

**TECHNOCULTURE AS A PRAXIS OF
POSTMODERN TIMES: A STUDY OF SELECTED
WORKS OF DON DELILLO**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in
English

By

**NIVEDITA
BHARDWAJ**

Registration Number: 11919344

Supervised by

Dr. ISHFAQ AHMAD TRAMBOO

Assistant Professor

Department of English

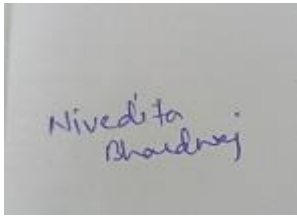
Lovely Professional University, Punjab



**LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB
2024**

DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the presented work in the thesis entitled *Technoculture As a Praxis of Postmodern Times: A Study of Selected Works of Don DeLillo* in fulfilment of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** is an outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, working as Assistant Professor, in the Department of English of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with the general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgements have been made whenever the work described here has been based on the findings of other investigators. This work has not been submitted in part or full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink. The signature reads "Nivedita Bhardwaj".

(Signature of Scholar)

Name of the scholar: Nivedita Bhardwaj

Registration No.: 11919344

Department/School: English

Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled *Technoculture As a Praxis of Postmodern Times: A Study of Selected Works of Don DeLillo* submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the reward of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Department of English, is a research work carried out by Nivedita Bhardwaj, 11919344, is a bonafide record of his/her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.



(Signature of Supervisor)

Name of supervisor: Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Tramboo

Designation: Assistant Professor

Department/school: English

University: Lovely Professional University



Supervisor Certificate for Plagiarism

Title of the thesis: Technoculture As a Praxis of Postmodern Times: A Study of Selected Works of Don DeLillo

Name of Ph.D. scholar: Nivedita Bhardwaj

Name of Ph.D. supervisor: Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Tramboo

Department/Discipline: English

I certify that the above-entitled thesis was scanned for similarity detection. The process and outcome is given below:

Software used: TURNITIN Date: April 29, 2023

Similarity index: 2% Total word count: 79745

The software is picking the following:

Yes No

(i). Small matches below 14 words

(ii).Mathematical formula

(iii).Standard symbols / standard equations / generic terms

➤ I have reviewed the plagiarism report and the similarity index is 2% percent.

➤ If the similarity index is above the accepted norms then please mention the reason(s):

Name & Signature of Supervisor: Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Tramboo

UID: 25645

Designation: Assistant Professor

Date: April 29, 2023

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

The American author Donald Richard DeLillo, primarily acknowledged in the literary world as Don DeLillo is known for his astounding presence in the postmodern scene. DeLillo's literary marvels and accomplishments lie in the fact that he is celebrated for his unending association with the postmodernist movement. Don DeLillo is a two-time finalist for the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for fiction and has won accolades such as being bestowed with the National Book Award and the Library of Congress Prize for American fiction. The author has also won the Jerusalem Prize apart from two PEN awards. DeLillo's literary repertoire thus includes novels, short stories, plays, screenwriting, essays and a regular contribution to American newspapers as a columnist.

In an interview for Chicago Tribune, with Kevin Nance, published in the year 2012, DeLillo claims that his fiction is about "living in dangerous times" Therefore the author's oeuvre engages with the contemporary culture and especially traces the rise of this magnanimous technological complex that has carefully invaded, assimilated and established itself in the present times. DeLillo's characters hence, exist in a suspended simulation of reality in the present, making them familiar with the technoscapes that govern the contemporary praxis. The author's fiction traces the rise of this culture of technology, especially, the 'technoculture' prevalent today.

Therefore, it becomes primal to understand what affects contemporary society, and it can be achieved through the careful evaluation of the contemporary culture of technology, having a strong foothold in the present extant. It also becomes pertinent to apprehend and embrace the apparent repercussions that are offshoots of the evolving postmodern cosmopolitan and the significant changes that have occurred as a result of this existing praxis.

The thesis attempts to underscore DeLillo's criticism of the existing high-tech culture and how the literature so produced, mirrors what Baudrillard conceptualized to be a hyperreal existence. It also emphasizes on how this literature also provokes a discussion on the grandeur of 'innovations' and

its implications on the conscience of mankind, as this ‘transient stage’, later often implodes into itself by wanting to remove the boundary between the human and the artificial.

Keeping in cue with the aforementioned, the thesis attempts to take cognizance of how the contemporary is not just modern but postmodern with having the most sophisticated forms of repression that are subtle in their existence as these have emerged from the contemporary technoculture. It also draws attention to modern aspects of living such as the evolution of media and communication technologies as well as that of data and artificial intelligence and other scientific inventions in the selected fiction.

The thesis further delves into modern America’s mechanized panorama that has left America in a consumerist stance suspended in hyperreality. It promulgates how contemporary America exists in a technocratic landscape which exists in a ‘virtual existence’ that is no longer merely conceptual but due to the scientific grandeur of today is a spatial-cum-temporal reality of the now making it almost possible to ‘digitally transfer’ consciousness into a hard drive to preserve the body for resurrection and eternal existence later on.

The thesis makes an effort to underline, after a thorough analysis, how contemporary existence affects the understanding and perception of ‘reality’ in the postmodern living paradigm. The selected fiction delineates how the collective consciousness of the humans existing in this technocultural paradigm is gradually heading towards the peak of exhaustion owing to the evolving technological complex that has predominantly taken over the living praxis. The contemporary thus is the living playground of a Baudrillardian simulacrum, with an apparent ‘construction’ of ‘real’. These seemingly are digitally ‘transferred’ and the medium of its ‘transaction’ is only possible and justifiable in the arbitrary human construct of the contemporary which embedded and entwined with culture of technology. Therefore, the thesis aims at locating and comprehending the hyperreal simulations that makes the contemporary extant function and exist smoothly.

The Baudrillardian lens of 'Simulacra and Simulation' provokes a profound discussion on the prevalent idea of what constitutes 'Hyperreality' and when this is contextualized within the selected fiction, it is deduced that the contemporary canon of literature produced, takes a keen interest in it. It showcases the grandeur of 'innovations' and how this grandeur often resuscitates and maintains a prolonged flow of the 'real' information. The selected fiction from the author Don DeLillo also elucidates how this information is repeatedly simulated through a very careful and conscious construction of memories for the multiple generations to come. The thesis therefore attempts to research how the contemporary culture of technology has led to the establishment of a unique 'technoculture' without which the present or the contemporary extant cannot suffice. DeLillo's literary texts hence serve as an exemplary case study to locate, validate and establish the presence of this 'technoculture' and present an understanding of how in the contemporary extant there is an existence of 'virtual over real' which has been ingrained in the society as the new norm. DeLillo is the creator of elaborate modern landscapes that are infused with modern technology making it a digital landscape or a 'technoscape'. DeLillo's characters interact with this mechanical world almost evolving alongside the technical paradigm gradually.

The author also traces this evolution of technology in his literature and the interaction between his characters and the technical paradigm is an actual representation of how modern human turns towards this evolving technology to satiate the sensory requirement of a modern mystical experience. As much as it is debatable, it can also be deduced that the high-tech culture of the contemporary extant is the root of the evolution of other multiple facets of modern living such as modern media, the digital entity known as 'data', as well as the sociopolitical outcomes like terrorism that significantly act as pieces of evidence for discussions about ideological oppression. DeLillo also looks into other offshoots of this kind of technical evolution that have a major impact on sociological, political as well as economic factors of America.

These include nuclear inventions that have again been used as a medium of threatening and violence when political aggression turns into a full-scale war. The other aspects of the contemporary extant such as political assassinations, abductions, extortions, economic repressions, bio weaponry and bio wars, nuclear wastes, residual toxins etcetera have also been dealt with by him in his fiction. It is also deduced that the intersectionality of these societal aspects results in the quiddity of this ever-evolving cosmopolitan and the subsequent convoluted hyperreal extant.

Therefore, to understand the pertinent issues that currently plague modern society, it becomes absolutely necessary to take cognizance of this evolving technical paradigm as it slowly draws away from the plane of physical reality and ensures a shift towards the virtual plane of existence. This digression in the form of living creates a very robust and complicated form of repression that cannot be comprehended, because, it is simultaneously in a state of continuous deferring owing to the rigorous interconnectedness in the modern living praxis.

This contemporary paradigm is hence a derivate of the complicated complex of technologies that have led to the genesis of 'urban technoscapes' where humans in a never-ending cycle of consumption, existing amidst bite-sized information in the form of images, gradually leading into the era of 'montaged confusion'. Don DeLillo's fiction hence is pivotal to underline the subtle repercussions of technology and the plethora of other issues that have been provoked by the aforementioned consequences, including the mental, physical, psychological, financial etcetera. Therefore, the author's selected fiction becomes the literary window through which an in-depth study of the resultant conjured simulacrum in the modern world becomes possible. It also acts as evidence of how the contemporary culture of technology and the unchecked as well as unbound technical expansion, has gradually revealed to be catastrophic, to some extent. The technical paradigm hence has lingering effects on the modern man, and is responsible for the supremacy of the technocratic landscape or the technoscape in general.

The thesis also attempts to research the Baudrillardian idea of 'hyperreal' by contextualizing it in the selected fiction to underscore the associated concept of a 'virtual existence' in the 'online world' that is purely made up of digital circuits. This 'digitalization' and 'virtualization' prowess has a triggering snowball effect that is rooted in the contemporary mechanical panorama as America becomes the prime example of how the rising scientific grandiosity is also often accompanied by man-made dissent and tragedy.

Furthermore, DeLillo's selected fiction exemplifies the new kind of habitat in which modern man exists and cannot survive outside of it as is noticed in DeLillo's writings that the presence of technology has not only been assimilated into modern living but is the reason behind alteration of the contemporary praxis. Therefore, the thesis makes an attempt at bringing to the forefront, the impact of technology and the rise of this technoculture that has aided in invading the innermost site of the human psyche, creating an almost rippling effect that shapes the narrative as well as conscience in the present times.

With the incorporation of technology in the traditional understanding of physical reality society has established a deviation, that is characterized by the power of technology, as aspects of modern living include a dependency on artificial intelligence. The present sociocultural practices of technology and the current technoculture thus act as the bridge that connects the far side of consumerist society as well as, modern developmental pursuits to conceive the modern epitome of globalization and unity beyond physical barriers.

The thesis therefore investigates the contemporary extant concerning its well-established technoculture and how it has led to the evolution of a virtual reality that makes up for the hyperreal extant. It also delves into how technology further instigates the enhancement of living praxis and upgrades to the point where functionality becomes a discarded virtue and the value is associated with the possibility of consumption. It also attempts at locating the focal points that constituent

major turns in the evolution of human history and how the consequence of it in present times lies in the fact that the evolutionary relationship of humans with technology is growing alongside the evolution of technology itself increasing ten-folds in complexity with every digital turn.

Keywords- Simulacra; Simulation; Hyperreality; Postmodern; Consumerism; Technoculture; Don DeLillo.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To the Lord in the heavens and his incarnations on this earth...

It is with immense gratitude, huge admiration, sincere love and devotion for the great Almighty that I acknowledge my debt to Bholenath and my parents, whose choicest blessings and absolute support are the reason behind how I have been able to accomplish this daunting task. Research is never an individual attempt and in this formidable journey, I have not only received the courage to undertake this unnerving endeavour but also have been endowed with bountiful affection from my parents. I am humbled to know that, while I progressed in the field of education with my fortitude, it was my father, Mr Arvind Bhardwaj, who not only inculcated in me the seeds of discipline, commitment, focus and diligence but also had my back against the malice of the world that undermined my stature as a girl child. I owe a heartfelt bow to my mother, Mrs. Asha Bhardwaj, the lady who made me the strong woman that I am today. It is her constant showering of love, warmth and maternal care that taught me the pertinent lessons of faith, patience and humility. It is she who nurtured me from her bosom at my birth and she still feeds my assertive growth through her colossal guidance and pragmatic inputs. I dedicate this thesis to my parents and I bow my head at their feet for their blessings.

It is an absolute honor to not only share my beautiful life but also my greatest achievement yet with my only sibling in whom I have found my best friend. My brother, Er. Mayank Bhardwaj served the purpose of not only my closest confidant but also my biggest cheerleader during moments of self-doubt, scrutiny and dismay. He brought the clarity to look at problems objectively whenever I plunged myself into the rabbit hole of self-pity and negative thoughts. He anchored me whenever I was plagued with the urge to give up. It is him, whose delightful presence made this journey a little easier. He was there to pick me up whenever I faltered. He is a resolute professional, whose tricks of the trade and valuable experience have taught me the wisdom of

ethics and merit in craftsmanship. I also want to acknowledge the blessings of my grandmother, Mrs. Goura Devi, who was a scholar of Hindi as well as an awardee of the 'Best Teacher' during her time in office. It is her love and assurance that has fueled my go-getter attitude and even though, he is not amidst us, I know my uncle Mr. Rajive Bhardwaj, rejoices in his heavenly abode, at my flourishing academic career because he was a staunch supporter of my educational journey.

No words can express my gratitude for my supervisor Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Lovely Faculty of Business and Arts, to whom I want to pay my sincerest homage. His crucial and critical insights as well as illuminating yet constructive ideas have helped me throughout the tenure of my work. I'm extremely indebted to the enriching sessions under his mentorship that sparked the researcher in me and motivated me to adhere to the principles that allowed me a successful culmination of this journey. I thank him from the depth of my heart for his unfailing support, endless guidance, right direction and honest opinions that enriched my critical acumen and polished my skills.

I must sincerely acknowledge and pay my due respect to Dr. Anurag Kumar, HOD and Assistant Professor, School of Languages and Literature, SMVDU, Katra for planting the dream of becoming a researcher like him. I owe my humble beginnings to my alma mater SMVDU as well as the kindness of the faculty there that ensured that the dream lived on. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to Dr, Simran Preet Kaur Khalsa, who's been an indomitable support in this journey. Her valuable support both academically and personally has shaped me as an individual and honed and refined my mettle as a researcher. Her constant motivation and encouragement ensured that I completed my educational expedition without any impasse throughout my MA(English) to my Doctoral program.

I would also like to mention that it would have been almost impossible to survive this journey, if it weren't for my two best friends in the whole wide world, S. Harshvir Singh Nagra and Er. Akshay Gupta, who have not only been my shield against the test of time but my most cherished connection. Words fail me as no amount of them can express the debt that I owe my friends for their valuable friendship, assistance and constant push to do better each time I came crying to them with certain defeat. I must acknowledge them as my beacon of hope during the days of doom. I owe a deep sense of gratitude to my friend Ms. Diksha Singh for her love and support because if it weren't for her constant visits to cheer me up, the sense of being lonely would have plagued me to the core. I thank her for being my family and a home away from home. I am also grateful to my friends and colleagues at the university, for their availability and consistent emotional support as well as critical inputs that have helped me in shaping the current thesis.

Finally, I want to acknowledge the love and support of my amazing fiancé Mr. Ritish Bawa for always being there at my lowest and for helping me through dark times. It is his consistent love and care that made the days of rough sailing, a cakewalk. I thank him sincerely for providing me with optimism and his unwavering faith in me and my capabilities so that I could conclude my Doctoral dissertation. I cherish his companionship and the memories that we have made together during this journey.

In the end, I want to immensely thank my institute, Lovely Professional University and the Department of English, as well as my RAC panel members for providing me with not just an opportunity but also with constructive insight throughout the herculean task of pursuing my research especially during my End Term Presentations. I sincerely extend my heartfelt gratitude to them for sustaining my substantial growth as a research scholar.

Table of Contents

S. No.	Title	Page No.
01	Title	i
02	Declaration	ii
03	Certificate by Advisor	iii
04	Abstract	iv - ix
05	Acknowledgements	x - xiii
06	Table of Contents	xiv
07	Introduction of the Thesis	1 - 19
08	Chapter 1- The Evolution of DeLillo's America	20 - 78
09	Chapter 2- Uncovering the Baudrillardian Hyperreal	79 - 123
10	Chapter 3- The Implosion of Technology in Consumerist Society	124 - 186
11	Chapter 4- The Simulation of Collapse in Hyperreal America	187 - 227
13	Conclusion of the Thesis	228 - 240
14	Bibliography	241 - 263
15	Appendix 1: List of Publications	264 -265
16	Appendix 2: List of Paper Presentations	266

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

Christopher Butler in his book entitled *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction* that was published in the year 2002 discusses how an art sculpture by Carl Andre is a representative of the postmodernist strand because “It is not formally complex or expressive, or particularly engaging to look at, indeed it can soon be boring. It is easy to repeat” (01) exaggerating of the fact that postmodernism is capable of ‘confronting and denying’ anything that seeks ‘expression’. The audacity of postmodernism lies in the fact that it makes us question and this skepticism generates an intellectual paradigm that is characteristic of this contemporary extant. There is an expression of avant-gardism in the present times that is typical of existence in such a convoluted landscape which nonetheless has a technocratic supremacy.

The average attitude in the contemporary extant is diluted with socio-political biases that are a result of this evolved cosmopolitan entity existing as one true global unit. There is an urge for complexity that then further dictates the hunger for ‘miniaturization’ and America happens to be the epitome of this postmodernist stance as Baudrillard in his seminal text *Simulacra and Simulation* published in the English language in the year 1994, argues that it represents the “social microcosm” (12) as America marks the peaking point in the evolutionary stages of human history and it becomes the “perfect model of all the entangled orders of simulacra” (12) much similar to Disneyland where Baudrillard seems to contextualize the American trajectory of growth and capitalism.

The modern world thus comes appended with a complicated technological complex that has a layering of mechanical, digital, cybernetic and overall a virtual dimension that gives rise to this postmodern playground. The postmodern fiction hence, contextualizes this culture of technology and implicates the tenets of sociopolitical and economic upheaval that are a direct

consequence of being influenced by the postmodern living praxis. Hence, the inception of this culture of technology in the consumerist and capitalist society of the then America inspired the foundations of the contemporary ‘technoculture’ that is prevalent today. As technology became an aspect of the living paradigm, its constant interaction with the living praxis paved the way for the ideological shift that manifested in the sociopolitical spectrum. Therefore, the intersectionality where this technoculture manifested the most, revealed how the availability of technology has now cemented into an automated system of its own that did not need any help from humankind for a smooth functioning.

