MEGA INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

*Journal of Arts and Linguistics Studies*
ISSN Print 2959-0957 ISSN Online 2959-0965
Volume 4 Issue 1 2026
Pages 53-72
Open Access

# Postmodern Memory and The Role of Technology in Don DeLillo's White Noise

**Publication Details**
**Paper Received:**
September 20, 2025
**Paper Accepted:**
January 12, 2026
**Paper Published:**
January 15, 2026

**Uzma Munir**
Department of English, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, (Multan Campus)

**Article DOI:** https://doi.org/10.71281/jals.v4i1.594

**Abstract**
In the present era, the constant stream of communication delivered through media has fragmented human memory and perception. The capacity to retain experiences in their original form is diminishing, as continuous exposure to sounds, images and narratives disrupts the cognitive process and replaces reality with mediated representations. Memory has become selective, disjointed and increasingly vulnerable to manipulation. Rather than anchoring recollection in an authentic way, media reframes historical events and cultural dynamics in ways that blur the boundaries between past and future, and between reality and fiction. Direct experience is no longer the primary source of memory; instead, it is supplanted by screens, broadcasts and digital archives that reshape what is remembered and how it is recalled. This research examines the constructs of postmodern memory and the pervasive impact of Media in Don DeLillo's White Noise, through the lens of Jean Baudrillard's theoretical framework of Simulacra, simulation and hyperreality. Grounded in a qualitative research approach, the study explores how artificial representations replace authentic experiences, thereby recontextualizing the perceptions of memory, mortality and identity. The research aims to evaluate how the depiction of the "Airborne Toxic Event" and its symbolic mediation through various forms of media intensifies fear and anxiety among individuals. The continuous influx of news through various channels, digital platform, and radio is embedded with constructed discourse that amalgamates reality and fiction, contributing to the reinforcement of a hyperreal scenario. The study is significant in its primary focus on the psychological and philosophical dimensions of postmodern memory as reflected in the characters of White Noise, examined through Jean Baudrillard's theoretical concepts. The application of this theoretical framework to the dynamics of postmodern memory has received limited attention in previous research. By incorporating the notion of memory as mediated through media representation, this study offers profound insights into the pervasive instability and uncertainty that define the postmodern condition.
**Keywords**: Postmodern Memory, Simulacra, Simulation, Hyperreality, White Noise.

Published by MIARD. Copyright: © the author(s). This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY NC) license (https:// creativecommons.org/licenses/by/ 4.0/).

## 1. Introduction

"The term *postmodernism* refers to a historical era that started roughly around the end of World War II and has lasted up until the present" (Saleem & Anam, 2024). Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise*, published in 1985, revolves around Jack Gladney, the Head of Department of Hitler Studies at the College-on -the-Hill and his pervasive fear of death lurking beneath a technological saturated world. Jack's obsessive fear of his own mortality highlights the novel's exploration of postmodern anxieties central to the novel. DeLillo intends to explore a world where every phenomenon resembles something else, known as simulations. In this novel, Media play a role of Simulacra where representations replace the real. DeLillo illustrates this idea through the portrayal of a former actor, Ronald Reagan as president, reflecting the media-driven construction of American identity and politics. DeLillo, through his narrative, highlights how psychologically triggered people affected by past trauma, anxiety and fear are living in this media-saturated world. The excessive use of toxic pills is becoming common remedy for psychological issues. With deliberate efforts, DeLillo unveils the intricate behaviors of individuals, specifically in their interaction with each other.

The novel resonates with everyday man who fears his own death, yet remains indifferent to other's death. It critiques the role of technology such as media, news broadcast, and advertisement contributing to construct a narrative that shape public opinions. DeLillo accentuates the consumerist mindset, emphasizing how people buy fear instead of genuinely empathizing with the endurance of others. This phenomenon is pervasive, from the housewife to the working woman, from ordinary citizens to actors and politicians, and can be felt in homes, offices or from offices and supermarkets. DeLillo presents American society as a postmodern

world in which chaos, anxiety, identity conflicts and racial diversity are recurrent themes. The astute perception of DeLillo regarding modern life is quite visible in his work. He depicts American society as passive, harsh and overwhelmed by fantasy rather than reality. The America is illuminated by artificial lighting at night, therefore public is unable to visualize and appreciate the true essence of nature and understand the suffering of the poor or the toxic, as the media fails to present these real groups as real victims.

