

CONSUMPTION AND UNPREDICTABILITY IN MODERN AMERICAN CULTURE: DON DELILLO'S PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF CONSUMER CULTURE AND UNRELIABILITY IN WHITE NOISE

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to do a postmodern examination of Don DeLillo's science fiction novel *White Noise*, that explores the absurdity of existence and people's hypocritical interactions with one another. This article's goal is to expose American popular culture, which is heavily reliant on consumerism, by theoretically dismantling postmodern components. The study's focus has remained on the modern way of living, where people find fulfilment in fabricating a false sense of self and giving their own self-constructed realities significance. Additionally, this essay exposes the postmodern diversions that characters in the book engage in through media, TV, radio, and technology. These distractions keep people from focusing on life's real issues. In addition, the novel's central theme—which illustrates the uncertainties of life—is death. During the entire book, it conjures up a strange and gloomy atmosphere. The research gap will be filled by this paper's critical analysis of all the ways that consumerism has affected American society as it is presented in DeLillo's novel *White Noise*, as well as the fallibility of many of the sources and goods he mentions.

Keywords: contemporary lifestyle, postmodernism, absurdity, consumer culture, death

INTRODUCTION

Life in the postmodernist era of today is based on pointless consumerist tasks that drive people to absurdity and purposelessness. One of the greatest authors, short story writers, novelists and essayists in America is Don DeLillo. He has authentically and widely emphasized a variety of postmodern themes in his writings, such as sports, economic and political issues, science fiction, sports, nuclear and cold wars, and the current digital and technical environment. According to DeLillo, his fiction is about "living in dangerous times." As a postmodern author, DeLillo created his book, *White Noise* (1985), as a science fiction, which clearly depicts a postmodern American society that is built on the philosophy of consumerism where people indulge in hyperrealism while leading unpredictable lives.

DeLillo writes thrillers, science fiction, and astronomy in combination. They can be referred to as self-aware because they distinctly reorganize contemporary society such that they always seem new to us. The idea of buying consumer items and finding satisfaction in materialism overwhelms the novel's all characters. The novel is a critique of the

modern lifestyle, in which individuals find fulfilment in fabricating a false sense of self and find purpose in reshaping and self-constructing their own reality. Distractions like media, TV, radio, and technology are what draw people in. Their attention is diverted from the real issues facing humanity by these distractions. For them, reality is fiction. They indulge themselves in consumerism and artificial realities of life.

People have been profoundly impacted by media and technology in all of their manifestations. Nearly every element of human existence is influenced by the concept of consumption. From personal preferences to familial and societal ties, it causes a community to become estranged, untrustworthy, and full of uncertainties and wildness. *White Noise* by Don DeLillo is interpreted as a book about the noise that white people create in the society. (Engles 1999) The postmodern society in which we currently reside is replete with instances of fallaciousness, absurdity, futility, and evading the truth—all of which are themes in DeLillo's *White Noise*.

The main character in the book, Jack Gladney, relies on inadequate domains and a wildly fabricated lifestyle to live and work in a false world. Babette, his spouse, has been used as a test subject for the life-extending medication Dylar, which has made her fearless in the face of death. The *White Noise*'s characters are ready to accept life's absurdities and faulty logic. Additionally, the book *White Noise* exhibits postmodernism as Jack Gladney, the main character, navigates a society that is becoming more and more dominated by commercial fantasy. In addition to approaching information with anxiety and skepticism, DeLillo's books epitomize postmodernism. Furthermore, truth in postmodern philosophy is not reality, but rather a constantly changing concept that is relative. Jack Gladney, the book's narrator, continuously makes connections between what at first glance appear to be unrelated occurrences in attempt to make sense of this confusing universe.

These days, consumerism is what makes the modern world unique. It is a way of living that centers on obtaining and using goods to enhance one's quality of life. In order to fill the gap, this research paper will elaborate on the idea of postmodernism and show in what ways its main ideas have had a big influence on consumer culture. The current research paper will also discuss the detrimental effects of consumerism on people's mental, emotional and physical well-being as well as the aspects of postmodern society's search for hyperrealism that demonstrate its unreliability. They develop a false consciousness that allows them to live in a state of endless consuming and escape the real world. This paper's main focus will be on the effects of postmodern consumerism.

Research Questions:

- In Don DeLillo's book *White Noise*, which aspects are deemed untrustworthy?
- Of what ways do the characters of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* show skepticism about their lives?