The term ‘technoculture’ was first used by Constance Penley and Andrew Ross in their book entitled, *Technoculture* that was published in the year 1991 and the section introduction of their text, the editors make a well-researched argument over how media technologies of the contemporary extant have come into play as a powerful tool and are also the modus operandi of political implications that have sociological, economic, political as well as transnational effects. To comprehend the effect that these media technologies have had in ideally the Western Political outlook of the world, the editors discuss the case of the Chinese democracy movement of the spring of 1989 where technologies of the then modern world especially, the fax machine became the tool of communication with the geographical world outside of China. The editors detail an account of how the students in China, as well as their voices regarding this liberation movement, were suppressed. However, it is extremely pertinent to note that at a point of high conflict, technology became the sole saviour of these targeted students. They theorize that with technology at their behest, the students cross-pollinated the information of the ongoing struggle to a larger audience and they argue that “the Chinese students were only picking up the legacy of what almost every liberation movement in the twentieth century has learned to do – turn the

decentralizing and liberation components of new media technologies against the state's centralized control of information" (ix) adding to their discussions on how technology has played a crucial role in paving the way for path-breaking outlets of information exchange as witnessed in the similar power struggles that occurred in Iran and Africa nation-states as well.

Irrespective of the gigantic stature of modern technology in the twenty-first century and its role in reshaping cultural narratives, America is seen as the epitome of growth, success and stability making America a land of opportunities and this American dream that was envisioned by the common American man has also been addressed by DeLillo in his fiction as well. Don DeLillo's intrigue and preoccupation with contemporary American society leads him to seek the apocalyptic turn in the current century through his critical insights on the rise of technology and the modern man's obsession with 'bettering' every tool at hand. DeLillo addresses the locale of action that is employed in the postmodern playground, foregrounding a solid argument for how the physical landscape of America soon developed into a cityscape after the introduction of urbanization, mechanization, globalization and capitalistic expansions. Thus, these cityscapes that represented the urban reality of a gradually progressing technical paradigm were soon seen as the technoscapes that represented a decentered truth which found itself to be present amidst multiple chains of signification and representations via packets of images.

The fragmentation of truth is attached to the fragmentation of urban life in itself hence, DeLillo's urban dystopia is encompassed in a world where the culture of technology is seen as a sign of evolution and the experience of this technology acts as evidence of a futuristic approach. It is evident in the Baudrillardian statement from his key theoretical argument given in *Simulacra and Simulation* published in the English language in the year 1994 that the way this shift in the mechanical paradigm has resulted in the replacement of reality with an imaginary world, it has

only been able to sustain itself because of a crowd that consumes generously and “in the sufficient and excessive number of gadgets necessary to create the multitudinous effect” (12). Hence, DeLillo’s fiction is seen as an extension of the Baudrillardian argument which critically engages in a dialogue of consumption concerning the contemporary culture and consumerist notion. It is this very culture that embodies the hyperreal and has roots in the modern-day notions of consumption, terrorism, biotechnologies, nuclear machinery, cybernetics, capitalistic ventures, global diplomacies and bureaucracy etcetera. In their book *Technoculture* published in the year 1991, the editors Penley and Ross argue that technologies of today have essentially evolved to serve the Western Political ideals and that the flow of information from the developed countries to the developing countries is carefully controlled and monitored. The authors expound on this argument and write that “The struggle for self-determination, in each instance, was being waged under technological conditions produced elsewhere” (ix) addressing how the West has seized power and predominantly is the force that controls the narrative through their supremacy in the technological advancements. The authors also critically assess that because of globalization, the transnational forces that are operating in contemporary times, have achieved a kind of political efficiency that redefines how these technologies aid the cultural growth in postmodern times.

DeLillo encapsulates all these modern facets that have marked the postmodern turn in his fiction and critiques this culture of consumption, commodification and mechanization extensively. The author’s resistance towards the assimilation of this culture of technology draws upon from his personal experience of having lived through the culturally impacting transition. DeLillo’s fiction is a well-argued commentary on this transcendence that is accredited to mechanization and urbanization bringing about an awareness to the readers of the absolute removal of the parameters of physical reality. DeLillo thus, assembles the perfect prototype of

the modern world in his literature and his arguments stem from the experience of negotiating for a reality that is not defined by its digital version. DeLillo through his fiction therefore depicts the vastness of the contemporary world in its virtual realm by erecting the modern metropolis in its overwhelming capacity. DeLillo's depiction of these urban technoscapes also explores how the world turned postmodern. His fiction mirrors the gradual development of humans to their maximum potential almost reaching a peak of paroxysm that he has attempted to describe in his novel *Point Omega* which was published in the year 2010.

DeLillo's selected fiction thus aims at underscoring the constant influx of images that shapes the narrative in the present times. It locates the points of intersection between human evolution and the developmental pursuits to lineate the evolving hybridity simultaneously. It also takes a keen cognizance of how the culture of technology has taken an anthropocentric turn and has now gradually moved it in the direction of decentering of traditional understanding of boundaries. The order of human praxis therefore is plagued with the evolutionary syndrome that is demonstrated by the mechanical overtake which constitutes and makes up majorly for the revolution in the way we live today. The interaction between the human and the mechanical entities in DeLillo's novels brings forth the virtual space of liminality where the modern man is linked to the modern machine and this hybrid just becomes more complex with everyday turn in the field of technology. Therefore, his fiction is the literary representation of this complicated relationship that humans share with technology, giving rise to a technological complex that ensures the integration of this technoculture that has vividly encompassed the entirety of the physical world.

DeLillo's fiction details the account of this global culture of technology as well as how it has ushered humans into an age of commercialization and constant consumption. The collective

oeuvre of writings seems to be a reflection of the Baudrillardian critique on consumer culture as they parallel on how the 'system of objects' that has developed, owing to its technological origins. DeLillo's textual genius also seems to have a subtle hue of self-realization of the current technological complex in the postmodern extant hence, there are undertones of autobiographical elements in his novels expressing a much unrecognized form of anxiety that surrounds the disaster that may be rooted in it. In an interview that was published by the *Publisher's Weekly* in the year 1988, DeLillo admits to William Goldstein that the anxiety of existing in the present times is almost on synonymous terms with it being 'about danger' and being in fear of a new kind of 'modern danger'. This modern danger in the novels of Don DeLillo is detailed through an elaborate discussion on how the contemporary culture of technology is the reason behind socio-political, economic, trans-cultural, psychological and social outcomes like terrorism and the development of sophisticated bio-ammunition and warfare methods etcetera.

DeLillo's fiction hence represents an America that has an uglier side which is known to have a huge impact on the psyche of the common American man. It sheds light on the themes of the dominancy of the consumer culture and his novels mark an insignia of exploration of these capitalistic ventures that lead to a disintegration of the society because of the rise of dark and violent tendencies of those who obtain power. Apart from this, DeLillo's novels have also explored the related angle of evolution through a global and cosmopolitan perspective, focusing especially upon the effects of ideological warfare that is prevalent in the present societies. Don DeLillo's literary repertoire, therefore, also narrates the American predicament through the Cold War, Civil Wars, Political assassinations and the rise of media as a source of information and the pinnacle of the definitive tool of ideological warfare. His fiction looks at the technological complex and underscores how it aided the atomic revolution and nuclear armaments. It also

explores how the military power was enhanced by this achievement in the field of nuclear science but at the same time it also created a huge source of nuclear waste that has not been dealt properly by any governing body. DeLillo's depiction of the psychological and social reality of contemporary America elucidates the helplessness that a common American feels at the hand of the rising scientific grandeur and how miniscule this culture of technology and corresponding technoculture makes the contribution of humankind.

The power of artificial intelligence makes DeLillo wonder how the fate of men has become uncertain as consciousness has reached its maximum and the peak of exhaustion is almost upon us. There is often a sombre tone that reeks of melancholy for a world prior to the mechanical turn which is why his characters that exist in the technoscapes created by him have also evolved from 'modern' to 'postmodern' almost similar to the duress that this transition had forced upon his skills as an author. In his critical commentary on Don DeLillo, author Paul Giaimo in his text *Appreciating Don DeLillo: The Moral Force of a Writer's Work* which was published in the year 2011, argues that "DeLillo's tendency is to show some elements of mimetic realism as well as those features of modernism and postmodernism" (Giaimo 1) marking DeLillo's commentary on urbanized America as truly postmodernist in its ideological stance as it is a form of radical resistance through his literature. Giaimo further continues that critically DeLillo's characters hence exist "in a socially constructed endless maze or labyrinth of words" (4) demonstrating how there is complexity in his literature much alike to the complexities of the evolving world.

DeLillo's representation of this globalized cosmopolitan unit thus is not easy to describe in mere words as the characteristics associated with contemporary and still evolving American society are nowhere homogenous in terms of the cultural aspects. The contemporary American

culture has been permeated by influences and incorporates an awareness of the revolutionary stance offered by the modern technological complex. This technical shift is also responsible for the collapse of the boundaries that earlier defined the physical parameters of reality. The contemporary extant leaves mankind oddly satisfied enough to not question the absence of these parameters. The negative potential of technology is brought to light by DeLillo in a consciously subtle manner especially when he attempts to critique the capitalist hegemony that exists in the contemporary era. Celebrated critic and author Peter Boxall in his book *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* which was published in the year 2006 argues that “the globalization of capital produces a kind of dizzying speed, a rush of technological invention and creativity, but it also produces a cultural exhaustion...” (Boxall 3) implicating that the real in the contemporary is so far removed in the chain of signification that all meaning and sense of reality is lost altogether and the hyperreal takeover insinuates a predicament of the contemporary that discusses how the evolution and technological revolution also has negative associations which DeLillo himself has attempted at addressing in his fiction.

Boxall further continues the analysis of DeLillo’s fiction in his 2006 published *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* and argues that the author’s novels discuss the decimation of boundaries as well as the post-war revolutions that occurred as according to him DeLillo writes of a future that is already here and:

The future, which harbors the unrealized possibility, which preserves that which has yet to be seen or imagined or colonized, has ‘become insistent’ in DeLillo’s work. It is forcing itself into the now, as the culture reaches past its own spatial and temporal margins, colonizes its own outsides, brings even un-lived time under the jurisdiction of the global market (Boxall 4)

critically implicating how the contemporary times are an age of relentless inventions that somehow aid the fabrication and manipulation of the truth in the present and usher in a 'now' that is purely curated based on the likes of hegemony. DeLillo therefore presents a clear picture of how contemporary times are substantiated and substituted with technology, giving rise to a simulacrum that is evidently perceived as the reality of the contemporary world. DeLillo's fiction hence can be viewed as a literary companion to Baudrillard's criticism of the changing urban dynamic. It can thus be read through the lens of Baudrillardian conceptual angles to nonchalantly draw similarities between the two. Similar to the French theorist Jean Baudrillard, DeLillo has explicated how in contemporary times there is a development of a strikingly familiar 'system of objects' that reeks of autonomy and is responsible for taking away from human labour. This familiarity then becomes the breeding ground of the hyperreal takeover in the cosmopolitan playground, given the fact that technology has an insurmountable affluence in both Baudrillardian critique as well as DeLillo's textual implications.

It is important to understand that the contemporary understanding of technology is different in the 21st century as compared to the technology that the author has described in the select fiction because the technology of today has transcended all boundaries surpassing any limitations that were previously associated with analogue technologies. The presence of digitality and media technologies in the contemporary extant vividly paints a different picture but DeLillo's fiction is of prominence because it highlights the transition of America from a landscape to a mediascape and eventually to an automated technoscape which does not require any mediation from the humankind. Though the technological boundaries have been pushed beyond expectations, DeLillo's fiction is important to understand the design behind this expansion, as it provides an insight into the trust and faith that humans have put into the rising

technological complex. His fiction accounts for the investigations into the anxiety that is generated from living in these highly advanced technoscapes making his fiction having a journalistic approach. DeLillo's fiction also reiterates the discussions surrounding the contemporary culture, the environment and the anthropocentric turn that has occurred in the present times highlighting the shift in the living praxis. The avant-garde style of writing implicates the position of 'cities' as figures or markers and reflects upon the diversity, heterogeneity and multiplicity of perception that these positions have to offer. In DeLillo's fiction, the author also provides a voice to the gradual turn in the cultural shift that has occurred due to the amalgamation of technology with the human counterpart while foregrounding the 'mistakes' that have led to the chaotic dissent and tragedy in contemporary times. Even though, the select fiction represents a part of this technocratic supremacy and the urge to create the ultimate automaton, it is evidence of significant events that have occurred through this journey that humans have undertaken making DeLillo's fiction a literary marvel in itself.

The present thesis thus contextualizes and locates Baudrillardian ideas on Hyperreal and also his criticism of the mechanical turn in the selected fiction of Don DeLillo, aiming to analyze the contemporary extant. The proclivity of this research rests on the fact that the hyperreal just doesn't situate itself within the contemporary extant and its technical paradigm but is actively invented and concocted together alongside the help of global media and exported out for consumption creating a false sense of reality and actuality. The technoscapes in DeLillo's fiction are also prone to implosions and these 'disasters' are almost always either caused by or are at least in proximity of some 'machines', the information about which is then carefully created for consumption and dispensed by TVs present in every American household instantly connecting both the disaster and American populace and linking it to a wider chain of signification where

'truth' or 'reality' is deferred till the simulacrum collapses into itself and the hyperreal also establishes itself. This is so because in these technoscapes, man and machine cannot escape each other and both experience an event as well as the simulation of that particular event together in an endless loop.

The human association with technology has now surpassed the cognitive levels and transcends into the boundaries of takeover by artificial intelligence. The interface governing this relationship has also evolved from mere interpretation of given instructions, to coordinating the program, to now being able to write its own code and execute it effortlessly, therefore, it now has also surpassed the ability of transcendence. In the various orders of the Baudrillardian simulacra, the third order is that of the order of simulation which according to Baudrillard's seminal text *Simulacra and Simulation* which was published in the year 1994, is the order that is "founded on information, the model, the cybernetic game --- total operationality, hyperreality, aim of total control" (Baudrillard 121) hence, the contemporary is full of such artificial programs that function as 'real' and do not have any material source or physical substantiality. The contemporary hence is characterized by instating primal importance to the informational circuits over any material substance that is visible to the naked eye in terms of existing as real. Humans in the present times have, therefore, acted as extensions of the evolutionary relationship that is shared with technology because the definite differences between experiences of man and simulations generated by computers or machines have been removed to most extent. The contemporary has thus, successfully taken the postmodern into the direction of the posthuman as the present extant is configured with the presence of machines that are intelligent owing to the innovations in the technical paradigm that has revolutionized the field of artificial intelligence.

DeLillo as an author has also addressed this world of cybernetics in his novels. His subject matter has thus evolved from the individualistic ideas of the humanist tradition with the latest novels tackling the different components of the heterogeneous amalgamation that represent the machines with programmed cognitive capabilities with a sense of self-sufficiency. In the selected fiction, the novel *Cosmopolis* which was published in the year 2003 exemplifies how in the modern world there is development of arms and ammunition that have linkages to the human owners making this biometrically operated gun a human extension in itself. This can be read as the blurring of the man-machine boundary. DeLillo's literature therefore has attempted to elucidate the relationship that humans share with the non-biological elements that not only aid their existence but now serve as an extension of the human living criterion. DeLillo's fiction hence is a literary excursion that evokes a feeling of dread of living in contemporary times but also provokes the feeling of excitement and pleasure at the level of upgrade that the contemporary has gone through.

DeLillo's characters can therefore be approached from different perspectives and also from the empirical approach of existing in the contemporary paradigm. The characters created in DeLillo's fiction are an embodiment of the mechanical world and act as the informational bits logged into the flow of information. The capitalistic turn and the rapid urbanization have taken away the faculty of agency and choice from the characters of DeLillo as well as his novels presenting a possibility of contemporary technologies having a hand in persuading the modern man of a potential reality where mortality can be overturned by turning into a part of the technology itself. This is seen in DeLillo's 2003 published *Cosmopolis* where the protagonist Eric Packer looks at the unlimited power that this permanence through simulation will provide to him by uniting with technology and existing as an immortal in the informational complex of it.

The critical comprehension of DeLillo from the Baudrillardian lens is to approach the selected texts with the vision that 'reality' in the cybernetic era can be constructed and reconstructed down to the minutest detail in the virtual realm. Baudrillard concurs with this notion with his criticism that the contemporary position of science fiction is to raise everything into a simulation of the hyperreal and he argues this in his 1994 published *Simulacra and Simulation* that:

It is no longer possible to fabricate the unreal from the real, the imaginary from the givens of the real. The process will, rather, be the opposite: it will be put to decentered situations, models of simulation in place and to contrive to give them the feeling of the feeling of the real, of the banal, of lived experience, to reinvent the real as fiction, precisely because it has disappeared from our life. Hallucination of the real, of lived experience, of the quotidian, but reconstituted, sometimes down to the disquietingly strange details, reconstituted as an animal or vegetal reserve, brought to light with a transparent precision, but without substance, derealized in advance, hyper realized (Baudrillard 124)

hence, in the literary criticism of Don DeLillo, this emulation of reality is nothing but a simulation of fragments that make up for the eventual hyperreal from the collapsed simulacrum. His fiction also is an evident discussion on how in contemporary times technology itself has become a thing of consumption thus, DeLillo through his writings deconstructs this relationship that humankind shares with modern technology.

