

## I. Introduction

This research is an inquiry into Don DeLillo's novel *White Noise*. The inquiry basically proves how DeLillo presents signs, images and electronic media etc. as simulacra to replace the reality. By replacing the reality, the writer tries to create the new world. My research in this novel is to find how the writer creates the new world of simulacra and the simulated reality functions further.

Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, winner of the National Book Award, published in 1985 A.D, is a novel laden with meanings being explored since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Although a piece of art in itself resulting from the creativity of a writer with a dazzling capacity to communicate complex meaning artistically, it shows the traces of modern and contemporary investigations and announces both the developments that would take place a visual culture and most importantly, where the human potential is to build a less alienating world. Several currents are brought together in *White Noise* of which, perhaps, the crucial is a study of the human fear of death and the presentation of how a kind of consumerist socially escapes this fear collectively. The idea that a death is one of the reasons why we live in a falsified world is no explicit in *White Noise* but resonates throughout the novel.

In the novel *White Noise* takes a postmodern idea, that simulacra have replaced reality and applies it throughout *White Noise*. The most obvious example is with the simulated evacuation, SIMUVAC; although the first run-through is for an actual emergency. SIMUVAC views it as practice for an actual simulation. In other words, its status as a simulation takes precedence over its use for a real emergency. On its second, simulated use, the people behind SIMUVAC continue to worry over its use in simulation, not in reality. The other major scene involving the dominance of simulacra is when Jack and Murray visit what signs call “the most photographed barn

in America” (12). As Murray notes, people pay more attention to the signs than to the actual barn; they are wrapped in the simulated idea more than in the real barn.

Another instance of simulation versus reality is when the family sees Babette on T.V. At first they are frightened but soon realize what is happening; only Wilder, not yet schooled in the way of simulacra, continues to believe it is really Babette and cries by the T.V. In the same sense, there is much exploration in *White Noise* of how the media controls reality; even to the extent that we ignore our own senses; the girls consistently feel the symptoms of Nyodeme D exposure only after the radio informs them of what they are.

More specifically, DeLillo explores the notion of simulacra in American society. In 1983 A.D. French philosopher Jean Baudrillard wrote simulation. In it, he maintains that the postmodern world privileges simulacra over reality, we believe our secondary, simulated reality is more real than first degree reality. His classic example is that Disneyland, a fantasy world, seems more real to us than the real world. This is explained in detail in the unit two of this dissertation. DeLillo says the idea for *White Noise* came to him while he watched television news, and realized that toxic spills were becoming such a daily occurrence that no one the news cared about then only those affected by the spills cared. We can see this idea play out in the airborne toxic event in *White Noise*, when people are upset that the media play their crisis little attention, but it emerges in subtler ways when DeLillo examines the consumerist, technological atmospheres of death we create for ourselves from our living rooms to our cars to our supermarkets.

In *White Noise* DeLillo's protagonist Jack Gladney confronts a new order in which life is increasingly lived in a world of simulacra, where images and electronic representations replace direct experience. *White Noise*, with its interest in electronic

mediation and representation, present a view of life in contemporary America that is uncannily similar to that depicted by Jean Baudrillard. They indicate that the transformations of contemporary society that Baudrillard describes in his theoretical writings on information and media have also gripped the mind and shaped the novels of Don DeLillo. For *White Noise* especially because it most specifically explores the realm of information and mediascape- Baudrillard work provide an interesting, valuable, and even crucial perspective. The information world Baudrillard delineates a striking resemblance to the world of *White Noise*: one characterized by the collapse of the real and the flow of signifiers emanating from an information society, by a 'loss of the real' in a black hole of simulation and the play and exchange of signs. In this world common to both Baudrillard and DeLillo, images, signs and codes engulf objective reality; signs become more real than reality and stand in for the world they erase. Baudrillard's notion that this radical semiurgy result in the collapse of difference, firm structure, and finalities markedly resembles DeLillo's vision of an entropic breakdown of basic rituals and concepts in the informational flow of electronic communication. Moreover, for both Baudrillard and DeLillo a media saturated consciousness threatens the concepts of meaning itself. For Baudrillard, "information devours its own contents; it devours communication," resulting in "a sort of nebulous state leading not at all to a surfeit of innovation but to the very contrary, to total entropy" (in the shadow 97, 100). For DeLillo, the flow of extrinsic information obliterates coherent meaning. The very notion of *White Noise* that is so central to the novel implies a neutral and reified media each, but also a surplus of data and an entropic blanket of information glut which flows from a media saturated society.

In the Novel *White Noise* the electronic medias are mostly used to replace the reality and to create a new world in which such representations precede. The TV and the radio appear as extension of the human voice and eye. The novel presents these media following the postmodernist idea that they are the message in themselves, shapers of perception, fragmentations of reality. The TV is also used by humans to combat their deepest fear. Whether this is convenient or inconvenient is not the crucial issue, seems to state his novel, our private enlightening TV set. "The implosion of Meaning in the Media," Baudrillard claims that the proliferation of signs and information in the media obliterates meaning through neutralizing and dissolving all content a process which leads both to a collapse of meaning and the destruction of distinction between media and reality.

This hopeful perspective is something that announces what artists and researchers would do from the 80s onwards transcend the blind alley postmodernism had directed us to. The fact that semiotics became a science, independent of linguistics, contributed to the promotion of visual signs. Visual texts, images, gained the relevance of written texts for the understanding of the world. Image fiction- what this novel is an example of relates to how man culture is affected by visual dominance in cultural discourses. *White Noise* develops formally in issue like the impact of TV in technical literary resources. DeLillo uses the presentational sensory mode of the media stylistically, reproducing their daily haphazard intrusion in peoples lives, the fact that their contents are namely perceived in the sensory in voluntary mode and not through conscious voluntary processes. Visual dominance will also develop intellectually, in how image conditions collective modes of perception and conceptualization; also in its role to help us deal with existential anguish. The earlier postmodernist implications are questioned. In spite of the fact that there will be

numerous moments in the novel when the world of simulacra seems to have a life of its own that threaten human existence, and in spite of ultimate yielding to this unreal world by the protagonist existences, DeLillo will hint at clues for critical thinking. *White Noise* finds other approaches, additional points to make in the same setting.

In the Don DiLillo's novel *White Noise*, death and disaster are presented as simulation, as hyperreal. In the novel, Jack Gladney and his family watch disasters on TV: "There were floods, earthquakes, mud slides, everything volcanoes. [...] Every disaster made us wish for more, for something bigger, grander, more seeping" (64). And, it seems as if the media are only becoming more focused on presenting disaster. For thirty minutes each evening, the networks broadcast airplane crashes, school shootings and fighting in Macedonia and Gaza; as if "real" televised death were not enough the networks supplement our viewing with the simulated death of Ebola viruses, asteroid collisions, and volcanoes. The multiplicity of images of death in the media creates a scenario in which death does not exist unless it appears on television essentially, the only "real death" is that which is televised. For Baudrillard, death is the simulation, "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (Simulacra 1). According to this model, American popular culture imitates death and in doing so creates the simulation; by living the simulation, the real disappears. Within *White Noise*, the Airbone Toxic Event is important because it places the individuals within a media worthy disaster and allows us to see their incapacity to understand their situation. The "reality" of the even makes it unreal, for these people, the "real" only happen on TV, not to them directly. After the Airbone Toxic Event, SIMUVAC decides it is necessary to have a simulated disaster because the real disaster did not happen exactly as they would have liked. The reason SIMUVAC is at the ATE in the first place was because they thought they "could use

it as a model” (139). SIMUVAC is Baudrillard’s hyperreal; the simulation denies and removes the real. The real is the dress rehearsal for the simulation.

Some interpreters have taken this novel as the searching of fear of death, feminism, satire and mysticism. Cornel Bonca suggest that *White Noise* is “the death fear expressed in the only terms that a postmodern media culture knows how to express it” (33). He shows that the fear of death is dominant in the novel *White Noise*.

Wendy Steiner analyzes *White Noise* as the gender issues, “*White Noise* is the theme the family the problem of a woman’s fulfillment and a man’s attainment to her ally it to feminist writing” (498). The critics’ criticism highlights that *White Noise* is as the issue of male and female. Tom Leclair has noted in a discussion of *White Noise*, “DeLillo presses beyond the ironic, extracting from his initially satiric materials a sense of wonderment or mystery” (214). The critic’s criticism highlights the satire and the mysticism in the novel *White Noise*.

The Novel *White Noise* is divided in three chapter, further, it is again divided in forty units where we find the various signs, images and electronic medias being used to replace the reality and to create the new world where the representations precede. These all contribute to the thesis I want to develop here: that how the writer DeLillo challenges the ideas of reality by replacing the reality with the images and signs.

The above mentioned criticisms indicate that, though the novel can be dealt from various perspectives, the perspective which I have chosen to conduct a research is a distinct one the replacement of the reality that shows the double created reality seems to be more real than the original one. This research will analyze how DeLillo’s *White Noise* challenges the ideas of reality. The replacement of the reality by the use

of various signs, image and mostly the electronic medias is found throughout the novel. However, while dealing with replacement of reality, Baudrillard's concept of simulacra, hyperreal media world and postmodern images will be primarily analyzed in the succeeding chapter. Its principal emphasis will be to find the simulated reality is more real than the first degree reality.

