



Postmodernism Aspects in Lens of Baudrillard Theory in the novels DeLillo's white noise and Atwood`s Handmaid's tale

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on Postmodernism Aspects in Lens of Baudrillard Theory in the novels DeLillo's white noise and Atwood`s Handmaid's tale. To consider the United States as our case study, we know that the affluence and waste are quite related to each other. In a way that we might count it as a throwaway society or garbage can sociology like how Baudrillard has put in words. We are cognizant of the fact that all moralists have criticized the lavishing of wealth. An individual who does not comply with the moral law regarding the internal use-value of commodities. The mystification of the commonplace in White Noise can be interpreted as a revolt towards Modernism, which equated rationalization with an increased and general knowledge of the condition under which one lives, i.e., the belief that there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play. Modernism located the romantic idea of mystery, of the unknown, geographically, in faraway places like Africa or America. The Handmaid's Tale suggests a particularly postmodern feminist space for resistance a space located within the discourses of the symbolic order including technologically produced and disseminated discourses) rather than in opposition to them.*

Keywords: *postmodernism; multinational capitalism; urbanization; identity; media culture*

I. Introduction

Baudrillard, considers objects as signs and thus the consumption of commodities as consumption of signs. These signs which their abundance prove the profusion and their consumption will lead to the consumer's happiness are, in Baudrillard's view, somehow descended to consumers like a miracle. He sketches a similarity between the rites of a primitive tribe and the way a postmodern family expects blessing with the appearance of TV's images on the screen in a postindustrial country. Though members of that primitive tribe never confirm that if the plane does not condescend to drop any goods for them, it is not due to their performance of rites. Like that tribe, the modern man has also gathered all the sham object and is waiting for the happiness.

Baudrillard counts this comparison as simply the private and collective consumer mentality. This basis of magical thinking that in Baurillard's words presides over the concept of consumption has ossified the very logic of the alleged consumer society. What has been undergone since the advent of middle-class and revolutionized the life of people over years, has its origins in social transformations of 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. The rise of the middle-class at the end of 20th century was concomitant to the stream of globalization which initiated the ideology of consumerism, officially.

II. Review of Literatures

The considerable movements through the 20th century, especially after the Second World War are Post-Modernism and post-modernism that vehemently precipitated the pervasiveness of consumption and blighted it as necessity (Watson, 2005, p.30). and Hariadi, (2018). Furthermore Sholihin and Wahyuni (2013) explained that generally the level of physical fitness of students differed, viewed from how active or not the student.

There is no doubt that all the societies or individuals have surpassed the boundaries of necessity in consuming. They have somehow wasted the valuables to “feel not merely that they exist, but that they are alive” (Baudrillard, 2011, p.78). That habit may overstep the criteria of consumption and enter what we deem as the consummation to be equalized with destruction. *White Noise* is a 1985 novel written by American postmodern novelist, Don DeLillo. This novel is chronologically the eighth novel by Don DeLillo and is categorized in the genre of postmodern literature. Its narrative depicts the new values, moral principles and habits of a community or more specifically, a family that is flowing in the stream of postmodernist revolutionary evolutions. A critical theme of the postmodern culture is the substitution of biographies of heroes of production with biographies of heroes of consumption (Watson, 2005, p.53).

Generally, giving importance to common human affliction is the secret of maintaining oral and written literary works of any nation. The reason is that topics such as ill-temper, good-temper, hatred, love, chastity, honesty, hypocrisy, envy, anger and greed have been and will be the subjects of all generations and eras and no generation has been able to ignore, abandon or lose them entirely. On the other hand, the way of expressing and creative structure as well as the legendary, fictional and mythical structure of these stories and statements have not made a difference among them. (Basirizadeh, 768).

As Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson have stated, the alleged consumer in a postmodern society like America has acquired a shattered identity. The consumers are hypnotized by commercial ballyhoos that have led them to lose their association with the real world and reality (Baudrillard, 2014, p.117). In other words, they attributed to this, the impotence of postmodern man to discern the threshold of signified and signifier a schizophrenic quality. When the boundary between these two is neglected, the consumer feels the paucity of individuality. An individuality that is the result of a definite and profane unification of the future, present and past (Baudrillard, 2014, p.117). Thus a schizophrenic consumer due to the lack of what we called identity seeks his or hers in buying and consuming commodities and totally in the gratification of desires to the extreme. So they do not have a stable identity and is dependent on the commodity they consume or are indebted to. Actions in the novels take place in a single day and during this single day, time is constantly flowing from present to past or to the future. The major moments of the novels constitute by flashbacks which being represented by the stream of consciousness technique. (Raouszadeh, 761).