The selected fiction has also been viewed through a dystopic lens that is connected to Baudrillardian concepts through the systematic arrangement of the mechanical objects which govern the contemporary world's functionality. Since, in the modern world there is an ample amount of evidence that the lines of demarcation between man and machines have been blurred,

DeLillo's selected fiction becomes a medium of gauging how in the contemporary extant the culture of technology has been internalized. It also presents a critical reading of how the culture of the 'now' is defined by how modern technology is not just made for consumption but is also used as a conduit for bringing in explicit changes to the present times. In recent times, technology has also acted as a vehicle of foregrounding disruption, especially in the socio-political stances that have given birth to life-altering events like political assassinations such as that of President Kennedy, Wars like the Iraq war, and terrorist activities such as the attacks of 9/11 as well as atomic testing and bombing etcetera. Hence, apart from experiencing technology in a positive light, the modern era has also witnessed it as the root of events where the display of power is concerned.

The contemporary hence, witnesses a kind of fragmentation that is owed to the revolution in the military industry especially pertaining to the arms and ammunition sector. This revolution has thus enabled a kind of chaos, which is publicized through the help of media, but is distorted and biased enough to cause a sense of alienation, paranoia, immediate danger and deadly destruction. This mechanical turn in the human praxis has subtly initiated a cultural shift where technology that previously just shared enough social space, is now ensuring maximum domination and display of power. It has extended into the spaces that are endowed with decisive power and are responsible for pertinent political conclusions, such as the political parties contesting in a nation or the government of the nation itself and serve as the guiding force that reiterates the political stance across the global platform. The modern era also sees technology as the medium of corresponding threats, violence and radical ideas leading to crises subsequently.

DeLillo, through his fiction thus, has been extremely outspoken about the societal aspects that have developed as offshoots of existing in the modern technoscape. His fiction details an

account of violence and the consequential trauma that shapes both the person experiencing it as well as society at large. Through his fiction the author has also discussed events like 9/11 publicly as well as critically and how such events shake the global confidence as well as affect the transnational forces such as capitalistic reigns of the world. His fiction also takes into consideration the aspects of fundamentalism that supplant the ideological component of terrorism and violence and according to DeLillo these 'acts' should be made 'visible' because these are the apparatuses that are bound to contain certain truth with representational significance that needs to be expressed by the perceiving subject. Therefore, it is safe to admit that DeLillo's fiction is also bound to comment on the power of this technological complex and its ability to rewrite reality, especially with the help of techniques of contemporary times such as augmented reality, it also has the competence of overlaying the two and forming a composite that has embedded meaning layered into it. The digital front of the modern technological era thus, renders it possible for all the effective embodiment of terror and disruption, enunciating how technology is somehow at the centre of this activity, facilitating it like an instrument of function.

Drawing on the aforementioned critical insights into the fiction of Don DeLillo, the thesis aims to offer a deeper understanding of how the transition from manual labour to mechanized outsourcing of this same labour has affected contemporary America. Since the author, Don DeLillo has witnessed this transition himself, therefore, the selected fiction offers an in-depth account of the process of mechanization and the shift towards a technical paradigm that has enabled the establishment of contemporary technoculture. The thesis thus, brings out the trajectory of this technical turn and its very inception to the contemporary times conflict with the hyperreal takeover. It delves significantly into the social context of the rise of machines and their impact. It illuminates the commodity culture that is present in the contemporary extant and

discusses the relationship that humans have evolved to share with the technical paradigm and how the contemporary reality moves in between the images and channels of media. The thesis also encompasses the contribution of this technological complex to the socio-political as well as economic designs of the present American society and how it shapes the public narrative as well as the social fabric. The critical insights have been drawn from the conceptual angles underscored by the French critic Jean Baudrillard and the thesis engages with the present America, especially in its hyperreal-technological complex unit and looks into the depictions of technology acting as conduits of change and medium of consumption through the generous 'system of objects' that has been installed in the current living paradigm.

The thesis is organized into four chapters that correspond to the posited research questions underscoring the research objectives. It also includes an introduction and conclusion to the thesis. The first chapter entitled 'The Evolution of DeLillo's America' highlights and traces the evolutionary origins of postmodern America. It brings forth a discussion of the theoretical perspectives on postmodernism and contextualizes the said thinkers and their line of argument into the America that DeLillo has lived in for his entire life. There is also a keen reflection on how the American postmodern scene has developed from multiple sources that 'form' and 'reform' the gamut of the postmodern American world. In addition to the historical and theoretical perspectives on postmodernism, the chapter also entails a deliberation on DeLillo's contribution as a postmodern author and his oeuvre. It also encloses the selected fiction and a literature survey that explores the various approaches employed in his fiction to analyze DeLillo's narrative styles, his take on violence and trauma, the political themes that make up for the central argument as well as his vision on the developing American media scene, especially the transformation from 'technoscapes' to current 'mediascapes' that ensure the prevalence of

consumption through different modes and channels. It builds upon the foundational framework based on which the thesis further endeavors to expound and engage in critical discourse through examination of the selected texts.

The succeeding chapter two entitled, 'Uncovering the Baudrillardian Hyperreal' within the thesis provides a contextual understanding of the growing and evolving media culture and its complexities. It also takes a special interest in the Baudrillardian conceptual angle of the evolution of hyperreal and the subsequent cosmopolis through a systematic arrangement of the 'system of objects' that uses the process of naturalization of technology and assimilation of the technical paradigm into the living praxis to produce a long-lasting effect on the culture of the present times. The chapter also highlights the intricacies of the present understanding of this culture of technology and attempts to synthesize how technology regulates the entirety of modern existence. The subjects experiencing this technical realm also understand that the link to physical reality has not only been disconnected but also severed altogether because of the dominance of the consumer culture.

The chapter thus, delineates the construction of this suspended consumerist society that thrives because of the technical turn and mechanization which have propounded the human praxis towards an age of digitalization. It underpins the creation of the Baudrillardian simulacra and the hyperreal in the selected fiction of Don DeLillo and rigorously analyzes and examines contemporary America and what defines its present 'reality'. It also delves into the advent, use, and manipulation of media in selected fiction to understand how this hijack through the powers of media is aided by contemporary technoculture. The chapter offers insights into how, through the years, there has been a transition from the physical landscape in America to an elaborate mediascape that has further evolved into a complex and nuanced technoscape in the present.

The forthcoming chapter three entitled, 'The Simulacrum of Modern Tragedies' delves into the contemporary culture of technology and looks at this technological complex through the lens of Baudrillardian angles of 'simulation' and 'hyperreal'. It endeavors to understand how technology has allowed the contemporary American society to surpass the man-machine dichotomy and blend the boundaries of the 'real' and the 'hyperreal'. The selected fiction posits a discussion on how the 'technical turn' in society has people contemplating and resorting to living an 'unreal' life. The characters created by DeLillo exemplify this turn and emphasize on how there is an unspoken rule of slowly moving towards the evolving technocultural praxis for salvation. This association with rampant mechanization and urbanization for the characters has extended into the Baudrillardian idea of 'the-more-visible-than-visible'. DeLillo's selected fiction encompasses and emulates the use of modern technology to simulate the mechanical panorama in contemporary America. The chapter thus provides a comprehensive and detailed account of how the rising scientific grandiose has slowly progressed into the phase of cataclysmic events that occur simultaneously with the evolving human paradigm making this shift part of the technical turn.

Chapter four entitled, 'The Simulation of Collapse in Hyperreal America' comprises of foregrounding the unwelcomed consequences of the evolving technical paradigm that has created a cultural shift as well as an impact. It delineates the apocalyptic turns that have been shadowing the rise in technological complexities and are brought into the world of living, as these advancements in technology have surpassed the stage of being controlled by their human counterparts. Furthermore, the selected fiction underlines these advancing technologies in contemporary America, tracing the evolutionary genealogy of such catastrophes and curating the antiutopian sentiment that has evolved from such events. Through the selected texts, the

narrative underscores that because these events are rooted in human activities, modern disasters such as terror attacks, assassinations and mass hysteria etcetera, are an outcome of human hunger for creating a praxis that removes the agency of manual human labour entirely. Characters within DeLillo's fiction examine this shift to deduce that their faith in the rising technological paradigm has been lost but simultaneously exhibit a fascination with the power display that contemporary technology is capable of demonstrating.

Chapter 1

The Evolution of DeLillo's America

“I offer instead, then, a specific, if polemical, start from which to operate: as a cultural activity that can be discerned in most art forms and many currents of thought today, what I want to postmodernism is fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political (Hutcheon 4)”.

- Linda Hutcheon in *The Poetics of Postmodernism History, Theory, Fiction* (1988)

1.1 Introduction:

Corresponding to the first research objective which was to explore the theoretical perspective of postmodernism concerning the selected fiction of Don DeLillo, it is pertinent to take cognizance of the significant discourses in the realm of cultural, philosophical and sociopolitical spheres. The organization of chapter one delves into the multifaceted and complex world of postmodernism, exploring its origins, key characteristics, and its profound impact on contemporary thought and society. It attempts to underscore the foundations of this intellectual movement and comprehend the multidisciplinary approaches that are used to draw insights and grasp the full scope as well as influence.

Postmodernism and its complexities tend to critique the universality of truth, fixed meanings or objective reality by embracing the idea that knowledge and the notions of reality are always shaped by social, cultural and historical contexts as well as that there is a presence of subjectivity and plurality. Hence, it led to the emergence of multiple perspectives in

philosophies, movements in literature, artistic manifestations and sociopolitical implications. The chapter, therefore, attempts at delving into the key concepts that have shaped the trajectory of postmodernism. It looks at how postmodern ideas have deconstructed the conventional notions to establish skepticism towards anything that exudes authority and the sections of the chapter delve into the different underpinnings of the movement of postmodernism.

The term ‘postmodern’ in its essence is a unique and ambiguous term about the canon of the twentieth century, particularly in the post-World War era. The diversity of Postmodernism is situated in multiple facets of art, literature, architecture, philosophy and even in theory. The tradition of postmodernism is upheld by critics and scholars alike, alluding to the different discussions in a broad spectrum that began with the radical ideas explicated by thinkers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Jean Francois Lyotard, Jacques Lacan, Frank Letricchia, Robert Venturi, Le Corbusier, Stanley Fish, Jean Baudrillard, Donna Haraway, Luce Irigaray, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Andrea Dworkin, Catharine MacKinnon etcetera as author Stephen R. C. Hicks argues this in his 2004 published *Explaining Postmodernism Skepticism and Socialism From Rousseau to Foucault* that their ideas encompass the realm of defining moments in history.

As it rose to its prominence in the mid-20th century, postmodernism was defined with the properties of ‘skepticism’, ‘irony’ and ‘rejection’ of any grandiose, be it narratives or ideologies, raised to the pedestal in the modernist era. The enlightenment of the age of modernism was contested as postmodernists “deconstruct reason, truth, and reality because they believe that in the name of reason, truth and reality western civilization has wrought dominance, oppression and destruction” (Hicks 3) as argued in *Explaining Postmodernism Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault* by Stephen R C Hicks (2004). The ‘post’ in postmodern hence is

encompassed with the idea of either a result, an aftermath, the development after the period of modernism, or perhaps the denial and entire rejection of modernism itself. It thus, identifies itself with something that isn't there.

With history being an unending cycle of eras that rejected its predecessor period with every new turn, it can be implicated that with every generation the definition of what constructs the culture and tradition of the age changes. Since, the concept of an 'age' is associated with the evidence it provides of the historical changes that occur in the sections of either art, theory, culture and the economic praxis. Likewise, the concept of Postmodernism is hence, tethered to multiple attitudes, that either accept or reject views encapsulating the debate of what constitutes 'knowledge', as the amalgamation of 'reason' and 'power' is a potent source of relegating the subjugated to the margins.

Therefore, a timeline can be traced of the genealogy of this period, specifically located around the particular historical period that came into existence after World War II i.e. after 1945. This period is associated with the rapid development in terms of machinery and appended technologies that revolutionized the way of living to establish the parameters of an intellectual age that liberates from the adjoined oppression of the past, as well as, questions the expectations for the future.

Thus, the prime focus in any postmodernist study is to highlight the 'socially conditioned' nature of education or what constitutes 'Knowledge'. The aim is to comprehend why reason is rejected consistently as Linda Hutcheon in the very beginning of her work published in the year 1988, entitled, *A Poetics of Postmodernism History, Theory, Fiction* states about Postmodernism that "It is usually accompanied by a grand flourish of negativized rhetoric: we hear of discontinuity, disruption, dislocation, decentering, indeterminacy, and

antilocalization” (Hutcheon 3). Hence, postmodernism stands for debunking and contesting the universalist ideas of what makes reality, what is morality, what is truth or human nature or language, science or even social progress. It more than often resists or attempts to obscure any sense that prevailed in the times of modernism, implying that a new age has begun that surpasses modern times in terms of knowledge.

The boundaries of postmodernism are as wide as the plurality and fragmentation of the contemporary world appear. The pivotal rise in technology has enhanced life in all its spheres causing a volcanic change across all realms, hence, there is a noticeable shift from the coherence exhibited before this setting of the contemporary era. There is a rise in abandoning of the traditional rationality and approach, which then is, superseded by self-reflexivity, pluralism, irrelevance and irreverence, the testimonials or grand narratives of the yesteryears are no longer looked at through the lens of elevating ‘thoughts’ and ‘passion’, the iconic status of these works does not hold any primary significance anymore thus, culminating the fact that Postmodernism has become a state of the mind which is now a staple of the contemporary existence.

The much-celebrated concept of a ‘transcendent truth’ pertinent to all mankind, throughout an endless space and time, does not exist for postmodernists. Subsequently, the idea of truth to be ‘universal’ is not only apprehensible but negated with the concept that ‘truth’ is whatever ‘we’ happen to agree with hence, this allows each one of us to have our truth thus, a universal truth encompassing all can neither be achieved nor established. This cements the idea of fragmentation that exists in present times but owes its emergence to the post World War two society.

Postmodernism tends to differ from postmodernity in lieu of the latter being the condition of the society that exists after modernity. There is no sense of ‘contemporary’ but rather a

reference to a specific time period in history which alludes to the characteristics of modernity i.e. a progressive era constituting the industrial as well as enlightenment revolutions. Hence, postmodernity is seen as the end of modernity with the culmination of constant change as Stephen R. C. Hicks (2004) argues in his *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism From Rousseau to Foucault* that “Epistemologically, having rejected the notion of an independently existing reality, Postmodernism denies that reason or any other method is a means of acquiring objective knowledge of that reality” (Hicks 6). Therefore, to accredit the conscious change in attitude towards postmodernity, a visible change in the aesthetics of the scheme of things of art, culture, and lifestyle is noted. It is often the change that has defied the conventional norms and is subjected to difficulty with respect to their classification.

Postmodernism thus, situates itself in the realm of architecture; history; philosophy; arts; social sciences and political history. It can also be cited in the schema pertaining to cultural productions especially, the products that are generated for consumption in art, cinema and music. Other sites of Postmodernism include ideological questions; literary theory and criticism; and distinguished literatures of the world. It can be hence, argued that postmodernism enlightens a new paradigm of organizing principles, thoughts, action, and reflection on all that connects to the changing factors in modern society as critiqued significantly after the year 1945.

It indulges in a dominant critical trend that became evident in most disciplines and practices of the twentieth century. To quote Hicks (2004) again “Postmodern accounts of Human nature are consistently collectivist, holding that individuals’ identities are constructed largely by social-linguistic groups that they are a part of... (Hicks 6)”. Therefore, the term ‘post-modern’ may emphasize situating itself historically and philosophically against modernism but the

understanding of it as a movement comes in context to the rejection and moving beyond boundaries of the same as “Postmodernism rejects the entire enlightenment project” (14).

To elucidate upon the notion of postmodernism as a theoretical construct, the credit aligns with numerous theorists, philosophers and critics who revisited ‘modernism’ and its canonical ‘critics’ to establish the implications of ‘their works’, allowing the eventual understanding of postmodernist tenet that states “any work of art couldn’t appeal to all humanity and hence, isn’t free of divisive political implications” (Butler 6) as deduced by Christopher Butler (2002) in his *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*. Hence, postmodernism is underscored as a methodological approach that critiqued the ramifications of the age of enlightenment, it adheres to strong reaction against everything “from capitalism and liberal forms of government to science and technology” (Hicks 14) as argued by Stephen R C Hicks (2004) in his *Explaining Postmodernism Skepticism and Socialism From Rousseau to Foucault* which was published in the year 2004.

Christopher Butler (2002) further analyses how the intellectual tradition then “moved away” from the strongly ethical and individualist existentialism that was typical of the immediately post-war period towards far more skeptical and antihumanist attitudes” (Butler 6). As a result various distinguished critics established numerous practices of interpretative opportunities. Therefore, to comprehend the genesis of Postmodernism, one needs to examine the theoretical cannon that predates it.

1.2 Beginnings of Postmodernism

As a term, ‘postmodern’ was first utilized in 1870 by John Watkins Chapman who suggested the ‘postmodern style’ in art. Then in the early 20th century, J.M. Thompson described

'postmodern' as the 'change in attitudes and belief' and in 1926 came the publication of essays from Bernard Iddings Bell that use the term to distinguish the arrival of a new time-period and henceforth, the ending of the modern era. However, there isn't a clear demarcation between the two, but, the period of Postmodernism does follow that of Modernism and often it is seen alluding to multiple meanings.

To begin with, Postmodernism refers to three different echoes, i.e. a.) Historical Period; b.) Cultural Tendency; and c.) Dominant Critical Practice. Historically, the postmodern period has a beginning and an ending which is attributed to the post world war era, i.e. after 1945. Culturally, it became the expression and trend that invaded most of the disciplines including arts and architecture etcetera. In the critical discourse and practice, it conquered and critiqued upon the genealogical intellectual tendencies and the life practices exhibited and followed in the 20th century thus, even though, it has an ambiguous touch to it, Postmodernism is seen essentially as a critique of life in this period, in general.

The epistemological seeds of this movement were sown by German thinkers, whose philosophies paved way for the various scholars around the world to add to the canon. The vastness of the field and scope of postmodernism thus, is rooted in the teachings of the likes of Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Kant and Marx etcetera. It was after these that European scholars emerged at the scene including the French like Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault, Barthes, Lacan, Deleuze and Baudrillard whose works influenced the subject matter and evolution of postmodernism in the American scene. These French theorists often appended their works with the Anglo-American philosophy and tradition of rejecting reason, science and objectivity.

