

Post Modernism in Literature
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Week - 07

Lecture – 20

Hyperreality in Delillo's Postmodernist Fiction: A Discussion of White Noise

Good morning and welcome to the NPTEL course title post modernism and literature. Our lecture today is titled hyper reality and DeLillos post modernist fiction our discussion of white noise. As the title implies this lecture is a discussion of white noise one of the typical post modernist novels of the contemporary.

And this lecture and also needs to be seen in the context of the discussions, that we have been having in the last a few weeks, we had first introduced you to a number of postmodern theories and a number of postmodern formulations, within which a certain post modernist text could be read analyzed and understood.

So, this needs to be seen in that larger context and I would also like to tell you right at the outset, that we do not intend to provide a detailed summary of the novel. So, it would be very helpful if you read the novel white novel is well in advance and then try to make sense of the discussion and even if you have not really read the novel yet it would be very helpful if you use this discussion as an as an entry point to understand the novel and also to engage with the novel as part of post modernist fiction.

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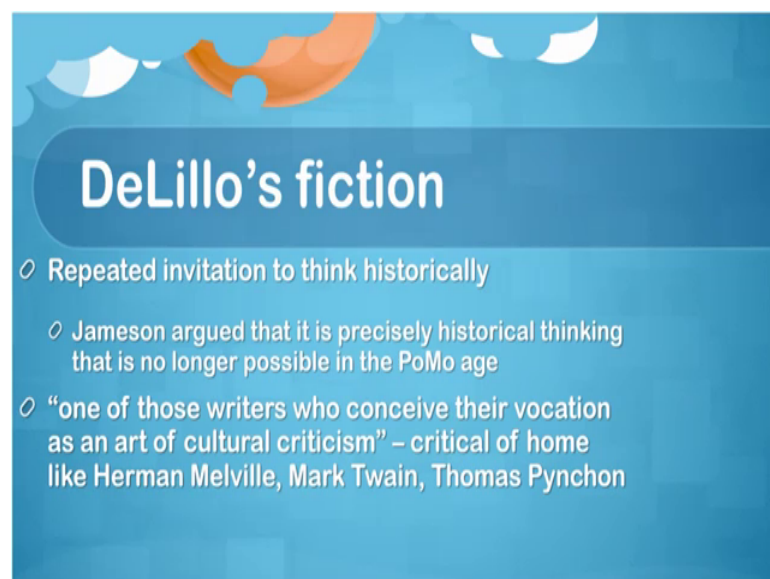


Donald Richard Don DeLillo b.1936

- Author of 14 novels – a representative figure of American postmodern novel
- Encourages us to think about the Cold War, environment and terrorism - His fiction seems to anticipate and comment on cultural trends and tendencies

Having said that, I now introduce to you the novelist Donald Richard Don DeLillo he was born in 1936, he is the author of 14 novels, and is considered as a representative figure of American postmodern fiction. DeLillo's novels are very unique they encourage us to think about the cold war environment and terrorism. And his fiction also seems to anticipate and comment on certain cultural trends and tendencies. It is a mix of very serious commentary as well as a playful engagement with the postmodern a world that we find in DeLillo's fiction.

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DeLillo's fiction

- Repeated invitation to think historically
 - Jameson argued that it is precisely historical thinking that is no longer possible in the PoMo age
- "one of those writers who conceive their vocation as an art of cultural criticism" – critical of home like Herman Melville, Mark Twain, Thomas Pynchon

And his fiction is particularly unique in this aspect that there is a repeated invitation to think historically. And this precisely goes against the argument that Jameson had put forward in his Marxist critique of post modernism, that in this post modernist age it is no longer possible to think historically.

DeLillo's in fiction particularly in a white noise also we find that. He is one of those very few people who encourage us to see a postmodern as a historical period and encourage us to repeatedly historicize respective of the ways in which the age it defies all kinds of historical conventions.

But I said about DeLillo that he is one of those writers, who conceived their vocation as an art of cultural criticism. In that sense he also joined the league with Herman Melville, mark twain, and Thomas Pynchon who also have been extremely critical of their home front which is America.

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Included in the *Time* list of 'Best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005'

White Noise (1985)

- 8th Novel by DeLillo – one of the most frequently taught post-war novels
- The publication of the novel – coincided with great academic interest in the ideas of Baudrillard and other theorists of PoMo
- Appeared just weeks after the Bhopal Gas tragedy in India
- Shows how America became postmodern

WHITE NOISE
Don DeLillo

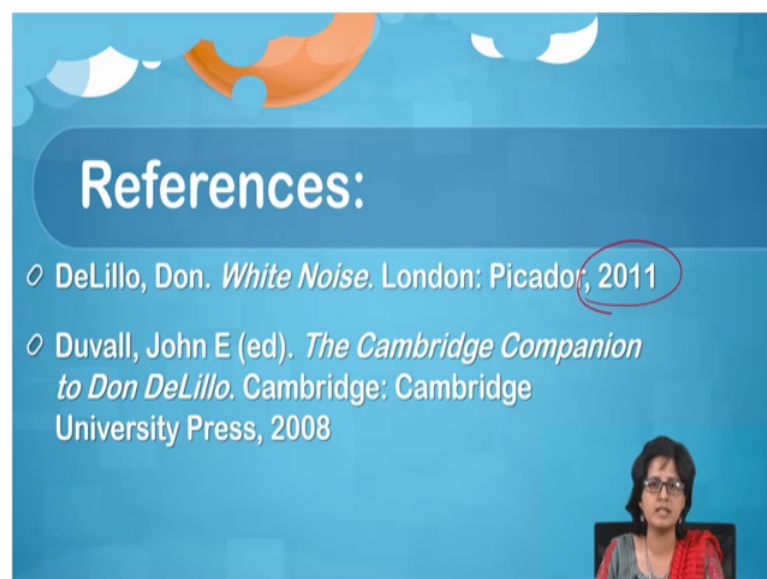
The novel white noise which happens to be the 8th novel written by DeLillo was published in 1985. It is considered as one of the most frequently taught post war novels, and the publication of the novel happened as have any happen at a very interesting juncture in history.

It coincided with a great academic interest in the ideas of Baudrillard and other theorists of post modernism and we also notice how the 1980's, were extremely influential in for grounding the theories of post modernism that we are now familiar with.

There is yet another distinction to this novel white noise, it has also been seen as very prophetic in that sense it appeared just weeks after the Bhopal gas tragedy happened in India. So, we also find a resonance in that sense though it happens inadvertently between the novel and certain geopolitical events, which were happening in different parts of the world.