## II. Simulacrum Theory

The word Simulacrum means an image, copy or shadowy likeness of something, derives from the writings of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, who thought the whole world was simply the copy of a better, purer world that existed on some other level of being. Its currency in debates around postmodernism stem from an essay by the French critic and theorist Jean Baudrillard called 'The Precession of Simulacra' (1983). Baudrillard, another critic to emerge from the Marxist tradition, argues that the western capitalism has moved from being based on the production of things to the production of images of things, of copies of 'simulacra'. Today we live in a world where the difference between 'real life' and 'simulated life' (or simulacrum) has degraded to a point where it becomes hard to tell one from the other: a world where millions fight the Gulf War through their television screens indeed where the war appears to us as if it were actually happening on television rather than in real life; Baudrillard uses the term 'hyperreality' where reality and simulation are received at being not different from one another: his prime example is Disneyland, which he argues is neither real nor simulated, neither true nor false. The old model where the copy comes after the original is overturned, now the 'simulacrum' precedes the real.

The key to Baudrillard's thought is his reversal of the commonsense understanding of the relation of culture to nature, of signs to thing signified. Conventional thought holds that nature precedes culture, which is built on top of it. Similarly, we think of a thing as existing in the world, and then of a word being invented and used to designate that thing. In *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard discussed the "desert of the real itself" (1). At times, Baudrillard implies that this commonsense view accurately describes how things use to be, at some unspecified



time in the past. Baudrillard in his book *Simulacra and Simulation*, first published in French in 1980, offered four successive phases of image or sign:

- “(1) It is the reflection of a basic reality.
- (2) It masks and perverts basic reality.
- (3) It masks the absence of basic reality
- (4) It bears no relation to any reality whatever: It is its own pure simulacrum.”
- (405).

In the first phase, there is a truth which is faithfully represented. In the second phase, reality still exists though warped, distorted, and perverted by representation. In the third phase, the truth has disappeared but we think that the represented has hidden the disappearance. In the fourth phase, there is no connection between image and reality because there is nothing real to reflect.

Baudrillard argues that signs have now taken priority over the things signified. In fact, things have just about disappeared altogether. It is found that he has linked this relation to the ‘death of God’ to the devastation of natural environments, and to Western imperialist destructions of all ‘primitive’, non-western, non-metropolitans ‘others’. Something has changed in the human relation to the non-human that plays itself out in a deadly hostility to all things different. It is, Baudrillard makes clear, a change for the worse, and all attempts to turn back the clock only accelerate the triumph of the sign. We are left yearning for the things we are killed, and ‘nostalgic assumes its full meaning’ as it is created ever more signs to simulate those lost things. This is ‘the vengeance of the dead’ who haunt us in their absence. Baudrillard chooses the term simulacrum to designate this new function of signs, that means representation but also comes the sense of a counterfeit, shame or fake. No one can

escape the already precoded order of simulacra. Every social role one adopts has “already been precoded to such an extent that there is no possibility of breaking free from the matrix of representation into a genuine, personal response” (Snipp-Walmsley 413). Simulacra seem to have referents (real phenomena they refer to), but they are merely pretend representations that mark the absence, not the existence, of the objects, they purport to represent. He blames two distinct but related culprits for this charge; contemporary consumer culture and imperialistic western science and philosophy.

In consumer society, natural needs or desires have been buried under, if not totally eliminated by, desires stimulated by cultural discourses, which tell us what we want. We are so precoded, so filled from the very start with the images of what we intend, that we process our relation to the world completely through those images. Furthermore, capitalist production in our time proceeds by first creating a demand through marketing and then producing the product to meet that demand. There are no longer natural needs that human work strives to satisfy. Rather, there are culturally produced ‘hyperreal’ needs that are generated to provide work and profits. The world is remade in the image of our desires. The signs exist before we create the thing to which the sign refers. Thus, for example, sexual desire is no longer a response to a person whom we meet and know face to face. Rather, sexual desire is stimulated by images promulgated by the media, and we strive to remake our bodies to fit those images. Baudrillard’s arrival at nullification of reality defines the postmodernism as the death of meaning, the death of reality and sexuality, and death of the social, and the political. He declares “the end of the era of modernity dominated by production, industrial capitalism, and a political economy of the sign contrasted to the advent of the era of a post-modernity constituted by ‘simulations’ and new forms of technology,

culture and society' (Best and Kellner 118). While bourgeois capitalist controlled the production in modern era, signs controlled by simulated models, codes, and cybernetics govern the production and consumption in the postmodern time. According to Baudrillard, in the postmodern age, we have lost all contact with the real world. As the things we use are increasingly the product of complex industrial process, we lose touch with the underlying reality of the goods we consume. The consumer society provides a "precession of simulacra", (1) a parade of images that project a life that consumers are encouraged to try to live.

Baudrillard again views how things lose their reality in the final phase, the phase of the simulacrum. For the difference and otherness of the thing, we substitute the signs that translate, account for, and tame it within our own signifying system. This is why Baudrillard insists that signs murder Western science especially since the Enlightenment, has increasingly translated all otherness into its own term, making it safe for subsequent tourist like encounters with the packaged exotic. Baudrillard asserts that the western world has reached to the fourth phase of the historical development of sign. This phase is the phase of hyperreality- "a gigantic simulacrum: not unreal, but simulacrum, never again exchanging for what is real, but exchanging in itself, in an uninterrupted circuit without reference or circumstance" (404). This process is simulation as opposed to representation. Representation has principle that the sign and the real are equivalent though such equivalence is Utopian. "Conversely, simulation starts from the Utopia of this principle of equivalence, from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as reversion and death sentence of every reference" (404-405). When every reference disappears, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. Myths of origin and sing of reality proliferate. We get simulated otherness, the real thing has disappeared. We sense this loss of the real, according to Baudrillard,

and search for authenticity; often subconscious, has become ever more panicky as a result. He interprets Disneyland as an elaborately artificial land created precisely to convince us that our “real” lives are real. Caught up in the “precession of Simulacra” that kills everything real and replaces it with fabricated models, we feel that something is wrong; but we have no satisfactory strategies for overturning the growing dominance of images and signs.

Baudrillard, however, discussed reality and illusion in a way that removed this sense of intentionality: “The impossibility of rediscovering an absolute novel of real is of the same order as the impossibility of staging illusion. Illusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible” (Baudrillard 19). Baudrillard argued that these realms of reality and illusion have become increasingly ambiguous through the mass conveyance of information that has occurred in the last decade. Electronic media, for instance, is a compelling power that has transformed communication into a hyperreality. Baudrillard claims that “We live in a world where there is more information and less meaning” (79). More precisely, he stated that “there is a rigorous and necessary correlation between the two information and meaning, to the extent that information is directly destructive of meaning and signification, or that it neutralizes them” (79). The process of simulating reality consumes meaning because it has become “more real than real” (81). Communication has transformed into a seductive spectacle that is embraced by its consumers or reality.

### **Simulation and Simulacra**

The terms simulation and simulacrum have subtly different meanings. According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, simulation is defined first as “the action or practice of simulating, with an intent to deceive,” then as “a false assumption or display a surface resemblance or imitation, of something”, and finally as “the

technique of imitating the behaviour of some situation or process... by means of a suitably analogous situation or apparatus". In total these three definitions convey the ideas that the simulation is usually of a set of actions, and furthermore is deceitful in its display of 'some situation or process'. In comparison simulacrum is defined as "a material image, made as a representation of some deity, person, or thing," as "something having merely the form or appearance of a certain thing, without possessing its substance or proper qualities", and as "a mere image, a specious imitation or likeness, of something" (OED). The distinction between the simulation and the simulacrum is subtle, but seems to be that the simulation has to do with a process or a situation, while the simulacrum is static, an image. The simulation includes such practices as the fire drill, the flight simulator, or the psychosomatic disorder, according to Baudrillard. Simulations are now a part of everyday life. Jean Baudrillard in his book *Selected Writings* published in 1998, defines the terms simulacra and simulation as "the simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth— it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true" (166). And he adds about simulation that "simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth, it is the map that precedes the territory— precession of simulacra." (166). Jean Baudrillard writes in simulation that an effective simulation will not merely deceive one into believing in a false entity, but in fact signifies the destruction of an original reality that it has replaced. He writes: "to simulate is not simply to feign, feigning or dissimulation leaves the reality intact whereas simulation threatens the difference between 'true' and 'false' between 'real' and 'imaginary' (Baudrillard 5). If for Baudrillard the simulation is the process through which reality is usurped, then

simulacrum is the term for the condition produced, namely a system where empty signs refer to themselves and where meaning and value are absent. According to Baudrillard, what is simulated is what is mediated and vice versa. Those experiences in our lives that are explicitly presented as mediated the author classifies as simply of a higher order of simulation, one which simulates simulating in order to falsely suggest a real that exists outside of the surface truth. Baudrillard uses Disneyland as the prime example of the phenomenon. “Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation” (25). For Baudrillard, the explicitly mediated betrays us in its suggestion of an unmediated system outside of it. As there is nothing that is not simulated, our everyday experience is mediated through simulacra.

The concepts of simulacra and simulation have circulated in society from very early times. Plato considered the simulacrum a debased version of reality, thus calling into question the very possibility of an ‘exact copy’ equal to the original. In “Simulacrum” (in *Critical Terms for Art History*), Michael Camille interprets Plato’s evaluation of the simulacrum in *The Republic*. “The simulacrum is more than just a useless image, it is deviation and perversion of imitation itself– a false likeness” (Camille 31-33). The simulacrum is deceptive; it results in confusion for the human subject over what is false, what true. Gilles Deleuze agrees with Baudrillard’s conception of the simulacrum as a system of empty signs that signals the destruction of the original reality it is modeled after thought for Deleuze this destruction is brought about because the simulation of the original is so perfect that it is no longer clear where what the original is. The original could still exist, but its existence is irrelevant as we do not know where to locate it, *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*

summarized his philosophy: “The artwork, then, is neither an original nor a copy nor a representation. It is a simulacrum, a work what forms part of a series that can not be referred to an original beginning.” (Kelly 517)

When the work of art is viewed in such a way the consequences are not negative, on the model of Baudrillard’s dread at the impending death of the real, but instead reveal new possibilities of interpretation in a critical realm where sensation is the focus instead of meaning. “Signs are not about the communication of meaning but rather about the learning of the affects, perception, and sensations to which we can be subject” (518). This fits perfectly with the conception of simulation as a process which effects our experience and not a signification of a fundamental reality, Michael Camille selects a quote from Deleuze’s essay, ‘Plato and the Simulacrum’ which ably demonstrates the simulation’s positivity: “The simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbours a positive power which denies the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction ... There is no longer any privileged point of view except that of the object common to all points of view.” (Camille 33)

The simulation changes the way that we view a work of art or experience a sensation, disposing with an earlier hierarchy that valued the original work highest, and what we are left with is exactly what Plato condemned, a system in which the viewer and his manipulation become more important than any underlying ideas.