Accordingly, the idea of the location of Postmodernism is grounded in the different philosophical and literary marvels that thrust the idea of it into manifestation or representations

in the 20th century. The characteristics of this era as propounded by critically acclaimed theorist Pramod K Nayar (2000) in his text *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory* which was published in the year 2000, include refusing to accept any system of thought or theory as universally valid with a tendency to opt for incredulity such as fragmentation over unity, dispersion over linearity and anecdotes over epics. It resolves to blur cultures that are separated by the boundaries of either 'high' or 'low' with a constant sense of 'playfulness'; 'contingency'; and 'self-reflexivity'. Another pertinent feature of it is the resurging interest in the 'surface', 'image' and 'copy' as opposed to that in the 'depth', 'reality' or the 'original'.

There is an increased fascination with the 'representational strategies' rather than the 'truth' masked behind them making the truth irrelevant and inconsequential and the process of pursuit of a universal truth making it a meaningless affair in itself altogether. It emphasizes on 'discourse', the 'language' it uses and the 'narrative' it produces rather than the 'reality' that they are supposed to convey henceforth, discarding mimesis as the basis of representation of reality. There is an urge for 'flows', 'shifts' and 'multiplicities' rather than the expected order, organization and tyrannical coherence.

It dives into what makes the connection between language and reality and also how this language is connected to consequential action. The postmodern perspective on the correlation between language and (anti)reality is interpreted through the concept of consciousness that serves a functional purpose but does not imply any cognitive aspects which was the basis of modernist claims, which is exactly why the postmodern often deals with the 'unmasking' or 'rhetoric', adding to the importance of 'subjectivity' as Stephen R. C. Hicks (2004) argues that "interpretation and investigation never terminate with reality. Language connects only with more language, never with a non-linguistic reality" (*Explaining Postmodernism* 175) since, any

subjectivity that is based in language is itself created in an underlying language which when deconstructed only provides us with more language as most thinkers primarily focused on how the ideas in one's mind translated into an expression and what made this language further made meaning possible. French linguist Saussure's idea that language is a system of signs that operates on the model of binary oppositions thus represents how language functions in actuality and grows in the degree of complexities with each layer of substitution and combination.

The postmodernist stance hence, is that the language does not connect to any reality, be it external or internal, that is embedded in the underlying self. It does not serve any purpose in proving or disproving, it merely is used as a weapon of effectiveness. The narratives so created thus, are deemed as a part of the postmodern art, that focuses on 'meta-fiction' or the idea of self-reflection in a text that implies the reevaluation, recasting and reformulation of events that make our 'real' history and Linda Hutcheon, in 1988, conceptualized this as 'historiographic metafiction'. Language thus, has facilitated this shift from epistemological to ontological concerns.

It is pertinent to comprehend that the understanding of postmodernism is always seen in terms of a continuation of the radical aspects of European and American modernism primarily focusing on 'continuity' as Eliot had put it, whereas, also insinuating the trends in tradition which were built inherently such as the concept of 'reflexivity' and 'irony' that were seen to be present during modernism as well, but are currently employed to bring sense to the rupture in dominant modernist ideas and tendencies. It is associated with the disappearance of security that 'reason' offered in the modernist era as the former was the period that continued the era of enlightenment and where it subsequently reached its peak.

In cataloguing the criteria of Postmodernism, it is important to acknowledge that, postmodernists not only questioned the prevailing hierarchies as dismantling of the established system occurred but also provided critiques of pertinent foundational theories that had been universalized. It thus ensured the rupture and collapse of intellectual grounds and foundations. Consequently, a commotion in the disciplinary world had risen that caused a crisis in the ‘meaning-making’ process as Christopher Butler (2002) puts forth that “it is this *conceptualist self-reflexivity* which is so often the sign of a postmodernist origin” (*Postmodernism* 78). Within the postmodernist traditions, this self-reflexivity often combined with minimalism “to ‘ask questions’ through quite simple works of art” (*Postmodernism* 82) since, this minimalistic tendency ensures that it quashes any or all elements of expressiveness. The emergence of minimalism as a reaction to the modernist stance across various domains was most noted in music and art where visual representation yielded better results.

The evolution of Postmodernism hence is deeply rooted in the idea of self-consciousness which instigated critical theoretical notions like that of self-reflexivity, “quasi-intellectual, shallow, surface-oriented, and ‘questioning’” (*Postmodernism* 83) as argued by Christopher Butler (2002). It hence, ensued the critiquing of generic restraints concerning artistic methods and ideology including the political ones. It questioned how the norms came to be accepted, standardized and implemented focusing on what is the set precedent for any idea to be legitimized.

The inception of political stances in postmodernist times is inherent to the Foucauldian philosophy where Foucault is accredited with the discussion on the relationship between discourse and power which was predominantly “designed to exclude and control people” (Butler 45), where ‘discourse’ is the primal ‘language’ and a principle set of statements that becomes the

intellectual foundation for various disciplines. The paradigm of language hence, also governs the 'discursive practices' that are employed and critically engaged in the fields of medical sciences, practice of law, boards of examiners as well as penology etcetera. Foucault (1972) regards authors as nothing but a mere subsidiary or function of discourse as "the frontiers of a book are never clear cut" (Foucault 23) which he argued in *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language* the English translation of which was published in the year 1972.

Christopher Butler in his *Postmodernism* (2002) elaborates on how the "language game of the discourse expresses and enacts the authority of those who are empowered to use it within a social group" (Butler 45). Butler exemplifies the same by citing the obvious language used by the social groups that comprise hospitals, courts or even professors. This prevalent language becomes the guiding force that then is used to distinguish the distinct sphere and "subordinate nor exclude or marginalize those who are outside of it" (*Postmodernism* 45) which he exemplifies by pointing at "faith healers, homosexuals, Communist sympathizers, anarchist protestors" (*Postmodernism* 45).

Foucault (1977) criticised these exclusions and "systems of micro-power" (Foucault 222) that arose in a Marxist fashion in pure 'non-egalitarian' and 'asymmetrical' disciplines as exemplified in *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, the English translation of which was published in the year 1977. Foucault also critically analyzed the power structure from the bottom up, by adopting the victim's position and thus, the conceptual foundation of the systems that formed 'exams', 'hospitals', 'prisons', 'schools', 'army' etcetera promulgate the "will to exercise power beats humanitarian egalitarianism" (*Postmodernism* 45) as argued by Christopher Butler (2002). Foucault's inference thus, is that these micro-systems are reflective of the proposition of absolute totalitarianism, which he terms as the 'episteme', the locus that "define

the conditions under which a discourse can be ‘true’” (Butler 46). Foucault hence focuses on how the interaction between power and knowledge helps in creating these subordinate identities.

These subordinate identities are what postmodernists claim to be ‘the other’ and to Foucault, these often comprise homosexuals, women, non-whites, criminally insane, prisoners etcetera. He is thus, of the opinion that ‘knowledge’ is merely an expression of one’s ‘social power’ that assures one to level any political game and exercise control to maintain this accumulated power for their personal profit through exploitative means.

It is imperative to note that Foucault’s works detail his concerns about the discontinuities and ruptures present in how historical studies are conducted. Though, his ‘archaeological dive’ into the analysis of the history of sexuality is what led to the rise of gay and queer theory as a consequence. Foucault’s prime argument in this discourse can thus, be summarized as “history indicates to us that it is the convention which dictates sexual practices, and that there is no ‘natural law’ of what must be” (97) as argued by Stuart Sim in his *Fifty Key Postmodernism Thinkers* which was published in the year 2013.

It is Foucault’s archaeologies that closely investigate how the contemporary world has been subjected to codes of behaviour that have not only been imposed but practised across the entire social spectrum. This has led to the evolution of policing regimes that govern aspects of ‘othering’ and establish institutes to supervise the same. Those in power then thus, formulate the conception and creation of authoritarian institutes that exert influence and command control, such as that of asylums, prisons or even hospitals and only the elite of the socio-political system so created then have the power to maintain this mass control. Hence, Foucault (1977) opines that since there is no clear line of evolution of this discourse, he reinstates the postmodernist thought of ‘randomness’ as he argues in his *The Archaeology of Knowledge* published in the year 1977,

that “those divisions or groupings with which we have become so familiar” (Foucault 22), we can no longer believe or reckon in them.

In *The Politics of Postmodernism* Linda Hutcheon (2002) dives into how Postmodernism has not only institutionalized itself but also overlaps “in its ends and means (but by no means interchangeable) with feminism and postcolonialism, as well as with queer, race and ethnicity theory” (Hutcheon 166). Postmodernism hence, is the progenitor of a space that is open for debates, parodic reinventions, and critical approach via multiple identities. With critics like Derrida, Lyotard, Brian McHale, Edward Said, Michel Foucault, Laura Mulvey, Terry Eagleton, Christopher Norris and Linda Hutcheon exploring the dynamics, postmodernism claims its space not only in style but in the ideology of representation.

It attempts to transcend whatever constitutes the conventional narrative and form of representation. By adopting a stark contrast with modernism, Postmodernism essentially became more accommodating to the plebeians and the middle-class. However, it also harboured an antielitist attitude, allowing the subsequent analysis and research-oriented study of unconventional subjects like movies, TV, style of clothing, or even automobiles for that matter. Subjects like these had no prior scholarly repute but became worth academic pursuits as Postmodernism moved closer to the masses by addressing the layman aspects like ‘delight in absurdities’.

The definition of Postmodernism therefore is always contextualized in one’s understanding of modernism and because of the different varieties found in foregrounding of modernism, as a result when the genealogy of postmodernism is traced, more than often, we find different disciplines, approaches and traditions that differ radically and substantially. It attempts to transcend the self-imposed limitations of modernism via not only self-reflexivity but also the

ability to question any premise so established from within the realm of art. It allowed not only the attacks on modernist art but also of undermining of the very idea of art itself as art in the modernist period was an institution (a modernist idea in itself) that was being critiqued. It is worth noting that the idea of postmodernism is predominantly rooted in most of the artistic disciplines like literature; architecture; dance; film and photography etcetera. It today resonates in the fields of philosophy, cultural studies, sociology, politics, aesthetics, media, language, as well as popular culture by deconstructing the dominant discourses and power structures as well as providing a voice to the marginalized.

1.3 Present Understanding:

In contemporary understanding, this postmodern art, takes the most worldly and non-artsy objects, only to transform them into very worthy art installations or pricey pictures. The definition of art isn't limited to pictures alone, it tends to also include architectural wonders such as the 'illusory buildings' or 'digital paintings' such as those popularized by Andy Warhol. It even encapsulates moments in poetry such as that of the 'Beat Generation'. Le Corbusier, the famous architect, is looked upon as the symbol of displaying the shift from minimalistic doctrines of modernism towards the postmodernist stance of blending the classical elements with the modernist ones, only to celebrate the obnoxiousness of the result as a form of decoration.

Robert Venturi (1966) in the book *Robert Venturi: Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* discussed the concept of 'hybridity', 'compromising', 'accommodating', 'messy', 'vitality', 'complexity', 'contradiction', 'difficult', and 'inclusion' over the very obvious unity. The offshoots of Postmodernism also branched out into the canon of children's literature with attempts being made to use 'non-linear plots' and 'unreliable narrators' best exemplified in Kurt Vonnegut's (1969) *Slaughterhouse-Five* or *The Children's Crusade: A Duty-Dance with Death*.

Towards the late 1970s, Postmodernism had transitioned into the various spaces of epistemic importance and with Jean-Francois Lyotard's (1984) publication of the work entitled *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* condensed this notion of Postmodernism into "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard xxiv), the English translation of which was published in the year 1984.

The fundamental philosophical premises of an intellectual movement define and implicitly imply the presupposed conceptions associated with it. Even though Postmodernism claims to be antiphilosophical and rejects any inherent traditional predicates, therefore, it evolved in different phases concerning the theoretical and conceptual frameworks within which it was studied. The idea of 'avant-garde' and its attack on the institution of art alludes to the antirepresentational, antinarrative and deconstructionist turn that Postmodernism took in the initial phase.

Prior to the evolution of concrete tenets of Postmodernism, the lack of proper theoretical definition and framework made it more reactionary. The reaction soon expanded to mature into the emergence of a counter culture where democratic and eclectic opinions then readily transformed into deliberate avant-garde attacks on art as an institution within its rights. Leslie Fiedler (1917-2003), a prominent critic in American canon, to underscore the basic tenets of the framework to understand the kind of change that was happening to the American scene. His texts like *Love and Death in the American Novel* (1960); *Waiting for the End: The American Literary Scene from Hemingway to Baldwin* (1964); *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968); *What was Literature?: Class Culture And Mass Society* (1982) etcetera paint a picture of a developing and changing America through the postmodern wave, reflecting on the critical environment and

major phenomenon of the time including the changes after the period of high modernism that culminated into disillusionment after a life-changing event like the World War II.

In the 1970s, Postmodernism became more foregrounded with its concrete foundations rooted in the socio-linguistic realities. Its emphasis on subjectivity and the idea that the notion of identity, especially that of a human, is a social as well as linguistic construction. Hence, there is a postmodernist denial of acquiring an objective knowledge of human nature and its reality through reason or any other method. The phase of postmodernist evolution thus, locates itself in the poststructuralist norm with critics like Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, Deleuze, Lyotard etcetera who worked in two different schools of thoughts that appeared simultaneously and almost overlap with each other.

There is a discrete amalgamation of the French and American postmodernisms giving it an Anglophone characteristic because of the sudden rush of availability of critical French texts that were previously denied to American scholars. When Barthes and Derrida attempted 'Deconstruction', they looked closely at language and what makes a text or an author with an emphasis on individuality, conventionality and incommensurability while making of a text. They dealt with the interaction of language, culture and politics and the collective effect it had on the post-structural movement. With this, in the second stage, the emergence of Lacan, Foucault and Deleuze, the vanguard posited the merger between the American and French forms of postmodernism.

The critical comments, concepts and critiques put together by them and other prominent theorists like Lyotard, working in the domain, then foregrounded the frameworks and theory that govern what postmodernism is within the poststructural and postmodern movement. This further led to the arrival of two important movements with one in linguistic and textual orientation,

solidified by the works of Barthes and Derrida whereas, the other was in the 1980s, with the works of Lacan and Foucault that further dived into the conceptual links with feminism and multiculturalism.

It is pertinent to note that the genealogy of postmodernism often depends upon the kind of modernism it departed from, facilitating a more accessible postmodern which is easier to contextualize, define and locate. Author Abdulazim Ali N. Elaati in his research paper “Postmodernism Theory” published in the year 2016, talks about how the concept of Postmodernism is still disputed and debated. He further states that it is because of the “multiplicity of the concepts and its implications from critic to another (Elaati 1).” According to him the period of modernism primarily focused on the encouragement of ‘historical vernacular’ which led to playful illusions, decorativeness and complexity. From a literary perspective, it is characterized by irony, self-references and absurdity (Elaati 1).

On the other hand, postmodernism materialized in the sociopolitical context of World War, the Cold War and the emergence of nuclear weapons and machinery. And thus, Literature also saw the birth of critical philosophies such as Surrealism, Existentialism, Absurdism, Nihilism and Deconstruction. These theories and philosophies paved the way for the transgression from Modernism to Postmodernism, the attributes of which included undermining, questioning, and nihilistic approaches which may rely on the facets of intertextuality, disorder and often non-compatibility. Hence, postmodernism is an ever-evolving congruence of theories and currents in the philosophical, intellectual, monetary, literary and technical schools which came forth after the establishment of postmodern structuralism, semiotics and linguistics.

To expand on Elaati’s notion, it can be reiterated that postmodernism often exhibits resistance to distinct cultural and historical markers. The periodization of this era is still disputed

with critics like Brian McHale deducing that it has possibly ended whereas, critics like Jürgen Habermas contesting the idea of the arrival of postmodernism altogether. The cultural and historical markers attempt to situate this period within the frame of either ‘post-war’, ‘post-modernism’, ‘cold war’, ‘neoliberalism’, ‘post-1960s’, ‘civil rights movement’, ‘age of computers’, ‘cyberpunk’, ‘the late capitalist culture’, ‘globalization’, and ‘unpredictable terrorism’. These markers are essentially important to trace the genealogy of the post-war development.

This advancement in the technical realm allowed the creation and establishment of the modern world which is characterized by ‘advanced media societies’. Another prominent feature pertinent to these societies is their ingrained ‘capitalist economies’ which have fashioned the world into a preposterous dominion. The paradigm of this media-based society is pragmatic and inherent in the fact that the shift in the praxis of these societies is a move forward towards breaking down of boundaries and a medium of transgressing into a subversive state of materialistic and idealistic productivity. The advent of technocratic capitalist states is hence, in compliance with the postmodern society that is didactic of the capitalist technology, allowing the modification to the embodiment of fibre of society and bringing about changes that have never been witnessed before, as a result altering the sense of reality.

This postmodern society is thus, a ‘society’ which is highly dependent upon ‘information’ making it easier to be the playground of consumerist ideology. When such rampant commodification occurs, global conflicts associated with the same emerge, which subsequently turn into severe political crises. The consequential transformation of social and private cultural characteristics thus, marks the abandoning of traditional concepts and tools which were utilized to analyze the society and state relationship. Though, there has been the birth of human rights and

access to the same guarantees equality however social class, ethnic identity and cultural characteristics still lead to clashes.

Although it evolved as a stringent reaction to the hegemony, domination, exploitation and alienation via critiquing the capitalist institutions which always have a monopoly on the production and consumption of knowledge, it looks forward to the postindustrial society which has a major influence on social, economic, political cultural and psychological paradigms. And contemporary fiction is pertinent in order to exemplify the presence of postmodernism in various disciplines such as the cultural studies, philosophy, economics, linguistics, feminism and literary criticism.