Objectives:

- To expose consumer culture and the fallibility of modern life in DeLillo's *White Noise*.
- To uncover the facets of modern American society that the novel portrays as ludicrous.

Research Methodology:

The novel *White Noise* by Don DeLillo serves as the primary source of research for this study. Reputable essays, dissertations, and articles about the chosen book will serve as secondary materials. The historical content of postmodernism would also be investigated in order to gather crucial data in favour of the position. The available data has been examined using the literature review method in order to carry out a qualitative investigation.

Literature Review

When Don DeLillo wrote *White Noise* in 1985, the only media outlets that were accessible were radio, television, periodicals, and advertisements. Individuals were more impacted and captivated by the content they used to read and see in the media. It is sometimes referred to as the "dawn" of a transformative period in human history for the presence of technology. By examining the ways in which media shapes our thoughts and emotions, we can begin to understand how it contributes to a sense of distrust and fear. It is essential for individuals and society as a whole to develop critical thinking skills, recognizing the role that media plays in shaping our perceptions and attitudes towards death.

These uncertainties and anxieties cause people to look into pointless methods to escape the terror of death, and they frequently engage in absurd behaviours to make the concept of death seem more positive. It appears that the Gladneys are experiencing uneasiness and uncertainty. They visit shopping centres and buy their typical purchases to calm their anxiety and only find solace in the media. When information technology and multimedia emerged, people were both excited about the new areas of knowledge they might explore and afraid of the risks that came along with this development. In an interview with William Goldstein for Publishers Weekly on August 19, 1988, Don DeLillo himself described worry as being "about danger, modern danger" (Britto Jenobia and Sekar). The protagonists of *White Noise* encounter terrorism, a lack of autonomy and decision-making, isolation, disillusionment, and boredom in their lives. The main characters in the book are plagued by the fear of dying and are looking for cures or means to delay their inevitable demise. They rearrange their life in the process, finding comfort in material possessions. For them, frequently visiting shopping centers provides a sense of escapism from the emptiness and

purposelessness that often characterize their daily life. By indulging in the thrill of the hunt for new products and experiences, the characters can momentarily distract themselves from the existential questions and uncertainties that may be weighing on their minds.

In her thesis, "The Influence of Technology on Postmodern American Society in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*," Redouane Oumaima marks the following claim: "Don DeLillo highlights the power of the image that is produced by television to the extent that it shapes reality, and the effect that is considered as a consequence caused through Media which is consumerism" (Oumaima). She additionally claims, "In a world where television, advertising, and media manipulation tend to give reality the illusion of a generated image". According to Farrell, the contemporary individual's sense of self has undergone a significant transformation, marked by a loss of profundity and depth and it has become a "shallow artifact of cultural production."

One could argue that DeLillo's *White Noise* depicts a wasteland consisting of empty men, anarchy, and wastefulness everywhere. Individuals are merely self-interested and don't give a damn about religion, morality, or social conventions. It goes without saying that Murray, a professor and Jack Gladney's colleague in *White Noise*, states, "We are delicate creatures surrounded by a world of hostile facts. Facts pose a threat to our security and happiness (DeLillo, Ch. 17)". Furthermore, death is always present to put an end to their pointless life. Another critic Kaviani writes about the book that in the world of *White Noise*, subjectivity is colonised by the media, signs are disconnected from their referents, science and technology combine to form the composite human person, and death is in danger as it represents the final remnant of modernist reality. The world of the Gladneys is unstable and divided. Because of the media and technological simulation, they have lost their identities.

This research paper will also examine how *White Noise's* characters have lost their individuality in their manufactured forms and the impact of consumer culture and virtual realities on contemporary American society. "The conditions of the second determine the status of the first, and human identity is reactionary to the human environment" (Gillis-Bridges). Gladney's impeccable academic record, his way of life, and his bond with Babette are all questionable. They are receiving inaccurate information from the media and

from their surroundings. DeLillo has described their planet as a wasteland. Their ideology is haunted by their scientific and consumer environment. They adhere to the "consume and die" mentality. They have synthetic and manufactured identities and personalities. The personalities of the Gladneys were created rather than being authentic.