The major themes of *White Noise*, such as consumerism, hyperrealism and simulacra, highlight the absurdities and uncertainties of modern life. These thematic threads serve as a foundation for comprehending postmodern memory, as reflected in the characters' experiences. In the present study, the intricate relationship between memory, technology and reality in *White Noise* is evaluated through Jaen Baudrillard's lens of simulation and hyperrealism. The aim of this research is to investigate the media-driven notions of death and identity through the concept of simulation and hyperreality (White Noise Bibliography | GradeSaver)

## 2. Narrative Structure

*White Noise* is written from a first-person narrator perspective, primarily through the eyes of Jack Gladney. The novel's structure is fragmented, ambiguous, and nonlinear, reflecting the disorganized, chaotic and disoriented nature of the postmodern world. The plot shifts in multiple directions, exploring various aspects of life, including Jack's professional life, family dynamics (with past marriages and stepchildren), the psychological behaviors of family members, the "Airborne Toxic Event" and Jack's obsessive efforts to avoid his inevitable mortality through the use of toxic pills. Another important character is Babette (Jack's wife), who works as a volunteer reading tabloids to the blinds at the College-on-the-Hill. She is a loving wife and caring mother but remains a mysterious figure. Babette takes

a drug called Dylar to alleviate her fear of death; therefore, throughout the novel, her existence seems to be fragmented and ambiguous. The detached relationship of the children with their parents also reflects how technology influences human bonds and memory in the world of hyperrealism.

## 3. Theoretical Underpinnings

(Zaghlul, 2024) highlights the importance of family dynamics through Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985), Dave Eggers' The Circle (2013) and Jonathan Franzen's Purity (2015). He argues that family plays a significant role in the personal, moral and social development of an individual. A strong familial relationship is seen as an idealistic solution to the problems of fragmentation, chaos, anxiety, anarchy and alienation in the postmodern society. Similarly, due to media saturation in the postmodern world, all the family members in *White Noise* experience fragmented memory as their consciousness of reality and simulation becomes blurred by external forces. According to (Shakhnoza, 2024) Don DeLillo's use of intertextuality in *White Noise* blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality. The Novel is set in an unnamed city of America, infused with consumerism and popular culture as a result of pervasive media saturation. These effects of media saturation render the existence of everything hyperreal and ambiguous. The concept of Hitler Studies functions as an intertextual component of postmodern memory. DeLillo's recurrent use of historical and cultural references intertwined with banal aspects of everyday life, such as watching television and shopping contributes to highlight the uncertainty, fragmentation and absurdity of modern existence. The constant influx of information through media broadcasts, newspapers, radio and television contribute to a sense of pastiche. Through intertextuality, DeLillo explores the true essence of reality, the construction of identity, and the profound influence of media on human self-consciousness.

"The Airborne Toxic Event" is the second part of Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. Researchers explain that the appearance of the toxic cloud creates widespread distress among the people (Ömerali Uslu, 2024). The cloud seems life-threatening, revealing the fragility of human existence. Its occurrence coupled with sensationalized panic driven by media saturation, intensifies anxiety, leading people to flee desperately to safe locations. This scenario fractures the illusion that progressive and advanced societies are immune to such calamities. The echoing sirens and ongoing evacuation announcements contribute to an atmosphere of fear, centered on the impending threat of death. Jack Gladney, in response, takes his family to Boy Scout camp on the outskirts of town. Meanwhile, Jack is exposed to the toxic chemical, Nyodene D. The black cloud symbolizes a metaphorical black out of the human mind and perceptions. By the end of novel, DeLillo conveys a message about confronting and accepting mortality. However, the unexpected and unidentified chemical exposure breeds chaos, anarchy, uncertainty, anxiety and fear. He further argues that COVID-19 and the fictional "black billowing cloud" in *White Noise* evoke similar fears among people.

