


INVESTIGATING THE CRITIQUE OF THE NEOLIBERAL AMERICA IN THE WALLACE'S WORK THE BROOM OF THE SYSTEM

INVESTIGANDO A CRÍTICA À AMÉRICA NEOLIBERAL NA OBRA DE WALLACE A VASSOURA DO SISTEMA

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Resumo. Olhando para trás e revendo os desafios que os seres humanos enfrentaram ao longo da história, uma semelhança pode ser distinguida em todas as épocas: o desejo de uma verdadeira identidade e o desejo de encontrar a verdade. A intenção deste estudo é ler a obra “A Vassoura do Sistema” de Wallace no âmbito de Frederick Jameson para criticar o liberalismo e o neoliberalismo e encontrar o eu e a identidade perdidos na sociedade liberal americana. Fundamentou-se que, como a realidade não está na página para ser compreendida, e não há relação direta entre o significante (a palavra) e o significado (o objeto real), o significado só pode ser compreendido pela relação entre as palavras. na linguagem, por exemplo, entre uma palavra e as outras palavras que a cercam em uma frase. Portanto, o mundo é excluído do processo de compreensão da frase porque a frase é autorreferencial. Portanto, segundo Derrida e Barth, existe uma lacuna entre o texto e o mundo e “a literatura cria uma ilusão de realidade”.

Palavras-chave: Neoliberal, Obra de Wallace, A vassoura do sistema

Abstract. Looking back and reviewing the challenges human beings faced all through history, one can distinguish one similarity in all epochs and that is a desire for true identity and a desire to find the truth. The intention of this study is to read Wallace's work “The Broom of the System” in the framework of Frederick Jameson to criticize liberalism and neoliberalism and to find the lost self and identity in the American liberal society. It was founded that as the reality is not on the page to be understood, and there is no direct relationship between the signifier (the word) and the signified (the real object), the meaning can only be understood by the relationship between the words in the language, for example, between a word and the other words around it in a sentence. Therefore, the world is excluded from the process of understanding the sentence because the sentence is self-referential. Therefore, according to Derrida and Barth, there is a gap between the text and the world and "literature creates an illusion of reality".

Keywords: Neoliberal, Wallace's work, The Broom of the System

INTRODUCTION

The history of human thought is full of the emergence and appearance of schools and attitudes that have changed the environment of human life and created a different living space. As the most successful effort to create a living space, cities are constantly changing and transforming based on the inner desires of humans. In fact, man consciously and sometimes in a gradual process recreates the city and rebuilds his city.

In Understanding David Foster Wallace, Marshall Boswell (2020) examines four fictions of David Foster Wallace which are The Broom of the System and Infinite Jest and the story collections Girl with Curious Hair and Brief Interviews with Hideous Men. In this book Marshall depicts how Wallace has introduced new goals for fiction and talks about the innovations Wallace has come up to in writing fiction.

David Foster Wallace was born on February 21, 1962 when literature and art was experiencing the changes called postmodernism. Considering the changes in art and literature, from the reactions to the realism of the 19th century to the post world war reactions to modernism, Wallace's writings can be the third generation of changes history of literature has seen since the beginning of the 20th century and "he confidently situated himself as the direct heir to a tradition of aesthetic development that began with the modernist overturning of nineteenth-century bourgeois realism and continued with the postwar critique of modernist aesthetics".

In Conversations with David Foster Wallace, Stephen Burn (2012) has gathered numerous interviews with Wallace and believes that through interviews the hidden ideas of the author and the conscious or even the unconscious ideas are revealed to the public. People who read Wallace can gain more information about his ideas behind each story and the perspectives he had when he was offering innovations in narration and style of writing fiction. In The Cambridge Companion to David Foster Wallace Ralph Clare informs the readers of how Wallace has reinvented the fiction for his generation? The new techniques and innovations of Wallace are declared in the book. The reader can find the challenges Wallace has faced when he was considering self-reflexivity and sincerity in his writing and his point of view towards the reader which is