Through the lives of the people described in the novel *White Noise* and the context of the consumer society, the issues of materialism and the unreliability of modern life are examined in great detail. For example:

1. Modern Materialism and Consumer Culture:

DeLillo criticises society for being overly influenced by materialism. The goods and commercials that the characters in *White Noise* are exposed to influence their identities and desires. Jack Gladney, the main character, is a professor of Hitler studies who is overwhelmed by his infatuation with technology and commercial goods. His entire existence is focused on obtaining material goods and following the newest fashions. One recurrent location where materialism is starkly shown is the supermarket. The way everything in everyday life seems to be packaged and marketed, including people's identities and relationships, is symbolised by it.

2. Media and Technology:

Technology and media are the main reasons for which make the lives of the characters more unreliable and detached from the real world. They struggle to examine through the constant barrage of information and get to the bottom of things. Radio and TV broadcasts are used throughout the book to illustrate how the media shapes people's perceptions and alters reality. Oftentimes, characters are detached from reality and exist only in the media.

3. Fear of Dying and Constructed Reality:

The book *White Noise* explores people's worries about dying and how they attempt to allay them with material goods and distractions. Jack and his wife Babette utilise consumer indulgences and prescription drugs as a way to cope with their inner worries, demonstrating how reliant they are on outside solutions. "The Airborne Toxic Event," the novel's environmental disaster, serves as a metaphor for the unpredictability and uncontrollability of modern life. It exposes how fragile the characters'

imagined worlds are and upsets the characters' routines.

4. Untrustworthy Accounts and Personalities:

DeLillo employs sarcasm and satire to critique the superficiality of contemporary life. Characters often present themselves in ways that betray their true personalities, mirroring the alluring dishonesty of popular culture. The scholarly dialogue in the book illustrates the propensity to intellectualise and separate oneself from existential issues and feelings, especially in light of Jack's fixation with Hitler research.

5. Themes of the Environment and Existence:

In a more industrialised and polluted world, DeLillo emphasises the precariousness of human existence through the motif of environmental deterioration and hazardous catastrophes. The book is filled with existential themes as the protagonists struggle with issues of authenticity, mortality, and finding meaning in a world where material possessions rule the day.

Theoretical Framework

The theory applied upon the novel *White Noise* for analysis is 'Postmodernism'. The term "Postmodernism" was originally used in the late 1800s. According to O'Donnell, artists initially coined the word "Postmodernism" to refer to fresh movements that were challenging the status quo (O'Donnell 2003). As a new movement, postmodernism rejects and breaks with the concepts created during the modern age. This explains the continued relationship between postmodernism and modernism. Moreover, postmodernism, according to Fredric Jameson, is more of a way of becoming dominant in culture than it is a style. "Aesthetic production has become integrated into commodity production generally today," meaning that "postmodernism must now be understood not as a style, but as a cultural dominant." (Jameson and Stephanson, 50).

White Noise is a perfect example of a postmodern setting. The simulacra of television and commercial products are described in postmodern author Fredric Jameson's thesis of consumer society. He has been one of the most important theorists for a long time discussing postmodernism and its effects on modern culture. Additionally, in his essay "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," he clarifies the concept of

postmodernism. Here, he demonstrates how modernism and postmodernism are at odds, and how these divisions are also evident in modern culture.

One of the main characteristics of postmodernism is the subjectivity of the characters' actions and reactions. The majority of this book's characteristics make postmodern ideas like absurdism, relativism, subjectivism, and skepticism clear. A postmodern approach is described as, "Postmodern theory is suspicious of the notion of human possessing an undivided and coherent self which acts as the standard of rationality, and guarantees all knowledge, claims irrespective of time and space (Woods 10)." Other postmodern writers like Baudrillard expound on this idea for his notion of the simulacrum as "an image or representation of someone or something" is shown in *White Noise* in the picture of "The Most Photographed Barn in America."

The present inquiry of the book *White Noise* will look at every method the novelist employed to create the tale of *White Noise*, in which the characters constantly and widely feel that they are dying, and cling to a meaningless existence in order to demonstrate the excellent use of postmodernism's diverse features. Their interactions, behaviours, and reactions show a peculiar realm that challenges intellectualism's definition. They have consciously closed themselves off from the outside world, believing it to be a more comfortable place to live than it is. The work is therefore undoubtedly seen via the prism of postmodern thought. The novel is quite an interpretation of the postmodern chaos in addition to having a postmodern style.

The Consumer Culture of Postmodern America

Having multiple layers of consumer culture of Postmodern America, it serves significantly in altering the relations and trends among people and environment. It has great influence on customs, trends and overall cultural values and norms which may uplift conflicts and hence further modify the roles of interactions among people.

