

The Real and the Image: Reading Mediated Reality in Don de Lillo's *White Noise*

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Abstract:

The present paper attempts to problematize the idea of reality and how it is mediated in Don DeLillo's novel White Noise. The visionary moment in Don DeLillo's novels catches our attention and it goes beyond the signifier-signified relationship. The meaning of the visionary moment gets usurped by the reality which reaches us through a medium. The authority of the real faces a crisis. A similar crisis can be seen in DeLillo's White Noise and this paper seeks to examine such crisis of achieving what is real. We experience a hyperreal condition in reading of the novel and this hyperreal condition can be better understood by Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum. The real is engulfed by simulacra. The dividing line between truth, falsity, actual and imaginary is blurred and has imploded. The real is reproduced and we experience tiny packages of reality passing through a prism. The Gladney family in the novel confronts an array of images of what is called real and are unable to locate the boundary between real and mediated. The postmodern culture is media powered and expansion of market is profound. Advertisements have empowered the masses and in the consumer ridden society reality also gets consumed. In the process the consciousness of mind and body gets encapsulated and realizes reality as layered and mediated. We are products of myriad representations. Eventually we get a represented or reproduced image of reality.

Key words: Visionary, reality, mediated reality, simulacra, layered, representation.

“What if the symptoms are real?”

“How could they be real?”

“Why couldn't they be real?”

“They get them only when they're broadcast,” she whispered.

(*White Noise* 155)

The global culture, plethora of images, the dominance of technology shaped the reality in the postmodern world. This is a result of the post industrial effects and America too turned into a global consumer capital. The reality is constructed through systems and symbols. The construction of the individual and his/her reality can be traced back to the earlier period of history which is investigated in the previous chapter. Individuals in today's world are creating alternative reality. Apart from that television, radio, satellite and electronic media established a relationship between people's day to day lives and social relationships. They have constructed a new arrangement of time and space in a culture with globalizing tendencies. Television and electronic media are in constant interaction with the human beings. The forms of media are the instruments of capturing the time and space in the household life. Media is creating a link between the domestic sphere and the outside world. Frank Lentriccia writes it is the image which becomes the landscape. The electronic landscape creates an image and it is the image that matters. Reality thus is a process of signification. The identity and the reality of a person are constructed by the projections of commercialization. Robert Nadeu¹ in the Preface to Don DeLillo writes

Exposure to media entices Americans, suggests DeLillo, to view gratification of impulse in terms of the likeness or image of self that appears in advertising to have the most access to scarce commodities.... What is finally merchandised is the prospect of altering the image of the self for purposes of

consumption, as opposed to refashioning, or reconstructing, the environment to create larger possibilities for growth and satisfaction. (15)

Reality is getting usurped by media and advertising. Reality unfolds in a pseudo world. It is a journey towards the monopoly of image and it is creating a spectacle. Guy Debord in his *Society of Spectacle* writes: "The spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and a means of unification. As a part of society it is that sector where all attention, all consciousness converges. Being isolated – and precisely for that reason – this sector is the locus of illusion and false consciousness."² (11) The society becomes indeed a spectacle where multivalent images can be seen. People experience various mediations by various images. Due to this the authority of the real faces a crisis. A similar crisis can be seen in DeLillo's *White Noise* and this dissertation seeks to examine such crisis of achieving what is real. We experience a hyperreal condition in reading of the novel and this hyperreal condition can be better understood by Jean Baudrillard's concept of the evolution of simulacrum which is explored in the previous chapter. The real is engulfed by simulacra which is a replica of the original or the real. An image becomes more real than the actual object. Simulation arises from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and the real. Simulation envelops the representation of the reality. There are successive stages of image formation which this dissertation shall highlight in its study. An image reflects reality and it has no relation to reality and it becomes its own simulacrum. There is a plethora of the signs of reality. It is an escalation of the truth. It is a strategy of the real, of the neo real and the hyper real.