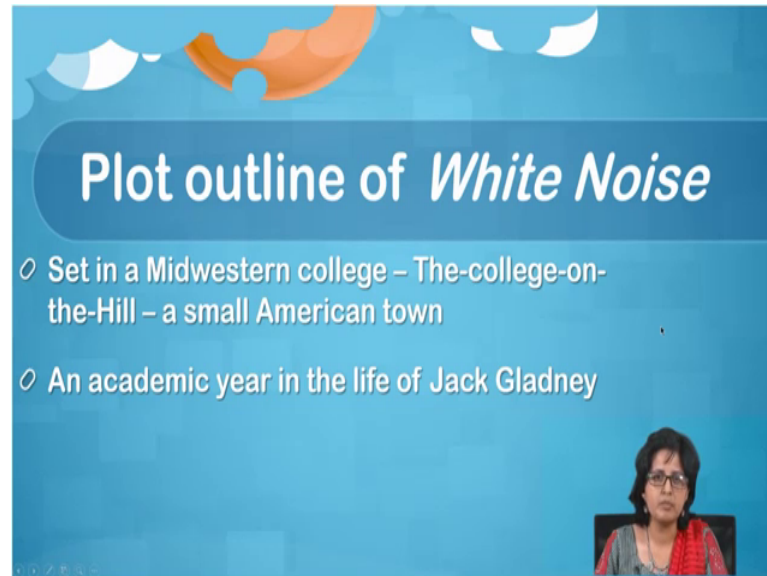
This novel particularly shows how America became postmodern it is in that sense a journey through certain protagonist in certain a family who become represent in terms of postmodern American life. And this novel is also one of the celebrated novels of the contemporary it was included in the time list of best English language novels from 1923 to 2005. It is also one of the most popular works by the author Don DeLillo.

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So, in this discussion throughout the references will be given from DeLillo's work which were the edition which was published in 2011. I also draw extensively from the Cambridge companion to Don DeLillo published in 2008 by the Cambridge University Press.

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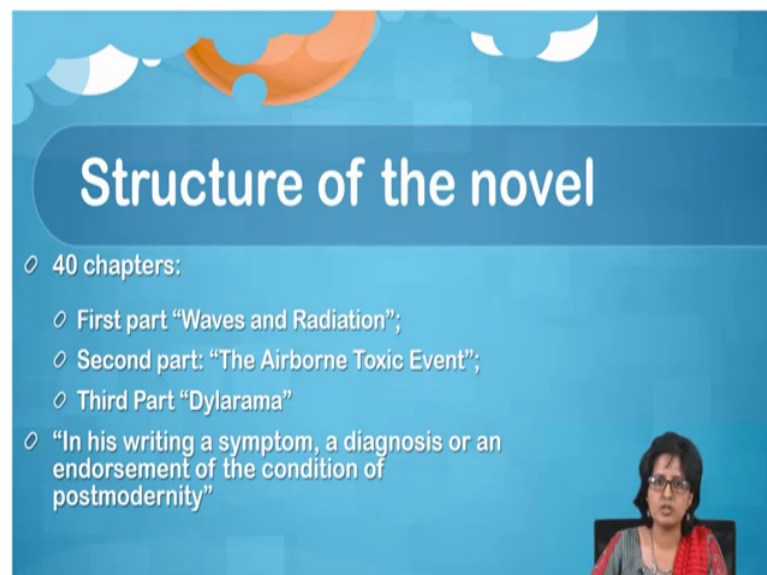
Plot outline of *White Noise*

- Set in a Midwestern college – The-college-on-the-Hill – a small American town
- An academic year in the life of Jack Gladney

A video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman with glasses and a red scarf speaking.

Let me try to provide a very brief outline of the novel white noise it is set in a Midwestern college known as the college on the Hill, it is set in a small American town and it also details the academic year in the life of the protagonist Jack Gladney.

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Structure of the novel

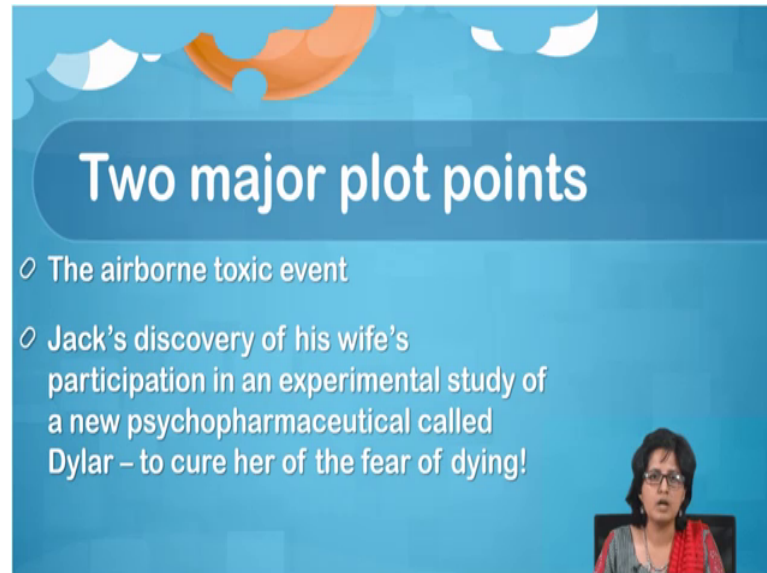
- 40 chapters:
 - First part “Waves and Radiation”;
 - Second part: “The Airborne Toxic Event”;
 - Third Part “Dylarama”
- “In his writing a symptom, a diagnosis or an endorsement of the condition of postmodernity”

A video inset in the bottom right corner shows a woman with glasses and a red scarf speaking.

This is the structure of the novel it is split into 40 chapters. The first part is named waves in radiation, the second part is the airborne toxic even and the third part is named Dylarama. The second part is the shortest of all the sections and altogether it is said

about this novel that in his writing in DeLillo's writing a symptom my diagnoses are an endorsement of the condition of post modernity could be found.

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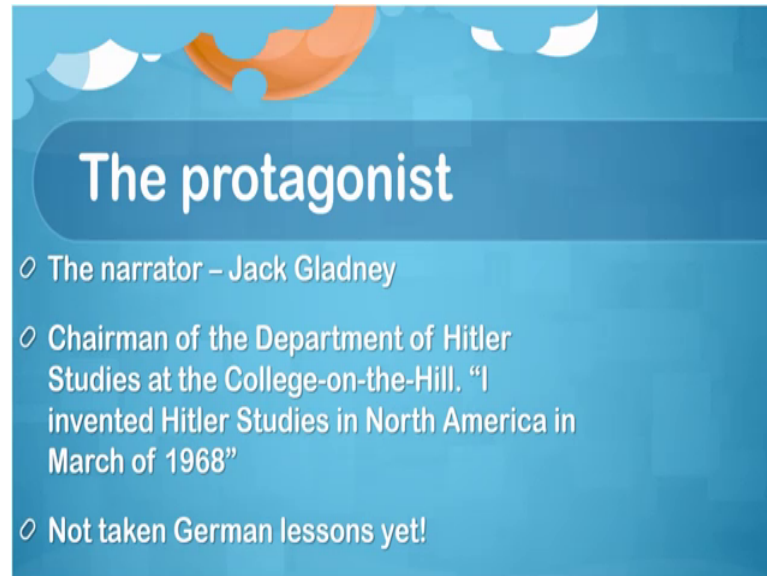
Two major plot points

- The airborne toxic event
- Jack's discovery of his wife's participation in an experimental study of a new psychopharmaceutical called Dylar - to cure her of the fear of dying!

The novel moves around two major plot points the first one being an airborne toxic event and the second one is Jack's discovery, he is a protagonist Jack's discovery of his wife's participation in an experimental study of a new psycho pharmaceutical called Dylar to cure her of the fear of dying.

So, it is very post modernist in that sense it also in certain way follow certain conventional narrative tropes and techniques, but at the same time it makes use of a number of post modernist elements to expose the ways in which America has become postmodern to such an extent that an entire family lives in a hyper real parodied situation.