(Boulanouar, 2025) asserts that the Enlightenment era play a significant role in shaping the concept of defined self, while simultaneously reducing individuals to passive figure controlled by external authoritative forces. He examines this overarching phenomenon of identity crisis in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, contributing it to individual's excessive dependence on collective validation. He further highlights the psychological and philosophical factors that reinforce *herd mentality* as a means of getting acceptance within specific social groups. People acquire artificial personas to cope up with inadequacies and to align with societal norms. The analysis reveals that individuals often compromise their personal autonomy in the pursuit of belonging, which leads to blind adherence to the system. He argues that DeLillo critiques the modernity for overreliance on

technology and examines its impact on identity formation within a media driven postmodern society.

(Stamenković, 2020) points out that DeLillo explores the theme of death and external fear imposed by a media- saturated environment in his works. Death is portrayed as inevitable, with recurring fear manifested in various forms such as terrorism, war, media saturation and a fragmented self. He asserts that much of DeLillo's work, particularly *White Noise* and Zero K, addresses existential anxiety, largely given by physical illness, which deteriorates the body and heightens its vulnerability to mortality. The depiction of the "sunset" within the Don DeLillo's novels is highly symbolic illustration tied to the theme of mortality. The metaphorical appearance of sunset adds a distinct layer to the narrative. The amalgamation of death anxiety with the embrace of life indicates that human existence, despite its fragility, is also filled with moments of joy.

Another study explores the role of subjectivity in the characters of DeLillo's *White Noise*, highlighting the construction of multiple identities, both social and personal, in order to attain desirable positions within particular ingroups and out groups. The study lays particular stress on adherence to the fragmented self as it is mediated within postmodern society. He extends the argument by stating that postmodern individuals adopt masked personas and carry fragmented selves, contributing to the increasing elusiveness of broader cultural and social authenticities. The study reveals how the fluidity of identity and existence of the postmodern subject is foregrounded in *White Noise* (Agrita Chhibber & Dr. Muzafar Ahmed Bhat, 2024).

(Parvaneh & Saberi, 2024) examines the thematic pattern of existential absurdity in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) and Point Omega (2010) through the lens of Albert Camus's philosophical work The Myth of Sisyphus (1942). The study reveals that *White Noise* is permeated by consumerism, hyperrealism driven

by media saturated environment, leading characters to live meaningless and absurd lives in modern world. In Line with Camus' notion of existential absurdity, the research highlights how jack Gladney experiences psychological fear of death within this overwhelming media landscape. Similarly, point Omega explores the complexities of time, mortality and self-consciousness, where Richard Elster, a retired defense strategist, retreats to the desert and anticipates the arrival of his own "omega point" embodying a profound existential quietude. The researcher draws a comparative analysis between the works of these two literary figures to examine the human condition and the continuous struggle to survive in a chaotic and seemingly meaningless world. The analysis suggests that these texts serve as philosophical reflections, guiding humanity to confront absurdity and embrace life's difficulties with dignity and responsibility, ultimately contributing to a more purposeful and meaningful existence.

(Boulanouar, 2024) concludes that Don DeLillo, in *White Noise*, depicts the era of late capitalism as a most vulnerable to the influence of simulacra, where appearances are deceptive and differ from authentic life experiences. Television appears to be the authentic and validated source of information, knowledge and guidance for aimless and leisure-driven individuals. However, DeLillo critiques this knowledge as accessible but ultimately useless. In *White Noise,* "The Airborne Toxic Event" is portrayed as a highly manipulated media report shaped by nihilistic cynics who report irrelevant details while seldom asking valid questions.