To understand the society as being imaginary we can cite an example of the objective profile of America which is Disneyland. It stands to be the perfect model for the orders of simulacra. It is a play of illusions and phantasms. It hides the

real and reproduces the image of the real. The dividing line between truth, falsity, actual and imaginary is blurred. The real is reproduced and we experience tiny packages of reality passing through a prism. The Gladney family in the novel confronts an array of images of what is called real and are unable to locate the boundary between real and the mediated. The postmodern culture is media powered and expansion of the market is profound. Advertisements have empowered the masses and in the consumer ridden society reality is consumed. In the process the consciousness of mind and body gets encapsulated and realizes reality as layered and mediated. We are products of myriad representations. Eventually we get a representation or reproduction of the image of reality.

Consciousness plays a great role in the works of Don DeLillo. The mind occupies an ontological status and in his novel *White Noise* we see that mind is more powerful than language. In his novel *The Names* too we find mind playing a great role. Death here is a significant element which represents the death of the society as well as the death of the individual. This idea will be justified as the chapter develops. Coming back to the notion of consciousness and how it is entrapped in a media driven society one can understand it through the enigmatic relationship between the mind and the body. The mind we see in his novels is molded by technology. The mind becomes a machine in *White Noise*. Mind is an entity that we refer to as consciousness. The consciousness becomes a plaything for the media driven society. We work, we listen, and we talk in the language of the media. It acts as a prism through which the so called reality is refracted. Daniel C. Dennett, for example, uses the differences between phenomenologist's accounts of mental experience to justify dismissing the "long-standing scientific tradition" that we all agree on what we find when we "look inside"³(66-72). Consciousness undergoes an objective analysis though it is resistant to scientific explanation. John R. Searle argues that the blend of mental

and physical characteristics possessed by consciousness does present a unique problem. Where science would normally reduce an object to its constituent parts, for example, analyzing water as molecules of hydrogen and oxygen, the analysis of consciousness, according to Searle, demands recognition of its mental and physical aspects. A simple 'appearance-reality distinction', in which the 'appearance' of thought is explained as the 'reality' of fibers and neurons in the brain, is inadequate.⁴(122) We can also cite Hegel who complains of science's readiness to believe that 'understanding is electricity' and animals are nitrogen' and dismisses such methodology as a 'forceful procedure', a mere connection of 'sense-ideas' which 'brings and holds together elements to all appearances far removed from one another'⁵ (109). But, in post modernity, science has augmented the ability to analyze the structure of the brain and build machines capable of reproducing elements of human thought. It has made consideration of the nature of consciousness particularly urgent and highly controversial. What grounds do we have for trusting our perception? It is in this troubled area where this thesis shall ponder on.

There are various forms of skepticism that prevails in the postmodern treatment of the idea of consciousness. DeLillo broadly analyzes the social issues in his work. He often concentrates on the technological systems, consumer culture and their numbing effect on the postmodern culture. Consciousness is a pawn to the media and the techno culture has numbed the attributes of consciousness. These debates became a characteristic of the entire corpus of DeLillo. The issues of reliability of consciousness, the mind-body relation, the analogy between mind and the computer, the rational and intuitive modes of thought govern DeLillo's novels. The novels present a contemporary culture steeped into the cybernetics. In turn the mind and the body work in accord to the spaces provided by technology. In this environment the subject is aborted and is reduced into a kind of schizophrenic "false-self

system” described by R.D. Laing.⁶ DeLillo’s *White Noise* explores the mind of the protagonist and its tussle with the language of death. His novels limit the autonomy of the individual as it is absorbed by the cyber space. The mind and the body are equipped with electronic mediation. This dissertation unfolds the manifold tensions that overlap DeLillo’s works.

The novel *White Noise* is an exemplary work and is known as a quintessentially postmodern work. In this novel the narrator Jack Gladney states “I understand the music, I understand the movies, I even see how comic books can tell us things. But there are full professors in this place who read nothing but cereal bones. It is the only avant-garde we’ve got” (*White Noise* 9). Postmodernism is a space of debate and it is not a space of resolution. This dissertation seeks to explore the postmodern context and problematize the idea of reality keeping in mind the ambiguous attitude that the postmodern carries along with it. The postmodernists are continuously questioning reality and we can witness an unrelenting struggle to seek reality in DeLillo’s novels. The concept of reality in his novels is realized or rather is in the process of realization when seen through a prism. This creates a path towards reality as being refracted towards multiple directions. Hence we find reality as passing through a medium and even the realization of the reality is mediated. In this process the senses of an individual also get an impulse of mediation. Mind is at work in DeLillo’s novels and the workings of the mind are encased in mediations. The mind connotes intensity though the mind is left ambiguous at the end of the novel and it reacts through multiple simulations. Body creates an emotional and at times radical response. The link between the senses is at rupture. DeLillo’s America is a world of simulations where mind also works through network of images. The real remains a conception without realization. In this context DeLillo gives a clinical portrayal of the characters. The annals of mind and