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The protagonist

- The narrator – Jack Gladney
- Chairman of the Department of Hitler Studies at the College-on-the-Hill. “I invented Hitler Studies in North America in March of 1968”
- Not taken German lessons yet!

We are being introduced to the protagonist right from the beginning of the novel the protagonist Jack Gladney also happens to be the narrator. He is very interestingly his position there is a chairman of the department of Hitler studies at the college on the hill and in his own words I invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968.

And ironically he is also protagonist, who is an expert in Hitler studies, but he is not taken German lesson lessons yet, but the others in the department are well versed in German that is also a concern that he personally has throughout the novel.

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Gladney household

- Family: “Babette and I and our children by previous marriages”
 - Married 5 times – 4 step children
- Gladney household – continually evince the effects of massive television exposure

And we are also introduced to their Gladney household in his own words Babette and I and our children by previous marriages that is what comprises of the Gladney household. He is married 5 times, his 4 step children, and television also is also an important character in the novel, because a Gladney household continually evince the effects of massive television exposure.

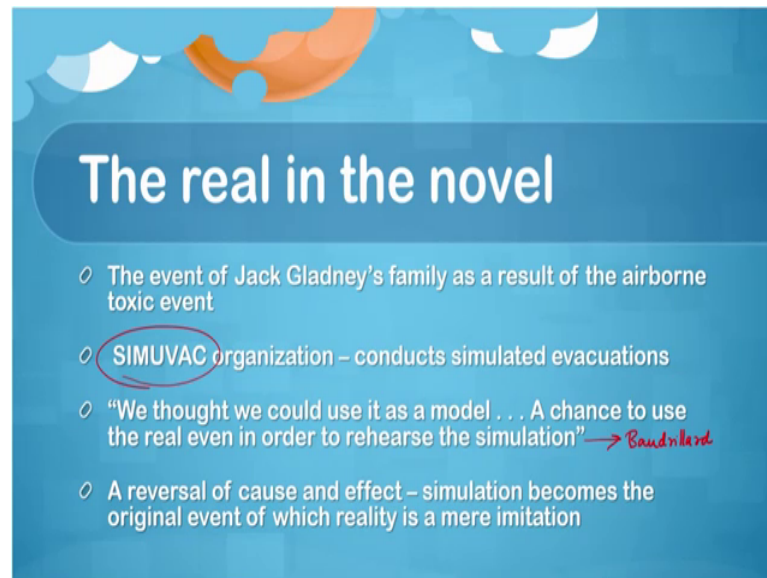
I would like to read to you an accept from the novel where, his a fascination with Hitler studies and his positioning in the colleges such as being talked about by one of his colleague Murray, and this is what Murray says to Gladney that is exactly what I want you to talk about.

You have established a wonderful thing here Hitler you created it, you nurtured it, you made it your own. Nobody on the faculty of any college or university in this part of the country can do so much as utter the word Hitler, without a nod in your direction literally, or metaphorically.

This is the center the unquestioned source; he is now your Hitler Gladney's Hitler. It must be deeply satisfying for you the college is internationally known as a result of Hitler studies. It has an identity, a sense of achievement you have evolved an entire system around this figure a structure with countless sub structures and interrelated fields of study a history within history I marvel at the effort. It was masterful, shrewd, and stunningly pre emptive, it is what I want to do with Elvis.

It is a very interesting juxtaposition of Hitler and Elvis Presley in the same passage here we also shown how Hitler and Elvis Presley can become nearly interchangeable figures in this culture of celebrities. And we are also being shown rather sarcastically, how a certain paradigm shift has come about in the academia, in the ways in which particular departments, particular disciplines, and certain kinds of historical figures emerge as the center.

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The real in the novel

- The event of Jack Gladney's family as a result of the airborne toxic event
- SIMUVAC organization – conducts simulated evacuations
- “We thought we could use it as a model . . . A chance to use the real even in order to rehearse the simulation” → Baudrillard
- A reversal of cause and effect – simulation becomes the original event of which reality is a mere imitation

In today's discussion, I draw your attention to certain aspects which I find are predominantly post modernist. And in that sense we it is important for us to begin with the idea of the real in the novel. In the novel at the course of the progression of the plot we come across an event where Jack Gladney's family is supposed to be evacuated as a result of an airborne toxic event.

There is a certain organization named the SIMUVAC, it is a it stands for simulated evacuation we conduct our simulated evacuations in America and that is also a presented as a reality which is also very ironic in nature.

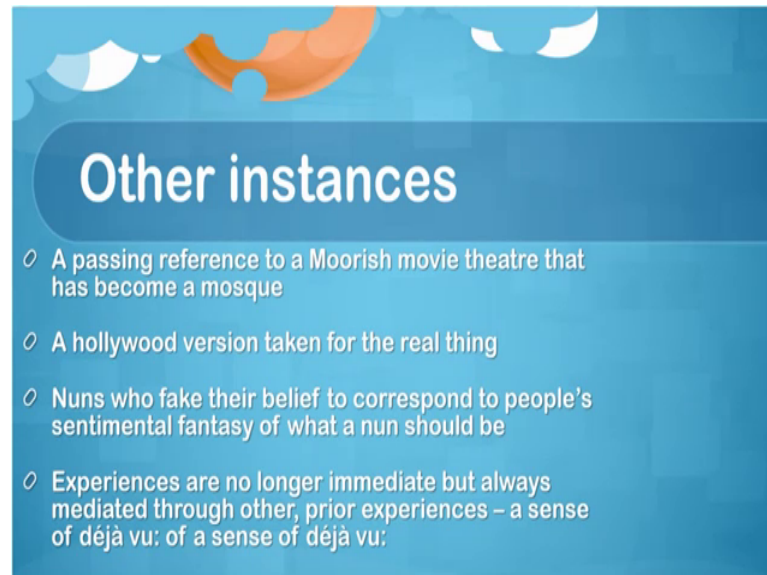
And here we find one of the officers at SIMUVAC, here he is talking about a real evacuation incident and also tries to pass it off as a simulated event. According to his own words a we thought we could use it as a model a chance to use a real event in order to rehearse a simulation.

We find a very direct and overt reference to Baudrillard's simulation over here. And we also find that the real and the hyper we all get merged in the novel and there is an inability for us to know why the simulation or the rehearsal is being passed off as a real evacuation event.

And here we also find a certain kind of a reversal of cause and effect simulation becomes the original event of which reality is a mere imitation. And this is also

something that was really wanting us against in his discussion of the SIMUVAC and simulation. We also find certain ways in which this has been getting replicated in multiple ways in the culture of American and also in the postmodern consumerist culture.

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There also number of other instances in the novel where we find the real and the hyper real merging into a single point one of them being a passing reference to a Moorish movie theater that has become a mosque, then we come across a Hollywood version taken for the real thing.

There are also certain nuns particularly we introduced to one who faked they believe to correspond to peoples a sentimental fantasy of what a nun should be. I would like to read to you from that passage in the novel and in the, this edition the episode with the nun comes towards the end of the novel in page 367.

And Jack Gladney needs this particular nun and he expects a certain kind of a rhetoric a certain kind of a behavior from the nun and he asks about heaven, he asked about divinely things. But the nun response in a very ironic humorous and an indifferent way much to the shock of a Jack Gladney and this is also very post modernist in a certain way I read to you from this passage.