Don DeLillo, recognized as a prominent postmodern author, belongs to post-war era (a period marked by disillusionment and uncertainty), which is reflected in his ironic stance toward history and politics. During this time, higher authorities were subject to growing skepticism and were critically examined by emerging intellectuals. The grand narratives of western philosophy were increasingly rejected in favor of more pluralistic and fragmented perspectives. One of DeLillo's

most acclaimed works, *White Noise* is saturated with the information disseminated by mass media under the influence of political authorities. He narrates through the novel that much of the information aired on television or radio functions as a white lie, designed to conceal darker realities and create the illusion that everything thing is proceeding appropriately. Throughout the novel, DeLillo mocks the blind faith of ordinary American people in their political leaders (Amutha, 2016).

(Naeem & Zahra, 2024) examines the novel Don DeLillo's *White Noise* as a work of science fiction from a postmodern perspective. The study asserts that the novel's plot is fundamentally grounded in the absurdity of existence and the superficiality of human relationships. It seeks to analyze the postmodern undercurrents of American culture, particularly in the context of consumerism, where individuals find comfort in self-constructed identities. The article offers insights into the chaotic postmodern intrusions such as media, radio and television that dominate the lives of all the characters in the novel. The recurring motif of death casts a surreal and somber tone, reflecting the deep existential anxiety that characterizes postmodern condition.

Another study explores the concept of Deconstruction in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, arguing that postmodern literature contains multiple narratives and themes, making a single read insufficient to fully examine all postmodern aspects. Drawing on Jacques Derrida's theories, the study applies the notion of linguistic instability, the playfulness of language, and the plurality of meaning to analyze the binary oppositions and hierarchical structures within the novel. Key Derridean concepts such as différance, the metaphysics of presence, and decidability are employed to interpret the text from postmodern perspective. The research reveals that one of the recurrent themes in "*White Noise*" is "fear of death". Through a deconstructive reading, it is emphasized that the "fear of death" depicted in the novel is more overwhelming than death itself, thereby reinforcing the

classification of *White Noise* as a work of postmodern fiction (Hasnaa Sadruldeen, 2025).

On the other hand, (Bounekhla & Mokhtar, 2024) explores racial and identity crises within American society through the postmodern literature of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) and Mao II (1991). Both novels engage with racial issues through semiotic devices and narrative structures across multiple social contexts. In *White Noise*, DeLillo critiques popular culture, a media-saturated environment, and racial blinkeredness, particularly within suburban setting. In contrast, Mao II addresses racial and cultural dynamics within an urban landscape. This comparative approach illustrates how diverse societal structures highlight the formation of racial identity within a media-driven American socio-political framework.

Another study endeavors to examine the pervasive anxiety characterizing late 20$^{th}$-century America, where technology, consumerism and media shape the contours of everyday life. Jack Gladney, the protagonist of *White Noise*, endures the psychological consequence of persistent stimuli, external pressures, and an acute awareness of mortality. The research analyzes how DeLillo constructs Jack's character and internal unrest, presenting a subtle fusion of modernist introspection and postmodern cultural conditions (Kurbonova, 2024).

Another study employs a qualitative approach, drawing on scholarly interpretations of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* alongside Jaen Baudrillard's theoretical framework. The research investigates consumerist culture through Baudrillard's hyperreality and simulation, exploring how postmodern society constructs and mediates the fear of death through simulated reality (Firdaus, 2024). By examining the existing scholarly literature, this study explores the dynamics of postmodern memory and role of technology in Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise*.

## 4. Research Question

1) In what ways does the role of technology contribute to shaping postmodern memory and distorting the perception of reality in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*?

## 5. Data Collection and Methodology

The present research employs a qualitative analysis of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (Don, 1985). The text (in PDF format) of the novel is downloaded from a web source, and a detailed reading is conducted to analyze the postmodern memory and the role of technology within the characters. Jean Baudrillard's postmodern theory of simulation and hyperrealism serves as the theoretical framework to evaluate how media and technology construct a simulated reality within *White Noise.*

## 6. Critical Analysis

*"I've witnessed this … every September … twenty-one years"*

The above line is narrated in the first person by Jack Gladney, who undergoes postmodern condition by relating the present September to all past Septembers over the last twenty-four years. This reflects the mechanical and repetitive nature of memory, emphasizing the lack of originality and fresh experience. Jack is unable to remember trivial things and observes reality based on a memory that blurs the distinction between present and past. Due to the repetitive events and jack's inability to recall specific details, his diminished retention power becomes a symptom of postmodern memory.it is revealed how memory is shattered in media-saturated environment, leading to emotional detachment and numbness. Jack is unable to attach any emotions to any event, as the constant repetition of events and scenarios fades the authenticity and originality of lived experiences.