very unique is mentioned in the book. Wallace was influenced by Barth's ideas and had some disagreements with him. Barth sets forth two problems for the writers of his time. The first one is the role and function of the writer which is said to "depict reality in language", though he believes that language is a tool that makes people alienated from reality; because by putting the reality into language, there will be a misreading of the reality since language is not capable of delivering meaning. Therefore, both writers and readers can be alienated from reality. That's why in his writings, the writers are alienated. The other problem is that despite the self-referentiality of the text and the novel, novels refer back to the other novels before them, since they do not refer directly to a knowable reality" (Boswell 2020). The aim of all writing is to depict the reality and Barth discusses that the purpose of all innovations in the modernist techniques of writing is to have "a more accurate access to reality" but later it is recognized that reality is nothing but "a construct of languages" or in other words, reality is what people decide to be the reality based on their understanding and then they put it in language for others to accept it as reality (Boswell 2020). In the time postmodernism emerged, this reality was challenged and the reality was not something to be discovered and conveyed easily. On the other hand, the literary conventions of modernism were used so much that they had lost their originality and innovations and this overuse made the writers eager to have new innovations. These writers tried to overcome the exhaustion of the modernist techniques and the "death of the novel" by highlighting those exhausted techniques in their novels (Boswell 2020). With following Wittgenstein's theories, Wallace tried to solve these problems and defy Barth in his theory of "death of the novel".

This novel is about communication, which is the main problem of man specifically in the second half of the 20th century. Rick is a character who cannot let anyone inside him and only wants to impose himself on others and is not open to changes. He is in a closed system and cannot communicate. He only follows the rules in that closed system and he has no ability to be free because he is not willing to have disorder in his life. "A break in the closed system causes disorder, that is, the potential for misunderstanding. At the same time, this potential for misunderstanding is also linked to freedom and multiplicity of meaning, whereas a closed system provides either order and no potential for work or disorder and ultimate heat death" (Severs, 2016; Homer and Kellner, 2004). "Interpretation is open and never complete, yet that is also the very source of the story's vitality". The story is alive only when it is open to interpretation. Different interpretations can give different meanings to a text and can make the story alive. It is the same with life. An ordered life in a closed system is a dead life since there is no variety of choices and interpretations and there is only one dictated false life or identity for the people who live in that system. At the end of the novel, Wallace gives this hope to the reader that the system can be opened and there is chance to have true communication and to find true identity. He ends the novel by Rick's words in an amazing way when he doesn't utter the last word which the reader can easily guess and Wallace shows that the system is open now. "You can trust me, I'm a man of my ". As a closure to the novel and a guide for his readers, Wallace puts his words in the mouth of a character, Reverend Sykes, and says " Use me, friends. Let us play the game together. I promise that no player will feel alone. You see my hand? Here it is. I hold it out for you to touch. Touch it. Lay your hands in the soil and touch me. Here I am for you". In these words, Wallace shows that there is hope for people to live in an open system and have a real life instead of being consumer citizens in capitalist societies. He refers to Wittgenstein's theory of language game and how people can communicate by getting engaged in that game and by using his hand he shows that as a writer he and his text are self-conscious of their presence and the mutual role of the reader and the writer as essential figures to understand the system. "Everything is reprised here—the concept of the language "game," the strategy of metafictional self-consciousness (showing your hand), the penetration of closed systems and its resulting vitality, a call for partnership between reader and text".

Every dominant power that existed has changed the identity of man to reach a form it assumes is the best form. In the modern world, in the 20th century, liberalism and neoliberalism, have promised to find a solution to the bad life condition of man after the Second World War and to set forth principles and ways following which man can live a better life. But the identity of man is lost and nothing is left but a destroyed self which is a mere puppet in society. Many writers and critics have tried to answer the question of identity. Fredric Jameson is a postmarxist who is a critic of neoliberalism and like David Foster Wallace tries to find a solution to the problem of man in American neoliberal society. Wallace questions liberal and neoliberal values and structures in his works and this research is going to read his works in the light of Fredric Jameson.