III. Research Methods

Jean Baudrillard is a postmodernist critic. Baudrillard's key ideas include two that are often used in discussing postmodernism in the arts: "simulation" and "the hyperreal." The hyperreal is "more real than real": something fake and artificial comes to be more definitive of the real than reality itself.

3.1. Media Culture

Contemporary media (television, film, magazines, billboards, the Internet) are concerned not just with relaying information or stories but with interpreting our most private selves for us, making us approach each other and the world through the lens of these media images. We therefore no longer acquire goods because of real needs but because of desires that are increasingly defined by commercials and commercialized images, which keep us at one step removed from the reality of our bodies or of the world around us.

3.2. Multinational Capitalism

As the things we use are increasingly the product of complex industrial processes, we lose touch with the underlying reality of the goods we consume. Not even national identity functions in a world of multinational corporations. According to Baudrillard, it is capital that now defines our identities. We thus continue to lose touch with the material fact of the laborer, who is increasingly invisible to a consumer oriented towards retail outlets or the even more impersonal Internet. A common example of this is the fact that most consumers do not know how the products they consume are related to real-life things.

3.3. Language and Ideology

Baudrillard illustrates how in such subtle ways language keeps us from accessing "reality." The earlier understanding of ideology was that it hid the truth, that it represented a "false consciousness," as Marxists phrase it, keeping us from seeing the real workings of the state, of economic forces, or of the dominant groups in power. (This understanding of ideology corresponds to Baudrillard's second order of simulacra.) Postmodernism, on the other hand, understands ideology as the support for our very perception of reality. There is no outside of ideology, according to this view, at least no outside that can be articulated in language. Because we are so reliant on language to structure our perceptions, any representation of reality is always already ideological, always already constructed by simulacra. Cultural materialists achieve their political ends by interpreting literary texts from the standpoint of oppositional or dissident subcultures. Recent British cultural materialist theory has emphasized reading dissidence into texts. This concentration on dissidence was to a considerable extent a reaction to Stephen Greenblatt's new historicist essay, 'Invisible Bullets', which argued that though literary texts may communicate subversive ideas, the dominant culture tolerated such subversion and incorporated it within itself as it allowed a relatively harmless outlet for opposition to the dominant discourses of the culture. (Soqandi, 683)

IV. Discussion

4.1 Twentieth Century and The Handmaid's Tale

Twentieth century can be regarded as one of the most controversial and significant era in history of mankind which is a turning point for humanity and the way they think. The most important wars such as the First and the Second World War take place in this era. People lived as result of changes in politics, ideology, economics, society, culture, science, technology, and medicine. Due to such changes and progresses throughout the world, the life of people and their relationship became more complex than any other eras. This era influences the literature

and literary texts and leads into emergence of genre of science fiction and this situation causes many writers to create works that feature the future of humanity in genre of science fiction.

This era influences the literature and literary texts and leads into emergence of genre of science fiction and this situation causes many writers to create works that feature the future of humanity in genre of science fiction. Their works' theme is mostly apocalypse and how people would live in alienated world in which they are severely controlled by ruling class; it is exactly what Margaret Atwood (1939) does in *Handmaid's Tale* (1988). They are trained in a way that ideology wants and they surrender to ruling class consciously and unconsciously as Brisha (2011) claims:

In the novel *The Handmaid's Tale*, Atwood brings the clear picture of the new republic which throws away the U.S. Constitution and establishes the Republic of Gilead in which women are viewed only as reproductive machines. This is because of the low birth-rates due to environmental crisis such as various nuclear plant accidents, leakages from chemical and biological-warfare stockpiles, toxic waste depositional sites and the use of chemical insecticides etc...(1).

According to Baudrillard what advertising does is to code products through symbols, so that when we consume a product, we consume a sign, and its meaning is transferred. Thus, commodities are valued by the way they signify social status and power.