1. Identity Commercialization:

Identity commercialization is one major perspective of consumer culture. The frequently used products by individuals help define their identity in Postmodern America. Especially the brands and the material are the symbol of status and class since they play a pivotal role in shaping one's identity. Also the

products and their advertisement not only highly influence individuals but they create the urge and need in people's mind to have it, hence changing their perspective of needs and wants of products overall in the society.

2. Simulators and Hyperreality:

Media plays an immense role in smudging the disparity between simulation and hyperreality. Making people confused through unrealistic representation of products and lifestyles. This hyperreal idealized lifestyle projected through advertisements and campaigns highly influence individual's perceptions towards real life. Thus consumerism expands into digital spheres by building online connections and this intervention of digital domain leads people to have virtual experience which makes it hard for people to differentiate between the virtual world experience and actual reality.

3. Diversity and Globalisation:

The international brands and multinational companies define the global culture and this narrow downs to influencing the local traditions and preferences of individuals. This global culture gradually becomes the standard or benchmarks which people expect to achieve across a wide range of cultural backgrounds. So, the global consumer culture in sync with the multicultural influence further shapes the consumer culture where people reach out to products and lifestyle experiences which are globally idealized to enhance their identities among people.

4. Technological Progress:

The progress and integration of technology in consumerism plays a pivotal role while influencing the way how people sell and purchase products. The social networking, product's digital advertisement and e-commerce have entirely changed with the intervention of and dependence on technology. The influences, v-loggers, social and commercial forums and reviewers are the digital identities which supports the fact that digital platforms shape the consumer perspective through social interaction.

5. Criticisms and Repercussions:

The critics argue that materialistic approach flaunters in the environment of postmodern commercial culture. The consumption of superficial products lead to reduction of recycling process

break in the chain process of production and consumption. Trends and products age quickly, leading to wasteful and continuous consumption. As mass production and consumption increase, worries regarding the effects of consumerism on the environment, such as resource depletion, pollution, and climate change, are growing.

6. Subcultures and resistance:

There are groups and subcultures that oppose mainstream consumption patterns despite consumer culture's overwhelming impact. Some of these, which support more conscientious and sustainable consumption patterns, are DIY (do-it-yourself) culture, minimalism, and ethical consumerism. Subcultures frequently emerge around countercultural ideals or specialised hobbies, opposing mainstream consumerist ideology and advancing alternative lifestyles and consumption patterns.

White Noise and Representation of Consumer Culture

In the book *White Noise* Don DeLillo purposefully crafted a tale that presents a postmodern American consumer culture in which people have hidden the truths behind their own creations. The novel's characters have a strong desire to shop in supermarkets and purchase the branded goods they desire. This picture of a "supermarket" symbolises the countless ways that materialism has impacted American culture. "Consumerism is the idea that increasing the consumption of goods and services purchased in the market is always a desirable goal, and that a person's well-being and happiness depend fundamentally on obtaining consumer goods and material possessions" (Hayes). As the speaker in the *White Noise* says, "When times are bad, people feel compelled to overeat" (DeLillo Ch. 4). Once again referring to the notion of consumer culture, this phrase highlights people's innate tendency to eat food regardless of the circumstances.

At another time in the story, after Gladney has returned from the grocery store with a large heave of items to suit their desires and preferences, Gladney remarks, "It seemed to me that Babette and I, in the mass and variety of our purchases, ... felt the sense of well-being, the security, and contentment these products brought to some snug home in our souls--- it seemed we had achieved a fullness of being" (DeLillo Ch. 5). Gladney describes his act of

shopping and purchasing as “my desire to buy” (DeLillo Ch. 17). The book's portrayal of a society obsessed with consumerism sheds light on the ways in which people often sacrifice their well-being and relationships for the sake of material comfort and status. The characters' fixation on shopping centers and entertainment venues serves as a metaphor for the ways in which modern society is prioritizing superficial pleasures over deeper human needs and values. By examining this phenomenon, the book offers a thought-provoking commentary on the consequences of a culture that equates happiness with consumption and material possessions.

It is evident that technology has had such a profound impact on people's life that they are only able to believe what they hear on the radio and in commercials. Media and technology have a greater hold on the younger generation. In observing the weather, the young Heinrich relies on radio broadcasts to refute the reality that his senses have established. Numerous media outlets and technological noises are consumed by people, which sometimes feels like the constant background noise of everyday life. According to a critic, television has irreversibly influenced the unconscious behaviours as well as the thinking of DeLillo's characters. Heinrich says, “Our senses are wrong a lot more often than they're right. This has been proved in the laboratory” (DeLillo Ch. 6). The Gladneys have a peculiar fascination with the television, often gathering around the screen with captivated attention regardless of the tone or subject matter. They welcome and watch every kind of disgraceful content presented on the TV screen.