body are perceived and recorded in this mediated reality of the postmodern world.

The grid of mind accounts for numerous sensations. The mind is like an *idée fixe*⁷ and it communicates through a common language. Reality has become an array of signs and we experience a structured understanding of reality. Images are numbing the masses and Don DeLillo projects America dwelling in such reality. Like other postmodernists DeLillo's world is a world of words, a world of signification. This dissertation seeks to explore the individual images which create the characters world and how reality is seen as reflected through myriads of tiny prisms. In the novel *White Noise* the corporeal body stems from an array of visions and the body becomes a state of being which is seen through multiple visions and multiple realities. In the text we see the troubled mind of Jack when he says:

A strangeness gripped me, a sense of psychic disorientation. It was her all right, the face, the hair, the way she blinks in rapid twos and threes. I'd seen her just an hour ago, eating eggs, but her appearance on the screen made me think of her as some distant figure from the past, some ex-wife and absentee mother, a walker in the mists of the dead. If she was not dead, was I? (*White Noise* 123)

The character negotiates with his mind and body. Reality is observed as being achieved through layers of mediation and the body becomes an object experiencing such mediations.

There is an inherent relationship between DeLillo and the media culture. His works are fashioned with ready materials. Novels like *Mao II*, *Americana*, *Libra* are made up of marketplace, advertising slogans, rock lyrics, snippets of film and television. DeLillo has a tendency to merge the world of Bob Dylan and Lenny Bruce together with the lines of Proust and Joyce. There are evidences of advertisements like as a "child of Godard and Coca-Cola" (*Americana*, 269). His works as Mark Osteen says are "collision and collusion between image

and anti-image, between high culture and consumer culture.”⁸His work always merges the consumer culture and the high art. We can read him as an exemplary postmodern writer in whom we see the experimentation, cultural segregation and a homogenized consumer culture. In Delillo’s first novel, *Americana* we can see the protagonist setting out to make an avant-garde film through which he tries to escape the mundane advertising world. He tries to recast his life from the mundane daily activities and acquires a life in the form of filmic images. But such a remodeling is an impossible task. The tawdry culture of the human beings is trapped into the webs of advertisement, and technology is inevitable. There is a blend of reality and mass mediated experience which evokes life as a movie and people become the players. There is a consumption of reality and its authenticity is trapped into the fiction oriented entertainment paradigm. This change alters the essential human condition and this alters in turn the material and biological basis of humanity. The world here is composed by the virtual reality. It is transcendence from the biological to the technological. It is an infinitely malleable world and thus technology carries the capacity to mold the human life.

The world of the novel *White Noise* is one of ruin and resurrection. The protagonist Jack Gladney is steeped in the fear of death in the entire novel. His body is molded into this fear and it responds to this fear imprinted in his mind. Man most importantly is physical and the physical reacts to the mental biddings. This concept in historical terms is known as virtue and in Roman it stands for “virtus.”⁹ It is related to the concept of man as physical. Virtus primarily mean power or mastery over one’s body especially under stressful conditions. Here we can mention the allusion to Hercules as a symbol of virtue in all its aspects. In the novel, Jack is guarded by the bodily impulses and he is caught amid the chaos of the body and the mind. Body is the crystalline center and caters to the dispositions to act. It is the fear of mortality which his body is