Industrial Revolution happened in America in the late 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. Economic development shifted from manual labor and farm labor to industrialized labor. Modernism emerged and bourgeoisie took control of the economy and capitalism emerged in the shadow of liberalism (Murti et al., 2023). Liberalism set forth ideologies to improve man's condition of life. It is not

something new. There has always been the description of Utopia from the time of Plato who tried to set principles for a desirable society, describing how a good citizen should be, what the society should do, and what the poets should write. However, through the ideologies of liberalism, the authorities were not trying to help flourish human beings but rather they were trying to develop capitalism. They used superstructures in society such as art, literature, school, and university to distribute the ideology they wanted and to control people. As life was never like before, there was a change in economy, politics, and literature. All cultural concepts in society changed to bourgeoisie cultural concepts and were spread in society by superstructure. Liberalism was not successful and helpful in finding the solution to the problems of society specifically the economic problems. As a result, neoliberalism comes after liberalism to fulfill the task. Fredric Jameson doesn't regard any of them as helpful since the superstructure imposed whatever ideology they wanted on people not for the wellbeing of people but for the improvement of capitalism. Wallace defies liberalism and neoliberalism and criticizes the values in such societies and believes that liberalism and neoliberalism help capitalism prosper therefore he defies them all. In his writings, he tries to show that there are other values in society that are more important and all the settings, characters, and events in his works are there to show this. Wallace doesn't accept the identity liberalism and neoliberalism have given man and all his characters and his works try to show this defiance. Fredric Jameson is a critic of liberalism and neoliberalism as well and talks about superstructure and ideology. Thus, reading Wallace's works with Jameson's perspectives and finding all the aspects Wallace defies and questions liberalism and neoliberalism is the main concern of this study.

According to Wallace, for over 100 years men were puppets in the hands of liberalism and neoliberalism. They only wanted them to think they were living in modern and postmodern era. They had the latest versions of cell phones and cars and they had specific values and perspectives in their lives. But these are all ideologies imposed on them through superstructure in society. Wallace believes that in modern or postmodern society man is always at the beginning of the way, always paying for the things he has bought because he has only learned to be a consumer and it never ends. According to Wallace they even use whatever and whoever opposes them. For example, they use irony with any opposition and rejection to bring stasis to society. He says everything in society has turned into a superstructure to distribute certain ideologies to control people. He believes that the authority imposes an ideology on the minds of people to have a concept of their identity but it is a false self and identity.

Neoliberalism is in fact late capitalism. It is a new system of economy rendered after capitalism. In the last few decades of the 20th century, liberalism has captured state power in different grand cities of the world. Being a political project and a form of capitalism, neoliberalism reinforces elite class power and redistributes wealth to the upper class by structural and ideological means. Charles Peters and Philip Keisling believe that in the late 20th century the American people were dissatisfied with the traditional Democrat and Republican ideas and couldn't see a relief in their solutions for the society. They needed new ideas and a new version of politics to find solutions for the existing problems such as defense, healthcare, education, and so on. People who believe in the growth and improvement of conventional beliefs agree on the ideas of neoliberalism to solve the problems (Peters 3). According to David Harvey neoliberalism was a solution to the crisis of liberalism in the 1970s. Liberalism itself was the result of a class agreement between a strong working class and the bourgeois state and was intended to solve the crises of the 1930s that were in their own place the result of capitalism. A liberal state promised full employment, economic growth, and social welfare in healthcare, education, and so on, to keep the compromise between the working class and the bourgeois state. In the 1950s liberalism was somehow successful in producing high levels of economic growth but couldn't avoid the inflation crisis of the 1970s. Liberalism failed in keeping its promises and fulfilling people's demands. So, neoliberalism was offered as a solution. It gained public support through an ideological process and introduced itself as a solution to the economic problems the countries faced. The primary purpose of neoliberalism was to overcome inflation by any economic policy regardless of any consequences (Harvey 23). The policies were and still are privatization and deregulation, taking the tax burden from the rich and sharing it with other people, and having drastic measures to take away the power of the unions and "has meant the financialization of everything" (Harvey 33). To accomplish political-economic goals the state power uses methods like privatization and deregulation and so many others. By financialization of everything, that is to Harvey an essential feature of neoliberalism, many western companies are no longer industrial producers. They turned into financial operations. But neoliberalism also didn't fulfill the promised economic growth for the working class and it led to the decomposition of working-class power and as a result international protest against it. Liberalists believe that liberalism has been exploited and misunderstood and has not applied perfectly and that's why it has failed to accomplish

its promised ideas. Neoliberalism which is a redistribution of wealth from the poor to the very rich has its own supporters in countries like USA and Britain and the reason is that it has secured its place through ideological structures. These ideological structures make people blind to the reality of their situation and the government's exploitation of them.

