

The Novel as Performance: The Fiction of Ronald Sukenick and Raymond Federman (A Chicago Classic)

Jerzy Kutnik Ph.D.

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This first full-length study of leading contemporary writers Ronald Sukenick and Raymond Federman defines the difference between modern and postmodern writers as the distinction between mimetic and performance art.

Larry McCaffery notes that "Kutnik's thesis is that performance art engages the artist and the audience in a process whose function is fundamentally different from the mimetic tradition... that is, rather than aiming at *representing* some preexisting state of affairs, performance art seeks to *be an experience for its own sake*, an experience which is ultimately to be recognized as continuous with reality and not merely an occasion for interpretation and analysis."

Postmodernists such as Sukenick and Federman spotlight themselves in the act of writing. Thus their creations have a life of their own, and the act of writing is so much a part of that life that the process of creation is as important as the end product. Kutnik's metaphor for this process is performance art.



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