embedded in. To understand the fear there are an array of signifiers and significations and the body acts accordingly. The physicality plays a dominant role in the protagonist's life and at large the "physical" in postmodern world. Thus DeLillo takes recourse to language as a strategy to face the issue of mortality. There is a mystery in understanding the postmodern culture and such mystery intertwines the novel. The novel strives to roar through a white noise as Jack Gladney says "I realized the place is awash in noise. The toneless system, the jangle and skid of carts, the loudspeaker and coffee making machines, the cries of children. And over it all or under it all, a dull and unlocatable roar, as of some form of swarming life just outside the range of human apprehension." (*White Noise*43) The corporeal or the palpably physical phenomena seem trivial and less important than the swarming life. The bundle of fear emanating from his mind and at the same time the body reacting to it becomes a benchmark of his ontological meaning. The logic of terror and Gladney's own despair brought into by his senses indicate that he has failed to connect between the signifier and the signified logic. The system is dismantled and it is the terror of the soul that haunts the mind. Body is nothing but a performing tool. DeLillo codifies through language and his characters are marked with certain codes.

White Noise is a platform of the swirling significations. The communicational system creates a sound; the sound of media permeates the body of the characters and this sound reverberates in the entire corpus of the novel. The human utterances and the utterance of the capitalistic structures encompass the noise. In this world of advertisements, DeLillo's novel *White Noise* is infested by images. The novel is endowed by some events and traces down the history and talks about Adolf Hitler's fascism and the event of chemical spill which occurred in Bhopal, India. The chemical spill has created a consciousness among the writers in America. The toxic waste is a serious issue and the eco critical theorists have looked into it

with great attention. The representation of the pollution provides an insight into the environmental consciousness. The contamination of the environment became an important problem in *White Noise* too. The catastrophe brought about by the chemical spill of the Union Carbide incident in Bhopal is an issue of global contamination of the environment and it has created a concern as American landscape is poisoned in *White Noise*. The novel projects the elements of waste as it is evident when we see Gladney passing the compact garbage. The garbage is the representation of the consumer capitalism. This toxic consciousness¹⁰ has induced fear in Gladney and the identities of his wife and children. The symbol of waste represents an ontological crisis. The representation of these events can be seen through series of images and one observes the reality through mediation.

Forms of media such as radio, television, films, and internet are the social forces and the characters of *White Noise* are grasped by these mediations. The very structure of thought is designed by the Television genre. In the novel the protagonist utters: "For most people there are only two places in the world. Where they live and the TV set. If a thing happens on television, we have every right to find it fascinating, whatever it is." (*White Noise* 66) Pressures of advertising and capital increased and the reality is accessed through media. The large toxic event is first experienced by the broadcast of radio –

"The radio calls it a feathery plume, he said. But it is not a plume."

What is it?"

"Like shapeless growing thing. A dark black breathing thing of smoke. Why do they call it a plume?"

"Air time is valuable. They can't go into long tortured descriptions. Have they said what kind of chemical it is?"

"It's called Nyodene Derivative or Nyodene D. It was in a movie we saw in school on toxic wastes. These videotaped rats." (*White Noise* 129)

It is the mediating device, radio which is capturing the reality and the masses are dependent on that reality. It is all about the various forms of media which occupies the lives of the people. The inhabitant gets carried away by the images of reality and both the physical and the mental scape is driven by those images. Thus DeLillo creates a world of simulations and here the works of Jean Baudrillard needs a mention. The loss of the real creates the idea of simulation. Meaning collapses in this complex process of reality hunt. Society faces a loss without actually knowing it and dwells only on various images. In *The Ecstasy of Communication*, Baudrillard writes: "All events, all spaces, all memories are abolished in the sole dimension of information."¹¹(24). Information and media neutralize the masses and they think what the media want them to think.