Americans seem to have an affinity for repeating words and phrases such as “just do it” or “just be yourself”. These phrases become a methods of communicating shared meaning in a social society. Baudrillard suggested that they perpetuate because of familiarity and because of the value that is afforded them by virtue of their repeated use. Over time, they may assume a broader meaning that has cultural or social

significance, or they may simply become information that has no meaning with respect to any reality.

Consider the idea of symbolic politics, as described by Murray Edelman. He suggested that political narratives create a distortion of the real activity of government, Habermass also suggested that political and bureaucratic agents systematically distort communication as a means of political manipulation. From the perspective of symbolic politics, these linguistics distortions can be directly associated with some reality. For instance, Al Gore's "works better and costs less"- a reference to government reform- is strikingly similar to 'the familiar beer slogan, "tastes great," "less filling" (Fox 259). Gore's phrase was articulated as a familiar symbol with established positive connotations. Assuming, for the moment, that Gore's symbol was designed to create the image of an effective and efficient government, when, in fact, government is not effective and efficient, "works better and costs less" is a simulation of reality.

If manipulation of language and intentionality are no longer assumed, however, communication as simulacra can be considered. Familiar symbols in communication can be understood as information that is disconnected from any "true" context and valuable by virtue of its own substance. Symbolic phrases delivered by government officials become the public's understanding of the "reality of government activity, or a simulation of reality with no referent other than the symbols themselves. Fox and Miller refereed to this as a self-referential epiphenomenon. The symbolic phrases are not a false representation of reality, as the idea of symbolic politics suggests; rather, they are a simulation of self representation. They are simulacra.

These perspective suggest that communication does not represent any single essence or offer a single "window" to reality. Language including an isolated world-



adopts an “intricate network of significations” (Chia 177) and becomes, through communication, a significant component of realities that are perceived.

Speaking directly to Baudrillard’s concern, the film leaves the viewer uncertain as to when the characters are in a virtual world and they are experiencing the real. The self-referentiality within the film, with its framing of a virtual reality video-game inside of another videogame, portrays, the simulated world as not only tied directly to the experience of emotion and sensation, but as a world in which logical action is rewarded and meaning sublimated. Any moral or allegorical conclusion that could be drawn from what appears to be the film’s initial conclusion, that simulations create a system which precipitates its own demise, is invalidated by a further expansion into another reality in which the real videogame designer is congratulated for having created a really fun game. The simulation in the film is reduced to the status of a ride or a contest, containing its own rules and raising the status of the videogame to deific proportions. The simulation, as we can see by contrasting the philosophies of Baudrillard and Deleuze, can be interpreted in nearly opposite ways, as either the death knell for meaning and the real or conversely as an avenue to new methods of interpretation. For Deleuze, the simulation raises the work of art beyond representation to a level where it is on equal footing with the original, and hence the original is destroyed. Plato’s fear of the simulacrum as described by Michael Camille is based on the distortion of real experience that the convincing image causes. The terms simulation and simulacrum are important to media study, as the simulation is total mediation without meaning. The content is shifted to a surface levels, into the realm of experience rather than communication of truth.

## Hyperreal and Imaginary

Jean Baudrillard, one of the major theorists of postmodernism and a French writer, marks his entry into the field of hyperreality. He is associated with what is usually known as the loss of reality. He clearly depicts his ideas that that in contemporary life the pervasive influence of images in electronic medias and advertisement has led to a loss of the distinction between real and imagination, reality and illusion, surface and depth. As a result, the culture of hyperreality generated in which the distinction between reality and imagining is eroded.

Simulation is a semiotic system through which people's lives are defined. Signs, models, codes etc. replace the reality completely and reproduce a new world that he terms simulation. Mark Poster says that simulation is, "infinitely more dangerous since it always suggests" (173). Poster supposes that simulation does not show the exact reality rather it only implies the reality. The imaginary world is a simulated world. Fantasy becomes so much a part of reality; as a result no clear line between reality and the imaginative reproduction of reality can be drawn. In this sense, imagining basis is images experienced in reality and images are not themselves aspects of reality but the reproduced forms of reality. Hence, imaginings are not real things but hyperreal things that represent reality. Peter Bary writes about Baudrillard:

He begins by evoking a past era of fullness when sign was a surface indication of an underlying depth or reality. But what he asks, if a sign is not an index of an underlying reality. But merely of other signs? Then the whole system becomes what he calls a simulacrum. He then substitutes for representation the notion of simulation. (87)

Here, referring to Baudrillard, Barry shows that the signs carry the reality. The spatiotemporal situation of the real is not found in the signs but it merely represents.

As Steven Best and Douglas Kellner writes:

Hyperreality thus points to blurring of distinction between the real and the unreal in which the prefix hyper signifies more real than real.

Whereby the real is produced according to a model. When the real is no longer simply given (for example as a landscape or the sea) but is artificially (re) produced as real for example as a simulated environment it becomes not unreal, or surreal, but realer than real, a real retouched and refurnished in a hallucinatory resemblance with itself. (199)

According to the views of the two critics mentioned above, hyperreality is the reformed world which is autonomous. The world of hyperreal is the world where signal plays a vital role in reproducing it but it doesn't seem as it is seen in day to day life. However, it is based on the physical world. The prefix hyper connote a marked degree of excess which suggests excessively real it would be like being too self identical, identical to a point of supererogation.

For example, fashion aspires to hyperreality. The amazing aspects of fashion is that it is more beautiful than the beautiful and it is fascinating. To put it differently, fashion is the excessive form of the beautiful, the pure and empty form of a spiraling aesthetics. Hence, simulation is the ecstasy of the real. In general, every characteristics thus elevated to the superlative power caught in an intensifying spiral, is much more true than true, more beautiful than beautiful, more real than real. But Baudrillard's notion is a good one: the hyperreal is the cultural product of the

imaginary acting upon the real, intensifying and transforming it, Steven Best and Douglas Kellner again claim:

In a new era of simulation in which computerization, information processing, media, cybernetic control systems, and the organization of society according to simulation codes and models replace production as the organizing principle of society. If modernity is the era of production controlled by the industrial bourgeois the postmodern era of simulations by contrast is an era of information and signs governed by models, codes and cybernetics. (118)

The image is more important than substance. In these cases, the model becomes a determinant of the real, and the boundary between hyperreality and everyday life is erased. Here, images are seen as possessing the murderous capacity of the real just like the Byzantine icons being able to murder the divine identity. To this murderous capacity is opposed the dialectical capacity of representations as a visible and intelligible mediation of the real. Actually, the real is produced from miniaturized models.

All the human practices are reduced to the signs which attest the human experiences. Then, the entire system becomes weightless, since it is reduced to the code; it is a gigantic simulacrum, not real, but a simulacrum without reference or circumstance. But, it is not an exchange of real. Rather it is opposed to representation because representation starts from the principle that the sign and the real are equivalent even if the equivalence is utopian. Conversely, simulation starts from the utopian principle of equivalence giving up every reference. Reichart Tarnus rightly views, "Reality is not a solid self contained given but a fluid, unfolding process, an open universe [...] it is possibility rather than fact [...] and symbol formation is

recognized as a fundamental and necessary element in the human understanding, anticipation, and creation of reality” (396). Tarnus challenges the reality as it is found in daily lives; rather it is an unfolding procession symbols.

Baudrillard claims that reality vanishes altogether in a haze of images and signs. When the real life is a restructured in a different world abandoning the contextual things in a new form. And this new form itself becomes a real. Linda Hutcheon rightly says:

Perhaps parody is a particularly apt representation strategy for postmodernism, a strategy once described as the use of parallel script rather than original inscription. Were we to head the implications of such a model, we might have to reconsider the operations by which we both create and give meaning to our culture through representation and that is not bad for a so called nostalgic escapist tendency. (42)

The replications are, it should be noted, not mere imitations but totally authentic reproduction, and indistinguishable in almost all respects from human beings. They are simulacra rather than robots. They have been designed as the ultimate form of short term, so, they are a perfect example of a worker endowed with all of the qualities necessary to adopt to conditions of flexible accumulation.

Baudrillard is not merely suggesting that postmodern culture is artificial, because the concept of artificiality still requires some sense of reality against which to recognize the artifice. His point, rather is that we have lost all ability to make sense of the distinction between nature and artifice. Baudrillard talks about four kinds of “signs” which show the picture of the visual world. First, the sign represents the basic reality. Society is organized as a fixed system of signs distributed according to rank

and obligation. The question of reality doesn't arise: the meaning of signs is already established in advance. It is a good appearance: the representation is of the order sacrament. About these kinds of signs Peter gives an example:

The representation of the industrial city of Salford in the work of the twentieth century British artists L. S. Lowry. Mid-century life for working people in such a place was hard, and the paintings have an air of monotony and repetitions cowed stick like figures fill the streets, colours are muted and the horizon filled with grim factory like buildings. As signs, then Lowry's paintings seem to represent the basic reality of the place they depict. (87)

Here, Peter seems right while giving the example of Baudrillard's concept of sign. In Lowry's painting, he finds the picture of reality.