4.2. Technological Surveillance

Additionally, Offred's awareness of how her identity is constructed by others and by herself in the acts of language and naming is one of the most powerful aspects of the text. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, where technology is ever-present, primarily in the collection of "Compu" items that litter the text. This event is similar in import to the coup d'état mentioned elsewhere in the novel's cursory account of the political upheaval leading to the establishment of the Gileadean regime, for it enabled the male members of the society to swiftly and completely subjugate all its women by barring them from an economy consolidated into a single computer system. In addition to this fear of technology coming from the top-down, the inhabitants of Gilead must live in fear of what Stephanie Barbé Hammer recognizes as "a very different kind of technology ... the technology of power which Michel Foucault has called discipline" (45). Everyone in Gilead, and the handmaids in particular, are "caught up in a network of surveillance and counter-surveillance" (45). Throughout the novel, the divisions between the powers of men's and of women's language are accentuated, as in one passage where Offred considers the grammatical distinction between lie and lay: "Lay is always passive", she tells us; "Even men used to say, I'd like to get laid. Though sometimes they said, I'd like to lay her. All this is pure speculation. I don't really know what men used to say. I had only their words for it" (47).

Spies called «Eyes» watch her, other handmaids watch her, and even, in an example of how the Gileadean regime has blended modern elements of surveillance with older ones, the eyes of God watch her: the closing words of a quasi-religious Ceremony read by the Commander before their monthly attempt to conceive state that «the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to know himself strong on behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him».1 Offred's body—its health, its movements—are always subject to an oppressive gaze,2 to the point that she learns to ruthlessly police herself.

These technologies inform and construct Offred's sense of her body, demonstrating the extent to which the idea and the lived experience of having a gendered body arises from dominant cultural discourses. The technologies used by the regime forcefully differentiate the male body from the female body, associating the female body solely with its reproductive capacity to the point that the handmaids are thought of as "two-legged wombs, that's all: sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices" (136).

The discourses that build Offred's existence: she is self-aware, recognizing how the discourses of power in the regime influence her conception of her body. Offred prepares for a bath immediately after visiting the doctor and reflects on how radically her relationship with her body is.

My nakedness is strange to me already. My body seems outdated. Did I really wear bathing suits, at the beach? I did, without thought, among men, without caring that my legs, my arms, my thighs and back were on display, could be seen. Shameful, immodest. I avoid looking down at my body, not so much because it's shameful or immodest but because I don't want to see it. I don't want to look at something that determines me so completely. (63)

4.3 Lack of Identity in Handmaid's Tale

The Handmaid's Tale is a book in which the "autonomous self is seriously undermined" (164), but also one that exposes the dangerously illiberal aspect of this postmodern construct" (166). Following Seyla Benhabib's critique of postmodernism from *Situating the Self*, Tolan argues that *The Handmaid's Tale* shows us the troubling fact that "if there is no way to know your society, except through your society, the individual is left defenseless against any concerted effort to manipulate their reality" (166). Indeed, for Offred, "her survival depends on her belief in a reality external to her culture; not an alternative culture ... a permanent embodiment of immutable values that cannot be eradicated by a cultural consensus—blind justice" (168). This is certainly a belief worth hanging onto for Offred, which is why she continuously engages in acts of reconstruction as she attempts to test her belief in an external reality against the dominating constructs that cause her to suffer under the Gileadean regime.

The Handmaid's Tale where the dilemma of postmodern feminism is exaggerated on account of the novel's setting in a dystopian society. Even if a self is not necessarily always stable across time, she argues, the self still attempts to make sense of its surroundings by telling stories about them. This is the very same problem faced by Offred in *The Handmaid's Tale*, as she continually returns to her memories of the «time before» in an attempt not only to make sense of what is happening around her, but as a way to resist the discourses of power that continually attempt to define her according to what she offers Gilead: a fertile womb. In this passage, Offred is able to make sense of how herself is situated by realizing that, even though she now lives in a completely different world, she still, in Gilead, relates to aspects of it identically to the way she did in the past. Something here is stable, in this case not only a dishtowel, but also Offred's ability to recognize what hasn't changed and reflect on this fact. What self Offred has is based upon her ability to make sense, and even her "reconstructions," though distant from the events themselves and radically situated, still arise from her desire and ability to make meaning. She desires to make sense so much so that she continues to tell herself stories, and constructs a reader to which to tell those stories even when they are not stories that she necessarily wants to tell.