The major inferences to be drawn from the argument of 'Postmodernism vs. Enlightenment' include how it outright rejects the tenets of modernism therefore, the notion of 'reality' is subjected to 'antirealism' in postmodern understanding. Similarly, the value associated with reason and experience was replaced by linguistic and social subjectivism. The individual identity of a person and their autonomy, propagated in modernism was countered with crediting of multiplicity in race, sex and distinguished group-isms in the postmodern era. The idea of a mutually beneficial and harmonious human interest was countered with the rising conflicts and oppression. The value associated with individualism in market and politics was countered with the notion of communalism, the idea of solidarity and restraints set by the egalitarian values in the postmodern times.

The revolutionary achievements of science and technology are now looked at suspiciously. In academia the postmodern exhibits itself in the form of literary criticisms that reject 'objective meaning' and 'true interpretation' for any text since, it can not only be deconstructed but the sole claim to objectivity can be challenged. The subjective association for

any reader with the text implies that no true interpretation of a text can exist independently, as well as, the idea that the form and content of a text are not only shaped by the author but also draws heavily from their individual experience with their race, sex, class, personal biases, feelings and preferences.

Postmodernism also seems to influence the world of law with a new wave that rose with the emergence of Critical Legal Theory and legal pragmatism. There is a general distrust of any abstract concept or any universalized theory of law since, they only act as tools or means for judiciary practices however, their usage is prone to subjective attributes hence, making it a part of the postmodern canon by turning legal arguments into a battle of will and rhetoric since “legal constitutions and precedents are essentially indeterminate and the so called objectivity and neutrality of legal reasoning are frauds” (*Explaining Postmodernism* 17) as argued by Stephen R C Hicks (2004). This points towards the inherent notion that decisions in such cases are subjective and often motivated by personal choice or preference in political understanding. Often law becomes the weapon that is used to fabricate and bring about the cover-up and exploitation of personal interests especially in the West where it procures the white male interest.

Hicks goes on to further elaborate on how postmodernism has deeply embedded itself into the field of education which primarily focused on the idea of complacent cognitive development and to that of training a young child’s mind. The postmodernist notion of education rejects this idea of education and replaces it with the view that education provides a social identity to a being, after exposing it to linguistics and language acquisition, making them conscious of the various moulded identities such as that of racial, and sexual and class.

And even though, the current educational system “reflects only or primarily the interests of those in positions of power” (*Explaining Postmodernism* 18) as argued by Stephen R C Hicks

(2004), postmodern education comprises of focusing on works away from canon, prioritizing the accolades won by non-white authors and the works that have come from the non-hierarchical positions such as that of women, the economically weaker, people from different racial backgrounds or different beliefs. This postmodern approach also questions the monopoly of truth that the scientific approach has collectively established. The academia before this catered to the exclusive nature of the Western canon but in the postmodern era, it has now been countered into a multiple-layered, reflective and against the ventriloquist practices.

The education system in the postmodern tradition hence, is associated with numerous debates across culturally conditioned and generalized topics. It voraciously voices against the hegemonic indoctrination of the West and its attempts at 'totalization'. These counter voices or the voices of 'Others' have thus, not only evolved but also been problematized, contextualized and established as well as "break down the distinction between high art and popular culture" (*Postmodernism and Society* 209) edited by Boyne and Rattansi (1990).

Major schools of thought that are poignant in the field of literary criticism today are that of 'Deconstruction', 'Structuralism', 'Post-Structuralism' and 'Post-Postmodernism'. Critics that have shaped the canon of postmodernism include Roland Barthes (1915-1980); Michel Foucault (1926-1984); Jean Francois Lyotard (1924-1998); Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007); Jacques Derrida (1930-2004); Julia Kristeva (1941-); Judith Butler (1956-); Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995); and Felix Guattari (1930-1992). These critics have transcended hierarchies and binary notions revealing interlinking or overlapping. Hence, the postmodern foregrounds the site of the emergence of something new.

1.4 Cultural Outcomes of Postmodernism

Cultural Studies that rose to its prominence in the 1970s garnered attention because of the emergence of counter-disciplinary domains. It was associated with a deliberate lack of a distinct methodology because cultural studies aimed at dismantling the hierarchies that were preconceived and established prior. Its refusal to privilege any discipline, text or site ensured the postmodernist notion of foregrounding an investigation into broader research areas.

Culturally, the arrival of postmodern, brings across the debates that mould the contemporary existence and the epistemic degree to which the twenty-first century has risen. The challenges to the Western canon of books by implying that ideologically they can be narrow and exclusive, is a multi-faceted and an ongoing debate.

The challenge also extends to other areas of the Western canon including the quest of European imperialism and subsequent colonialism as the West used brute force to spread their religious and cultural values while uprooting the indigenous people and native cultures. It also accounts for the violent crimes committed during the expedition to annex, which are often whitewashed by white historians.

Another pertinent feature is the questioning of the idealistic Western society and their approach towards the principles of liberty, equality and opportunity because, in most of the West, the Marxist approach to these ideals often can be detected to be sometimes sexist, racist or classist. It has also been noted that there are often deliberate attempts at keeping women in their places with a glass ceiling over their heads and the same approach is seen towards most of the minority communities residing in the West.

Therefore, postmodernism approaches non-Western cultures with a non-conventional lens to understand the social achievements such as that of their ‘non-elitist attitudes’ or ‘being one with nature and living a harmonious life’, which are not evident in the traditional Western school of thought. The idea of postmodernism has also allowed the questioning of the ‘consumer culture’ that is not only prevalent but is thriving exponentially in the urbanized lands of the West. This rampant consumerism is seen as a derivative of the growth of industrial, scientific and the information technology sectors. However, the postmodern idea not only highlights whether this growth is beneficial, or not, it also enquires into the idea of ‘cosmopolitanism’ and whether it is fruitful or not.

In theory, the most important critical paradigms that have come out of the period of postmodernism include that of ‘Marxism’; ‘Postcolonialism’; ‘Feminism’(s); and, Race and African-American writings. Therefore, it becomes impossible to define postmodernism within specific and concrete frameworks, however, it is possible to locate and define it within the different figurations of postmodernist notions that are situated within the ‘differences. Therefore, there exists an amalgamation or a hybrid that accommodates these differences to present a very non-linear expression of cultural values such as race, gender, class etcetera.

As argued by Adam Kelly (2011), in his research article, “Beginning with Postmodernism” that “what we can term the new postmodernist studies has been constituted by this historicist turn, which reacts against the “disabling commitment to theory” that marked the work of scholars of a previous generation” (Kelly 392). He further elucidates how a critical trend has begun in the field of literature as authors under the influence of postmodern beliefs have departed from the canonical ideas and existing predominant styles of narrative writings and have emerged and critics now have a new appreciation for ““hybrid fiction” (Grassian), “American

literary globalism” (Adams), “cosmodernism” (Moraru), “late postmodernism” (Green), or “post-postmodernism” (Burn)” (Kelly 392).

Postmodernism hence, becomes undeniably a valuable historical and aesthetic category within which most creations are adjusted in the current times. The problematizing of the term postmodern and the literature so produced by this generation of authors has given rise to a society that is now slowly inclining towards the post-postmodernism phase or the ‘metamodernist’ state, and Kelly further argues that the niche does not address the breakdown between the past and the present anymore but focuses on the “continuity, where the contemporary information society that characters inhabit is seen as emerging from identifiable historical and technological shift” (Kelly 393).

Its effect is also seen in the literary scene, as the incredulity in fiction is roped and built on the postmodern traditions that have been foregrounded by authors like Pynchon and DeLillo alongside those like “Paul Auster, J. G. Ballard, John Barth, Jorge Luis Borges, William Burroughs, Angela Carter, Bret Easton Ellis, Vladimir Nabokov, and Ishmael Reed” (Kelly 393) as argued by Adam Kelly (2011) in his research article, “Beginning with Postmodernism”. In the same research article, he further argues that the texts produced in this canon are effective when “texts have consistently stressed the prominence of space over time”; when they discuss the “contemporary loss of history and emergence of an endless present” and when they miniaturize the world into “totally administered and technophilic postmodern society” (Kelly 394).

Christopher Butler (2002) argues that “Postmodernist doctrines thus, drew upon a great deal of philosophical, political, and sociological thought, which disseminated itself into the artistic avant-garde” (*Postmodernism* 7). Therefore, it is safe to say that the works produced

under the postmodernist lens are liberating yet echo the obscurity of the postmodernist stance as ideologically it is inspired by a broad Marxist paradigm (Butler 7).

Therefore, the seeds of postmodernism were planted with every revolutionary idea whose praxis existed outside the paradigm of what the makings of an art are, despite the literature it produced. An attempt at re-reading Marx through these new lenses ensured the break that cemented the arrival of the postmodernist mindset. It also elucidates how the theoretical perspective in which the philosophy of postmodernism developed and detoured from the traditional empirical point of view that is mostly employed in the disciplines associated with science, where theories are bound to be tested to be either true or false.

It therefore, evolved on the pretext of conceptualizing ideas that were rooted in the traditional philosophy and streamlining them to accommodate the problematizations in the disciplines of literature, sociology and arts etcetera that have been closely read to comprehend the 'continuity' and 'discontinuity'. It further extended into the cultural norms that covered the entirety of conditions that were predisposed in society and governed the power within the spectrum of creative arts.

As Gerhard Hoffmann (2005) argues in *From Modernism to Postmodernism Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction* stating about postmodernism that it has its origins in:

Beginning with the critique of the Fifties and modernism, it broadens into a sensibility and mode of writing, is then interpreted as a general cultural phenomenon and dominates the cultural scene for twenty-five to thirty years before exhausting itself. Postmodern art grows out of and participates in the new postmodern spirit but it also has its own rationale as a language of

art. Its rebellion against the rigid art ideology of modernism creates a new mode of experience, a new consciousness, a new intellectual style and, above all, new playful possibilities for the imagination unhampered by the frustrations of existential alienation... (Hoffmann14)

highlighting how the arrival of this turn was pertinent to portray the accurate reflection of the roots it outgrew from as well as, become highly critical and subversive, at the same time, in concurrence, to point out the discontinuities that occur in the traditions established prior thus, marking the locus of change or deficit of time. It catered to the weaknesses in philosophy through skepticism that emerged out of the empirical mindset which challenged the traditional rationale.

The postmodern hence, became the prominent social force that guided the anti-enlightenment attitude as Stephen R. C. Hicks elucidates in his 2004 published *Explaining Postmodernism* that “Postmodernism’s extreme skepticism, subjectivism, and relativism are the results of a two-centuries-long epistemological battle” (Hicks 27). The modern generation of writers therefore could be seen as a guiding force because of having been nurtured midst the writers who exhibited postmodern irony in their works. The literature so produced thus became that of embracing this shift rather than merely locating it in terms of not only a discussion on the ‘present’ as well as the ‘recent past’.

1.5 Baudrillard: A discussion on Hyperreal

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) was a French sociologist, philosopher and cultural theorist. He is one of the most celebrated representatives of postmodern figures however, Baudrillard himself averted being labelled as a postmodernist. His critiques include the analysis of contemporary praxis that encompassed a diversity of subjects, from media to intricate gender

relations. Stuart Sim (2013) in *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers* argues that Baudrillard was an “*enfants terribles* of postmodern thought, a self-consciously maverick figure given to making deliberately provocative announcements...” (Sim 29). He is acclaimed for taking arguments out of their frame of reference, to take them across from the point of no return, to express his dissatisfaction with the contemporary times and his works challenge most of the assumptions made by the Marxist paradigm that govern the present ‘hyper capitalistic’ society.

He is the prominent theorist that has been considered in this research as his seminal treatise *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) introduced the world to the concept of the ‘hyperreal’. As quoted in Mark Poster’s (1988) *Selected Writings* that “...The simulacrum is never that which conceals the truth—it is the truth which conceals that there is none. The simulacrum is true” (Poster 166). Baudrillard’s criticism opines that the contemporary world, and all the means of communication that it utilizes, are now a part of a system that itself is an uninhibited extension of the technological complex that has evolved simultaneously.

He also constantly reiterates through his different texts, how this hyper-capitalism will take a full circle in development, by taking an apocalyptic turn when it implodes within itself, and the present is left with nothing but a simulation where no real exists. Baudrillard’s criticism looks at society as an entity that should be investigated for its scientific panorama and his works are a response to the concerns raised in traditional social theory.

Baudrillard problematizes the whole system of mass production rather than the individual aspects of who owns or runs the aforesaid means of production. He disregards both the capitalists as well as the workers that run it because his prime focus is on the system itself, as it exploits the privilege of media, a byproduct of technological evolution, with its peculiar advantages to not only advertise but also monopolize the market by exerting its influence. Baudrillard comments

on this contemporary existence in this ‘hyperreal’ world where media is a dominant force and not only has solidified itself but is now also saturated.

Therefore, the basic tenets of his body of work express how the ‘signs’ in the postmodern world have changed because the semantics and communication have been dominated by constantly interchanging signs. Moreover, it has led to stoicism in the subjects who no longer are attached to the outcome which has direct political, literal, personal, economic and social consequences. Also, being subjected to media has rendered the difference between an actual object and its image nullified, leading to indiscernibility in viewers. Baudrillard also emphasized the idea of ‘Hyperreal’ which promulgates the concept of ‘virtual existence’ in his treatise *Simulacra and Simulation*, the English translation of which was published in the year 1983, called “A real without origin or reality” (Baudrillard 2).

Baudrillard is not only critical of this but also very apprehensive of the rate at which technological advancements are occurring. He critiques the idea of how because of all the technological systems, humans have become degenerate and are irrelevant to the primary process itself. Baudrillard also focuses on the point of how humans are themselves witnesses to this suppression in all forms of symbolic, alterity and singularity because of the simulation occurring in semiotic and technological developments. He considers “this simulation of the real to be endemic to the world of media” (Sim 31) as argued by Stuart Sim (2013) in his *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers*, as anything that is presented via a media outlet exists only to “maintain the illusion of actuality – of the reality of the stakes, of the objectivity of the facts” (Baudrillard 71) as argued by Baudrillard himself in his *Simulacra and Simulation* (1983).

Baudrillard’s discussion on America analyses America in the light of rapid takeover by media, he not only parodies this but gives a critique on the “proliferation of signs and loss of

referentiality which characterize hyperreality” (Laugt 338) as argued by Elodie Laugt (2012) in his research article “America in Time: Aphoristic writing in Jean Baudrillard’s *America*”. Laugt further elaborates on Baudrillard’s usage of aphorism, parody, and irony to analyze both America as a geographical location as well as the legitimacy of identity that it provides, which are questioned by Laugt himself in this article.

Baudrillard attempts to understand what it is to be American by coursing through people, habits, the cities, their landscapes and in total, the kind of society that has been built through the means of aphoristic writing in his seminal and one of the most controversial work entitled *America* (1986). According to Laugt, Baudrillard’s aphoristic style of writing is a mere theoretical tool and he uses it to explore ‘America’ both as a title and function. Baudrillard’s criticism of the American lifestyle especially in the wake of globalization expounds on the fact that it has rendered any alternate reality almost impossible and America now exists in a state of constant suspension which he refers to as being ‘hyperreal’. America, to Baudrillard, is what the possible future of any simulacrum is, because the signs have proliferated infinitesimally and have collapsed into themselves, losing any referential value.

In the postmodern times, simulation is exhibited at its best, as it has become a norm in our culture and Baudrillard’s interesting take on Disneyland and the concept of reality TV that are an essential part of American culture, exemplifies how America simulates a piece of history that never actually existed. He “treats America as a mass of sensations which ultimately do not add up to any particular message” (Sim 32) argues Stuart Sim in his *Fifty Key Postmodernism Thinkers* (2013) as Baudrillard’s writings further elucidate how America offers a hyperreal space where the fantastic meets reality yet, exists only within that bubble from which it cannot escape. This criticism also incorporates, how the ‘image culture’ is shaped because of the

system that overlooks both the production as well as consumption of set values associated with the same.

As quoted in Elodie Laugt's (2012) article entitled "America in Time: Aphoristic writing in Jean Baudrillard's *America*" that states "Baudrillard says, I wanted to go there in a sidereal way. My first choice of a title was: "Sidereal America", which means following a rule, keeping a distance" (340), it exemplifies Baudrillard's parodic take on America and how it represents the future. America, to him, signifies a parody of other different cultures that culminate into a geographical space where it enables one to travel to the future and is marked by a hyperreal environment. The 'truth' or 'reality' about America is then found in American art such as novels and movies, as there is no specific truth of America and it is open to interpretations of what it is to be an American. Baudrillard's fictionalizing of America brings awareness to the fact that there is no singularity and it's impossible to escape the 'illusion' that doesn't even exist anymore and because of globalization, there's no presence of alterity.

Baudrillard understands that locating the real is equally impossible like staging an illusion as both are no longer possible in a world of hyper-simulation and America is what he calls a 'utopia' achieved (342) because of rampant mediatization and digitalization of communication that has nullified any difference established before it as argued by Elodie Laugt. Hence, America doesn't resist the hyperreal but is a voluntary part of it and Baudrillard's criticism of it paints a picture of a permanent present.

Interestingly, this facet leads into the 'Post-Postmodern' school of thought which now is sometimes comprehended along the critical lines of the 'meta-modern' and/or 'posthuman' school of thought. Cary Wolfe (2010) in *What is Posthumanism?* that was published in the year

2010 talks about “The ‘decentering of the human’ by its imbrication in technical, medical, informatics and economic networks is increasingly impossible to ignore (Wolfe 121).”