Unlike what many people think, politics is not just attending an election and choosing a group to govern a country for a while. Politics controls everything in the lives of the citizens. It even controls the way people think and what they want and desire by different means one of which is ideology. As a result, a system like neoliberalism is not just an economic system that believes the private sector should be in charge of the welfare of the populace. It is more than an economic system in which ideologies are dealt with to shape the values of the society and control the minds and lives of people. Henry Giroux explains that democracy has lost its meaning and neoliberalism in the US government is trying to confine the youth in America because they are considered to be threats to the system. They are not "a symbol of the future" anymore. They form a generation that needs to be controlled and the government focuses on solving the threatening problem of the youth (Giroux 86). All the system does to control this generation is to turn them into good obedient citizens who will never think of any rebellion. They use ideology and begin at schools which have turned into a place for examining and exercising politics, power, and authority.

The novels chosen to be discussed are five of Wallace's major novels, *The Broom of the System*, *Infinite Jest*, *The Pale King*, *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* and *This is Water*. All his characters, settings, and jobs in his works put emphasis on this idea. He insists that man's identity is lost. There is no flourishing of man's self and elevation of man in a neoliberal society and man has not been successful in possessing a true self in the 20th and the 21st century.

METHOD

There is a picture theory of language that says language is full of words that name objects and full of sentences that are the combination of these words. In this novel, Wallace undermines this theory by using strategies and techniques of metafiction. "Metafiction emphasizes the chasm that separates fictional conventions from the real world to which they refer" (Severs 2017; Jamalpour & Yaghoobi-Derab, 2022). He insists that there is a gap between the fictional conventions and the real world they try to show and he shows it in his metafiction. He emphasizes that the fictional world the writers try to depict is far different from the real world. He believes that the world his forerunners created for their readers made the readers confused and alienated from the literary work. Therefore, instead of the "hermetic, enclosed, and self-referencing fictional structures" that alienated the readers, he chose "open system of communication. In place of alienating self-reflexivity, the book proposes a communal approach to communication, one that operates not between word and object, or self and other, but between two equal and interactive participants, a dynamic carried over onto the novel's relationship with its own readers". By this system, he challenges both Pynchon's "solipsism and loneliness" and Barth's the "death of the novel" (Roberts, 2001). Wallace accomplishes this task by having allusions all through his novel to an eminent philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein whom he was influenced by. In the course of the plot, Wittgenstein's presence can be felt as in the technique "deus ex machina," or "the god from the machine", intervening in the process of the story not in a figure exactly but by the presence of the grandmother who was Wittgenstein's student in the past. The grandmother was obsessed with words, just like Wittgenstein and Wallace himself. "Words were the obsessive preoccupation of Wittgenstein's lifework, and they are also the primary focus of Wallace's first novel".

Wittgenstein broke language into small components and believed that all communication is based on these irreducible parts and then claimed that all languages shared lots of similarities. He argued that to understand a language, one must describe it not explain it because explanation means determining for a meaning of something and there would be a risk of misunderstanding the meaning. Therefore, he declares that by avoiding to explain the meaning, one can consider the function of language in real-life situations and he called these real-life satiations "games". The use of a word in these real-life situations determine the meaning of a word (Boswell 2020). It is exactly the way children learn languages. They learn through functions in surrounding situations not through the meaning of the words. Therefore, learning the rules of the game is important in understanding the words in their specific functions. The real-life situation that is an important element in understanding the language can be the sociohistorical aspects, culture, the country and so on and when more than one person agree on the meaning of a language in one specific real-life situation, language will take shape. In an essay "Authority and American Usage", Wallace makes it easier to

understand and declares that "A word like tree means what it does for me because of the way the community I'm part of has tacitly agreed to use tree" (qtd. in Boswell 2020) Therefore, language and the world it is used in, are inseparable and according to Wittgenstein, without a community to apply usage to the words, there will not be any language at all.

Definitions of the Key Terms

Base: The model Marx developed to express the relations in society was that of base and superstructure. The base of all societies is economic. It is all about money and the money owners and money makers (Roberts 18).

Comodification: In a capitalist system comodification means turning everything either abstract or concrete into commodities or objects of trade. Everything is intended to be exchanged or traded even ideas (Roberts 40).