4.4 False Consciousness in the White Noise

The notion of "false consciousness" derives its origin from works of Marx and Engels, where it is fundamentally intertwined with ideology and class conflicts (Eyerman 44, Jost 398). DeLillo's novel, especially in *White Noise*, in which the commodification of discourse is one of the main features in his portrayal of a consumer society. In *Discourse and Social Change* Norman Fairclough defines commodification as "the process whereby social domains and institutions, whose concern is not producing commodities in the narrower economic sense of goods for sale, come nevertheless to be organized and conceptualized in terms of commodity production, distribution and consumption" (p. 207). New sectors are referred to as "industries" concerned with producing, marketing and selling cultural or educational commodities to their "clients" or "consumers".

4.5 Consumption in White Noise

The massive consumption of catastrophe is also portrayed in *White Noise*, as the Gladney family sits in front of the T.V. on a Friday evening:

That night, a Friday, we gathered in front of the set, as was the custom and the rule, with take-out Chinese. There were floods, earthquakes, mud slides, erupting volcanoes. We'd never before been so attentive to our duty, our Friday assembly. Heinrich was not sullen, I was not bored. Steffie, brought close to tears by a sitcom husband arguing with his wife, appeared totally absorbed in these documentary clips of calamity and death. Babette tried to switch to a comedy series about a group of racially mixed kids who build their own communications satellite. She was startled by the force of our objection. We were otherwise silent, watching houses slide into the ocean, whole villages crackle and ignite in a mass of advancing lava. Every disaster made us wish for more, for something bigger, grander, more sweeping (p. 64).

Commercials and sitcom programmes are consumed together with real life catastrophes to the extent that the division between what is real and what is not creates no difference in the emotional response of the viewers. Steffie cries over a sitcom drama as well as over an earthquake.

Closely related to the theme of death is the theme of religion. Although religion continues to have power and influence over the lives of many people, it has also undergone a process of commodification in a postmodern society that no longer believes in the great metanarratives of the past. The transformation of religion into a commodity can be seen in chapter 37 of *White Noise*, as Jack and Murray Jay Siskind, an anthropologist and semiotician who works at the same university as Jack, are discussing death:

"You can always get around death by concentrating on the life beyond." (Murray)

"How do I do that?" (Jack) "It's obvious. Read up on reincarnation, transmigration, hyperspace, the resurrection of the dead and so on. Some gorgeous systems have evolved from these beliefs. Study them." "Do you believe in any of these things?" "Millions of people have believed for thousands of years. Throw in with them. Belief in a second birth, a second life, is practically universal. This must mean something." "But these gorgeous systems are all so different. "Pick one you like" (p. 285-286).

Religions are all placed on the same level of importance by means of asyndetic coordination, no one religion is better or truer than the other and there is no center to which the subject can hold on to. As Enrique Miranda¹¹ says in his essay on postmodernism.

The metaphor of the cultural market is evinced in the passage in the cataloguing of religions plus the choice of the action verb “pick” and the epithet “gorgeous,” which suggest a metaphoric comparison between religions and fruits at the supermarket. Religions, like fruit, can be “picked” or chosen according to the fancy and needs of the consumer. The epithet “gorgeous” denotes something very attractive and bright to look at, which is reminiscent of the way the fruit racks in the supermarket are described by Jack: “Everything seemed to be in season, sprayed, burnished, bright” (p. 36).

The idea that the subject is free to choose from a variety of systems refers us to Sartre’s existential ideology in which existence takes priority over essence, and man must decide for himself how to live. It is from this perspective that culture becomes a supermarket where the subject is free to choose and appropriate the systems of belief he prefers for his personal realization or fulfillment. In the cultural market, indeed, everything is or can be commoditized, even popular knowledge and common sense can be commercially exploitable and sold as a package:

“They want me to teach another course. ”In what?” “Eating and drinking. It’s called Eating and Drinking: Basic Parameters. Which, I admit, is a little more stupid than it absolutely has to be.” “What could you teach?” Denise said. “That’s just it. It’s practically inexhaustible. Eat light foods in warm weather. Drink plenty of liquids.” “But everybody knows that.” “Knowledge changes everyday. People like to have their beliefs reinforced. Don’t lie down after eating a heavy meal. Don’t drink liquor on an empty stomach. If you must swim, wait at least an hour before eating... People need to be reassured by someone in a position of authority that a certain way to do something is the right way or the wrong way, at least for the time being” (p. 171).

Indeed, in a consumer society all problems have a material or money solution. There is a belief, propagated and disseminated by television and advertising that you can buy your way out of any personal trauma and that to consume is the surest route to personal happiness, social status and success. Consumerism becomes thus a way of living which locates the meaning of one’s life in acquisition, ownership and consumption. Indeed, in a consumer society all problems have a material or money solution.