The second stage for the sign is that it misrepresents or distorts the reality behind it. It is an evil appearance: of the order of malefic. Similarly, the third stage of sign disguised the fact where there is no corresponding reality underneath. It is in this phase, the images play at being an appearance: it is of the order of the sorcery. The fourth and last stage for the sign is that it bears no relation to any reality at all. Here, it is no longer in the order of appearance at all, but of simulation. Further, Peter writes about the fourth phase of the sign it is "as illusion of the stage we have simply to imagine a complete abstract painting which is not representational at all. (88)

The model that Baudrillard (1994) presented in simulacra and simulation begins with a phase that is easily recognized and accepted, the concept that the image reflects reality. In a rational culture, reality is generally reliant upon facts and objects. Baudrillard's second phase of the image that the image mask and denatures a

profound reality may manifest itself as distrust of the media and government. The third phase of the image that the image masks the absence of a profound reality- might be understood through Baudrillard's argument that it is not "a question of a false representation of reality but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle" (12-13). Baudrillard's fourth phase of the image, that the image has no relation to reality whatsoever, suggests that the simulation of powers of meaning, of reality, can continue indefinitely because it is the object of social demand (26). The hyperreal suggests no distinction between the real and the imagery, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and for the simulated generations of difference" (3).

The fourth phase of simulacra can be particularly disturbing in its implication that images have no real referent. Baudrillard suggested that the cultural shift from a mode of production to a mode of shift from a mode of production to a mode of information has caused the dissolution of 'reality' and movement toward the disappearance "of the real, of meaning, of the stage, of history, of the social, of the individual" (162). Baudrillard's phases of the image provide a structure through which we can consider the unstructured, the symbolic, and the simulacra of phenomena in our social and political environments. Perhaps with further exploration of the separation between reality and image, the simulacra in policy making and policy implementation can be recognized more reality. With an understanding of simulacra, policy makers and bureaucrats may be able to make choices that bring more meaning to information and action.

For Baudrillard, signs are everything's they are omnipotent, omnipresent and they do not conceal any things, hence, the world of signs is Disneyland. Of course it is a sign of the second type which is mythologized misrepresentation of the USA.

Hyperreal is presented as imaginary to make people believe that the rest of the world is real. “Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the real country, all of ‘real’ America, which is Disneyland” (406). In fact, all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are just like Disneyland. None of them is real. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality, but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus of saving the reality principle. Peter says, “Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the real country all of real America which is Disneyland in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence which is carceral. Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real” (89). Densification of all ordinary and indispensable human practices is possible through the employment of the symbols and it is not the real human practices and at the same time it is not separated from the real even. Hence, it is the rearticulated and reproduced world of the reality which bases on the reality. Hyperreal and imaginary Disneyland is a perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulation. To begin with it is play of illusions and phantasms.

### **Postmodern Images in Media**

It is somehow impossible to present the real world as it is found in daily life. It can be possible through the use of the images the entire human activities are in existence since it has enabled the things to expose in any way. The use of the signs and images makes the impossible things possible. Media works by employing the images. Any understanding of social, cultural and political change is impossible without the knowledge of the way the media works. The world presented through the images in media is not a real world since it doesn’t show the world as it is, rather it shows a world which is hyperreal, Marshall McLuhan rightly says:



Ours is a brand new world of allatoceness. Time has ceased. Space has vanished. We now live in a global village [...] a simultaneous happening. We are back in acoustic space. We have begun again to structure the primordial feeling, the tribal emotions from which a few centuries of literary divorced us. (151)

Mcluhan's idea is today's world is the combination of the past event and the present. Thus in the modern world two world can be found within one that represents past as well as present. Similar ideas have been put by Mark Poster, "This is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us: a strategy of the real, neo-real and hyperreal, whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence" (171). His idea is that computer generated world is a hyperreal world.

We get the information through the media in an electric speed. As a result, we can no longer wait and see at the high speed of electric communication. The matters demonstrated on the television screen are supposed to show relevant issues that we could experience in our daily lives. But very sadly, we are to confront this new situation with an enormous backlog of outdated mental and psychological responses. While watching television, the watches do not find out what truth is and what is untruth since the television world is made through the process of selection which is needed. We are in a constant confusion as Mcluhén responses this situation "We have been left d-a-n-g-l-i-n-g" (152). Electronic signings profoundly have their own world wince employed signs do not totally refer to the real things and at the same time they are not quite new things. In the media culture the actual information is replaced by newer information. People can no longer understand the information thoroughly. But at the same time, people are not unknown about the world because newly reproduced

computerized signs show, to some extent, the actual information but people can not be sure about the true information.

In the last hundred years, the media has increasingly become a primary source of information in the American culture. Without media, we have a sense of being uninformed, yet, with media, we are saturated with world that becomes so intimately familiar that they adapt, or mutate, for replication in multiple contexts. Information is socially selected for its resilience rather than for its meaning. Commercial advertisement has taken advantage of language, or linguistics symbols, for decades, producing jungles and phrases that can be remembered and repeated. Politicians take much the same approach when communicating to the publics. Although symbols have always been associated with politics, the referents of the symbols have changed with the proliferation of mass communication. In other words, the symbols of political communication have changed from referencing real activities to referencing only the meaning of the symbols themselves. The symbols in communication become a reality in and of themselves, like a myth that perpetuates itself in mutated form long after it has deviated so much from the original “true” event that there is no longer any reality behind it.

While watching the images shown in the television all the sense organ involve simultaneously rather than that of sight alone. We are to be with it. But an electronic phenomenon, the visual is only one component in a complex interplay. At the age of information where science and technology are at peak, most images or signs are arranged electrically. The electronic technology is to show only the desired things. The images, by scrutinizing, are shown in television. However, the images are not untrue and further they are not absolute truth also. At this phase, the images become hyper images. Jean Baudrillard examines the American television which deals with

the “Loud Family” in 1971. He concludes after watching the images in television, an absurd paradoxical formula neither true nor false utopian. In this study he finds the images distorting the reality. It is camera lens that comes to pierce lived reality in order to put it to death violating someone’s privacy. Pleasure in the microscopic simulation that allows the real to pass into the hyperreal. The domain of media culture is hyperreal by the very nature of selection and distortion.

The very important point about his family is, does television tell the truth of the family or the truth of television itself? Undoubtedly icons about the Loud Family produced by the television are not true but the television culture is true. It is television that renders true. Baudrillard says:

Truth that is no longer the reflexive truth of the mirror, nor the perspective truth of the panoptic system and of the gaze, but the manipulative truth of the test that sounds out and interrogates, of the laser that touches and pierces, of computer cards that retain your preferred sequences, of the genetic code that controls your combination, of cells that, inform your sensory universe. (163)

Hence, in the eye of Baudrillard, the eye of television is no longer the source of an absolute watch, and the ideal of control is no longer that of transparency. Moreover, it creates a kind of new world hiding the real world. It is no longer a culture of the spectacle of which the situationists speak. It is intangible, diffused, and diffracted in the real. Baudrillard views “such a blending such a viral, endemic, chronic, alarming presence of medium...” (163). Signs in television world neither are disease nor a vital infection for him. Rather he suggests the people to think the media as a kind of genetic code that directs the mutation of the real into the hyperreal. It gives us information and equally dominates us. Baudrillard seems to be right in saying, “TV is

watching us, TV alienates us, TV manipulates us, TV informs us.” (164) The pole of reality and imagining vanishes when sign represent them and becomes simulation.

When the events are presented through the employment of images, at the time, the images represent the events rather than present it. Therefore, the audiences encounter the world of the images and find out information after observing the images. Images, that are articulated abandoning several reference, become more real than the real events thus the world of images become hyperreal.

Predominantly, the images have played a major role in the modern age. It is through images the modern age can be understood. In the domain of literature or politics or media or science and technology, society, or in other words in almost everywhere the images are found to be employed immensely. It is a major feature of the postmodernism. And, all the images are used to create a new world replacing the previous the real world. Jim Collins views that:

One of the key precondition of the postmodern condition of signs and their endless circulation, generated by the technological developments, associated with the information explosion (cable television, VCRs, digital recording, computers, etcetera). These technologies have produced an ever increasing surplus of texts, all of which demand out attention in varying degree of intensity. (193)

Here, Collins states that the signs produce the meaning, no matter they can be reducible. All the signs employed in the text or in media give the meaning and that is what the reality is. Jean Baudrillard has claimed that contemporary culture is television culture (media culture) which is endless simulation where reality simply disappears. To Baudrillard, television (media) is cause as well as system allegedly constructing a seamless realm of simulations that hides our acquisition of the really

real. Whether or not we live in a world of simulacra, the term is certainly important in light of how we view media. Media theorist, especially Jean Baudrillard, have been intensely concerned with the concept of the simulation in lieu of its interaction with our notion of the real and the original, revealing in this preoccupation. Media's identity not as a means of communication, but as a means of representation. When media reach a certain advanced state, they integrate themselves into daily "real" experience to such an extent that the unmediated sensation is indistinguishable from the mediated, and the simulation becomes confused with its source. The simulation differs from the image and the icon in the active nature of its representation, the simulacrum: the image of a simulation has since been extended theoretically, and in the recent theory exemplified by the work of Baudrillard functions as a catch- all term for systems still operating despite the loss of what previous meaning they had held.

The mass media- television, advertisements, films, magazines, and newspaper plays the important role to hide the real world and to create a new world which later becomes the realer more than the real. These all are concerned not just with relaying information 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 the world around us. Baudrillard was fascinated by how media affect our perception of reality of the world. He concluded that in the postmodern media laden condition, we experience something called "the death of the real". We live our lives in the realm of hyperreality, connecting more and more deeply to things like television, sit corns, music videos, virtual reality games, or Disney land, things that merely simulated reality.