Economy: Economy is the base of all societies and of course a capitalist society based on which the structure of the society is built (Roberts 18).

History: For Jameson the present is a site contested by past and future histories, "now" being a composite of the traces of the past and anticipations of the future present in our contemporary mode of production (Roberts 28).

Ideology: For Jameson ideology is not just false consciousness but as the structures of thoughts and feeling that define us as citizens in late capitalist society. Culture has a large part to play in this form of ideology. We learn how to be from the culture around us (Roberts 36).

Materialism: It is a way of thinking that believes the fundamental element of everything is matter even the abstract ideas come from material interaction. In materialism there is no place for supernatural elements and it opposes the ideas of idealism. Marx ideology is based on materialism and he has nothing to do with the ideas beyond mater and he believes it is the best way to rule a country (Roberts 30).

Modernism: The principles of a literary school that lasted from roughly the beginning of the twentieth century until the end of World War II. Modernism is defined by its rejection of the literary conventions of the nineteenth century and by its opposition to conventional morality, taste, traditions, and economic values. Many writers are associated with the concepts of Modernism, including Albert Camus, Marcel Proust, D. H. Lawrence, W. H. Auden, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, William Butler Yeats, Thomas Mann, Tennessee Williams, Eugene O'Neill, and James Joyce (Galens 494).

Neoliberalism: It is a system that takes away the economic power from the public sector and gives it to the private sector. It focuses on free market capitalism and tries to put limitations on government control on market and production (Munck 60).

Postmodernism: Writing from the 1960s forward characterized by experimentation and continuing to apply some of the fundamentals of modernism, which included existentialism and alienation. Postmodernists have gone a step further in the rejection of tradition begun with the modernists by also rejecting traditional forms, preferring the anti-novel over the novel and the anti-hero over the hero. Postmodern writers include Alain Robbe-Grillet, Thomas Pynchon, Margaret Drabble, John Fowles, Adolfo Bioy-Casares, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez ().

Protofascism: Protofascism is a system in which the ideologies of fascism are being applied to control people. There are certain features based on which a society can be distinguished as a Protofascist society (Severs, 2021).

Reification: Reification or thingification is the process of the transformation of everything in the world such as people, abstract ideas and so on to objects and things and according to Marx this is the wrong doing of a capitalistic society. The ideology here is to struggle to have more commodities, more objects and more money instead of struggling for justice and equality. There is no wholeness in modern societies but only "reified fragmentations" (Carey, 2020).

Superstructure: Out of the base emerges a superstructure that is constructed and determined by this base. The form of the super structure depends on the base. When base is the economic, the superstructure is the culture among people (Roache, 2022).

Totality: Totality means having a total view of the society, not regarding it as something containing individual elements. Regarding everything in particular and ignoring the total view of what is happening only add up to the misery and oppression of the working class. The only solution is to look at the society or the world as a whole (Steinhilber, 2020).

Postmodernism

One of the characteristics of modern and postmodern fiction is self-reflexivity or self referentiality that is when the authors refer to their own fictional work in their fiction and they keep calling attention to what they are doing and their narrator is called self-conscious narrator. To escape postmodern reflexivity that was dead according to Wallace, he used Wittgenstein's model and challenged what Barth established in postmodern literature. Barth believes that language "always replaces the reality that it seeks to articulate" and the words can find meaning by their relationship to the words around them (Boswell 2020). For Barth who was influenced by post-structuralists, mainly the deconstructionist philosopher Derrida and the psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan, language is self-referential meaning that it always goes back to itself to find a meaning instead of going back to the real world (Boswell 2020). Derrida claims that "the signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concepts, by means of the systematic play of differences" (Boswell 2020). It means a concept is not sufficient to have a meaning on its own and it needs other concepts to help it have a complete meaning. As the reality is not on the page to be understood, and there is no direct relationship between the signifier (the word) and the signified (the real object), the meaning can only be understood by the relationship between the words in the language, for example, between a word and the other words around it in a sentence. Therefore, the world is excluded from the process of understanding the sentence because the sentence is self-referential. So, according to Derrida and Barth, there is a gap between the text and the world and "literature creates an illusion of reality" (Boswell 2020).