The scope of DeLillo's *White Noise* too gives an idea of the plethora of images which the society succumbs to. It creates a world of simulations and Jack Gladney's fear of death also occurs due to some images of death which he carries in his mind. The fear multiplies with each progression of day and finally he gets an image of a pill, Dylar which is about to reduce the fear of death. Jack gets obsessed with the drug and even goes to the point of searching through the trash compactor. When Jack discovers that his wife Babette also takes the pill secretly and she said that the pill doesn't work but still Jack was fascinated by the idea of the pill. Gladney is obsessed by the system of codes. The SIMUVAC team in the novel actually simulates or creates an image of disaster and the great Airborne Toxic Event represents the image of the smoky cloud due to chemical spills which is again related to the fear of the protagonist. In one of his most popular definitions from his book *Simulations*, Baudrillard defines the real as:

that of which it is possible to give an equivalent reproduction
This is contemporaneous with a science that postulates that a process can be perfectly reproduced in asset of given conditions, and also with the industrial rationality that postulates a universal system of equivalency (classical

representation is not equivalence, it is transcription, interpretation, commentary). At the limit of this process of reproducibility, the real is not only what can be reproduced, but that which is always already reproduced. The hyperreal.¹² (146)

In the simulation model the signs are interchangeable as it does not propel exact meaning and thus reality keeps on shifting. Baudrillard writes:

Nothing separates one pole from the other, the initial, from the terminal: there is just a sort of contraction into each other, a fantastic telescoping, a collapsing of the two traditional poles into one another: an IMPLOSION- an absorption of the radiating model of causality, of the differential mode of determination, with its positive and negative electricity-an implosion of meaning. This is where simulation begins. (*Simulations*57)

The above theory can be understood by the most photographed barn in America, one of the tourist attractions of America. Murray Siskind, Jack's friend suggested the place. He says "No one sees the barn" he said finally. A long silence followed. Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn" (*White Noise*14) It is thus difficult to retrieve the actual picture of the barn and we tend to see a simulation of the barn. It is a hyper real situation where photographs are photographed. We get a picture out of a picture and can see that photographs reinforcing the perceptions and it is much better understood when Murray again adds "They are taking pictures of taking pictures." (*White Noise* 14) A collective perception is created through these images and one sees the world through that. Jack is self-conscious of the representation of images induced by the weight of representations. Individuals in DeLillo's novels access through mediation and this is their reality. The repetitions of brand names like Waffelos and Kabooms, DumDum Pops, Mystic Mints (*White Noise* 3), "The

Airport Marriott, the Downtown Travelodge, the Sheraton Inn and Conference Center” (*White Noise* 15); “Dacron, Orlon, Lycra Spandex” (*WhiteNoise*52); “Leaded, unleaded, super unleaded” (*White Noise* 199); “MasterCard, Visa, American Express” (*White Noise* 100) shows a picture of the mediated life the people are into in the postmodern world.

The television is the magnificent image in the entire novel. It is a representation of the image driven society. It reminds us of Baudrillard once again. He writes “the distinction between cause and effect, between active and passive, between subject and object, between ends and means. It is in this mode that it can be said TV watches us, TV alienates us, TV manipulates us, TV informs us. . . Throughout all this one is dependent on the analytical conception whose vanishing point is the horizon between reality and meaning.” (*Simulations*, 55-56). One example can be traced of how the language of an individual is snapped by the world of advertisements when Steffie, Jack’s daughter keeps on blabbering a brand name “Toyota Celica” (*White Noise* 180) when she is asleep and Jack wondered how a brand name can be murmured when someone is asleep. Jack says “She was only repeating some TV voice. Toyota Corolla, Toyota Celica, Toyota Cresida. Supranational names, computer generated, more or less universally pronounceable” (*White Noise*181). The media spectacle becomes important and the spectacle dominates the behavior of the people. Frank Lentricchia says that the advent of TV is like the settling of the first Mayflower pilgrims in America. He writes:

Sitting in front of TV is like a perpetual Atlantic crossing reenacted in our move from first person consciousness to the third: from the self we are, but would leave behind to the self we would become. Advertising may have discovered and exploited the economic value of the person we all want to be, but the pilgrim-consumer dreaming on the Mayflower, or on the New Mayflower in front of television, invented that person. ¹³(87)

White Noise is embedded with signs and codes. This is evident when Jack is seen interacting with an ATM machine:

I went to the automated machine to check my balance. I inserted my card, entered my secret code, tapped out my request. The figure on the screen roughly corresponded to my independent estimate, feebly arrived at after long searches through documents, tormented arithmetic. Waves of relief and gratitude flowed over me. The system had blessed my life. I felt its support and approval... What a pleasing interaction. I sensed that something of deep personal value, but not money, not that at all, had been authenticated and confirmed. (*White Noise*55)

ATM system is one of the systems of signs and codes in which the inhabitants are steeped into. The signs are signification systems and these images shape the lives of the people and at the same time they are delighted in such an existence as they are unable to discern the reality from the images.