*"They feel a sense of renewal, of communal recognition".*

The word "renewal" indicates that the traditional parental role has become crucial for survival in a systematic society, where individuals need constant reaffirmation of their roles to validate their ideal image of parenthood. "Communal recognition" marks a paradigm shift from a more genuine performance of parenting to one focused on maintaining a social image. Through his narrative DeLillo highlights that postmodern memory is fragmented and deceptive, recontextualizing genuine experience.

> *"Babette and I and our children by previous marriages live at the ... street in what was once a ... ravines. There is an expressway beyond the backyard now, well below us, and at night as we settle into our brass bed the sparse traffic washes past, a remote and steady ... our sleep, as of dead souls babbling at the edge of a dream."*

Postmodern memory is distorted and disjointed by the intrusion of technology into modern life. Babette and Jack often recall their post- marriage time in the context of infrastructure. The lexical item "once" indicates a change in environment, which reflects a postmodern perspective. It seems that relationships are replaced by mechanical hum. The natural setting invades emotional essence and becomes hyperreal, where instances are remembered and affected more by the encroachment of modern development than by authentic emotions. It is also evident how the noise of expressway penetrates disruption in their sleep time, creating an unsettling type of memory.

In the postmodern world, people lack integration with their environment and are lost in their own psychological conflicts. Similarly, Babette is a mysterious woman and her innermost conflicts lead her to stay disconnected and alienated. It seems she largely depends on external cues to remember some trivial daily tasks. Postmodern memory is grounded in technological reliance over several reminders,

alarms, and notifications to be present on time. This overwhelmed reliance on technology fractures human memory. This sense of dysconnectivity is mediated by overwhelming external stimuli, substituting self-consciousness and emotional entanglement with mechanic behavior.

> *"I watch her … in measured sequence, skillfully, with seeming ease, unlike my former wives, who had a tendency to feel estranged from … world—a self-absorbed and high-strung bunch, … intelligence community".*

In the postmodern condition, identity, memory and behavior are shaped by external factors, reinforcing the idea that memory becomes selective and shallow in a highly mechanized and technology saturated society. Jack's compares of Babette with his former wives reflects how he connects the present with the past through act of memorization. Babette's character appears to embody modern life as systematized, and organized, whereas his former wives seem more alienated and detached from the outer world.

> *"She and I are alike in this, that … the rest of the house as … for furniture, toys, all the unused objects … and different sets of children, the gifts of lost in-laws, the hand-me-downs and rummages".*

In postmodern world, relationships are treated like commodities. People find it difficult to accommodate others with emotional or psychological differences, yet they make room for the leftover gifts and objects from previous relationships. However, the echoes of these past relations remain. Similarly, Jack recalls previous relationships through material remnants suggesting that the objects of past are not static but carry emotional weight and memory.

> *"LET'S ENJOY THESE AIMLESS DAYS while we can, I told myself, fearing some … acceleration".*

Here, the phrase "aimless days" symbolizes a life of purposeless leisure, devoid of prior planning or meaningful intent, yet governed by dominant and emotionless systems that accelerate human experience within a mechanized world. Jack's internal reflections reveal a fragmented memory, suggesting that individuals inhibit a psychological and existential threshold, suspended between a static past and an uncontrollable future.