Murray in the novel says, “Television is the death throes of human consciousness...” (DeLillo Ch. 11). Alfonse says, “For most people there are only two places in the world. Where they live and their TV set are present. If a thing happens on television, we have every right to find it fascinating, whatever it is” (DeLillo Ch. 14). Jack Gladney and his family are reflected to possess a commercial personalities. Ahmad Ghashmari in the evaluation of *White Noise* depicts, “The supermarket, with its spectacle of goods has affected reality and replaced it with a hyper-reality in which the surfaces replace the real products.” By immersing themselves in a world of material possessions and fleeting experiences, they attempt to distract themselves from the inevitability of death.

Jack Gladney poses this question at numerous places in the book, “Who will die first?” (DeLillo Ch. 20). Further he describes, “The question of dying becomes a wise reminder” (DeLillo Ch. 4). The idea of mortality is a profound existential threat to the Gladneys, as it serves as a stark reminder of their own impermanence. However, despite their reluctance to acknowledge the unreliability of their lives, they are acutely aware of death's presence, a constant companion that hangs over them like a shadow. Gladney says, “Let's enjoy these aimless days while we can...” (DeLillo Ch. 5). The family and other characters have this thought that they will deace sooner or later hence they should enjoy the life. To his college students, Gladney describes, “All plots tend to move deathward...We edged nearer death every time we plot. It is like a contract that all must sign” (DeLillo Ch. 6). In the twenty-first century, when our perceptions are constantly being processed, snapped, reshaped, and collectively affected by an electronic culture that has changed the way we react to our lives, the book makes perfect sense.

The consumption of medicine is one more example of consumerism in the book. A Treadwell firm introduced a medication called "Dylar", which is supposed to relieve death fears. The company is in need of a volunteer for their study. Babette volunteers to participate in the drug's experimental analysis. In the hopes that the medicine "Dylar" may save her life, she prepares to take it. Jack Gladney imagines what this medication will do to him when he learns about it. He yearns for the medication since he is a cautious man who constantly attempts to avoid dying. However, it soon becomes apparent that this medication may have harmful side effects, and the company that makes the drug, decides that it is risky for anybody to use. This position clearly states that people are only considered as consumers and that their lives are not valuable—rather, they are being used as test subjects.

The Rational Findings of Unreliabilities in White Noise

One of the major postmodern writers, Don DeLillo, used *White Noise* to depict a nihilistic society where people are anxious about an impending death that constantly occupies the characters' thoughts. The text is a modern era hymn as a whole. While we are preoccupied with our own lives and trying to make sense of them from our unique perspectives, death is a collective trauma that haunts us all in the same

manner. By engaging in and diverting themselves from the process of making purchases and spending time at the supermarket, the protagonists in the book attempt to avoid the obsessive realities of life. In the context of the market-driven society depicted in *White Noise*, the search for authenticity and reliability is futile, as everything is ultimately tainted by the impermanence of human existence. The notion of death, which lurks in the background, serves as a reminder that even the most seemingly solid and permanent structures are subject to decay. This realization can lead to a sense of disillusionment with the world around us, as we come to understand that everything is impermanent, including our relationships, possessions, and even our own lives.

The signs of unpredictability are depicted on varied phases in the novel. In his discussion with his colleague Murray, Gladney says, "I've got death inside me. It's just a question of whether or not I can outlive it. It has a lifespan of its own" (DeLillo Ch. 21). Gladney, the main character, is a professor of Hitler studies, and his career reflects his unreliability, but he appears to be picking up lessons early. Although he asserts that his knowledge is his specialty, his academic achievements demonstrate "pseudo-professionalism" which ultimately depicts his unreliability as a professor and a metaphor for the fragility of human understanding and the limits of human knowledge. The characters' surroundings are affected by a sense of disarray and disorder, making it challenging to establish a sense of stability and well-being. Their environment is unhealthy due to the presence of "The Toxic Airborne Event". The existence of Nyodene D gas in the air has polluted it. Still they have to live in that toxic and unnatural atmosphere. "Kids were getting headaches and eye irritations, tasting metals in their mouths" (DeLillo Ch. 9). There are clouds of smoke hovering over them progressively.