Baudrillard in a very similar sense, talks about a virtual universe which is the universe of simulation and is primarily focused on expelling everything that is deemed to be dangerous and negative. In the postmodern stance, this becomes the space where humans are rendered as “...poor binarized ghost” (10) as mentioned by Lyotard in his 1988 critical article, *Can Thought Go On Without A Body?*

Baudrillard attempted to move beyond this discourse and provide a fresh vision of the posthuman process, one that specifically aimed to look into what is being lost in the process of pragmatism attributed saliently to posthumanism. His anxiety about the posthuman existence and the surrounding virtual reality comes from the idea that humans are eroding all ambiguity and otherness that separates them from the virtual existence, as they subject themselves to constant simulation. From this, it can also be posited that humans have immersed themselves into the body of communication forms that emerge out of the technological advances alone thus, being submerged in the media and data-driven technologies that have invaded the personal space of man and loiter around making sure that detachment from what should be the ‘Real’ occurs without much stimulus that may enforce critical thinking.

Donna Haraway in her *A Cyborg Manifesto*, which was published in 1985, takes the notion of posthumanism and advances it further into her own brand of postfeminism. Her take on the cyborg assures that the hybrid of machine and human will allow women to liberate themselves from the constructed experiences that have been embedded in their consciousness. It is pertinent to note that both Baudrillard and Haraway talk of emancipation from constructed virtual reality, though, their reasons may differ as Baudrillard tends to look at posthumanism in a

fashion of critiquing it, calling the simulation a regression of human thought as it tends to destroy the thinking capability, whereas Haraway approaches the concept for its challenging and invoking new possibilities for gender equality.

Baudrillard in his writings often targets the semiotics because according to him not only does it hinder and thwart the experience but also makes sure that the symbolic is reduced. This ecosystem of signs thus, generates a self-referential system that constructs a simulation which not only obscures the symbolic but carefully invades, conquers and replaces the real, causing the distortion and deferring of meaning. The concepts of real, hyperreal and virtual are hence, distinguished based on symbolic making them a simulation of their own.

In a posthuman sense thus, Baudrillard critiques that the virtual is a dimension in its own where the 'real' doesn't exist, as the cultural flow in terms of communication and information is heavily dependent upon digital circuits, electronic media and cyberspace. Humans in these digital circuits exist only to serve as a junction at which the information is exchanged. The necessary change that is administered in society is hence, attributed to this flow of information brought on by events that are digitally televised. Thus, humans are nothing but as Baudrillard (1999) in his *Impossible Exchange* published originally in 1999 elucidates, "...an interactive, communicational particle, plugged into the network getting continuous feedback (Baudrillard 106)."

Rosi Braidotti a critic of the posthumanist tradition in her, *The Posthuman* published in 2013, looks at the progress in the different fields of science and technologies and deduces that this scientific grandeur, "...urges us to think critically and creatively about who and what we are actually in the process of becoming" (Braidotti 11) and Baudrillard has only added to this pragmatism. It is also noted that the posthuman, thus, marks the collapse between the

man/machine binary making it impossible to seek the real as quoted in *The Baudrillard Dictionary* which was published in 2010, by RG Smith, "...The human gives way to the post-human when the virtual replaces the actual as the primary mode by which we conceptualize and experience reality (Smith 16)."

The only criticism from Baudrillard in this context is his notion of 'singularity', which is remarkable for its unique, uncertain, unpredictable, incalculable, unrepresentable, untranslatable and unproductive. It is a threat to the posthuman world because of its radical otherness, as the postmodern world which has transformed into posthuman now, exhibits the, "...culture of equivalence and calculation" (128) as mentioned by Baudrillard in his *Fragments, Cool Memories III*, published in 1997, thus, enabling a world that is on the path to becoming universal, digital, and productive and rid of all ambiguity.

1.6 Rise of Technoscapes and Consumer Culture

The premise of Postmodernism witnesses a simultaneous development in the world of media with the emergence of capitalist economies in the West. It led to the rise of advanced media societies that evolved as a result of information technology and its life-changing revolution. Owing its emergence to the revolution in the Enlightenment era and the subsequent rise in reason and empiricism, the gradual political as well as economic freedom guaranteed the premise that humankind could govern itself. This liberal attitude directed humans to analyze, invest and redeem the powers that lay in the field of science and technology. This made certain that there is always a refined attitude that is involved in the comprehension of evolving cosmopolitan composite, further aiding the institutionalization of science and technology in society.

This evolution brought along a major shift in the paradigm of how previous societies used to function, and an anomaly can be observed here, as we see the dependence upon this exchange of information has surmounted the functioning capabilities. As editors Roy Boyne and Ali Rattansi (1990) argue in *Postmodernism and Society* that:

Baudrillard has important things to say and that his work engages the most salient features of our current 'postmodern' situation. More specifically, it offers new beginnings in an age when 'the instant, worldwide availability of information has changes human society forever, probably for the good'. No longer can we fall back on those old 'metanarratives' or enlightenment myths of information, grounded as they were (or as they claimed to be) in a capacity to distinguish truth from falsehood, progress from reaction... (Boyne and Rattansi 120).

It can thus, be assimilated that Baudrillard's works not only address the alteration in the praxis of mankind but also discuss the permanent changes insinuated by the advancing technological standards. These progressions make such societies a functioning ecosystem in their own right. Hence, it is concluded that these societies are thus, a byproduct of the growing capitalist economies and its consumer culture existing in a suspended state of technical panorama.

The authors also allude to Baudrillard's pertinent concept of 'Hyperreality' when they argue:

it is no longer possible to maintain the old economy of truth and representation in a world where 'reality' is entirely constructed through forms of mass media feedback, where values are determined by consumer demand (itself brought about by the endless circulation of meanings,

images and advertising codes), and where nothing could serve as a means of distinguishing true from merely true-seeming (or ideological) habits or belief (Boyne and Rattansi 121).

Baudrillard's major works thus expound on how 'machines' act as an enhanced replacement, as they alter our existence and its reality. He also focuses on how the unending access to large-scale means of production is directly proportional to the 'advertising' done that further aids the capacity of mass producing that leads to a superfluous existence, suspended in the capitalistic notions of contemporary societies regulated by media and its functioning accessories.

Baudrillard in his *System of Objects* originally published in 1968 and the English translation of which was published in the year 1996, theorized how in a consumerist society people are attracted and 'lured' via the creation of a system of inter-related objects that represent the idea of an urban space. This system is deeply connected to each other as in such societies only some objects are available for use without a context attached to them.

He states that with the rise in production, Capitalists aim to establish an order of consumption that allows them to attract and reel in more customers. It is primarily done through the operational system established via the agency of advertising that has ascertained special markers in the form of ads, signature fashion looks or even symbolism that mainly aid in the process of consumption as a whole. Baudrillard (1996) in his *System of Objects* argues "Human beings and objects are indeed bound together in a collusion in which objects take on a certain density, an emotional value – what might be called a 'presence'" (Baudrillard 16) because objects serve as markers of memory or specifically, 'remembering', implicating that he is interested in the anthropological as well as psychoanalytical aspects related to consumption as he

further elaborates that "...the objects that furnish it become household gods, spatial incarnations of the emotional bonds and the permanence of the family group (Baudrillard 16)."

In his critique of the 'social analytic' Baudrillard argues about how the old symbolism that is now represented only in art, is carefully replaced by the postmodern capitalist order as it demands total efficiency. This further results in a desire to create a serialized version of objects that Baudrillard claims to be nothing less than a fetish. He attempts to understand the universal as well as individual level of markings of existence in the present world because the series of objects so created share a relationship amongst themselves and this relationship is what is not only fetishized but commercialized more than the value and actual goal of the object. This further cements the idea that the whole production culture is, therefore, a proxy of how people understand these objects and their relationship with them.

The modern spaces hence, gravitate more towards functionality which is facilitated by the notion of minimalism, evidently seen in the contemporary homes in comparison to the Victorian houses that represented the desire to show off and thus, were cluttered. Baudrillard also critiques the ideological tonality that was exuded in these structures as the Victorian houses have remnants of patriarchal and domineering setup that was exerted via a system of signs allowing to dialectically reinforce the ideological identity that again reinforces the idea of owning the object itself and apparently, these objects hence, are no more traditional but are technical in nature. In his *System of Objects* (1996) he thus argues that "The principle that regulates this new extension, this functional dimension, is the requirement that organization be maximized and communication optimized" (Baudrillard 51) as these objects replace 'gestures of doing' and increases the effectiveness by becoming an independent tool of utility.

The technical sensibility has been on a new rise in the contemporary times and Baudrillard is cognizant of the same. He further elaborates on how the rise in technical grandiose has aided in the gradual but significant replacement of this gestural act. Baudrillard states “We are heading towards an absolutism of forms: only the form is called for, only the form is read, and at the deepest level it is the functionality of forms that defines ‘styles’” however, Baudrillard also opines that, “our technological civilization tries to use the universal transitivity of form as a means of compensating for the disappearance of the symbolic relationship...” (Baudrillard 54) And by ‘form’ he refers to the technical outgrowths of objects that symbolized the dynamics of human beings.

In a chapter entitled ‘The Desert of the Real America as Hyperreality’ in the book *Fabricating The Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* (2008) by Jaap Kooijman, the author comments on American hyperreality by stating that “From a Baudrillardian perspective, America is a space where the myth of the American dream does not come true but is true already through its mythic construction” (Kooijman 71) implying that America is symbolic of the utopic existence that has made all impossible possible through fictionalization and the American popular culture becomes the embodiment of all the technical growth that has allowed the transformation of the actual world into a virtual one and is aided by all the scientific advancements that is displayed through the means of TV, films and media, industries, infrastructure and innovative inventions. This further supplants the idea of identity of a nation or nationhood that is actively pursued and constructed through rhetorical means and implicating a collective consciousness for the American population.

To further extend this discourse, in Baudrillard’s (1973) *The Mirror of Production* originally published, and translated by Mark Nunes in 1975, it is inferred that his works have a

sharp Marxist critique that comments on the Marxist obsession with mass production as a means of liberating mankind from its impending economic crisis because it invests in ideas like ‘value’, ‘labour’, ‘necessity, and ‘production’ etcetera, the very founding principles of capitalism. He states that “a human purpose of the commodity in the moment of its direct relation of utility for a subject – is only the effect of the system of exchange value, a concept produced and developed by it” (Baudrillard 22-23) thus critiquing on how labour power exploits the contemporary technology to produce more results for the betterment of humanity altogether. It also solidifies Baudrillard’s argument that both “labour and nature are both reduced to “values” that require the proper means (technology) to actualize (Baudrillard 4).”

Baudrillard opines that any obsession with mass production doesn’t liberate but enslaves man and all operational feats occur only because of the control that a system exhibits. He further comments that contemporary society exists in an era where signs are constantly imploding and the display of these ensures that the ‘hypermarket’ comes into existence as this neoliberal society then moves past all modern aspects, only to dissolve global institutions and decentralize the societal structure. He argues that:

In this respect the modern world is prey to a systematic delirium, of which the autonomization of unfettered technology (and bureaucracy) is the most immediately perceptible and menacing form... the economy exhibits, in the most striking fashion, the domination of the imaginary at all levels (Baudrillard 151).

1.7 The Postmodern American Fiction: An Overview of Select Fiction

The postmodern turn in literature brought along an era of experimentation. It was to explore the strategies used in the narrative concepts to revise the complexities within which it

existed. As argued by Gerhard Hoffmann (2005) in *From Modernism to Postmodernism Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern America Fiction* the fiction in this period included liberating and deconstructive turns by creating a body of work that ensures the playful and ironic attitudes integrated with the decomposition of traditional logic. He states “The new trends challenge the innovative artistic imagination to establish new contents and new forms” (Hoffmann 35) elucidating that the evolution of postmodernism encompasses all the social and cultural trends that dictated the era and the ‘post’ in postmodernism, “offers a first approach to the phenomenon postmodernism as a socio-cultural category” (Hoffmann 35).

The postmodern literature hence is full of multiplicities and pluralism. It includes the marginalized, the relegated, the neglected, and the conflicting ideologies from sections that emphasize ‘disintegration and changes’ alongside the possible ‘new beginnings’ that sustain a major social transformation over time. A major part of this was the emergence of ‘ethnic literature’ especially the African-American literature, that provided a more critical point of view in terms of the debates going on in what makes a gender, class or race. It catered to the difference and idea of an ‘otherness’, pertinently it also embraced the artistic tendencies of the culturally different and in *A Poetics of Postmodernism History, Theory, Fiction* Linda Hutcheon (1988) thus, states that “In fiction this attention has taken the form of overt textual emphasis on the narrating “I” and the reading “You” ” (Hutcheon 76) as the language employed in contemporary fiction derives its meaning from the context in which it is being used.

Gerhard Hoffmann (2005) in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern Fiction* argues that:

In the American postmodern novel, philosophical thought and scientific knowledge are openly cited or tacitly invoked, consciously infused into the character’s motivations and

reflections, or unconsciously articulated as significant information. In addition to direct influences, the parallel concerns between thinkers and writers, philosophical thought and narrative practice are important (Hoffmann 163).

It ensures what John Barth as quoted in Stuart Sim's (2013) *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers* states "Barth defined this move away from the late modernist tradition as the 'literature of replenishment'. And that is largely how postmodern fiction has developed..." (Sim 22) further reinforcing that how the postmodern fiction locates itself within the philosophical and historical contextualization as concurred by Linda Hutcheon as well.

Postmodern literature thus emphasizes the literary aspects that include postmodern parody, irony, a sense of self-reflexivity, contradictions and more than often a paradoxical situation that blurs the line between history and fiction. The postmodern fiction hence marks a major shift from epistemological to the ontological one and this shift ensures a distinct way of approaching the contemporary world, through a lens that may not necessarily always contradict this shift but may sometimes not fully integrate as well. Contemporary literature thus has a diversity and often transcends genres and as a result, science fiction and detective fiction have emerged in the postmodern scene.

In the new era postmodern fiction hence, became one of the most prominent ways to present the "orientation in culture and art following political and social changes" (Hoffmann 623) writes Gerhard Hoffmann (2005) in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern Fiction*. This new era also ensured the broadening of the horizons of postmodern fiction to incorporate authors from various fields of humanities as there were no strict limitations and 'postmodernism' as a collective movement analyzed the contemporary extant in order to figure out the most original idea beyond any ideological restriction. It led to the

post-postmodern fiction for the analysis of which critics developed the idea of 'realism', it depicted the return to traditional forms and aspects of storytelling that were missing from the postmodern fiction. This consequently, led to 'neo-realism' also which was defined by suggesting that any realist mode of representation does not garner a positive return to a traditional realism.

Both these terms attributed to the developments that were occurring in the field of postmodern and post-postmodern fiction. It catered to the epistemological and aesthetic changes and the fiction was acclimatized to the postmodern strategies employed to present any uncertainty and incomprehensibility that dictate the field of postmodern and are evident in the literary scene of the contemporary epoch. It also ensured that the changes happening in the fiction did not appear to be prominently radical and adhered to the dictums of experiences of the new world with reflections from both the political, social as well as the cultural spheres of life.

With the development in technology as a contributing factor of globalization, the world has compounded into one where cultural transaction have led to a worldwide union. Improvement in media and the entertainment industry played a crucial role in the growth of fictional pursuits as it convoluted the situation by blending in and both simplifying as well as complicating the resulting product and process. Rationally, it allowed the integration and absorption of multiple cultures that influence the modern-day existence and the fiction so produced resulted in an amalgamation of the desirable attributes of both. On the contrary, this blending also takes away from the serious aspects of the art by removing autonomy and the predisposition of provoking thought after witnessing a serious art.

Gerhard Hoffmann (2005) in *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern Fiction* writes that:

Under the hegemony of the cultural experience, the link between the (nervous) optimism of the present and the pessimism of the past came to establish a pool of potential positional combinations and relativizations, including the conjunction of affirmation and negation, in art and literature as well (Hoffmann 626)

implying that postmodern fiction has undergone implicit growth and changes and has created a narrative dynamic that is beyond the ironic subversion or the contradictory point of view, establishing a new 'realm of experience' that is thematized and dramatized in this new writing. It incorporates experiences, both positive and negative, from living in the contemporary world that is run by media and is heavily mechanized to the point of almost being self-sufficient.

Postmodern fiction hence includes most of the experiments that authors have managed to do over the years. It problematizes the contemporary world and includes what it is like living in today's world. Despite a proliferative attempt at deconstructing and defamiliarizing the present living this fiction somehow familiarizes the readers with the world of today by creating models that can be connected to the current praxis. In recent times the fiction has moved towards a global pragmatic realism that has emerged from the distinct ideologies that shaped the social, cultural and political atmosphere of the world.

The advent of postmodern literature thus ensures that there is an improvement in communication and a sense of order can be established between the representations from distinguished subjects and the intersubjectivity of which can be addressed properly. It also redefined the newer styles of fiction as more new concepts and structures were introduced in the writing of fiction.

1.8 Select Fiction: An Overview

Donald Richard DeLillo primarily known as Don DeLillo is an American novelist, short story writer, playwright, screenwriter and essayist. His novels are popular for their narrative styles, political themes and extensive scrutiny and commentary on the subsequent cultural crisis which poignantly remind of issues that concern contemporary America. The beauty in DeLillo's fiction is that, even though, it is from the world of 'images', he forces his readers to think historically about issues that matter.

DeLillo's oeuvre is diverse and alludes to a plethora of subjects like modern-day inventions such as television, or the imminent threat of a nuclear war, further delving into the categories of everyday interests such as sports, complexities of language, performance art, Cold War, global terrorism, political assassinations etcetera. DeLillo's repertoire subtly expresses the idea of an individual and the freedom possessed by him in society. Therefore his repository is critical of the most sophisticated forms of oppression which have manifested themselves in daily American life, leading to repression that isn't visible but exists, gnawing at the common man.

DeLillo expresses the cultural trends and tendencies with a frame of reference for processing how certain cultural shifts, such as the role of terrorism in society cannot only be anticipated but are considered as a factor to comment upon. Marxist critic Fredric Jameson sees this as the aesthetic production which can be critically purchased by the existing social order in American society. The capability of DeLillo to 'historicize the present', in a fashion of teasing, as to how 'crucial events of the past still linger on' as a photographic memory, still bearing traces of the same in the contemporary is what makes DeLillo one of the most sought after authors in the modern times.