Jack being death phobic gave his life to Hitler studies which in contrary is a figure of genocidal fury. Jack has resorted to such a figure around which he has “evolved an entire system.” (*White Noise* 12) He has forgotten the history of the Nazi past and thus he remains in an aestheticized media driven present. The Hitler Studies represents the mass assemblies and mass killings. This narrative of the novel is a kind of the Hitlerian will to power which Jack exercises in his college. This can be understood from the reference to the text which says :

Death. Many of those crowds were assembled in the name of death. They were there to attend tributes to the dead. Processions, songs, speeches, dialogues with the dead, recitations of the names of the dead. They were there to see pyres and flaming wheels, thousands of flags dipped in salute, thousands of uniformed mourners. There were ranks and squadrons, elaborate backdrops, blood banners and black dress uniforms. Crowds came to form a shield against their own dying. To become a crowd is to keep out death. To break

off from the crowd is to risk death as an individual, to face dying alone. Crowds came for this reason above all others. They were there to be a crowd. (*White* 87)

This shows the mass absorption of the individuals into crowds and eventually the individuals are getting enmeshed into the crowds. Death is inherent in the structure of the novel as well as in the behavior of Jack Gladney throughout the novel. The Nyodene D menace instilled fear in the mind of Jack and the chemical spill constantly haunted him. This traces the history of the post nuclear war. Amidst various images Gladney takes recourse to history and decides the present which is caught in a complex network of images. His fear of death is vague. To get access to the Dylar he kept on asking about the pill to almost all the people. He discovered his wife's concealed attempt of taking the medicine and when he knew the truth he wanted to kill the project manager who dealt with the drug. The episode of Willie Mink whom Jack attempts to kill becomes a clichéd ending. It is a kind of parody where we see the dichotomy between killing and dying. Linda Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* says that "the collective weight of parodic practice suggests a redefinition of parody as repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity"(26) Jack becomes intimate with the description of the event and focused not on the act but on the act of description. Mink has been mistaken for simulation of the real thing. Jack talks as one of the character of the pulp thriller when he says "I fires the gun, the weapon, the pistol, the firearm, the automatic" (*White Noise* 312) . Jack decides that to overcome death he will take an attempt to murder. The interjection of these two people in the end of the novel has driven the structure of the novel into a comic excess. The mortal fear lies within the system of simulations rather than the medicine Dylar. The medicine will only neutralize the fear emanating from the mind and the body will act accordingly.

The sign spectacle is the most important in DeLillo's world. Everything is consumed; the mind and the body are consumed by the system of signs. Even the radio transmitters got saturated by the news of the Airborne Toxic event. Individuals mind and body gets assimilated in the crowd as they sense wealth in information. The society is structured and coded and the mind of the people is only a pawn at the hands of the society. Everything is represented in words and we can refer to Babette who says "We have to use words. We can't just grunt" (*White Noise* 233)

The novel's events circumvent death and the bodily anguish. One can diffuse death by the system of signs and wealth of information and everything is a rendition of commodity. Death can be the only anchor of stability to do away with simulations. The desire of immortality is also a sign of rendering to codes and death can be an escape from codes. Nyodene D aggravates the fear of death and it is the mind which inculcates the fear but the toxic spill along with the fear of death became only the simulation of dying. The airborne toxic event became a spectacle and it took different names like: "Snow watch, said the forecasters. Snow alert. Snowplows...Snow flurries. Snow warnings. Driving snow. Blowing snow." (*White Noise*, 194) The toxic event is represented through various names where initially they called "the black billowing cloud." (*White Noise*134) and after sometime they gave a different name-"The airborne toxic event."(*White Noise*136) The event acquired only variant names as it became a pawn to the media. Media is constructing reality here to reach the masses. The impact of airborne toxic event raised questions in the minds of Jack and Babette – "Who will die first?"(*White Noise*,17)Jack fear of death that the toxic cloud instilled in his mind can be understood by the lines "That little breath of Nyodene has planted a death in my body. It is now official, to the computer. I've got death inside me."(*White Noise*175) We can see Jack waking up at night after getting "in

the grip of a death sweat.” These moments in the novel reflects the terrorized events. Nuclear war is itself a spectacle where people died in large numbers and in the novel we experience only a fraction of the grand war which succeeded in creating a spectacle out of the event. Jack is a victim of that spectacle. He couldn't differentiate between the image of death and the real death.