Even if there is no denying of the advantages of modern technology in this period of progress and advancement, we also cannot deny the sense of unreliability and uncertainty that technology has brought into our lives. Gladney's daughter Steffie says, "We have to boil our water" (DeLillo Ch. 8). This statement of her again refers to the idea that the drinking water is also toxic and not suitable for drinking. They need to refine it before drinking. The effects of media and technology have a profound effect on the current generation. They no longer trust their senses, and the media shapes their true

information. Another instance of a technological failure in the book is the plane crash that occurs. Babette, Mrs. Gladney, consumes a medicine named "Dylar" which is known to be a "Life Saver" for her but in fact that is unreliable and injurious as the medicine is on trial phase and still not tested for its effects on human beings.

After closely examining the text, it seems that DeLillo used unreliability as a rhetorical device to represent modern society. The book also parodies the way people currently live and how they view natural phenomena. It makes fun of people's reliance on gadgets, consumerism, and technology. This brings about their demise. Babette and her husband Jack Gladney attempt to run away from the terrible reality of their existence and their impending demise. They promise to discuss anything and everything during their talk, with the exception of their fear of dying. Both of them entered into a relationship following the dissolution of their prior unions. Given that their prior marriages ended in divorce and that they are now attempting to maintain happiness in their new relationship, this illustrates the instability of the marital institution.

It is also proved in the novel *White Noise* that the characters' experiences are marked by a sense of ephemeral nature, as his recollections are constantly called into question. Their memories are prone to distortion and manipulation, blurring the lines between reality and fantasy. Indulged in chat with his wife, Gladney says, "We all forget... I forget names, faces, phone numbers, addresses, appointments, instructions, and directions. It's something that's just been happening, more or less to everyone... Forgetfulness has gotten into the air and water" (DeLillo Ch. 11). It represents that humans have become increasingly reliant on technology to navigate their daily lives.

Conclusion

By dissecting the novel's themes, characters, and linguistic styles, this study reveals a profound commentary on the state of American civilization. The protagonist's fixation on consumer goods, media saturation, and environmental degradation serves as a microcosm for the nation's broader issues. Moreover, the novel's exploration of hyper-reality – where the lines between reality and simulation are blurred – underscores the ways in which American society has become desensitized to the artificial and the superficial. Through its nuanced exploration of

these themes, *White Noise* presents a powerful and thought-provoking critique of contemporary American society, one that continues to resonate with readers today. The author succeeds in presenting a picture of the postmodern world that exists now, one that is not dependent on originality but rather is captivated by objects' imitations. As the novel's characters become engrossed in a media-focused society they believe only what they read in periodicals and ads, or hear on TV and radio.

In general, *White Noise* presents a depressing yet humorous picture of modern Western culture, where commercialization, materialism, and technology frequently distort human connections and experiences at the price of sincere connection and existential fulfilment. Sharp and insightful, DeLillo's critique forces readers to consider what it means to live in a society where the quest of material prosperity and technical growth might result in a diminished sense of self and community. Since there is a similar consumption culture all around us today, as a reader you get the impression that everyone is still living in the world of *White Noise*. In the novel, Gladney confronted his fear of unreliability, which is evident everywhere. Indeed, after the coronavirus pandemic, our lives have grown even less reliable. Numerous lives have been lost and it has had an impact on the entire planet. This serves as an example of how powerless people are against faith and preconceived notions about death. According to Brian Tallerico's review of the book, "Death binds us all".

There are certain gaps for further study about the novel because the book can also be used to examine how morality and religion function in modern society. These elements might be examined in relation to *White Noise* from the perspective of what moral principles are upheld in society and whether people possess any sort of moral or ethical sensibility. Do they possess any sense of responsibility for their actions and responses? If they have no moral or religious beliefs about life, where are they going to end up? Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of nihilism, sometimes referred to as the widespread phenomena of Western civilization, can be used to analyse the book.

The novel also helps us understand the idea that, either we are the products of what our society has taught us to do, or our existence depends on the ways we choose to rely on and interact with the environment around us. Gladney and his son

Heinrich debate whether our actions result from our "free will" or from the mental processes we go through when assimilating into a community. The specifics of the psychological, biological, and philosophical elements influencing human behaviour can be covered in a different study paper. *White Noise* can thereby involve its readers in a number of ways.

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