Apart from this he also explores how the fragmented American identity is interconnected to a broader social and cultural spectrum which have been forged over time, indicating the

societal construction of the same. As quoted in Gerhard Hoffmann's *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern Fiction* (2005) in an interview given to The New York Times, DeLillo states that ““what’s been missing over these past twenty-five years is the sense of a manageable reality” but he adds: “We seem much more aware of elements like randomness and ambiguity and chaos since then”” (Hoffman 628) assuring how his storytelling reflects the world and does it intellectually.

He looks at the innovations of modern times such as radio, TV, films and the internet as social forces which have led the progression of the modern into postmodern times, focusing especially on how capitalism and advertisement have conquered the innermost places of consciousness, influencing the modern man from within, as a result of being hijacked by images, which in turn is a consequence of living a culture of simulation where the contemporary is as media-driven as it can be.

The postmodern is noted for taking away the innocence of mankind. It is attributed to constant exposure to advancing technologies that have not only led to progression but have increased detachment from traditional values and tools. This absurdity and abandoning is thoroughly examined by DeLillo in his fiction where he traverses through the transitional moments of American national consciousness as shown in *Libra*, his 1988 novel that talks about the assassination of President John F Kennedy which was televised, rendering both him and the shooter Lee Harvey Oswald as celebrities of some kind.

Paranoia is another pertinent feature which is heavily discussed by DeLillo as a direct consequence of the consumer culture and media which marks its birth around the Cold War period. The emergence of nuclear weapons (another theme explored heavily) as a medium of absolute destruction is the contributing factor to the paranoia aforementioned.

Though his works are full of satire and dark humour, DeLillo's novels are conduits of attacks on postmodernity. He expresses what Linda Hutcheon calls 'historiographic metafiction' in his other mature works, making him a postmodern novelist whose works show a blurring of lines between history and fiction and also a certain fair amount of self-reflexivity, which explores the gaps and absences in historical archives. The ability of Don DeLillo to recognize the power of history makes his fiction intriguing as his works deflect from the usual guidelines and walk into the realm of spiritual transcendence allowing the seeing beyond the realm of simulation. His fiction hence contains,

- a. A subject matter that resonates with Fredric Jameson's idea of 'Art' being co-opted by advertising agencies.
- b. And, Poetics which resonates with Hutcheon's view of how a postmodern novel is capable of enabling social critique.

Another credible feature of DeLillo's fiction is it depicts about how it feels to live and operate in a postindustrial nation, at a time when media forms not only exist but absorb daily attention, making it feel like this form of media ceases to exist as a 'mediation of the real' and is possibly experienced as the actual real in itself. DeLillo's poetics is viewed in conflicting opinions as some see him as a direct descendent of modernist while some appropriate him to the postmodernist cannon, it is agreed that there is a certain degree of resistance that can be studied in his writings, making his language rich and a heroic novelist in the sense of the role of an artist. His acknowledgement and sense of debt towards modernism is what makes him stand in the postmodernist tradition. Don DeLillo's fictional characters are fully aware of the canonization and commodification of postmodernist individual styles, demarcating him as a postmodernist in approach with DeLillo's fiction becoming highly reflexive of the problematic

role of an artist in the present consumer culture.

DeLillo's oeuvre is a portrayal of media and the culture of simulation that it promotes, where layers of representations create a regressive maze in which any notion of reality becomes not only obsolete but meaningless. This marks DeLillo's fiction not only creating a critical purchase on postmodern simulation but also conveying his suspicions, disappointments and occasional anger regarding corporate capitalism which is exhibited prevalently in American society.

Thomas LeClair, a prominent DeLillo scholar interviewed the author that was published in the year 1982. It was DeLillo's very first interaction with the public sphere as the author is very reserved. LeClair states that his "books are elusive because for DeLillo, fiction draws its power from and moves toward mystery (LeClair 2)." DeLillo's fiction offers a comprehensive examination of contemporary culture and his "books offer a precise and thorough anthropology of the present, an account of our kinship in myths, media and conspiracies (LeClair 2)." LeClair discusses how DeLillo's fiction challenges readers' expectations by delving into "about grids of American power" (LeClair 3) but makes an impact because the author caters to the "detail of fieldwork and the economy of understanding (LeClair 3)." In an answer to one of LeClair's questions, DeLillo states that the 'games' he writes about in his fiction are structured because "they satisfy the sense of order (LeClair 4)" enhancing the appeal of his fiction and substantiating what LeClair calls the 'conceptual monster' seen in DeLillo's works.

Numerous critics have analyzed DeLillo's fiction and have posited various angles through which his fiction can be read. It is seen that his novels encapsulate many facets of postmodern living including aspects that are often missed. A brief overview of these includes:

Sonia Baelo-Allu`e (2012) in the research article "9/11 and the Psychic Trauma Novel:

Don DeLillo's "Falling Man" discusses how 9/11 has been embedded in the conscious memory of America but it can be looked at as both a psychic as well as personal trauma. The study focused on how the tragedy had collective as well as cultural effects, as it was a "wound in the nation's sense of identity" (Baelo-Allu`e 2). The tragedy affected not only the direct witnesses but had a rippling effect that still lingers on in the contemporary times. Psychic trauma in terms of narration in novelistic form is considered antinarrative as a victim is never fully able to tell what the experience was but the power of DeLillo's fiction lies in how "DeLillo has defended the independence of literature from history" (Baelo-Allu`e 5). The author expounds on how literature attracts the common man who claims to have no interest in it as she discusses the character of Lianne who chooses non-fiction in the form of newspaper over art like poems (Baelo-Allu`e 5). The paper emphasizes how trauma can not only be translated but understood via art because it allows the comprehension of pain even when the wound is still open in the society.

Laura Di Prete (2005) in "Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*: Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma" discusses a similar trope. The author discusses how trauma has been a sublime theme in DeLillo's works and his *The Body Artist* (2001) is a fine example of it, in which, DeLillo has explored the dynamics of what the author refers to as 'Psychic Intrusion'. As the novel deals with distortion in temporality and spatiality, it is noted that the conventional language is shattered as a result and this project then "engages in the difficult task of articulating relations among the key terms that structure the experience of trauma: the self, the voice, and the body (Prete 3)." Conceptually, it aims to explore if trauma can be narrated as DeLillo has observed the "notion of 'voice' that departs from conventional parameters of language and attends to nonverbal, physical perceptions and a notion of 'body' that tongued and in touch with what the

mind cannot know, will voice its unspoken truth” (Prete 3) and thus, the truth about the trauma is made accessible in expressive limits.

Matthew J. Parker (2005) in “At the Dead Centre of Things” in DeLillo’s “White Noise”: Mimesis, Violence and Religious Awe” discusses how the ‘sacred’ and the ‘significant’ in our culture come from the tendency of humans to misunderstand the aspects of imitation and violence (Parker 3). Parker stressed the fact that in *White Noise* (1985) the religious awe looms in the airborne toxic event as the narrator of the novel extends an invitation to consider “the scientific study of the cultural behaviour and development of man” (Parker 3) as the characters express a hidden but imitative tendency that not only shapes their behaviors but also their desires. Parker elucidates how the conversation about mimesis is missing as he believes “mimesis, in fact, precedes language” (Parker 3) and how DeLillo’s language doesn’t focus on the system of signifiers and signifieds but it is a “massive strategy to cope with mortality” (Parker 4). Parker emphasizes that the beauty in DeLillo’s works lies in his ability to maintain that sense of mystery and “his reluctance to elaborate on his work’s own revelations (Parker 16).”

Leonard Wilcox in “Baudrillard, DeLillo’s “White Noise” and the End of Heroic Narrative” published in the year 1991 elaborates on how “DeLillo’s novels have been concerned with the relationship between American identity and the mediascapes (Wilcox 2).” He focuses on how the media controls the common idea of the American dream through a technologic-semiotic regime (Wilcox 2) as the images and electronic representations have carefully invaded and replaced the direct experience leading to a spectacle of the postmodern society. Wilcox discusses how both Baudrillard and DeLillo have writings deeply rooted in the idea that the media is responsible for gripping and shaping the mind and they critique this

“realm of information and mediascape” (Wilcox 2). DeLillo’s fiction thus is characterized with the collapse and loss of ‘real’ where for both him and Baudrillard “a media saturated consciousness threatens the concept of meaning itself (Wilcox 4).”

Furthermore, Leonard Wilcox in “Don DeLillo’s *Underworld* and the Return of the Real” published in the year 2002, discussed the novel *Underworld* (1997) by DeLillo, exerting on how real has returned and “it involves a shock of recognition, a disturbance in the symbolic world of the subject (Wilcox 3).” Wilcox looks at the return through the eyes of the character Edgar, narrating various incidences from the novel where Edgar encounters various strange scenes and in these encounters the author sees how “*Underworld*’s narrative project is precisely to construct traumatic experience in the only way it can be, after the fact” (Wilcox 4) as Wilcox in retrospect says that the novel explores the traumatic alterity and the residue of trauma which is present in the cultural unconscious. The author has also discussed the recurring image of nuclear armaments and the subsequent waste as an “actual pulsing thing of the real” (Wilcox 6) which persists as intractable. The author also implies that the symbolic representations in the novel are significant, as they emphasize that the “nuclear disaster is the ‘other’ of the contemporary world, the real specter that returns to haunt the ‘floating zones of desire’ (319) of postmodern culture” (Wilcox 6) as the real often is seen returning in metonymic processes which constitute the novel.

Cornel Bonca in “Being, Time, and Death in DeLillo’s *The Body Artist*” published in the year 2002, asserts how DeLillo has been writing in the postmodern canon predating his formal recognition. “The cultural logic of late capitalism” (Bonca 2) can be seen in DeLillo’s works like *White Noise* (1985) and *The Names* (1982). His *End Zone* (1972) is an example of Derrida’s concept of deconstruction whereas Lyotard has been seen represented in works like

Ratner's Star (1976), *Running Dog* (1978), and *Libra* (1988) etcetera. Bonca discusses how DeLillo's *The Body Artist* (2001) "attends constantly to such Heideggerian moments, in which the everydayness of things gives way suddenly, and without willful prompting to a deeper perception" (Bonca 6) making it possible to see what it is like being in the spatiotemporal envelope providing the ground for the consciousness to be conscious. The author also discusses the importance of epiphanies in the novel which circle around the "consciousness's doubts about reliability of its perceptions, and about language's ability to transcend its circularity as a sign system" (Bonca 6).

The research article "Don DeLillo's *White Noise*: The Natural Language of the Species" authored by Carol Bonca (1996) discusses the postmodern sensibility of the novel. She states that to limit the contribution of this novel to just being a depiction of mediascape is an understatement as DeLillo "has been exploring the idea that language is something more than a ceaseless flow of signifiers with no resting place (Bonca 4)". Bonca underscores how it has not only ensured our colonization by capitalism but goes far beyond that as this language is a "massive human strategy to cope with mortality (Bonca 4)." It is also pertinent that the novel is capable of articulating "a virtually religious sense of awe before the very fact that language exists as if DeLillo had discovered an extraordinary mystery in the utterly familiar act of human utterance (Bonca 5)." The research article focuses on how language has been employed as a tool by DeLillo and what this language 'really means' because "Language is the organized utterance of mortals connecting themselves to other mortals (Bonca 7)."

Mark Osteen (1996) in "Children of Godard and Coca-Cola: Cinema and Consumerism in Don DeLillo's Early Fiction" debates how the early fiction of DeLillo was primarily influenced by the film-maker Jean-Luc Godard as he kept in mind "The strong image, the short ambiguous

scene, the dream sense of some movies, the artificiality, the arbitrary choices of some directors, the cutting and editing. The power of images (Osteen 2).” He emphasizes the fact that DeLillo’s early fiction not only attracted, celebrated and predicted the arrival of postmodern culture but also made its readership aware of the dangers that had tagged along with this ushering. Osteen argues that his fiction is replete with the advent of this postmodern time and culture that he has been able to depict the same in the works as he:

...anatomizes so brilliantly in his novels: the effacement of historical consciousness: dehumanization by institutions and technology: the “power of image” to shape human subjectivity and to blur the differences between reality and representations: the totalizing effects of consumer capitalism... classic Hollywood features (Osteen 3-6).

Osteen has analyzed the characters in DeLillo’s stories which are arguably influenced by the pop culture while DeLillo’s narrator’s identity seems to be influenced by Hollywood features.

The most significant feature of DeLillo’s fiction is it being studied for its narrative techniques, and Christian Morau (1997) in “Consuming Narratives: Don DeLillo and the ‘Lethal’ Reading” attempts to understand the same. He assures that DeLillo has been following what critic Jameson called the integration of ‘aesthetic production into commodity production’ as “DeLillo trades upon the predicament of narrative representation, showing how cultural objects in general and stories in particular are fetishized in the public arena (Morau 2).” Morau argues that DeLillo’s novels are a critique of how art has been commercialized but the fate of the same is a ‘system of non-culture’ as the stories expose their subject to a consuming for publicity.

In “Criminality, The Real, and The Story of America: The Case of Don DeLillo” author

Joseph S. Walker (1999) discusses how his fiction aims at cracking the hyperreal surface to give glimpses of truth and meaning as his works are not bent on talking about the floating postmodern culture but also provide potential political statements showing his resistance to the culture of simulation. Walker discusses about DeLillo having a sense of nostalgia for the “lost cultural object whose meaning can only be apprehended after the fact of its disappearance” (Walker 2), this is what critics have called DeLillo’s ‘cultural paranoia’. He also says that the technoscapes built by DeLillo do not have a single authority as “No specific entity, personal or collective, can be identified as centrally responsible for what happens: instead there are simply nameless men in chemical suits and mostly anonymous bureaucracies issuing order (Walker 8).”

Joe Moran (2000) in “Don DeLillo and the Myth of the Author-Recluse” sheds light on how the “subtly entrapping nature of celebrity has been a common theme of Don DeLillo’s work since his third novel, *Great Jones Street* (1973) (Moran 2).” Much like his own personality trait DeLillo has worked upon the theme of authors who are recluses and though they are celebrities to an extent they do not allow the world of media to hijack their personal lives. DeLillo through his fiction praises authors for “refusing to become part of the all-incorporating treadmill of consumption and disposal (Moran 2).” DeLillo’s critique is that the culture of media is an automated mechanism which is bound to absorb these reluctant authors into their weave leading to tactics that devalue the author suggesting that the connections between “celebrity, media and death can be linked to a certain negative critique of postmodern culture as an endless play of signs detached from any notion of “value” (Moran 5).”

DeLillo’s works have also explored another major theme which is the rise of terrorism as a socially contributing factor in bringing change in society. His *Falling Man* (2007) is set in the

same tone and Author Joseph M. Conte (2011) emphasizes in “Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man* and *The Age of Terror*” where he argues “...when the towers fell, so did confidence in our global preeminence, revealing the twenty-first century as an age of terror and retribution (Conte 2).” This is studied as “the dialectical critique of the transnational forces of global capitalism and fundamentalist terrorism” (Conte 2) which have brought nothing but catastrophe to the nation of America. Conte deduces that the Trade Centre represented the gigantism and hubris of capitalism which was indifferent to humanity and hence each man held a “subtly repressed desire to see the fall of the towers as the ultimate fulfilment of their totemic stature (Conte 6).”

DeLillo scholar, Marco Abel (2003) in his essay “Don DeLillo’s *In the Ruins of The Future: Literature, Images, and the Rhetoric of Seeing 9/11*”, continues the same notion and expounds how events like 9/11 are impetus in nature and such events “contain an essence, a representational truth that must be voiced—represented—by the perceiving subject (Abel 2).” Abel looks at these representations as apparatuses which are capable of not just assigning but assigning sense to an event in “accordance with the type of forces that produce these representations” (Abel 5) as it is of prime importance to render the ‘acts’ visible. It is pertinent to note that “DeLillo’s narrative strategy intervenes in the world by seeing, or rhetorically (re)inventing it (Abel 6).”

Amy Hungerford (2006) in her research article “*Latin Mass*” talks about how DeLillo being raised as a catholic has been able to transfer this “version of mysticism from the catholic context into the literary one, and that he does through the model of Latin mass” (Hungerford 2) and the influence of this source can be seen his “...novels, interviews, and essays: in his choice of words, in his subjects, in his imagery, in the ways he understands faith, belief, agency, guilt, redemption, and human relations (Hungerford 2).” This helps in understanding the

transcendence that is often seen in DeLillo's works such as *Mao II* (1991), *The Names* (1982) and *Underworld* (1997) and it provides the context to the mystical touch that DeLillo has because he configures these "several strands of Catholic culture propel these manifestations of language toward a redemptive end (Hungerford 18)."

In "Don DeLillo's Financial Sublime" Alison Shonwiler (2010) has discussed how the postmodern narratives about what is real have forgotten the discourse of finances and how the "academic theories of capital have become indistinguishable from neoliberal faith (Shonwiler 2)." She discusses how difficult it is to separate the real or mythical in terms of capitalism and that the financial sublime that she mentions in the paper "refers to the full range of mystifications of capital- technological, political and otherwise- that make it difficult or impossible to distinguish the actuality of money from increasing unreality of global capitalism (Shonwiler 5)." The author looks at DeLillo's character in *Cosmopolis* (2003) "who is studying the flow of the currency information across computer screens" (Shonwiler 5) hinting at the global network that has evolved in which the transactions are frictionless suggests that "...this intense has become (or is on the verge of becoming) fully elaborated through cybertechnology in ways that shape our lives on a heretofore unimaginable scale has thus become both a popular shorthand for the economic complexity (Shonwiler 9)."