Jack Gladney is shopping with his family at the supermarket and, as Jack approaches the fruit racks, he sees that “the apples and lemons tumbled in twos and threes to the floor when someone took a fruit from certain places in the stacked array. There were six kinds of apples, there were exotic melons in several pastels. Everything seemed to be in season, sprayed, burnished, bright” (p. 36). «Fullness of being» Jack feels is further developed into a sense of power and control. Most of the processes are material action verbs such as «shop,» «touch,» «inspect,» «buy,» «spend» and «locate,» which show a subject in control of his environment, a subject who makes things happen rather than to whom things happen:

I shopped with reckless abandon. I shopped for immediate needs and distant contingencies. I shopped for its own sake, looking and touching, inspecting merchandise I had no intention of buying, then buying it. I sent clerks into their fabric books and patterns books to search for elusive designs. I began to grow in value and selfregard. I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a person I’d forgotten existed. Brightness settled around me. The more money I spent, the less important it seemed. I was bigger than these sums. These sums in fact came back to me in the form of existential credit (p. 84).

The chapter seems to suggest that fulfillment through materialism is not sustainable or even attainable, since once the excitement of shopping is over, the existential anxiety and emptiness that man feels in the face of death soon take over.

4.6 Identity in *White Noise*

In *White Noise* identity is taken to be socially constructed as consumer culture provides the symbolic tools for defining identity. According to Zygmunt Bauman “the role that our present-day society holds up to its members is the role of the consumer, and the members of our society are likewise judged by their ability and willingness to play that role”. The shaping influence of advertising and of the consumer society in the formation of identity can best be seen in the opening paragraph of the novel, where Jack is describing the arrival of the station wagons at the College-on-the-Hill:

The station wagons arrived at noon, a long shining line that coursed through the west campus. In single file they eased around the orange I-beam sculpture and moved toward the dormitories. The roofs of the station wagons were loaded down with carefully-secured suitcases full of light and heavy clothing; with [1] boxes of blankets, boots and shoes, stationary and books, sheets, pillows, quilts; with rolled up rugs and sleeping bags; with bicycles, skis, rucksacks, English and Western saddles, inflated rafts. As cars slowed to a crawl and stopped, students sprang out and raced to the rear doors to begin removing [2] the objects inside; the stereo sets, radios, personal computers; small refrigerators and table ranges; the cartons of phonograph records and cassettes; the hair-dryers and styling irons; the tennis rackets, soccer balls, hockey and lacrosse sticks, bows and arrows; the controlled substances, the birth control pills and devices; the junk food still in shopping bags, onion-and-garlic chips, nacho tins, peanut crème patties, Waffelos and Kabooms, fruit chews and toffee popcorn; the DumDum pops, the Mystic mints. I've witnessed this spectacle every September for twenty-one years.(3-4).

Feeling that one belongs to the community is also feeling and being part of the financial system. In the following passage from chapter 10, Jack's very existence is confirmed and authenticated by an automated teller machine, a synecdoche for the whole of the financial system that regulates people's lives:

In the morning I walked to the bank. I went to the automated teller 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. [1] Waves of relief and gratitude flowed over me. The system had blessed my life. [2] I felt its support and approval. The system hardware, the main frame sitting in a locked room in some distant city. What a pleasant interaction. I sensed that something of deep personal value, but not money, not that at all, had been authenticated and confirmed. A deranged person was escorted from the bank by two armed guards. The system was invisible, which made it all the more impressive, all the more disquieting to deal with. But we were in accord, at least for now. The networks, the circuits, the streams, the harmonies (p. 46).

It seems apparent that the relationship between Don DeLillo and Jack Gladney is one of multiple uses. DeLillo uses Jack to explore the tension between the novel's two interpretations of plots and their relation to the formation of a coherent identity. DeLillo synthetically and thematically uses Gladney's identity faults to study and evince the problems that arise in transitioning identity from one dominant narrative mode to another. It is through this use that Gladney becomes a transfusion of these ideas, rather than identifiably

representing one side more honestly. This struggle is manifested throughout the novel's calculated encounters between Gladney's crumbling narrative identity and the intrusive narratives of society, such as consumerism, technology, and class identification. It is these same intrusions that so masterfully explore the attacks (both explicit, and more troubling, masked) on narrative formation, and how these attacks problematize the process of not only self-identification but also self-censorship and open expression (sorting, telling, and keeping) in light of that identification.