In short, outward visible world comes into existence when it transfigures into images. The images of the thing appear in human mind after an individual experiences them. Hence, images, symbols, signs etc. are means for representing reality. Since they represent reality, it can be called the hyperreal things. And, our mind functions by the images. Literature, media, society, politics deal with the images, hence their world is not the real world, but they represent the actual world replacing the previous real world, Baudrillard argues that in a postmodern culture dominated by TV, films, newsmedia and the internet, the whole idea of a true or a false copy of something has been destroyed: all we have now are simulations of reality, which aren't any more or less real than the reality they simulate. In our culture, Baudrillard claims, we take "maps" of reality like television, film etc. as more real than our actual lives.

### III. Implication of Simulacra in DeLillo's *White Noise*

*White Noise* written by Don DeLillo is divided to three parts: Waves and Radiation, The Airborne Toxic Event and Dylarama. As the readers go through the text, they find all the chapters full of various images and signs replacing reality to create the new simulacrum world. This chapter deals about the movement of the character and the plots towards the world of simulacra. Furthermore, we analyze here that how the writer of *White Noise* uses the various images, signs and electronic media to replace the real world.

The simulacrum “a copy as that an original,” is the most salient metaphor of *White Noise*, a novel in which simulations exploit real catastrophes, and in which tourists visit the “Most Photographed Barn in America”, (12) not to see the barn but to see photographs of the barn. Further emphasizing the distance between experience and expression is the novel’s emphasis in the ineluctably representative nature of language. The disconnection between signifier and signified, pointedly demonstrated in conversation between the narrator, Jack Gladney, his son, Heinrich, and the collapse of etymologically sound meaning suggests that words, too, are copies without originals. Dejavu, one of the many shifting symptoms of contamination from the airborne toxic event, renders memory itself suspect, suggesting that the earlier experiences upon which recollections seem to depend may not exist. The lack of originality moments results in a persistent conversation with the past, an overwhelming nostalgia for a more stable moment in history.

DeLillo seems a new form of subjectivity emerging as the modernist order is eclipsed by the postmodern world. Indeed, an older modernist subjectivity is in a state of siege in the information society. Jack Gladney, the narrator of *White Noise* is a modernists displaced in a postmodern world. He exhibits a Kierkegaardian ‘fear and

trembling' regarding death and attempt to preserve earlier notions of an authentic and coherent identity by observing the tribalistic rituals of family life. Gladney attempts to "shore up the ruins" of an older order, ironically by chanting advertising slogans as if they were sacred formulas. Yet he often succumbs to the Baudrillardian condition, floating 'ecstatically' in a delirium of networks, hyperreal surface, and fetishized consumer objects. Gladney's narrative is interspersed with the entropic chatter and snippets of talk shows that emerged from a television that migrates around the Gladney household, moving from room to room, filling the air with jingles and consumer advice ("the T.V. said: 'And other trends that could dramatically impact your portfolio'") (61). His narrative is interpenetrated by brand names and advertising slogans as he chants, "MasterCard, Visa, American Express... Leaded, unleaded, super unleaded... Dristan Ultra, Dristan Ultra... Clorets, Velamints, Freedent" (100, 99, 167, 229). These 'eruptions' in the narrative imply the emergence of a new form of subjectivity colonized by the media and decentered by its polyglot discourses and electronic networks. They imply the evacuation of the private spheres of self, in Baudrillardian terms 'the end of interiority' (Ecstasy 133).

Moreover, for Baudrillard and DeLillo the dissolution of a modernist subjectivity in the mire of contemporary media and technology is integrally connected to another issue: the passing of the great modernist notions of artistic impulse and representation, the demise of notions of a heroic search for alternative, creative forms of consciousness, and the idea of art as specially endowed revelation. Such a heroic modernism struggled through extraordinary artistic and intellectual effort to create meaning from the flux and fragments of an automated contemporary world, to pierce the veil, to reveal underlying truth. But, for DeLillo, such heroic striving for meaning has been radically thrown into question in the contemporary world, for at the core of



the modernist version of the heroic is the notion of the constitutive power of the imagination, the idea of an autonomous and authentic subjectivity out of which springs vision and illumination. Such is the modernist epiphany: a moment of profound imaginative perception in which fragments are organized and essence revealed, and in which a hermeneutical core of meaning is contained within a constellation of luminescent images. But *White Noise* suggests such moments of authentic and unfettered subjectivity are being supplanted by a Baudrillardian euphoria of 'schizophrenia' which characterizes the experience of the self in the space of the simulacrum. By rendering moments of heroic vision and imaginative epiphany as parody and pastiche- as he does in the climatic showdown between Gladney and Gray (a.k.a. Willie Mink)- DeLillo implies the exhaustion of late modernist, existentialist notions of heroism. As well, DeLillo's parody and "terrific comedy", (Lentricchia 1) underscore a crisis of representation relating directly to the collapse of patriarchal authority.

The postmodern order is registered in *White Noise* through the narrative voice of Jack Gladney sifts through the layers of *White Noise*- electronic media, printed information, traffic sounds, computer read-outs- listening for significance, for a grasp of essence in the flux. In modernist fashion, he struggles in an almost Sisyphean way to glean meaning from the surrounding noise of culture and is drawn toward occasions of existential self- fashioning, heroic moments of vision in a commodified world. When he shops with his family he notes that "I began to grow in value and self-regard. I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a person I'd forgotten existed" (84). And when he hears his daughter Steffie uttering the words "Toyota Corolla, Toyota Celica, Toyota Cressida", (155) in her sleep, his response is

“whatever its source, the utterance struck me with the impact of a moment of splendid transcendence” (155).

Yet Gladney's modernist impulse toward authentic selfhood and his quest for transcendental meaning seem oddly out of place in the postmodern world. Gladney's colleague Murray Siskind, a visiting lecturer in “living icons”, (10) who lives in a one-room apartment with a television set and stacks of comic books, and who teaches popular culture courses in “Elvis” and “The Cinema of Car Crashes”, (72) insists that looking for a realm of meaning beyond surfaces, networks, and commodities is unnecessary; the information society provides its own sort of epiphanies, and watching television, an experience he describes as “close to mystical,” (51) is one of them. For Murray television proffers the Baudrillardian “ecstasy of communication”, a “peak experience’ of postmodern culture. Television, he says:

Welcomes us into the grid, the network of little buzzing dots that make up the picture pattern. There is light, there is sound. I ask my students, “what more do you want?” Look at the wealth of data concealed in the grid, in the bright packaging, the jingles, the slice-of-life commercials, the products hurtling out of darkness, the coded messages and endless repetition, like chant, like mantras, “coke is it, coke is it, coke is it.” (51)

For Murray the postmodernist, the euphonic form of electronic data and information flow are to be enthusiastically embraced, and Murray takes it upon himself to be Gladney's tutor in the new semiotic regime. When Murray and Gladney drive into the country to see “The Most Photographed Barn in America,” (12) for example, Murray explains the significance of the tourist attraction within the new order of image and simulacrum. Rather than conjuring up associations with a pioneering past or an authentic rural life, the barn has been subsumed into the process of image replication;

it is surrounded by tour buses, roadside signs, vendors selling post cards of the barn, people taking pictures of the barn. Observing the tourists, Murray points to the postmodern experiences of proliferating images without ground: “they are taking pictures of taking picture” (13). Murray expounds solemnly on the unfolding of a new order where the distinction between reality and representation, sign and referent, collapse: “Once you’ve seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn” (12). He explains to the reluctant Gladney the logic of a simulational world where signs triumph over reality, where experience is constructed by and in service of the image, and the ephemeral image takes capture an image, we’re here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura. Can you feel it, Jack? An accumulation of nameless energies” (12).

This episode is one of the more famous scenes that accords with one of the major ideas from French philosopher Jean Baudrillard. The reproduced simulation has replaced the original reality. In Baudrillard’s prime example, he argues that Disneyland, a simulated fantasy environment, is somehow more “real” to us than “reality”. In *White Noise*, Murray makes the same point: it is only the most photographed barn because signs constantly reinforce the “aura” of its being photographed these signs, or simulacra, as Baudrillard refers to them, dictate reality. As a result, the tourists cannot see the real barn any more, but only the simulated, photographed barn and this is the barn that is real to them. “But as soon as the program ended, the two girls got excited again and went down stairs to wait for Babette at the door and surprise her with news of what they’d seen”(105). Babette’s appearance on TV is the simulated reproduction through the media.

Yet if Murray savors the flux of images and signs, Gladney is increasingly nonplused by a world without referents, where the responses of an authentic interior

self vanish in the undertow of the simulacrum and where media images and spectacles proliferate, terrorize, and fascinate. The “Airborne Toxic Event”, (127) depicts a condition where subjective responses are both constructed and validated by radio and television; initially the “toxic event” is reported as a “feathery plume,” (111) which induces curiosity and mild alarm, later it is described as a catastrophic “black billowing cloud,” (127) evoking fear “accompanied by a sense of awe that bordered on the religious” (127). Increasingly it becomes impossible to distinguish between the spectacle and the real, even the natural world the ultimate ground of the “real”- succumbs to a hyperreal condition of multiple regress without origin. Spectacular sunsets (which Gladney refers to as “postmodern sunsets),” (127) appear after the release of toxins into the atmosphere, but it is never certain whether the sunsets are caused by toxic chemicals or by the residue of microorganisms subsequently discharged by scientists into the atmosphere to eat the airborne chemicals. Exposure to the toxic materials released by the “event” causes déjà vu in the Gladney children, but it is unclear whether it is a ‘real’ symptom or a psychosomatic one resulting from suggestion, since they get the symptoms only after they hear them reported on the radio.