"Where Jacques Derrida and other deconstructionist linguists view language as inherently unstable to the point that language can hardly convey believable meaning whatsoever, Wittgenstein's linguistic theory allows that specific context can help define (and hence stabilize, even if for only a moment) the meaning of a particular utterance" (Clare 2018). Derrida and those who think as he does believe that language cannot deliver authentic meaning and it is not a stable system to be able to do so, but Wittgenstein claims that language has the potentiality to define what a specific utterance is trying to convey only when the person who creates the language and the person who is accepting the language engage in the situation and understand the function of the language. "A word may have dozens of potential uses and potential definitions, he allows, but successful communication can arise when speakers, writers, listeners, and readers consider the specific rhetorical situation in which an utterance takes place" (Clare 2018). Wittgenstein does not reject what Derrida claims about insufficient ability of language to convey meaning and accepts its instability and contradictory aspects but believes that it is possible for language to create believable communication that creates authentic connections between the person who is creating it and the person who is engaged, whether they are just speakers and listeners or they have reader-writer relationship (Clare 2018). The difference between Wittgenstein's theory of language and Derrida's theory is that in Wittgenstein's theory, the language-game must be played by more than one participant but in Derrida's a dynamic property of language is the play (Boswell 2020). The Broom of the System is a novel in which Wallace shows his rejection of Derridean view of language and his agreement with Wittgenstein's thought. In this novel, mostly the communication fails and Wallace tries to show the influence of neoliberal system to make people unable to communicate in an authentic way. Unlike many writers, Wallace doesn't treat plots as plots and characters as characters. Rather, in the course of the plot and in the appearance of the characters in the plot, he tries to find and reveal true relationship between people and the way they communicate (Clare 2018). He shows that people lack communication abilities and cannot communicate. The matter of relationship between people in the time of postmodernity is very important to him. He even uses the technique of stories within stories as communicative acts and characters try to communicate through these stories.

RESULTS

David Foster Wallace believes that modernism and postmodernism are done and it is time to have new practices for literary works but with respect to both previous literary practices (Sean and Kellner, 2004).

Wallace observes the modernist movement and John Barth's reaction to it and the shift from epistemological aspect of literature and art to ontological one and finds them essential in the development of art. The certainties were shaken and replaced by doubts and new modes of possibility emerged that were different from the beliefs of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Barth is an American writer best known for his postmodern and metafictional fiction and Wallace was inspired by his shaking of previous modes of writing and called it a "patricide" and claimed that this patricide brought with itself a great amount of liberation and at the same time loneliness and isolation. In the essay "E Unibus Pluram: Television and U.S. Fiction" which unfolded his literary career and was a respond to the literary practices of his time, he introduces television as the main factor that helped postmodern project to bring this isolation and loneliness to people. He announced that it was because of the power of television that metafiction and literature have no power in helping people to resist. He also refers to "irony" and discusses that its original usage is changed in postmodern time. Irony was intended to attract the attention of the readers to the flaws of the conventions and the wrongs of the dominant ideologies in the hope of having a cure for all of them because as Wallace puts it, these writers were "frankly idealistic; it was assumed that etiology and diagnosis pointed toward cure, that revelation of imprisonment led to freedom" (Boswell 2020). He thought they were only after distinguishing the problem and showing it to others hoping that showing the problem will lead to cure. But instead of revealing and putting an end to all these problems, irony and self-reflexivity turned into weapons in the hands of mass production industry and brought stasis and despair to the U.S. culture. With the help of irony, they make fun of the problems in society and engage people in understanding the irony and enjoying their understanding and take away their power of resistance. They won't react because the problems are normalized and laughed at. Consequently, the writers of Wallace's generation lost the power of irony and even self-reflexivity as weapons to enlighten the readers against the wrongdoings of the system (Boswell 2020). A. O. Scott call Wallace's works "meta-ironic" and asserts that Wallace has tried to turn irony back on itself and his works are conscious of its self-consciousness. His works are both serious and ironic, both sensitive and intellectual.