The Nun talks a Critism is a dedication, someone must appear to believe, our lives are no less serious than if we professed real faith, real belief. As belief shrinks from the world

people find it more necessary than ever that someone believe while died men in caves, nuns in black, monks who do not speak we are left to believe, fools children those who have abandoned belief must still believe in us.

They sure that we are right not to believe, but they know how belief must not fade completely, hell is when no one believes, they must always be believers, fools, idiots, those who hear voices, those who speak in tongues we are your lunatics, we surrender our lives to make your non belief possible.

You are sure that you are right, but you do not want everyone to think as you do there is no truth without fools. We are your fools, your mad women rising at dawn to pray, lighting candles, asking statues for good health long life. She rattled out the laugh showing teeth so old they were nearly transparent.

And here we are being introduced to a certain sarcastic and ironic view of religion where even one loses faith in God, even when loses faith in the religious systems, that is a certain way in which you expect certain kind of a register, a certain kind of a presentation, of figures of persons such as nuns and such an attitude is entirely being mocked at in this novel throughout right from the beginning.

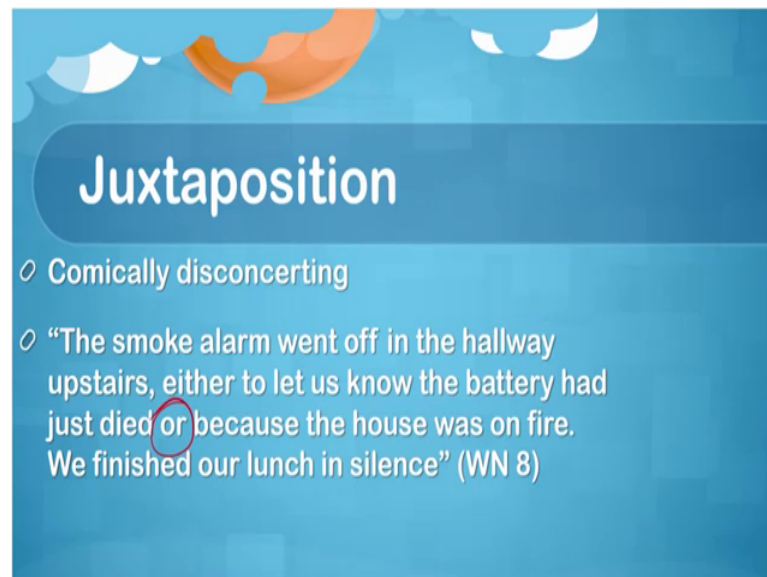
And we also find certain instances where experiences are no longer immediate, but always mediated through other prior experiences my sense of déjà vu or the prior experiences. For example the novel talk about a sense of déjà vu of a sense of déjà vu. And in this novel in the 2011 edition in page 146, there is a discussion of a confusion about some whether something is has really happened whether it is reality or whether it is a sense of déjà vu.

So, I read to you this excerpt from page 146 what did it all mean? Did Steffie truly imagine she had seen the wreck before or did she only imagine she would imagined it is it possible to have a false perception of an illusion is there a true déjà vu and a false déjà vu I wondered whether her palms had been truly sweaty or whether she would simply imagined the sense of wetness and was she so open to suggestion that she would develop every symptom as it was announced.

Here we find the novel playing with the idea of reality in multiple ways and it would be possible to look at this from the discussions generated by Baudria. And his concept of

hyper reality and also about how the real and the fake, the real and the illusion, the distinction between them collapses to such an extent that there is an inability for us to know which is real, and which one is a simulated effect.

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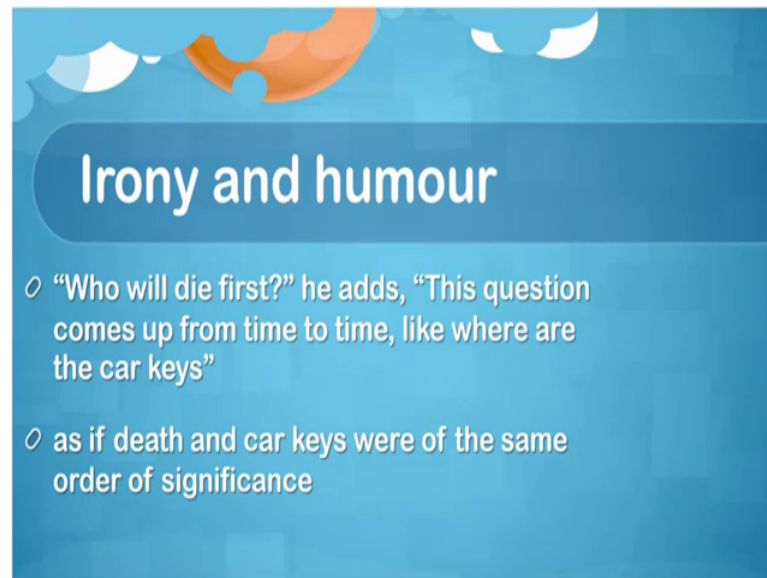


There are also a series of juxtapositions which the, or the novel comically uses and this a very this is very comically disconcerting us as well. For example in page 8 of the novel there is this there is this small passage the smoke alarm went off in the hallway upstairs, either to let us know the battery had just died or because the house was on fire we finished our lunch in silence.

Here look at the way in which the term or is being placed very casually over here without really discriminating between the cause and effect of both of these events of either the battery just dying, or the house being on fire. This is the postmodern irony or the postmodern juxtaposition of placing disconcerting fact simultaneously.

And here the here the narrator also diluted into believing that he does not really care whether the battery had just died or whether the house was on fire because both supposedly have only the same kind of consequence according to him and this is the postmodern approach that the novel takes a throughout.

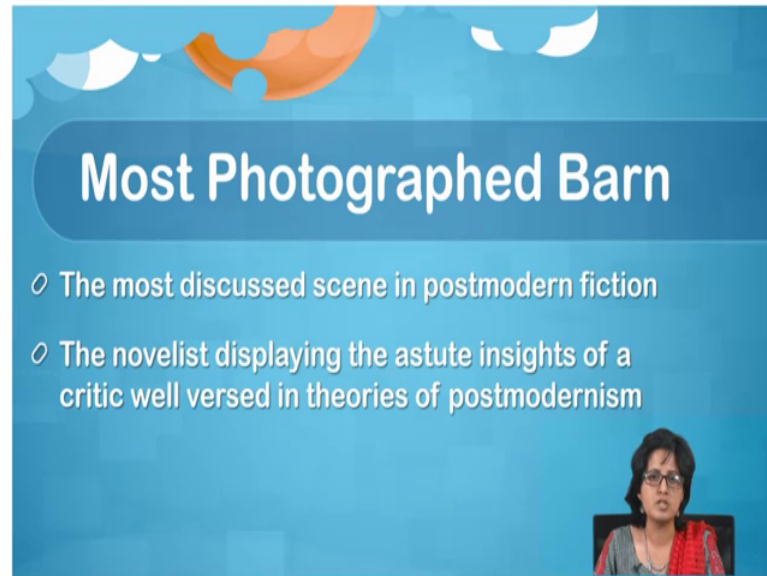
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There is also a way in which irony and humor also appear to have a disconcerting effect on the reader we realize that there is a constant fear of death that Jack Gladney's wife Babette has throughout the novel. And there is also this repeated discussion they have about who will die first who will die first he adds this question comes up from time to time like where are the car keys and again this is yet another juxtaposition as if death and car keys were of the same audit of significance, it clearly does not matter whether it is about death or whether it is about the lost car keys.