Gladney’s encounter with the SIMUVAC (simulated evacuation) underscores most profoundly the simulated or hyperreal world depicted in *White Noise*. SIMUVAC regularly stages efficient rehearsals for coping with real disasters – volunteers play dead and videotapes are sent for prompt analysis. Yet at the evacuation site during the toxic event, Gladney discovers that the SIMUVAC personnel are using the real event to rehearse and perfect a simulation. The world has been turned inside out; simulation has become the ground of the real: “you have to make allowance for the fact that everything we see tonight is real” (139). The

SIMUVAC man complains to Gladney, “we don’t have our victims laid out where we’d want them if this was an actual simulation.... There’s a lot of polishing we still have to do” (139).

Finally the world of *White Noise* one based on the abstract circulation of information follows the logic of the utter commutability of signs. Any semiological network can become a hermetic system into which the individual subject can be inserted and which constructs the self Gladney’s German teacher, for example, tells Jack how after his loss of faith in God he “turned to meteorology for comfort” and soon had created a universe of significance from the weather: “It brought me a sense of peace and security. I’d never experienced, Dew, frost, and fog,. Snow flurries. The jet stream... I began to come out of my shell, talk to people on the street. ‘Nice day.’ ‘Looks like rain.’ ‘Hot enough for you?’” (55).

Indeed, Gladney finds himself unwittingly drawn into this order in ‘which the subject is assembled in sign. Gladney is chairman of “Hitler Studies” which in itself suggests a grim nostalgic impulse to recuperate the “real” in an age of simulation but is nevertheless warned by the chancellor of the university about his tendency to make “a feeble presentation of self” (17). Gladney begins to wear heavy-rimmed sunglasses to bolster his credibility and changes his name from Jack Gladney to the more distinguished J.A.K. Gladney. Later, when his wife Babette expresses her irritation at the imposing, mirrored sunglasses and asks Gladney to stop wearing them, he retorts, “I can’t teach Hitler without them” (221). Any notion of an essential identity is all but erased in this realm of free-floating signifiers and simulation. Yet Gladney is unable, like his friend Murray, to submit himself happily to surface and simulacrum; rather he is plagued by a nagging late modernist, existential sense that he is in ‘bad faith’: “I am the false character that follows the name around” (17).

This crisis of subjectivity that Gladney faces in this hermetic universe of afterimages, ghosts, gloating signifies, and simulacra is compounded by another- his impending death after exposure to the deadly gas 'Nyodene D' during the evacuation. Gladney exhibits a modernist angst about death, ruminating about its significance, visiting graveyards, and talking about it with his friend Murray yet Gladney's existential crisis is obsolete in the new postmodern order. Gladney's anguished confession, "I want to live," (283) merely evokes from Murray a flight of free association along the intertextual surfaces of popular culture: "From the Robert Wise film of the same name, with Susan Hayward as Barbara Graham, a convicted murderer. Aggressive jazz score by Johnny Mandel" (283). Moreover, even death is not exempt from the world of simulation: the experience of dying is utterly mediated by technology and eclipsed by a world of symbols. The body becomes simulacrum, and death loses its personal and existential resonances.

### **Simulated Death in Don DeLillo's *White Noise***

The contemporary American culture and postmodernists are not the first to posit death as simulacra: death has, it seems, always been approached as simulacra. From the first notion of an afterlife, humans have actively sought to remove the reality from death. Jean Baudrillard writes in "Symbolic Exchange and Death", "Death should never be interpreted as an actual occurrence in a subject or a body, but rather as a form, possibly a form of social relations, where the determination of the subject and value disappears" (124). How is Baudrillard different from protestant ministers who tell mourners at a funeral to be happy because the person is not really dead but in heaven with Christ or Catholics who pray to dead saints as if they were alive for living persons who might die? It may not even be possible to take death from the personal to the public without it becoming simulacra. This may result from death's

position as the one point at which subjectively is completely removed; one can approach it as object. As object, then, death is redefined, either as “form” or “transition on to afterlife”, allowing one not to deal with the reality and finality of death. Postmodernism and contemporary American culture are different from religious only in how they approach death as simulacra. In Don DeLillo’s novel *White Noise* death and disaster are presented as simulation as hyperreal, but within each work, there is an unraveling of the postmodern denial of the real. DeLillo exposes the tendency of popular culture to be anesthetized to it.

DeLillo is especially aware of the representation of disaster in the news media. In *White Noise*, Jack Gladney and his family watch disaster on TV: “There were floods, earthquakes, mud slides, erupting volcanoes [...]. Every disaster made us wish for more, for something bigger, grander, more sweeping” (64). And, it seems as if the media are only becoming more focused on presenting disasters. For thirty minutes each evening, the networks broadcast airplane crashes, school shootings, and fighting in Macedonia and Gaza; as if “real” televised death were not enough, the networks supplement our viewing with the simulated deaths of Ebola viruses, asteroid collisions, and volcanoes. The multiplicity of images of death in the media creates a scenario in which death does not exist unless it appears on television, essentially, the only “real death” is that which is televised.

For Baudrillard, death is the Simulation, “the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (simulacra 1). According to this model American popular culture imitates death and in doing so creates the simulation; by living the simulation, the real disappears. Of course, all of this depends upon the real and the simulacra being a stable dichotomy. If the real seeps into the simulacra, if the subject becomes objectified, the structure can be exposed. Thus, death can be better

understood, not because the subject is directly experiencing it, but because the layer of culture between real and simulacra, subject and object, have been penetrated.

In *White Noise*, Murray Siskind notes how in American popular culture people are frequently identified by their cars, even after death: “The dead have faces, automobiles. [...] He drove an orange Mazda” (38). Further, after the turbulent airplane ride, the passengers are disappointed and angry because they went through a simulated death but were not rewarded with the normal appearance on television generally afforded such near-victims. This event is important as well because it allows DeLillo another perspective from which to comment on the difficulty in representing death. During the near crash of the airplane, one of the flight crew said, “They didn’t prepare us for this at the death simulator in Denver. Our fear is pure, so totally stripped of distractions and pressures as to be a form of transcendental meditation” (90). The fear of death, here, exceeds the representation, the simulation of it. However, the comment only has tangible meaning to those passengers during the event. DeLillo cleverly gives us this information through the voice of a passenger who heard it, further removing the audience from the event. The effect of the narrative distance is visible, even on the other passengers who are in the audience: “It was as if they were being told of an even they hadn’t personally been involved in. They were interested in what he said, even curious, but also clearly detached. They trusted him to tell them what they’d said and felt” (91). The ‘reality’ of the fear of death is already fading; the narrative is replacing the event. The fact that no media are there to record this story challenges its status as event; furthermore, with no public narrative of the event it will fade.

Television plays a central role throughout the novel. Jack’s students believe that “television is the death throes of the human consciousness” (51). This is an



aesthetic judgment, one that devalues mass culture; I would never have been able to afford Warhol to do my portrait, but I can be part of a television event. The slew of “KILL YOUR TELEVISION” stickers that I see in my English department suggests that this idea is not unique to Jack’s students. That same television is the center of the Gladney household: The entire family gather each evening for quality time by watching disaster footage on the television. Osteen comments that “When death is everywhere, it becomes more frightening” (165), but that presumes that the death is interpreted as “real”, simulated or replicated death appear to have the opposite effect. Osteen seems to recognize this, because later he writes, “televised apocalypses wrap social problems into tidy narrative parcels, reducing frightening events to formulaic fables” (174). Tom LeClair goes even further by saying that the effect of televised death is anesthetizing” (217). Death has been dullingly reduced to a mere image or picture. “The individual’s ultimate goal in *White Noise* is to become a part of the ‘culture industry’ of the TV, to become an image, to appear Haidir Eid views such as internal subjugation: on TV, and thus accept her/his subjugation feely” (11). Television has replaced religion, but what else do we have to keep ourselves “visible” or present after death; is this desire any different from those who write, those who point, those who in some way or other are inscribed in more traditional form? Television and film idols are the epitome of visual celebrity, and their fates become marked in time via television: The émigrés discuss where they were when Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Clark Gable and Joan Crawford died. The death of a culturally important figure serves as a point in the lives of the member of that culture which is eternally fixed in time and can be repeated ad infinitum. Death allows for perpetual life.

There is a conflation of Hollywood with California with American popular culture. After discussing the screen and TV stars, DeLillo's pop culture émigrés discuss California and its televised importance to the culture:

Only a catastrophe gets our attention. We want them, we need them, we depend on them. [...] This is where California comes in. Mud slides, brush fires, coastal erosion, earthquakes, man killings, etcetera. We can relax and enjoy there disasters because in our hearts we feel that California deserves whatever it gets. California invented the concept of life style. (66)

Technology and the media are as vital to the understanding of *White Noise*. In many ways, Babette is the figure who represents the application of simulacra (Murray is its theorist). There is one point when Jack sees her face on television- she gives lessons in posture, televised on community accessible- that he thinks that she is dead; at this moment, she has become the Want of Ballard icon whose media replication implies death. Terrified of death, Babette resorts to tabloid science, sex, and placebos. Dylar is promoted to cure death, but at best only stimulates the brain not to be afraid; it treats hyperreal death. Osteen argues that Babette believes that technology can counter death: "she also possesses the American faith that pills can defeat even death- or the fear of death" (182). Jack cites the interesting thing about Dylar, that it is technological as well as bio-chemical: "Those little white disks are superbly engineered. Laser technology, advanced plastics" (190). Thus, each time Babette ingests one.