The dialectic of the individual and the mass shapes the global picture of America. The innermost feelings can no longer be represented through words; the writer is only sprinkling some facts of the American people who dwell in mediation. Every word gives an idea though it fails to produce thoughts as postmodernism is steeped in uncertainty. In an age of boundless consumerism DeLillo tries to manifest some problems. Reality is seen through a prism and in turn it refracts different layers of reality. The senses of mind and body are designed in order to adhere to the reality which reaches us as mediation. Postmodernism thrives to give a solution to the concept of reality but every time it seeks to explore we find multiple versions reality. Life is influenced by the mass culture, technology, supermarket where everything has a brand and thus the body is subjected to such brand names and seeks for reality in different brands. Markets, mass culture has heralded America as a totalitarian nation. America has turned into an unthinking and zombified group of people. DeLillo gave a diagrammatic representation of the American culture and human consciousness. DeLillo investigates the everyday life grounded into mediations. People are striving for meaning in their everyday life. Gladney's everyday fear of death turned out to be an act of killing which is again constructed within a system of signs. Thus in *White Noise* when the narrator Jack Gladney climbs up to a hill and he sees “another postmodern sunset rich in romantic imagery” (*White Noise* 227) The sunset is a spectacular image not of the natural richness but shows the chemical clouds hovering above creating an image of sunset.

America is inundated in images and simulacrum became a predominant part of life. The very concept of reality is mediated and it is still struggling to get perceived.

END NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. These lines are written by Robert Nadeu, a critique of Don DeLillo in the book *Don DeLillo* edited by Harold Bloom (Bloom, Harold. *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Don DeLillo*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003) p-15.
2. The concept of society as a spectacle is put forward by the theorist Guy Debord in his book *The Society of Spectacle*. (Debord. Guy. *The Society of Spectacle*. Trans, Donald Nicholson Smith. New York: Zone University Press, 1976) p-12
3. The idea of consciousness is described by Daniel C. Dennet in his book *Consciousness Explained*. (Dennet. Daniel. C. *Consciousness Explained*. London: Penguin, 1992) p-66-72
4. Another psychoanalyst John R. Searle talked about consciousness in his *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. He has put forward an anatomical discussion.(Searle. John. R. *The Rediscovery of the Mind*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992) p-122
5. Hegel provided a philosophical bent to the idea of consciousness in his *The Phenomenology of Mind*. (G.W. F Hegel. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. Trans, J.B. Baille. London: George Allen and Unwin,1931) p-109.
6. R.D Laing too discussed the models of consciousness in his *The Divided Self- An Existential Study in Madness*. (Laing. R.D. *The Divided Self- An Existential Study in Madness*. London: Penguin, 1992)p- 69-75.

7. The term *idée fixe* means an obsession which predominates the mind. The name has its origin in French “*idée*” which means “*idea*” and “*fixe*” means “*fixed*”.
8. Mark Osteen, *American Magic and Dread: Don DeLillo's Dialogue with Culture*(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), p. 25.
9. The term *virtus* is used by Russel Scott Valentino in his essay “From Virtue to Virtual.” (Valentino. Russel Scott. “From Virtue to Virtual: Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* and the Corruption of the Absent Body.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 53.1(2007). p 140-162.
10. The toxic event plays a significant role in the novel *White Noise* and we took the help of the book *The Ecocriticism Reader* to discuss the issue. The essay is written by Cynthia Deitering in the chapter “The Postnatural Novel” (Glotfelty, Cheryl. Fromm, Harold. *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Athens, London: The University of Georgia Press, 1966) p196.
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