So this sort of placing side by side ironic elements and elements which may not normally go well together this is again a way in which post modernism is it to work in this narration.

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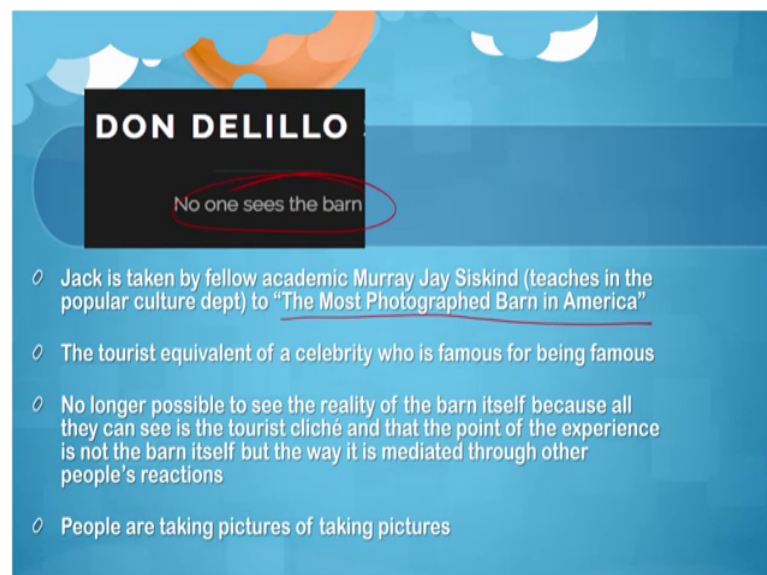
Most Photographed Barn

- The most discussed scene in postmodern fiction
- The novelist displaying the astute insights of a critic well versed in theories of postmodernism

Video inset of a woman speaking.

Now we come to one of the most discussed as scenes in postmodern fiction which is part of which is part of a significant episode in the novel white noise and this is an episode which has generally been described as the episode of the most of photographed barn. Here we find the novel is displaying the astute insight of a critic a well versed in theories of post modernism.

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DON DELILLO

No one sees the barn

- Jack is taken by fellow academic Murray Jay Siskind (teaches in the popular culture dept) to "The Most Photographed Barn in America"
- The tourist equivalent of a celebrity who is famous for being famous
- No longer possible to see the reality of the barn itself because all they can see is the tourist cliché and that the point of the experience is not the barn itself but the way it is mediated through other people's reactions
- People are taking pictures of taking pictures

And this is in fact, an episode a scene where Jack is taken by a fellow, and he also teaches popular culture in the same department and Murray invites Jack to see this most photographed Barn in America that is how the site is generally known.

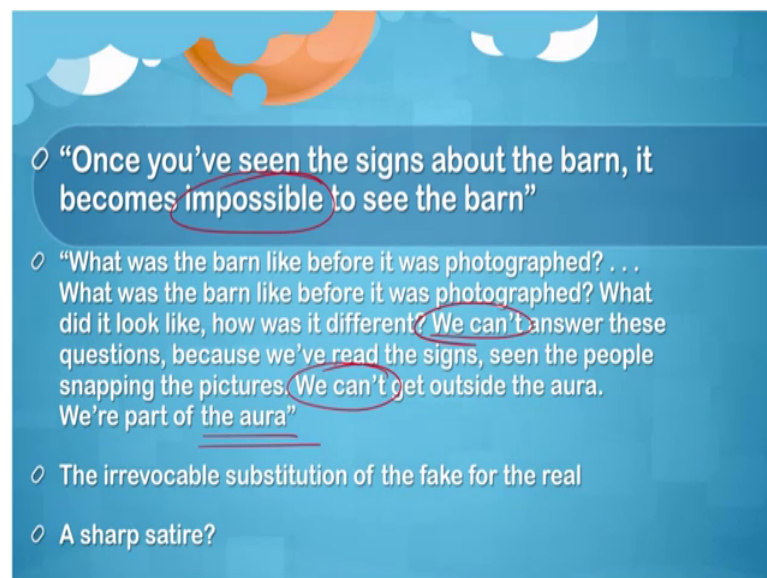
And this is in fact, also a tourist equivalent of a celebrity who is famous for being famous for instance and Murray also educates Jack on how this has become the most photographed Barn in America.

Because it is no longer possible to see the reality of the Barn itself because all that they can see is the tourist Cliche and that the point of experience is not the bond itself, but the way it is mediated through other peoples of reactions.

Because we only do not really see the Barn no one sees the Barn according to the novel, people are taking pictures of taking pictures because only if you take pictures of people taking pictures of the Barn you get you get to claim that you have actually seen the most of photographed a Barn in America.

And this except where this discussion about the most photographed a Barn happens in the novel has been often discussed as a case of a hyper reality, as a way in which America has become a victim of this sort of our consumerist a culture to such an extent that it becomes impossible to see the object, but one only sees a mediated object which has been mediated heavily by the and global consumerist of perception.

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o "Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn"

o "What was the barn like before it was photographed? . . . What was the barn like before it was photographed? What did it look like, how was it different? We can't answer these questions, because we've read the signs, seen the people snapping the pictures. We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura"

o The irrevocable substitution of the fake for the real

o A sharp satire?

We find the character Murray telling Jack, when he is taking him to see the most photographed Barn. Once you have seen the science about the Barn it becomes impossible to see the Barn. It is this impossibility that Baudrillard had already want us against when it comes to seeing the contemporary America because contemporary America is also mediated by a lot of these significations from part of the global consumerist culture.

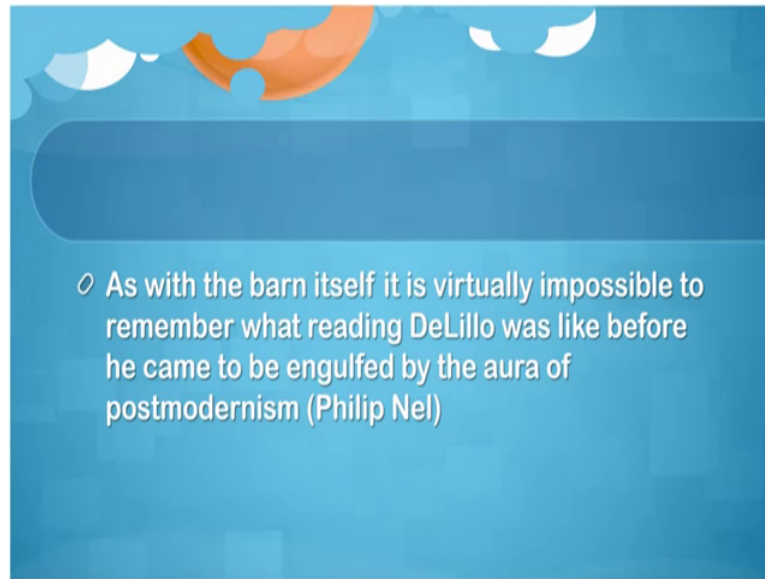
I could extensively from the novel where Murray is talking to a Jack, what was the Barn like before it was photographed. What was a Barn like before it was photographed? What does it look like? How is it different?