> *"Tibetans … a transitional state between death and rebirth. Death is a waiting period, basically. Soon a fresh … the soul. In the meantime, the soul restores to itself some of … lost at birth".*

In the postmodern context, nostalgia is related to something that is not actually experienced by anyone. Murray Jay Siskind, a former sportswriter and college professor, often thinks about "Tibetans" that have no existence. It is revealed through analysis that all the characters in the novel imagine their past and present in an idealized manner, not in their true colors. In Buddhism, Tibet is a believe about the transition of the soul from the body after death and its reincarnation. Death is supposed to be a waiting realm for another life. this believe supports the idea that people are purified once they leave the material world and move toward eternity. Tibetan ideology is a self-creation of west philosophers. They believe they will find more peace in life after this transience.

> *"I WOKE IN THE GRIP of a death sweat. Defenseless against … fears. A pause at the center of my being. I lacked … physical strength to get out of bed … house, clutching walls and stair rails. To feel my way, reinhabit …, re-enter the world. Sweat trickled down my ribs. The … reading on the clock radio was 3:51. Always odd numbers … this. What does it mean? Is death odd-numbered? Are … charged with menace?".*

In postmodern world, memory is an unclear record of one's experiences. Emotional reliance on time is fragmented, distorted, subjective and constantly shifting. Jack's account of the past event is merely a vague narrative center around his fear of death. His fear is imaginative, yet it triggers his physical (sweating) and mental (racking fear) reactions. In these lines, jack feels a disconnection between his self and his body, unable to attach any meaningful dimensions to his condition. Technology plays a vital role in shaping postmodern memory and reinforcing the overarching fear of death, for example over reliance on alarms to recall things, dependance on sleep aids, and belief in specific numbers as guarantee against death.

> *"Waves and radiation," he said. "I've come to understand that the medium is a primal force in the American home. Sealed-off, timeless, self-contained, self-referring. It's like a myth being born right there in our living room, like something we know in a dreamlike and preconscious way. I'm very enthused, Jack."*

Through the character of Murray, DeLillo portrays technology dependent American homes as spaces shaped by hyperreality, a self-contained myth.in his discussion with Jack, Murray is skeptical regarding the news projected through media channels in self-referring world. He argues that the news is not simply reported but rather created, like a myth instantly produced in every American living room. The phrase "waves and radiation" symbolizes postmodern media, which seals off truth and influences the subconscious through manipulated content. DeLillo critiques how, in postmodern society, individual memory is overtaken by collective memory shaped by a media-saturated environment.

"There's not much ... that Hitler was what ... a mama's boy."

This flippant remark encapsulates the postmodern perspective, reducing the significance of a legendry political figure like Hitler to an ironic cliche. In

postmodern world, memory is not only distorted but also stripped of depth and meaning, often reduced to superficial representations. Even the gravest incidents in history are recalled in a light and sometimes comic manner. The portrayal of charismatic nationalist like Hitler in such casual way reflects the trivialization of historical reality, a phenomenon Baudrillard describes as hyperreal. In this context, DeLillo critiques the shallow and surface-level engagement with serious academic and historical subjects, exploring how complex narratives are reduced to easily consumable fragments.

> *"I brushed my teeth with my finger the first time I stayed overnight at my wife's parents' house, before … married, when … at Asbury Park. They were an Ipana family. Forgetting my toothbrush is a fetish with me," Cotsakis said. "I brushed my teeth with my finger at Woodstock, Altamont, … other seminal events".*

Jack and his colleague at the College-on-the-Hill, share a moment of amusement as they recall their habit of forgetting toothbrushes. However, Jack remembers that Babette's family used the Ipana brand, a detail seemingly trivial yet explicitly meaningful. This reflects how, in the postmodern world, memory is often attached to consumer products, with brand names symbolizing personal recollection. This incident highlights how postmodern memory is constructed through trivial and commodified elements within a media-saturated environment. Coherent and linear memory becomes an idealized notion, contributing to fragmented recollections where the boundaries between private and public instances are increasingly blurred.