When "the airborne toxic event" has begun, Jack's wife Babette urges him to turn the radio off:

"So the girls can't hear. They haven't gotten beyond the déjà vu, I want to keep it that way."

“What if the symptoms are real?”

“How could they be real?”

“Why couldn’t they be real?”

“They only get them only when they’re broadcast”. (133)

This is not just simple hypochondria: the girls, in fact the whole Gladney family, rely on the broadcasts for their well-being. The radio broadcasts, more than their own sensation effect how they think and feel. In the same way that his daughters don’t get sick until they hear it, Jack doesn’t believe, or know, or feel that he’s dying until his data, a simulacra of himself, is run through a computer. The resulting simulacrum of the calculation is his imminent death.

SIMUVAC (Simulated evacuation) embodies DeLillo’s clearest presentation of simulated death in American popular culture. During the Airborne Toxic Event (ATE), SIMUVAC person tells Jack that the computer shows that death is in Jack’s body:

“Am I going to die?”

“Not as such,” he said.

“What do you mean?”

“Not in so many words.”

“How many words does it take?”. (140)

Jack has incorporated death into his body, according to the computer, but one knows what that means; he is told that if he survives into his eighties, then he will not have to worry about the exposure to the ATE. For Jack, there seems to be a substantial difference between this “death” event and what he is shot. Although he has incorporated the ATE, there is no visible sign of penetration; the sign of death is outside of his body, on the computer monitor. However, when he is shot, the bullet

penetrates his body, leaving a visible sign. Within *White Noise* the ATE is important because it places the individuals within a mediaworthy disaster and allows us to see their incapacity to understand their situation. The “reality” of the event makes it unreal; for these people, the “real” only happens on TV, not to them directly.

After the Airborne Toxic Event, SIMUVAC decides it is necessary to have a simulated disaster because the real disaster did not happen exactly as they would have liked. The reason SIMUVAC is at the ATE in the first place was because they thought they “could use it as a model” (139). Jack questions this logic: “Are you saying you saw a chance to use the real event in order to rehearse the simulation?”. (139)

SIMUVAC is Baudrillard’s hyperreal; the simulation denies and removes the real. The SIMUVAC employee tells Jack the problems with the real event:

We don’t have our victims laid out where we’d want them if this was an actual simulation. In other words. We’re forced to take our victims as we find them. [...] You have to make allowances for the fact that everything we see tonight is real. There’s a lot of polishing we still have to do. But that’s what this exercise is all about (139).

The real is the dress rehearsal for the simulation. Something about the fear or immediacy of death cause Jack to try to prevent Mink from dying. Once Jack decides to try to save Mink, death reverts back to being simulacra because the rescue begins to sound like an overly heroic and melodramatic scene from television. The scene ends at a hospital, where Jack is shocked when a nun tells him that her order no longer believes:

Our pretense 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 in the world, people find it more necessary than ever that someone

believe. [...] Those who have abandoned belief must still believe in us.

[...] we surrender our lives to make your nonbelief possible. (319)

Christianity posits that death is not real, that one is merely passing from one life to the next; Christians death is simulacra. Thus, the nun represents the religious/secular binary, the idea that each needs the other in order to exist, but also, that the secular world wants someone else to believe, so that one's own miniscule hope that there is something after death is validated. As much as we don't believe in an afterlife, we want to be proven wrong. Religion has become the simulacra for the secular world in a similar way to which it has always been for believers. At the Most Photographed Barn in America, Murray tells Jack, "Once you've seen the sings about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn. [...] We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura" (12-13). DeLillo exposes the fissures of the simulacra, and in doing so, provides his critique. One cannot escape the simulacra, but by recognizing its structure and language, one has a better chance of understanding the cultural package and its contents.

Death and disaster are media events and cultural moments, but as such, they are deprived of much of their power and awe. Leonard Wilcox says of *White Noise* that

Even death is not exempt from the world of simulation: the experience of dying is utterly mediated by technology and eclipsed by a world of symbols. The body becomes simulacrum, and death loses its personal and existential resonances [...]. Media and technology transform death into a sign spectacle. (352-53)

In the culture represented by Baudrillard and DeLillo, popular culture, our culture, death is subject and simulacrum; it is the culture itself. By locating death on the

surface of culture, instead of beneath it, they demonstrate how culture, and they themselves as creators of cultural commodity, present death as simulacra and in doing so separate it from its meaning. In this, they are no different than those who hide death behind promises of eternal life. Hyperreal culture has done much to simulate death: From our lifestyles, to our houses, to the places we go to view Leonardo's glass The Last Supper. We believe that in repetition, death loses its sting. DeLillo has shown that for the most part, repetition and simulation do make us immune.

When Gladney is subjected to a computer scan to obtain a "data profile" on his condition, he notes that "it is when death is rendered graphically, is televised so to speak, that you sense an eerie separation between your condition and yourself. A network of symbols has been introduced, an entire awesome technology wrested from the gods. It makes you feel like a stranger in your own dying" (142). And as Gladney later tells Murray, "there's something artificial about my death. It's shallow, unfulfilling. I don't belong to the earth or sky. They ought to carve an aerosol canon my tombstone" (283).

Thus media and technology transform death into a sign spectacle, and its reality is experienced as the body doubled in technified forms: death by "print-out." But if death, the last vestige of the real, the final border of the self, becomes part of the procession of simulacra, what possibilities exist for meaning, value, for the autonomous self's endeavor to create meaning against death's limits and finality? In an order given over to simulation, such heroic impulses can only be rendered as parody and pastiche- the "blank parody" of exhausted or dead forms, the postmodern response to the disappearance of narrative norms that previously figured heroic action.

When Gladney discovers that Babette has contrived to obtain Dylar (a high tech chemical "cure" for the fear of death) by sleeping with the project manager of the

group working on the drug's research and development; he resolves to hunt out the project manager identified by Babette as "Mr. Tray" and kill him. Such a confrontation has all the makings of a heroic showdown. Yet from the outset Gladney's role of hero in the showdown is undermined in a variety of ways. A note of literary parody is struck even before Gladney meets Gray. After his exposure to Nyodeme D. during the airborne toxic events Gladney is diagnosed by the computerized scanners as harboring a fatal "nebulous mass", (280) in his body. His comments on his own predicament constitute an overt parody of the existential hero contemplating radical freedom against the knowledge of the inevitability of death: "How literary, I thought peevishly. Streets thick with the details of impulsive life as the hero ponders the latest phase in his dying" (281).

When Gladney confronts Gray, the "residential organizational genius," (285) of the Dylar research group, now a shabby, demented recluse, the scene becomes a pastiche of the existentialist epiphany- a "negative" epiphany which involves a lucid recognition of the absurd and contingent nature of reality, a moment of heroic self-fashioning based on the sudden perception that existence is grounded in nothingness and the individual is utterly free. When he goes to the seedy motel where Mink is living, there is a strong sense of the utter provisional and freedom which characterized Gladney's action: he proceeds by instinct, continually updating his plans. Gladney experiences an intensity of sensation as he enters Mink's room: "I stood inside the room, sensing things, noting the room tone, the dense air, information rushed toward me, rushed slowly, incrementally" (305). Gladney experiences with almost hallucinatory intensity the essential pulsating "thusness" of reality, and in so doing believes himself to be experiencing an unmediated vision of pure existence. "I knew the precise nature of events. I was moving closer to things in their actual state as I

approached violence, a smashing intensity water fell in drops, surfaces gleamed” (305).

Yet these perceptions are related in a dry, toneless fashion appropriate to pastiche, which implies a world where fragmented or heterogeneous linguistics islands supplant centered, heroic narrative positions, a world where the possibility of unique vision and style has been lost. Thus rather than the parodic imitation of a peculiar and unique style, DeLillo's pastiche involves a play of stylistic mannerisms, from the high modernist heroics of the existential hero to the B-movie heroics of the hard-boiled detective. Even as he approaches the motel, Gladney assumes the voice over style of the Raymond Chandler hero : “It occurred to me that I didn’t have to know. The door would be open” (305). This B-movie quality is furthered by Gladney’s insistence upon inflating the narrative as he dwells repetitively on his sensory apocalypse: ‘surfaces gleamed. Water Struck the roof in spherical masses, globules, splashing drams” (307). “The precise nature of events. Things in their actual state” (310). But these observations of an intensified reality rapidly descend into ludicrous banality, and rather than an epiphany of identity, Gladney undergoes a farcical loss of self:

I continued to advance in consciousness. Things glowed a secret life rising out of them. Water struck the roof in elongated orbs, splashing drams. I knew for the first time what rain really was. I knew what wet was. I understood the neurochemistry of my brain, the meaning of dreams. Great stuff everywhere, racing through the room, racing slowly. A richness, a density. I believed everything. I was a Buddhist, a Join, a Duck River Baptist. (310)



Moreover, just as the secure narrative position required by the heroic figure is destabilized by pastiche, the revelations of the heroic transcendental ego are ultimately transformed into a postmodern decentering of self, an “ecstatic” Baudrillardian dispersal of consciousness in the world of screens and networks. As Gladney enters Gray’s motel room he observes that “I sensed I was part of a network of structures and channels” (305). As the narrative continues, metaphors of the experience of Dasein through which Being Coalesces in an existential moment of recognition startlingly shift to metaphors of the world of networks, information, and white noise: “The intensity of the noise in the room was the same at all frequencies. Sound all around... I knew who I was in the network of meanings” (312). The whole atmosphere, so charged with unusual vitality, now becomes bathed in the eerie glow of television: “auditory scraps, tatters, whirling specks. A heightened reality. A denseness that was also a transparency. Surfaces gleamed” (307).