We cannot answer these questions, because we have read the signs seen the people, snapping the pictures, we cannot get outside the aura, we are part of the aura. First one theorists also talk about a certain aura, which gives a lot of value to certain objects in the postmodern theory. And once the object is once we get used to seeing the object within and aura it becomes impossible to see the object itself for what really it is.

So, no one sees the Barn in this context and this is also it this also becomes an every workable substitution of the fake for the real, and this is also sharps attire on the way in which think objects are being objectified and objects are being converted into certain consumable products, in the contemporary particularly in America.

And this cannot be seen as a case and limited to America, it could be said that it is true with most of the modernized globalized cultures in the contemporary.

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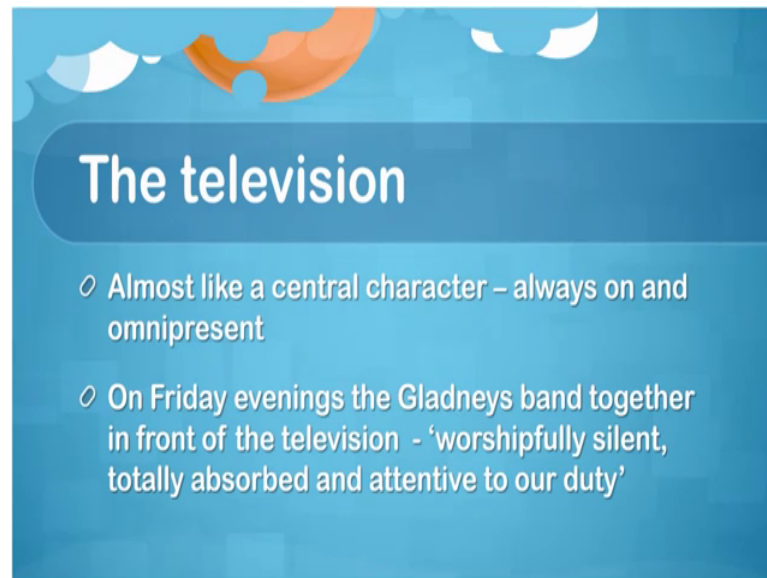
Taking off from this discussion related to the most photographed Barn in DeLillo's novel, Philip Nel, one of the contemporary critiques of DeLillo's fiction. He makes this remark as with the Barn itself it is virtually impossible to remember what reading DeLillo was like before he came to be engulfed by the order of post modernism, this statement is very telling.

Because even in this discussion we begin with the pre-given verdict that DeLillo's fiction is essentially post-modernist, that *White Noise* is mostly about hyper and in the American context.

So, here even in the critical reading of the novel *White Noise*, we cannot approach the novel in a neutral way without really knowing what it is to read *White Noise* without being conscious of the postmodernist elements in it. Now whether the postmodernist elements were built in knowingly or whether it is there inadvertently.

Now there is an impossibility for us as a reader to illuminate the postmodern identification of the novel *White Noise*, because it has been always already seen as a post-modernist novel and we have no way of knowing how it is to read the novel without seeing it under the aura of post-modernism.

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The television

- Almost like a central character – always on and omnipresent
- On Friday evenings the Gladneys band together in front of the television - ‘worshipfully silent, totally absorbed and attentive to our duty’

Coming to certain aspects of the novel which I would like to highlight in this discussion, the television emerges like almost a central character in the novel white noise. The television is always on and in that sense omnipresent in the Jack Gladney household.

And on Friday evening evenings were also given to understand that the Gladney’s went together, the Gladney’s went together in front of the television. And there they said worshipfully silent totally absorbed and attentive to our duty.

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Repetitious brand-name mantras

- The Airport Marriott ✓
- The Downtown Travelodge ✓
- The Sheraton Inn and Conference Centre ✓
- Dacron, Orlon ✓
- Lycra Spandex ✓
- Leaded, unleaded, super unleaded ✓
- Mastercard, Visa, American Express ✓

So, it also talks about how television emerges as a culture as a unifying culture, within the family no matter how disturbing that is a knowledge in the postmodern scenario. And there is also a sense in which we are being given to us certain we are being subjected to a certain repetitious a brand-name mantras such as we that there are repeated references to the airport Marriott, at the downtown a Travelodge, the Sheraton Inn and the conference center.

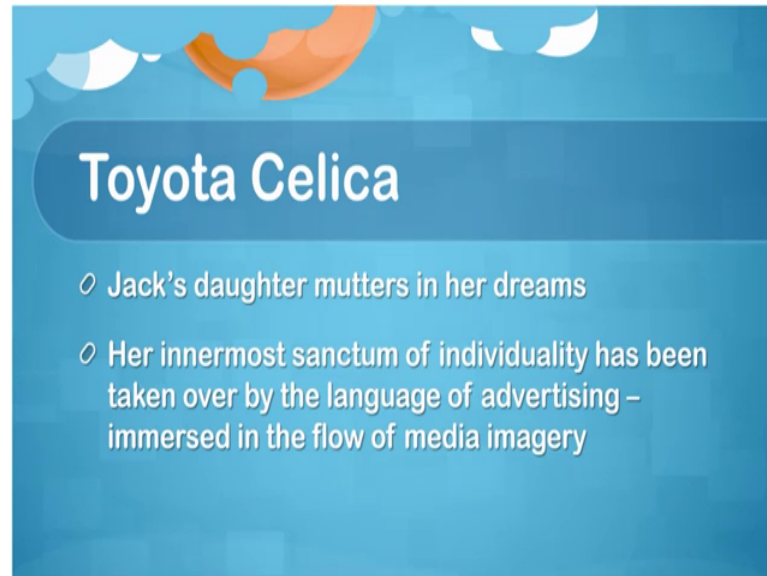
ah Dacron, Orlon, and the Lycra spandex, leaded, unleaded, super unleaded, versions of different products and also about MasterCard, Visa, American express. These sort of images are being continually being woven into the narrative we are not even conscious that these are brand names which become part of the narrative.

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And this commercial culture this television and ad saturated culture, it is it have infiltrated their way so much into Jack's stream of consciousness that he cannot seem to escape from this inevitable reality and again it brings us back to the original mind it becomes also difficult to differentiate reality from the simulated things that he comes across in his day to day life.