> *"When I read obituaries I always … deceased. Automatically I relate this … own age"*

In postmodern era, memory functions as automatic human response to the forceful and associative stimuli, detached from the actual sequence of events. Human

experience becomes increasingly mechanical, to the extent that even the announcement of a death is reduced to a mere calculation of years lived. Jack emerges as a representative of this postmodern condition, trapped in a state of chaos perpetuated by an underlying fear of death and the fragmented essence of modern life.

*"The radio said … derailed. But I … from what I could see."*

*This* statement encapsulates key themes of postmodernism, reflected through the concepts of postmodern memory and technological advancement. It expresses the gap between mediated information and human perception, questioning the reliability of media- driven narratives and the constructed nature of reality within a digitally infused environment.

*"People from the east end … to the fourth service area, where they would proceed to … called the Kung Fu Palace, a multiwing … pagodas, lily ponds and live deer."*

DeLillo's narrative is highly significant for its use of simulacrum, as the depiction of an imaginary place through the phrase "Kung Fu Palace" constructs a blurred and fragmented memory. This place with its multiple images such of pagodas, lily ponds and live deer, symbolizes exotic cultural experiences. Its distinct pronunciation and rhythmic sound render it appealing despite its lack of genuine grounding in any historical or cultural context. The description reflects how the West imagines East, filtered and presented through media channels, stripping the content of authenticity.

*"People already indoors were … stay indoors. We were … meaning of this."*

DeLillo critiques how some white middle-class Americans exist in a state of confusion, overwhelmed by conflicting directions aired through media channels during evacuation orders. They remain aware of the exact situation, which

heightens tension and disrupts understanding among the masses. The phrase "stay indoors" symbolizes how suburban Americans are denied the right to know the exact situation outside constructed bubble of media narratives. They are compelled to interpret the situation based on fragmented memories shaped by alarming reports and vague alerts.

*"We were a parade of … of chemical fallout but to the scornful … other people."*

In the postmodern context, the proverb "appearances are deceptive" symbolizes a perfect example of how appearances often triumph over reality. This particular extract from DeLillo's *White Noise* is relects how people are less concerned with what is actually happening to the masses and more influences by the narratives constructed by the media. In postmodern memory, individuals do no experience reality directly; instead, they perceive and judge it through the lens of media representations.

The statement, "It's the rainbow hologram that gives this credit card a marketing intrigue" represents a constant white noise reflecting simulacrum, where signs are replaced by their representations. Important moments are illustrated through gadgets and memory is integrated with consumer cues. The language used by DeLillo is highly mechanical, superficial and detached from in-depth meaning. People remember incidents not through lived experience, but through catchy slogans, repetitive advertisements, and multiple alerts.

## 7. Conclusion

Overall, it is concluded that in the postmodern world, media act as powerful tool for manipulating high alert situations. A qualitative analysis of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* reveals that the media is largely indifferent to factual accuracy as long as unless its broadcasts generate sensational impact. People become increasingly dependent on vivid notifications from media channels, feeling no need to verify

their validity. This reliance reflects the postmodern memory, where individual extend their energy on trivial matters while becoming ignorant from their meaningful relationships, moral values and cultural preservation. Jack, as a representation of postmodern condition, is overwhelmed by televised and media-generated news, perpetually trapped in a state of chaos. In this context, "*White Noise*" symbolizes the constant "hum" of suburban life, an unacknowledged whisper of voices that remain unheard and unaddressed.

**References**

Agrita Chhibber, & Dr. Muzafar Ahmed Bhat. (2024). Examining the Landscape of Postmodern Subjectivity in Don DeLillo's White Noise. Literary Voice, 40–46. https://doi.org/10.59136/lv.2024.2.1.5

Amutha, Dr. L. (2016). Death Anxiety in Don DeLillo's White Noise. SMART MOVES JOURNAL IJELLH , 4(8), 5–5. https://ijellh.com/index.php/OJS/article/view/1566

Boulanouar, A. (2024). Television and the Devaluation of Truth and Meaning in Don DeLillo's White Noise. Algerian Scientific Journal Platform, 11(2), 691–702. https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/261608

Boulanouar, A. (2025). The Death of Individuality: "Herd Mentality" and Kantian Infantilism in Don DeLillo's White Noise. Algeria Scientific Journal Platform, 20(1), 513–528. https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/265122

Bounekhla, A., & Mokhtar, B. (2024). Exploring Race and Identity in Don DeLillo's "White Noise" and "Mao II": Semiotic and Spatial Semantic Intersections. Algerian Scientific Journal Platform, 4(2), 593–619. https://doi.org/10.34118/jskp.v4i02.4064

Don, D. (1985). White Noise. Viking Press.