Wallace has frequently used the terms "cynicism and naivete" in some of his works to declare that television and the postmodern irony that is used in it have taken away the sense of doubt and cynicism and made people remain in the state of stasis (that is what he means by naivete). He writes in "E Unibus Pluram", "Culture-wise, shall I spend much of your time pointing out the degree to which televisual values influence the contemporary mood of jaded weltanschmerz, self-mocking materialism, blank indifference, and the delusion that cynicism and naïveté are mutually exclusive?" (Boswell 2020). In his novel *Infinite Jest*, his main character Hal reveals his fear of being a human and defines being a human as being "unavoidably sentimental and naïve and goo-prone and generally pathetic" (Boswell 2020). To prove that cynicism and naivete are the same and are made to be the same in postmodern era, Wallace treats this fear with ironic self-awareness. He tries to use irony to reveal what irony is trying to hide. He tried to find both the problem and a solution to it, both diagnosis and the cure. In his career, Wallace was doing more than just writing what he was feeling. He was concerned about human beings and he could feel the process of loneliness of people that could lead to the extermination of communication. He tried to help human beings by the help of fiction because he believes that a good art is the one that depicts the dark times and at the same time shows the possibility to get out of the dark and come to light. A good fiction can both represent the dark world and a way to survive it. "In dark times, the definition of good art would seem to be art that locates and applies CPR to those elements of what's human and magical that still live and glow despite the times' darkness. Really good fiction could have as dark a worldview as it wished, but it'd find a way both to depict this dark world and to illuminate the possibilities for being alive and human in it" (Boswell 2020). Doing so, he not only diagnoses the eccentric alienation that haunts the American culture, but also, he tries to find a solution to this problem. He tries to do so by finding a way to follow postmodernism without rejecting it and without going back to the time before postmodernism or modernism (Boswell 2020).

Wallace's first novel, *The Broom of the System*, tells the story of a 25-year-old woman, Lenore Stonecipher Beadsman Jr., who is in the search of her grandmother with the same name, Lenore Beadsman. The novel makes the reader laugh and, in some parts, it is hilarious but at the same time it is a serious novel that is investigating the language and its role and relationship to the outside world or in fact the role of human beings and the relationship between human being and society. Wallace dramatizes fiction in the novel and uses the technique self-reflexivity to "explore self-consciousness, solipsism, and signification". The presence of the great writers such as John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, and William Gaddis as writers who had great influence on Wallace is clearly observable in the novel but the novel shows more than just following these great figures in literature. In this novel, it can be clearly seen that he tries to go beyond

metafiction and self-reflexivity (Clare, 2018). One of the characteristics of modern and postmodern fiction is self-reflexivity or self referentiality that is when the authors refer to their own fictional work in their fiction and they keep calling attention to what they are doing and their narrator is called self-conscious narrator. To escape postmodern reflexivity that was dead according to Wallace, he used Wittgenstein's model and challenged what Barth established in postmodern literature. Barth believes that language "always replaces the reality that it seeks to articulate" and the words can find meaning by their relationship to the words around them (qtd. in Boswell 16). For Barth who was influenced by post-structuralists, mainly the deconstructionist philosopher Derrida and the psychoanalytic theorist Jacques Lacan, language is self-referential meaning that it always goes back to itself to find a meaning instead of going back to the real world.

DISCUSSION

Wallace has always been concerned with what has happened to humanity and the function and identity of man in the 20th century specifically the second half of the 20th century. He shows the characters who lack the ability to communicate and characters who fail to find their identity. By showing that words are understood in the function they have in the language-game, he claims that every man can find its meaning and identity through the function he has in the society. If a neoliberal society imposes on the citizens to be consumer citizens, they will be consumers in such a society and they will follow the norms of such society. Lenore understands that she needs to stop following the rules that were set forth for her to both shape her identity and show her a specific life style, and Wallace asks the readers to discover these rules in their lives and challenge them and struggle to resist to be able to find their true identity.