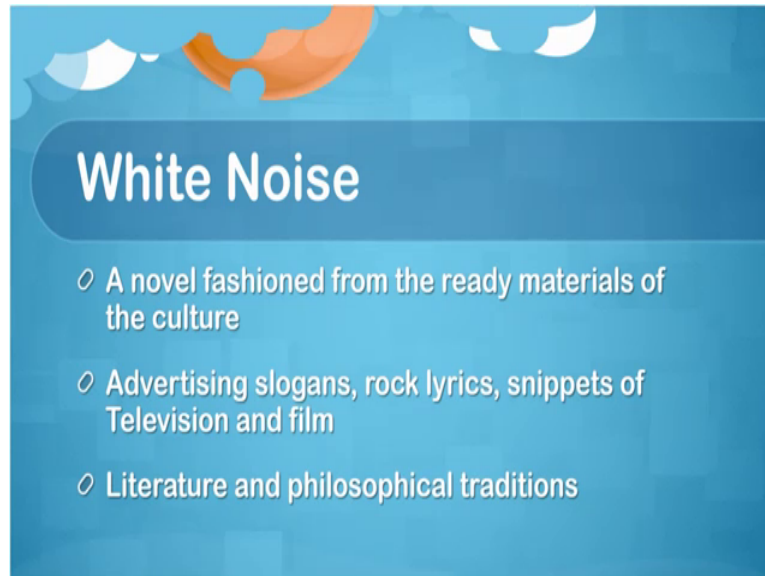
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And there is this very significant instance in this novel where Jack's daughter mutters Toyota Celica in her dreams and that is also an advertisement that she would be continually seeing during the daytime through the television and the car radio ads.

And here we find that her innermost sanctum of individuality has been taken over by the language of advertising and she is totally immersed in the flow of media imagery, it becomes impossible for her to differentiate between the reality that she encounters and the reality which is being fed into her through these mediations of advertisements and television images.

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White noise in that since could be considered as a novel fashion from their ad materials of culture particularly American culture and we find the novel written with advertising slogans, rock lyrics, and snippets of television and film.

It is also has a generous discussion of literature and philosophical traditions as well and it was also very conscious of the traditions and the philosophies that it makes use of in the narrative. This we also notice the way in which the novel talks about Hitler studies as a department or about the presentation of the most photographed Barn in America.

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There is yet another way in which the novel celebrates the post modernism that it talks about. There is no difference between high art and mass culture. In fact, there is a refusal to distinguish between media culture, and high culture. A refusal to discriminate one or exclude one from the other, this is something that we saw in way in which Hitler, and Elvis Presley were mentioned in the same breath in the same passage.

Here we find a way in which the consumer culture comes into contact with high art, in becomes difficult for us to differentiate one from the other we find the discussions of Wittgenstein, Proust, and Joyce who are philosophers and writers at the high art.

We also find discussions of Bob Dylan, we find a way in which Hollywood films and altruistic films are mentioned side I said, we also find Andy Warhol and his iconic image infiltrating into this discussion as well. And there are also certain characters who serve as examples of media saturation taken to comic excess.

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Frenzied appetites of consumerism

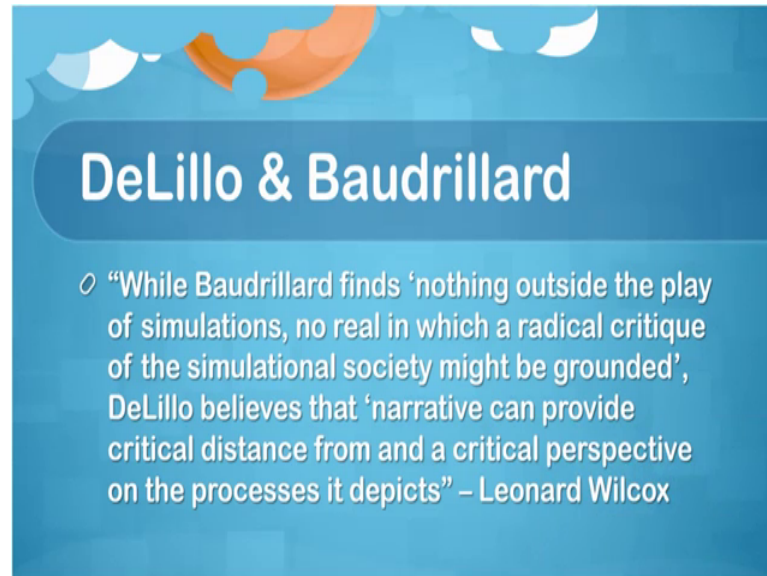
- A rack of novels is knocked over in the supermarket and the books spill over the floor
- Fiction is just one more bar-coded item

The slide features a blue background with a decorative orange and white pattern at the top. The title 'Frenzied appetites of consumerism' is in white text on a dark blue horizontal band. Below the title, two bullet points are listed in white text. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video feed of a woman with dark hair and glasses, wearing a red and white patterned top.

For example, the narrator Jack Gladney himself and also there the character of Willie Mink, we find that the novel critiques the frenzied appetites of consumerism, there is a certain instance in the novel where a rack of novels is knocked over in the supermarket and the books tend to spill over the floor.

And here we are being when to understand that fiction is just one more bar coded item in the supermarket. There is hardly anything superior to the literary work compared to the many other items, which are available in the supermarket. So, fiction is reduced to just another bar coded item which is available in the supermarket.

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We find a lot of discussions where DeLillo and Baudrillard mentioned together and for obvious reasons. Leonard Wilcox one of the leading critics of DeLillo's fiction he writes. While Baudrillard's finds nothing outside the play of simulations, no real in which a radical critique of the simulation of society might be grounded. DeLillo believes that narrative can provide critical distance from and a critical perspective on the processes it depicts.

Here we find Baudrillard and DeLillo being discussed in the same breath and also highlighting the ways in which one differs from the other. In a very postmodern the rhetoric, we also find that there is no regard to the fact that Baudrillard as a philosopher and DeLillo as a fiction writer.

And there is genre differences do not seem to play any role in this discussion because what becomes important is a representation that both of them hold forth what Baudrillard talks about and what DeLillo talks about, the genre ceases to be important the time frame ceases to be important.

What becomes important is that, it is possible to talk about a philosopher and a fiction writer in the same passage and also look at how both of them engage with the postmodern world in different ways.

How while one refuses to see anything outside simulation, the other makes use of narrative to critique the contemporary critique the outside world the way he finds it. There are a couple of things which the novel engages within in a very interesting manner it talks about the fear of death as a real fear which could also be addressed through scientific methods.

There is Babette Jack Gladney's wife who is constantly under the fear of death and she also begins to take a certain medicine to cure her of this fear. So, I read this passage to you. We stood there watching the surge of lurid light like a heart pumping in a documentary on color TV.

Remember the saucer shaped pill of course, she said a super piece of engineering. I found out what it is designed to do it is designed to solve an ancient problem, a fear of death. It encourages the green to produce a fear of death inhibitors, but we still die everyone dies yes we just would not be afraid she said that is right interesting I guess.

Die la was designed by a secret research group I believe some of these people are psycho biologists. I wonder if you have heard rumors about a group working secretly on fear of death, I would be the last to hear, no one can ever find me when they do find me it is to tell me something important.

What could be more important, you are talking about gossip rumors this is thin stuff Jack who are these people where is their base that is why I have been chasing you I thought you know something about them I do not even know what a psycho biologist is, it is a catch all sort of thing interdisciplinary the real work is in the pets is not there anything you can tell me.

Here you may see how in a very postmodernist way a number of dissimilar things are being brought under the discussion in the same passage. There is fear of death, there is also certain new inter disciplinary field called psycho biology and we also find that it is a there is a certain kind of a medicine, which claims to cure the fear of dying.

So, in a very postmodernist sense, we are being presented all of these as facts which are at the same level. We are not being allowed to wander, we are not being allowed to walk, there is no ironic tone either. So, this is a way in which the post modernist fiction makes

use of the narrative technique to talk about things without really betraying any sense of irony or any sense of marks attire.