4.7 Language and Ideology in White Noise

Language, the same as painting or any other form of representation, is immersed in cultural ideology and it is this cultural ideology that gives shape to our perceptions of the world and of ourselves. Language mediates man's apprehension of the world and of himself by making the world intelligible and allowing each society to construct their world they see. In the 18th and 19th centuries both language and painting fulfilled the function of representing the real. Language was used as a transparent medium to give order, name and classify the reality that laid «out there.» Likewise, there was a belief that painting mirrored nature and that the relationship between world and image was unproblematic, transparent, unmediated. The medium has become the real, not a representation of it. Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (at the symbolic level) give expression to the cultural and ideological assumptions that underlie the consumer society in the 20th and 21st centuries, by raising every possible question on the nature of the real.

4.8 Media power in White Noise

In this society, where the media and the consuming policies are ruling, the reality vanishes and the real is substituted with the simulated world of media. The power of this new idol is so domineering that causes its followers to ignore their comprehensions and give this important responsibility to the media. Steffie, appreciation of radio and television is a good example of this substitution. It is these secondary levels of life, these extrasensory flashes and floating nuances of being, these pockets of rapport forming unexpectedly, that made me believe we were a magic act, adults and children together, sharing unaccountable things.

“We have to boil our water,” Steffie said.

“Why?”

“It is said on the radio.”

They are always saying boil your water,” Babette said. “It's the new thing, like turn your wheel in the direction of the skid ...” (DeLillo, 1985, p.48).

In fact, there is no need to boil water at all. However, as far as Steffie is one of the victims of the hypnotization of consuming society and mesmerized by the power of media, accedes to its dictation and urges the family to do so. This enslavement exactly shows their inability to the differentiation between the real world and the simulation one and they prefer to live in the ambiance of the latter. In *White Noise*, Don DeLillo expresses his concern over the weakness of the postmodern family, although he shows a faint possibility of rebellion and transgression by depicting Jack rejuvenating the moralistic virtues of humanity. By juxtaposing the refusal of Jack to kill Mink and helping him to survive, we may deduce that Don DeLillo places his hope not in the accidental collapse of the consumerism but in the potentiality of the captivated consumer to restore his or her heritage in order to acquire and keep the balance that he is beginning to be deprived of in an initial postmodern society.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, in this state of hyperreality, the real becomes indefinitely reproducible, an effect merely of the codes which continue to generate it. It means glorifying the reign of simulacra, and affirming that any original is itself already a copy, divided in its very origin. The idea of reality as massively reproduced copies of copies is inherent to a consumer society that thrives on mass production and consumption. This is reflected in the language in the commodification of all orders of discourse by transferring the wording and vocabulary of a market economy to other types of discourse. The effect is to restructure our apprehension of reality and of the practices of education, religion, the medical profession, metaphysics, etc. on a market model, i. e., to construct reality as a mega market where everything is for sale and liable to be measured, quantified, mass-produced and mass-consumed. Since the logic of capitalist expansion demands that the entire globe becomes a market, the commodification of language is a necessary step in the process of its naturalization.

Postmodernism locates it as the underlying segment of a global economic circuitry that is the basis of the consumer society. It is precisely this enchantment of the world, and particularly of the commonplace that characterizes postmodernism and that is represented in *White Noise*. Ours is a commercial culture dominated by the media and the values of advertising. T.V, the radio, newspapers and magazines cripple our capacity for real experience and emotion. Their effect is anaesthetic. Their endless repetition inures us to the real suffering entailed in the images as Warhol's "death" serigraphies show. We repeatedly witness pain, violence, murder, and other forms of calamity but this repetition only wears away the pain. T.V anaesthetizes the pain of dying because it makes it unreal, a two-dimensional image, split off from the immediate surroundings of viewers. Warhol serves himself of colour symbolism to restore the image its power to shock, despite its multiple reproduction on the canvas. DeLillo fuses the particular and the general as sitcom dramas and real life catastrophes are massively consumed by American families. The pervasive and unconscious effect of advertising also becomes patent in *White Noise*, as slogans, brand names and jingles mysteriously cut across the syntagmatic contiguity of the narrative, intruding into the web of voices of the text without any marker of a speaking source. Although consumption is perceived as the surest route to personal happiness and fulfillment, Andy Warhol and Don DeLillo seem to suggest that fulfillment through materialism is not sustainable or even attainable, and that consumer culture is just another failed metanarrative.

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