Like Lenore, Rick also mistakenly clings to the word-object conception of language. Instead of making love with Lenore, he tells her stories because he is not capable of having an affair and he tries to change the nature of their love and he tries to restrict their words to their objects to be able to control the objects around him as he believes that meaning is exact and referential and language is his "weapon of control" to have Lenore in his hands. One of the stories Lenore's boyfriend, Rick, tells her is the story of a man falling in love with every woman he sees and as following his therapist advice he began a relationship with an unattractive woman who always has a toad with her. The history behind this woman and where she comes from is very eccentric. She comes from eastern Europe where her family lives a strange life. They refuse to have real connection to outside world and they have their own version of meaning in life that is dictated to them and they carry a small animal to prevent them from having real connection to outside world. This woman desires to have this connection to the outside world but she is attached emotionally to the toad and when she decides to be in contact with the outside world, she cannot bear it and kills herself and passes the responsibility of the toad to the man. This family and their community resemble the authoritative system of neoliberalism in America that tries to control people and everything in their lives. The outside that these people in Rick's story are forbidden to contact with is in fact the truth about life and society that these authoritarian regimes hide from people. They give the citizens false identities and false understanding about life. The toad can be the ideologies in a system that make people believe in whatever the system wants and make them follow the rules and disciplines. They are so blinded, restricted and imprisoned by some ideologies that they cannot free themselves from them, it is the death of their identity, and they can never resist. The girl kills herself because those ideologies (the toad) is so innate in her that she cannot live without them and after her death, the ideologies won't die, they are passed to other people and generations. In this story, Rick regards himself as the man and regards Lenore as the woman with the toad. He suggests that she cannot submit to him because she is loyal to her family and she is too much involved with the problems of herself and her family.

Therefore, based on the main concern of this study, it can be said that Lenore is so much preoccupied with the current ideology around her which is having a predetermined function and identity and she cannot see the whole picture and cannot understand the outside world and her true function and identity. Her grandma works as the toad who stops her from being free to find her own identity and by her absence, she manages to understand the game of language and her true function. The point in Rick's story and its bitter ending is that he wants Lenore to be her center and wants to be Lenore's center as well. It is not possible and they fail if they try to do so because whatever is outside someone would be other and "any time we make something outside ourselves the center of our existence, we are not connecting" (23). It suggests that by trying to accept someone else as the force to be the center and to determine our function, we actually lose our identity and we will die. "Thermos woman in Rick's story makes the tree toad her center and

referent and, in the process, undermines her ability to connect emotionally with the world outside her". Likewise, when a citizen in a neoliberal society considers the laws and norms of the society and the government to be his center and tries to follow them, the death of the identity of man happens. "Rick the writer can imagine himself as one who binds the world to his word, who controls the field of play". Every story is a system which controls everyone involved in it and by telling stories, Rick tries to control everything specially Lenore. By ignoring that the meaning of a word lies in the function they find in the interaction they have with other words and by accepting the object-word relationship and trying to find meaning in the word itself alone, the communication will fail. Similarly, by ignoring that the identity of a person can be found in his interaction with others and the function he freely finds there, and by accepting the determined identity, one will be alienated and will surrender to loneliness and death (24). Wallace emphasizes the process of objectification of people and human relations by having puns with the word "object which denotes not only a referent in a logocentric vision of language but also an inanimate thing" (25). Word-object relation is like objectifying humans and seeing them as mere objects to use in certain ways. The name of the character Mindy Metalman whom Rick loved in his childhood proves that he loved her and wanted to objectify her and consider her as a thing to find pleasure. Alternatively, in Lenore's case, it is obvious when she says "Stop trying to pin me, Rick. I feel like a butterfly on a board".

CONCLUSION

The *Broom of the System* is a novel with a female protagonist who is in search of someone missing and tries to "measure the amount of disorder within a closed system". The novel is written in 1987 and by setting the novel in 1990 that would be the future at the time of writing the novel, Wallace conveys a message to the readers. The novel is set in Cleveland and it is depicted in the novel that Ohio landscape has been changed by the governor's order. It is ordered to construct an artificial desert called Great Ohio Desert (or G.O.D.) a void of nothing but black sand due to its appropriateness for spiritual extremity (Clare 2018). What Wallace introduced by depicting this landscape in America is the future of people's identity because of deterioration of communication and people's ability to have any relations. This will be the future of man's life in a neoliberal capitalist society. They will turn into humans devoid of identity and they would be like stuffed puppets in the hands of the governors. By referring to spiritual site for people he refers to the religious institutions the neoliberal and capitalist societies use to convey their ideologies and making people follow their norms in the society. It can be concluded that neoliberalism is in fact late capitalism. It is a new system of economy rendered after capitalism. In the last few decades of the 20th century, liberalism has captured state power in different grand cities of the world. Being a political project and a form of capitalism, neoliberalism reinforces elite class power and redistributes wealth to the upper class by structural and ideological means.

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