Gladney’s existential epiphany now begins to resemble the ‘peak experience’ typifying the postmodern condition- one similar to Baudrillard’s description of schizophrenia- the ultimate outcome of an “obscenity of communication,” (Ecstasy 128) in which the self succumbs utterly to “network of influence” (130). Baudrillard describes schizophrenia as “the absolute proximity, the total instantaneity of things ... the overexposure and transprence of the world which traverses without obstacle” (133). In this “delirium” of communication, the schizophrenic exists only as a nodal point of “switching center”, his mental and physical boundaries dissolve in the flow of information as he experiences the cognitive equivalent of *White Noise*.

Alarmingly, Gladney peak experience rapidly metamorphoses into this Baudrillardian nightmare. Indeed, it becomes similar to Fredric Jameson’s description of the transformation of the expressive energies of modernism into the fragmentation

of emotions in the diffuse and discontinuous schizoid world of postmodernism. For Jameson, this schizophrenic experience is one in which the world takes on a “hallucinogenic intensity” (“Cultural Logic” 73). Gladney’s experience has this hallucinatory quality, yet if it initially resembles the Sartrean visionary moment in its intensity, its sense of depth, of unmediated reality and pure existence is ultimately a chimera. Rather than an epiphany of identity, it constitutes a dissolution of self, a life world reduced. In Jameson’s terms, “to an experience of pure material signifiers, or in other words of a series of pure and unrelated present in time” (72). DeLillo has created a schizophrenic character in Willie Mink, but Jack Glandey experiences some of the same symptoms. The disconnected signifier looms imposingly, “ever more vivid in sensory ways”; “a signifier that has lost its signified has thereby been transformed into an image” (Jameson 120). *White Noise* is filled with such luminous images, not as an effect of Dylar, but as an effect of the mass media. John Frow comments that, in *White Noise*, “real moments and TV moments interpenetrate each other [...] the world is so saturated with representations that it becomes increasingly difficult to separate primary actions from imitations of actions” (421). The mind-numbing effects of Dylar and of the mass media work together to produce schizophrenia in Willie Mink; and Jack, having witnessed their combined effects on Mink, loses interest in Dylar. Similarly, the figuration of SIMUVAC suggests that signifiers refer to a model, in the Baudrillardian sense, rather than to a signified that exists in reality. Gladney is temporally suspended as he continues to revise his plans to kill Mink in a toneless, chantlike fashion, perpetually rewriting a present which seems without link to past and future. And as temporal continuities breakdown, his experience of the present becomes overwhelmingly vivid: When he shoots Mink he marvels at Mink’s blood, sees its color “in terms of dominant wavelengths luminance,

purity” (312). Yet in spite of this heightened intensity, the encounter suggest not the existentialist sense that pure existence looms up as artificial words that constructs drop away, but rather the postmodern awareness that words themselves construct reality. The dominant impression of Gladney’s account, in fact, is wordiness, a proliferation of words. Words themselves look up in hyper present materiality; when hw shoots Mink, not sound so much as word, echo around the room: “I fired the gun, the weapon, the pistol, the firearm, the automatic” (312).

Gladney ultimately botches his plan to kill Mink and steal the Dylar: Mink devours the Dylar, and Gladney, after wounding. Mink, takes him to the hospital. More significantly, the encounter with Mink suggests the untenability of heroic self-fashioning, as Gladney’s epiphany collapses into postmodern schizophrenia. Rather than a moment of pure, unfettered subjectivity, Gladney’s experience implies the evacuation of the self, as the deep structures of modern experience- as well as modern narrative succumb to a postmodern crisis of the sign and representation, to “networks of influences” to a discontinuous schizoid world, and to *White Noise*.

This world in which the ultimate, transcendent ‘name of the father’ is simulational implies a crisis in the deeply patriarchal structures of late capitalism, a world in which there is a troubling of the phallus, in which masculinity slips from its sure position. Initially this insufficiency of masculine authority is suggested by Gladney’s position as head of a family of five children, most of whom are brought from earlier marriages. Gladney’s string of ex-spouses and his collection of children from previous marriages are connected through time and global space by electronic networks. When one of Jack’s ex-wives telephones, he comments that “her tiny piping voice bounced down to me from a hollow bal in geosynchronous orbit” (273).

Baudrillard's position toward the postmodern world is ultimately one of radical skepticism: finally there is nothing outside the play of simulations, no real in which a radical critique of the simulation society might be grounded. Given a world such as that which *White Noise* depicts, a culture based on the mode of information, there seems little chance of returning unproblematically to a modernist sensibility, with its heroic strivings for imaginative unity and an "unmediated" vision. In fact the novel suggests that to go back would be a form of nostalgia, could in fact lead in the direction of "Hitler Studies" and a grim recuperation of a mythic unity and an "authenticity" of blood and soil "the more powerful the nostalgia, the closer you come to violence," says Murray (258). Yet the final image of Gladney suggests that DeLillo would wish to retain some aspects of the legacy of modernism in a postmodern world- such as the ideal of a rational, autonomous subjectivity- and that he is highly critical of a commodified, fast-image culture that threaten to bring about 'the end of interiority', Gladney's modernist "last stand" is his refusal to submit to the "imaging block", in which the body is irradiated with the information of "ecstatic communication" and in which his impending death is consigned to a technologico-semiological hyperreality:

Dr. Chakravarty wants to talk to me but I am making it a point to stay away. He is eager to see how my death is progressing.... He wants to insert me once more in the imaging block, where charged particles collide, high winds blow. But I am afraid of the imaging block. Afraid of its magnetic field, its computerized nuclear pulse. (325)

A failure at heroism, Gladney shops at the supermarket and contemplates his "fear and trembling" about death, an indication that his subjectivity has yet to be completely swallowed up in the hyperreal. DeLillo sympathies surely must with his

protagonist as Gladney holds tight to his fear of death in a society where the fear of death, like other aspects of the deep structures of subjectivity, is being transformed into images, codes, simulation and charismatic spectacle; standing in the supermarket checkout line, Gladney ominously notes the “tabloids in the racks,” (326) and their tales of the “cults of the famous and the dead” (326).

In this way the final chapter is related to the replacement of the reality by the use of various images, icons, signs and electronic Medias. The novel *WhiteNoise* deals about the post modern concept ‘Simulacra’ and shows how the western culture and society are in the grip of simulation.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Don DeLillo's masterpiece *White Noise* deals with simulacra. The main character Jack Gladney confronts a new order where images and electronic representations replace the reality. By using the simulacra, the television images, the radio reports, the newspaper reports and the signs in *White Noise* DeLillo primarily shows the replacement of the reality so as to create a new reality in which such representation precede.

The postmodern writer DeLillo has shown the replacing of reality with simulacra applying postmodern idea. The main character Gladney discovers that the SIMUVAC personnel are using the real event to rehearse and perfect a simulation. The simulated evacuation, SIMUVAC views it as practice for an actual simulation. Its status as a simulation takes precedence over its use for a real emergency. On its second, simulated use, the people behind SIMUVAC continue to worry over its use in simulation, not in reality.

The SIMUVAC, or simulated evacuation, is perhaps the most extreme example of the tension between what is real and what is artificial. For SIMUVAC, real event, such as the airborne toxic event- which was itself caused by a derivative of an original chemical- are used to prepare for later simulations, and later simulations are used to prepare for other simulations. In this environment, where technology allows for endless duplication, it becomes increasingly difficult to ascertain where reality ends and replication begins.

In the same way, the other major scene involving the dominance of simulacra is when Jack and Murray visit what signs call "the most photographed barn" in America. As Murray notes, people pay more attention to the signs than to the actual barn; they are wrapped in the simulated idea more than in the real barn. Another vivid presentation in the text to support the research can be found as simulation versus

reality is when the family sees Babette on TV. At first they are frightened, but soon realize what is happening; only wilder, not yet schooled in the way of simulacra continues to believe it is really Babette and cries by the TV. While going through the text, it is found that the TV and the radio appear as extensions of the human voice and eye. The novel presents these media following the postmodernist idea that they are message in themselves shapes of perception, fragmentation of reality. By this and that way, DeLillo presents the various images and signs as reality to present simulacra in the novel.

DeLillo's novels frequently show contemporary society struggling with a nostalgic palimpsest of old-fashion values that have been layered over by the textual, semiotic materialism of marketing, commodification, and computer codes. DeLillo reportedly writes a novel of simulacra with an endless regress of mediation and so is found in the present text *White Noise*.

This text makes it easier for the post modernists to express their ideas confidently. Hyperreality is a concept propounded by Jean Baudrillard towards the end of twentieth century. DeLillo's text *White Noise* is also written in the same period in 1985. It is indeed impossible to draw the boundary line between the simulacrum world and the real world. The world of imagination can not be reality but becomes a criterion for knowing reality; therefore, the images world is hyperreal world.

Similarly, cinematic world is not actual world but it is about the actual things. Employed images in cinema, television and computer are not exactly the same things that occurred in reality but are an equivalent reality regenerated in a different form ignoring contextual reality. In modern time, computerized world or television world has been a virtual world of the real things. In the absence of virtual reality, the present world would be beyond imagination since every real things come into existence

through virtual reality. Simulated world of *White Noise* is a virtual reality which is shown by employing computer or television model of mind. In cinematic world, the reality exists beyond space which is known as cyber space. Here, in the novel, Gladney and other characters reality exist beyond their spatiotemporal situation; hence, their world is cyberpunk world. Their conditions in the novel meet criterion of hyperreality. All the characters applied symbol, images and signs to replace the reality which is the representation of the real world.

In a nutshell, DeLillo's *White Noise* is a novel showing replacement of the reality by the use of various images and signs and to create a new reality in which such representation precede. In the same way, the electronic medias throughout the novel hide the reality and create the new reality which is more than the originality. As a whole, in the text *White Noise* DeLillo has challenged the concept of reality.



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