Let me also read to you a passage in the novel where DeLillo talks about the academic setting in a very satirical way. He talks about the conferences as part of the Hitler studies center, he uses this as an entry point to talk about their ways in which in the contemporary, the academic setting functions.

I read from the novel this is from page 314. Delegates to the Hitler conference began arriving. About 90 Hitler scholars would spend the 3 days of the conference attending lectures, appearing on panels going to movies. They would wander the campus with their names letter in gothic type on laminated tags appearing to their lapels.

They would exchange Hitler gossip, spread the usual sensational rumors in the last days in the Fuhrer bunker, it was interesting to see how closely they resembled each other despite. The wide diversity of national and regional backgrounds they cheerful and eager given to spitting when they laughed given to outdated dress, homeliness, punctuality; they seemed to have a taste for sweets.

So, we find a very interesting description is a satirical description being given about academic centers in the practice of practice of academics in the contemporary. As we begin to wind up I also leave you with this interesting description of a family and how the family becomes a central discussion point in the novel.

I read to you from page 97, where there is this extensive rumination about our family. The family is a cradle of the world's misinformation. There must be something in the family life that generates factual error, over closeness, the noise and heat of being perhaps something even deeper like they need to survive.

Murray says we are fragile creatures surrounded by a world of hostile facts. Facts threaten our happiness insecurity the deeper we delve into the nature of things the looser our structure may seem to become. The family process works towards sealing of the world, small errors grow heads, frictions proliferate.

I tell Murray that ignorance and confusion cannot possibly be the driving forces behind family solidarity. What an idea, what is subversion he asks me why the strongest family

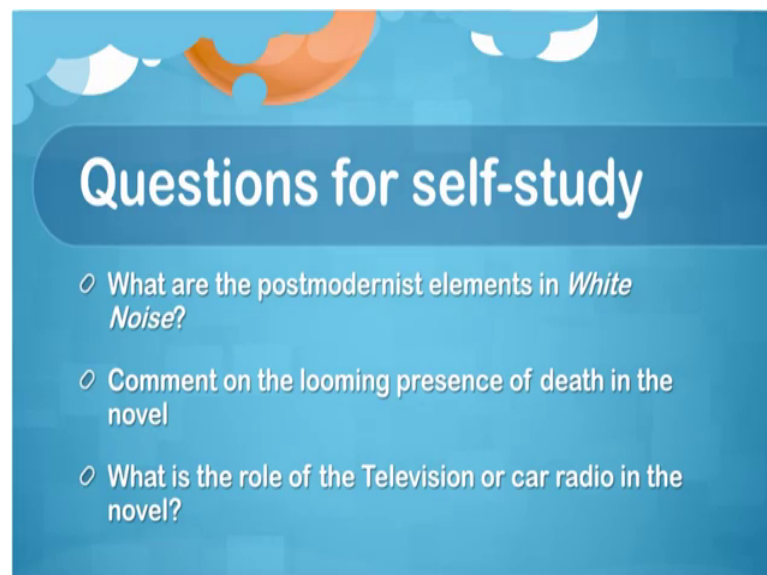
units exist in the least developed societies not to know is a weapon of survival he says. Magic and superstition become entrenched as a powerful orthodoxy of the clan the family is strongest where objective reality is most likely to be misinterpreted.

What a heartless theory I say, but Murray insists it is true. In the novel *White Noise*, that DeLillo chooses to narrate the story in the backdrop of a family, in the backdrop of a number of things which are part of everyday life in the contemporary world is very interesting.

And he also opens up the discussion opens up the avenue for criticism and also for leading us to see look at the ways in which a fiction also coexist with the many theoretical formulations of the postmodern age.

The novel we can say the dress in it is well with a number of postmodern theories and it could also it also possible to read this novel in connection with the many critiques which were formulated by Jameson. It also engages in a very extensive powerful dialogue with Baudrillard through the discussions of simulation and hyper reality and we are also introduce the pressures of living in a culture dominated by advertising and simulation.

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Questions for self-study

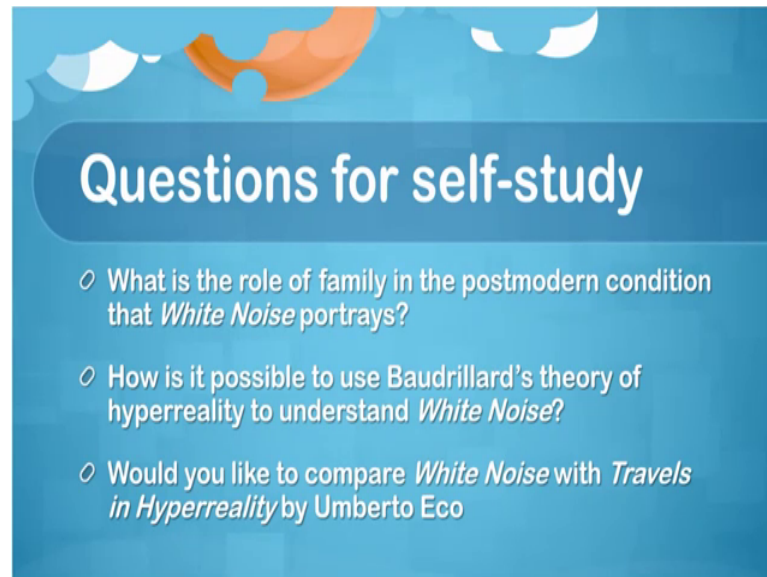
- What are the postmodernist elements in *White Noise*?
- Comment on the looming presence of death in the novel
- What is the role of the Television or car radio in the novel?

As we begin to a wind up this discussion I also leave you with a set of questions for self study which would be useful and simple to read the novel on your own. What are the postmodernist elements in *white noise* comment on the looming presence of death in the

novel; this is also something which could be seen as a repeated trope in a number of post modernist works.

What is the role of the television or car video novel you could also use hyper reality and Baudrillard's works as an entry point to access this question.

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What is a role of family in the postmodern condition, that white noise portrays. This can be a scene in contrast to the ways in which the postmodern narratives reject all kinds of Meta narratives and how there is an inevitability? How there is an impossibility to completely move away from the Meta narratives.

But also how it becomes possible to stay within some of these institutions, some of these Meta narratives, and then critique them and subvert them in different ways.

In fact, what if the theory is proposed to do in their in their realms, we find the novel writing out an entire script staging a number of debates, which are part of a lot of theoretical formulations. And also how is it possible to use Baudrillard's theory of hyper reality to understand white noise, it would be a good exercise to identify and number of other instances more than the ones that we have discussed in the course of this lecture.

And finally, would you like to compare white noise with travels and hyper reality by Umberto eco. Umberto ecos work is not entirely fiction, it is almost like a documentary fiction, it talks about his journey through the contemporary American culture.

So, how would you find white noise resonating with certain things that a cold also talks about in Hesburgh travels in hyper reality? There could be many other ways in which white noise could be accessed as a post modernist novel, as they begin to wind up this discussion. Let me also remind you that white noise is also a reference to the multimedia generated white noise which is infiltrating the contemporary, globalized, consumerized, societies. I hope this will also help you to generate a newfound taste in reading post modernist fiction.

I thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.