Firdaus, A. (2024). Consumerist Culture And Morality In Don Delillo's White Noise: A Modernist Analysis Through Jean Baudrillard's Theory.

International Journal of Academic Research for Humanities, 4(3), 168–176. https://jar.bwo-researches.com/index.php/jarh/article/view/505

Hasnaa Sadruldeen, H. A.-Q. (2025). DON DELILLO'S WHITE NOISE: A DECONSTRUCTIVE READING. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Humanities (IJIRAH) International Peer Reviewed-Refereed Research Journal, 10(1), 12–20.

Kurbonova, S. O. (2024). THE DESCRIPTION OF THE HERO'S PSYCHE IN NOVELS OF THE 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MODERNISM GENRE: AN ANALYSIS OF DON DELILLO'S WHITE NOISE. Ethiopian International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 11(12), 373–376. https://www.eijmr.org/index.php/eijmr/article/view/2307/3904

Naeem, Z., & Zahra, N. (2024). CONSUMPTION AND UNPREDICTABILITY IN MODERN AMERICAN CULTURE: DON DELILLO'S PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF CONSUMER CULTURE AND UNRELIABILITY IN WHITE NOISE. International Journal of Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences, 3(2), 3146–3154. https://ijciss.org/index.php/ijciss/article/view/1074

Ömerali Uslu, M. (2024). Airborne Toxicity in Don DeLillo's White Noise. Open Cultural Studies, 8(1). https://doi.org/10.1515/CULTURE-2024-0501/ASSET/GRAPHIC/J_CULTURE-2024-0501_FX_001.JPG

Parvaneh, F., & Saberi, S. (2024). Existential Absurdity in Contemporary Literary Works: Camus and DeLillo Contemplate the Human Condition in White Noise (1985) and Point Omega (2010). Literature & Aesthetics, 34(3), 218–226. https://openjournals.library.sydney.edu.au/LA/article/view/20771

Saleem, J., & Anam, S. (2024). WHITE PRIVILEGE AND RACISM IN DON DELILLO'WHITE NOISE: A NEW HISTORICIST STUDY. International

Premier Journal of Languages & Literature, 2(2), 236–250. https://ipjll.com/ipjll/index.php/journal/article/view/41

Shakhnoza, S. (2024). INTERTEXTUALITY IN POSTMODERN LITERATURE. THE INTERTEXTUAL WEB: DECONSTRUCTING REALITY AND FICTION IN POSTMODERN LITERATURE. PROSPECTS AND MAIN TRENDS IN MODERN SCIENCE, 2(13), 394–396. https://interoncof.com/index.php/spain/article/view/3503

Stamenković, S. (2020). Postmodern Sunsets and the Concept of Death in Delillo's White Noise and Zero K. In B. Čubrović (Ed.), Belgrade English Language and Literature Studies: BELLS90 Proceedings. Volume 2 (Vol. 2, pp. 309–327). Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade. https://doi.org/10.18485/bells90.2020.2.ch23

Wayne, T. (2002, April 4). White Noise Bibliography | GradeSaver. https://www.gradesaver.com/white-noise/study-guide/bibliography

Zaghlul, M. (2024). The Generational Gap and the Role of Technology in the Contemporary Family in Selected American Novels by Don Delillo, Dave Eggers and Jonathan Franzen: A Postmodern Approach. Journal of the Faculty of Arts, Fayoum University, 17(1), 89–125. https://doi.org/10.21608/jfafu.2024.336229.2139