Katrina Harrack in "Embedded and Embodied Memories: Body, Space, and Time in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and *Falling Man*" published in the year of 2013, discusses how DeLillo's writings reflect upon his concern with the "nature of time, the minute details of human existence, and how human beings interact with the spaces around them (Harrack 2)." DeLillo's literature simmers down this discussion to a point of meditation as he reflects upon the concepts by almost portraying no action and condensing the narratives to focus on the

minute details that reflect through the characters, their thoughts and the environment in which they exist. DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007) "addresses the loss of life on 9/11 and demonstrates an ethics of embodiment that focuses on how trauma affects the individual" (Harrack 3) while *White Noise* (1985) "deals directly with memory, loss and subjectivity through a focus on the body and its vulnerability (Harrack 3)." Harrack discusses how the subject in his novels is always decentered and is unable to orient itself to the world nor is capable of finding a solution to the problems reflecting upon the postmodern sensibility. She also points out the "desire for depth of thought and a stronger sense of identity as related to place" (Harrack 4) because "DeLillo is conscious of how power relations are affected by spaces and structure" (Harrack 5) thus an identity that is formed in such an environment is primarily contextual.

James Berger (2005) in "Falling Towers and Postmodern Wild Children: Oliver Sacks, Don DeLillo, and Turns against Language" explores "some of the consequences of damage to a linguistic-social order" (Berger 3) as we see before what was considered to be the unified language of the entire earth was in itself fragmented and defied against the unity professed in the very same language. The incident of destruction of the Babel towers is used as an example of critique upon the "unity, transparency of meaning, and all other purported virtues of the primal, perfect language (Berger 3)." Berger who's trying to discuss the status at which language is not only held but also allows representation of social trauma hence argues that the incident of Babel serves as having two possible outcomes i.e. a) "...a society may regard it world as fallen and look back nostalgically to the world before the Fall" (03) and b) "...people who feel the damage to the symbolic order more acutely may try to restore the previous order exactly as it was" (Berger 3) to restore and impose the absolute signifiers as a result of this damage to the symbolic order, "people may try to imagine modes of human life removed from

symbolic behavior altogether (Berger 3).” Berger argues that these “cognitively and linguistically impaired figures in these narratives” (Berger 3) whom he calls the Postmodern Wild Children exist to “illustrate contemporary tendencies toward desires for terror and transcendence in response to traumatic damage to the symbolic order” (Berger 3) which is a direct consequence of the global capitalism where the production of ‘goods’ was done in a ‘space’ that existed between the international boundaries and their complementary markets.

Glen Thomas (1997) in “History, Biography and Narrative in Don DeLillo’s *Libra*” discusses how *Libra* (1988) as a novel has a threefold narrative structure that aims to construct a biography of the assassin along with the plot to study the life of the then president and the history of the assassination as orchestrated and designed by a retired CIA agent. Thomas states that the turmoil in the American political history has served the purpose of “an increased distrust of official explanations” (Thomas 3) and the doubt of the public caused the government to reinvestigate the assassination of then president John F Kennedy but to DeLillo, this renewed record of the history is just another polished form of fiction. The novel by DeLillo is an attempt that “refuses to see the historical record as fixed or stable entity but instead as the product of interpretation (Thomas 3).” The narrative in the novel is built upon ‘discourse’ and ‘linguistic alienation’ which is a predominant feature of the postmodern novel as seen in the novel when DeLillo employed the technique of splitting the signifier by interchanging references Lee and Hidell, this allows the biographical discourse to be identified in character attributes of the two subject entities. Glen has used Barthes’ notion of historical narration to justify how the “construction of the assassination and the constructed figure of the assassin rests; it is not so much that a real gunman exists but the conspirators create one and make such a figure intelligible to investigators (Thomas 14).” The paper further discusses the elaborate structure or

the framework that surrounds the figure of the assassin and how it is created with a predetermined notion within the discourse that Oswald will have to occupy in the end.

Therefore, it can be deduced that out of DeLillo's large oeuvre which includes a large reservoir of novels, plays, short stories, speeches, interviews, critical essays and screen adaptations of his works that have been examined through various lenses to understand how the postmodern is employed in his fiction, the selected novels taken for a comprehensive analysis in the proposed research that will aid in a better understanding of how DeLillo not only witnessed this transformation but was an active part of the same. The selected fiction is discussed briefly below chronologically:

White Noise (1985) won the National Book Award for fiction in the same year. DeLillo illustrates the story of a college professor named Jack Gladney. The novel deals with contemporary family life combined with academic satire, it also deals with a chemical spill that leads to evacuation by a group called 'Simulated Evacuation'. The remainder of the novel deals with a drug which is mediated to experiment upon terrors of death.

Mao II (1991) talks about a media and terrorist-dominated society. The plot deals with Bill Gray, a recluse novelist who believes that finishing his novel and the mass production of the same will destroy the real 'Bill'. He believes that writers have become obsolete and terrorism has supplanted 'Art' as the 'Raids on Consciousness'. Sven Birkets of the Washington Post called this novel the best in terms of threading of crowd in his review published in the year 1991.

Underworld (1997) tells the history of the Cold War. It also won the National Book Award and was a finalist for the Pulitzer for Fiction. The plot is centred on Nick Shay and examines the

themes of nuclear proliferation, waste and the contribution of individual lives to the course of history. It consists of six parts and the epilogue which interweaves the aforementioned attributes.

Cosmopolis (2003) follows the modern reinterpretation of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The protagonist Eric Packer makes his odyssey across Manhattan to get a haircut but is obstructed by various traffic jams, riots and a funeral procession. This novel from DeLillo is a classic example of the invasion of emerging technologies into the innermost corner of human lives. Eric, the protagonist, is not only consumed by these technologies; he dreams of being in union with them. DeLillo has critiqued the posthuman era which has emerged from the postmodern tenets itself.

The final novel to be studied is *Point Omega*, published in 2010, which talks about how humanity and its consciousness have now exhausted and will only lead to paroxysm. The plot revolves around Richard Elster who once was a war advisor and is now on the lookout for space and time. In his quest, he is joined by Jim Finley in the desert who is there to document Richard's experience.

Therefore, critiquing DeLillo's America is critiquing the emerging and simultaneously evolving relationship between technology and humans and how the contemporary world is manifested with this technoculture that has slowly but very carefully replaced the praxis of human existence, forcing them to be dependent upon the up surging technical innovations. This not only establishes the commencement of a new dawn for humans but envisages that the relationship between humans and technology has led to the creation of a new world that didn't exist before this. This virtual connection that makes its presence marked globally has compromised the sense of existence in the name of converging the entire world, rendering it

down to a single unit which is still fragmented.

Though the expansion of technological prowess has expanded beyond the year 2010 in which the last selected novel was published, the selected fiction allows a comprehensive examination of the research objectives as it caters to the historical perspectives, allowing a thorough analysis without being overwhelmed by the modern technological advancements. The available data and literature also allow the exploration of the profound impact that technology has had on society from its very inception. It caters to the social and cultural impact on humans and how these innovations transformed the fields of communication, media, and transnational politics as well as the daily lives of the common American. The selected fiction also has a detailed account of this shift in living praxis thus, presenting a robust and well-documented analysis which makes the critical implications even clearer.

The research therefore can act as a reference point for better comprehending the future rise of this technological-economic complex and how the trajectory of this exponential growth can be traced thoroughly and in a manageable manner within certain limitations.

Chapter 2

Uncovering the Baudrillardian Hyperreal

“...Today abstraction is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror, or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory – *precession of simulacra* – that engenders the territory, and if one must return to the fable, today it is the territory whose shreds slowly rot across the extent of the map. It is the real, and not the map, whose vestiges persist here and there in the deserts that are no longer those of the Empire, but ours. *The desert of the real itself* (Baudrillard 1).”

- Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1983)

Chapter two of the thesis corresponds to the second research objective which contextualizes the selected fiction through the conceptual lens of Baudrillard. It attempts to delineate the idea of how contemporary media technologies aid the hijack of what was previously known as ‘real’ and with the careful dissemination of ‘images’, these technologies are powerful enough to supplant the ‘hyperreal’. DeLillo’s selected fiction acts as evidence for this argument as even though the author himself refrains from any media interactions, the selected fiction presents an account of how technologies such as television and media have become an integral part of the American lifestyle. This has led to the assimilation and naturalisation of media technologies as a part of everyday existence.

Postmodern literature and fiction in particular are embedded with a lot of meanings that can be deduced via numerous connotations and denotations. The ploy used to further and establish

the postmodern tenets in these fictions ensures the Baudrillardian relationship between a sign and its signifier. The literature so produced hence caters to this representation and mirrors modern-day existence pointing towards the cultural associations, meanings and ideas attached to symbols or images so ascribed by the praxis of technoculture that is exhibited in contemporary living. Jean Baudrillard in his seminal text *Simulacra and Simulations*, published originally in French in the year in 1983, explores the control exhibited by a system that causes ‘deterrence’ and the circulation of ‘capital’ independent of production. Interestingly, Baudrillard himself has become the very commodity that he once disdained deeply. His concept of ‘hyperreality’ also addresses the ‘aporia of meaning’ which arises from the convulsed realities of contemporary existence, heavily influenced by scientific dependencies. This notion aligns with what Julian Wolfreys refers to as ‘tele-technologies’ in *Critical Keywords in Literary and Cultural Theory* published in the year 2004.

This chapter thus aims at comprehending the transition and sustenance of America, as witnessed by the author himself, because not only did Don DeLillo view the transformation of how America as a country, was invaded by the technical advancements, that seeped deep into the day to day functionality, but he consciously also became a part of the ‘cultural revolutionaries’ that not only surrendered and adopted these significant changes into their own lives, but also progressively participated in their further spread and assimilation into the norms of living. It also aims at understanding how these technical innovations that originated from ‘human needs’ later were designed from the urge to satiate human desires and the related fantasy of being supreme.

Through the selected fiction it becomes evident that the transformation and transcendence of American society from a physical and a geographical entity into a hyperreal conglomeration where the world is not just seen as a globalized unity but is heavily affected by the mechanical

panorama that has taken over this modern world comes from the key component of technology. Being subjected to this praxis of living, modern humankind is thus quintessentially subjected to a hybrid of the technological advancements and the impediments of the same and though the society is 'ultramodernized' because of the radical changes that technology has brought to modern living, it is also seen as the base of grading the societal hierarchy. Society thus, is more than often defined by the kind of technology it is appended with, the use of which denotes the progress that is associated with it. The relationship between the two is constantly evolving and exemplifies how a certain shift has taken place that is now permanent and how it is pertinent to trace the very transformation to understand how this convergence of a hyperreal world came into existence in the first place.

Despite DeLillo's avoidance of media interactions and interviews renowned DeLillo critics such as Thomas LeClair (1982), Leonard Wilcox (2002), and Cornel Bonca (2002) concur that his narration possesses an enigmatic and potent quality that provides "an account of our kinship in myths, media and conspiracies" (LeClair 19-31) as stated by LeClair in an excerpt from his 1982 interview with Don DeLillo. LeClair further contends that DeLillo's writing can be deemed as a "conceptual monster" (LeClair 20) as it explores the power structure in the American landscape. DeLillo's body of work is thus a repository of ideas vital to the discourse on modern-day America, where it steadily transforms into a market driven by the excessive production of mere signs. Leonard Wilcox (2002) in "Don DeLillo's Underworld and the Return of the Real" argues and further enhances the discussion on DeLillo by highlighting how his textual narratives bring about the bogus front of the universalized American dream and a sense of American identity because it "explores the realm of information and mediascape" (Wilcox 365) also asserted by critics like Mark Osteen (1996) and Christian Morau (1997).

In an attempt to understand this transformation from an analogous existence to a mechanical one, DeLillo carefully observes the common American man in order to understand the interactive interface between man and a machine. The slow inundation of technical changes that then became permanent and finally established themselves into the general American practices are familiar to the author as he comes from the generation that witnessed this boom first-hand. The revolutionization allowed DeLillo to critique the transcendentalism that modernization has brought into American households. This contemporary approach also impacted the notion of faith, echoing Baudrillard's idea of reducing 'divinity' to a mere 'image', rendered superfluous by globalization's expansion of the market for 'production,' 'consumption' and 'reproduction,'. Baudrillard extensively explores these themes in his work *Simulacra and Simulations* originally published in 1983 in French. It is important to note that through the selected fiction, DeLillo communicates his understanding of concepts such as faith, belief, guilt, redemption, and human relations, mystifying and transcending them into a state where 'real' and 'mythical' become inseparable both in human and capitalistic terms.

In addition to criticizing the modernization of America, which Baudrillard simplifies as the triple product of 'sign', 'hyperreal' and 'entertainment', DeLillo closely examines the evolution of the language and literature viewing it as an object of commercialization and a symbol of capitalist greatness due to its associated aesthetic value. Furthermore, DeLillo expresses criticism of the celebrity culture and its captivating culture in his 1991 novel *Mao II* where he raises concerns about the image of authors in contemporary society.

DeLillo's reflections align with Baudrillard's concept of contemporary society transforming into a 'hypermarket', where society appears to dissolve and decentralize, but signs continue to implode, resulting in a constant influx of information that leads to a loss of meaning. Peter

Boxall (2010) in “Late: fictional time in twenty-first century” focuses on the unprecedented virtual dominance, a characteristic of this new millennium, labelling it as “cultural agedness” (Boxall 694) that attains its peak while the protagonist of DeLillo’s novel awaits the end of the century hinting at an anticipated apocalyptic closure both historically and temporally. Boxall views DeLillo’s works through the lens of a ‘technological-economic’ complex (Boxall 691) that generates a form of time that is laden with ‘software’ and drives the capitalization-globalization concord.

The capitalist reigns behind such a complex ensure that there is hyper-productivity that leads to the creation of a productive hyperspace, therefore, ‘capital’ itself becomes the productive force and liberates the productive machinery. The process of production and the end result of productivity may either have objective ends or have means to serve itself, but, both have a certain value associated with it that can be read via the Baudrillardian lens and critically analyzed to comprehend the ‘system of exchange value’ or the ‘surplus value’ that comes after mass production for consumers or even the ‘market’, the space where this exchange actually occurs. Prior to the machines being introduced in the world of production, this value was underscored by human labour but with the machinery becoming more advanced, the process of production now runs like a simulation model that binds all material production to a specific coding that is again specific to human assimilation in terms of value, desire and actual use.

The trifecta of ‘production’, ‘labour’ and ‘value’ have together founded the makings of an objective world, where man is constantly working objectively to find his own value and as a result, another consequence of this modern world is the highly mechanized weaponry that is seen as a sign of the strength of a nation, a theme that often comes in select fiction. Martin Paul Eve (2015) in ““Too Many Goddamn Echoes”: Historicizing the Iraq War in Don DeLillo’s “Point

Omega”” draws attention to the crucial aspect of the ‘politics of representation’. He delves into debates surrounding whether the horrors of war should be ‘degraded’ through ‘analogy’ or experienced as ‘absolute’. Furthermore, Eve analyses DeLillo’s display of ‘historical relativism’ by intertextualizing his examination of the Cold War subject matter. Eve also highlights the presence of historiographic passages in the work, which he refers to as ‘situations’ where the “nation state is no longer the privileged agent of war (Eve 575-592).” The DeLillo critic, Askold Melnyczuk (2010) also discusses the same theme in “Shadowboxing: “The Falling Trees, The Burning Forest”” arguing that DeLillo’s *Point Omega* that was published in the year 2010, presents an unprecedented rendition of the American cultural fantasy that is described as a ‘hermetically sealed Disneyland’, utopian in existence and oblivious to any consequences or repercussions (Melnyczuk 201-214).

The contemporary American scene thus presents a ‘materialistic version’ of the reality that simulates Baudrillardian idea of a political economy, and the efficiency of this system is profoundly dependent on the fact that man is coded to think of himself only in terms of the products he can produce or the transformation made possible because of the value attributed to consumerist society arises from the cycle of production and consumption, which is further amplified by the increased production resulting from the commercial industry’s revolutionary advancements. There is an element of phantasm in this mass production because it is more than often read as a representation where man himself is seen as the signified and makes an effort to reproduce the mass culture by more than often resorting to newer models and forms of technology.

The development of media as an aide industry to this revolution in mechanization apparently only added to this mass culture that man sought after. The media thus developed throughout the

years and appeared as a heterogeneous entity with the appearance of newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, films, TV shows, photographs, internet browsing etcetera as a medium of imparting the reflections of our contemporary society but they mask the arbitrariness of the same via dressing up realities in the name of presenting the truth. These truths are often decorated as spectacles to which the perceiving audience becomes attuned, hence, the right to know the actual truth behind these 'truths' that surface is then abandoned and the primary aim of it is to be just 'seen' and 'accepted, the idea of the visual truth having any motive or consequence is completely discarded. This can also be viewed in the light of the Baudrillardian idea of media and how it is used in political strategies as an aid to explore how both capitalism and commodification are at an advantage.

The consumers of these media-based truths thus, see how the story behind it is constructed right in front of their eyes, as they become spectators that juxtapose different images to conclude an immediate meaning which may or may not be even connected. Therefore, the current media exposure can be read as the sum of all individual spectacles for the consumers, and this sum when split into each image is independent of each other and hence, can be read as a 'truth' of the moment. These images are also a result of excessive exploitation of means by which they are procured hence, the technical aspect of media and the technology thus, provides 'graphic images' that are then again exaggerated to engross the audience to ensure total involvement. This involvement allows the conscious participation of the consumer to turn passive overtime, as the consumer builds up a level of tolerance for such an influx of images and thus the act of 'viewing' itself is then concurred as the visible explanation of the truth since because these images are endowed with clarity and the consumer is supposed to understand everything with each moment that is relayed on.

In contemporary consumerist society, technology becomes the potential gradient of classifying and categorizing or differentiating between those who can afford certain products and those who cannot. This reflects Baudrillard's notion of postmodern societies being shaped by advancements, capitalism, and fragmentation, particularly highlighting their media-driven nature. This digitalization of everything has resulted in an overwhelming exposure to images, leading to the sensory overload that has been described by Baudrillard (1983) in *Simulacra and Simulation* where he aptly explicates how the individuals of the contemporary times are becoming passive and 'pure screen' or 'terminal'.

DeLillo's selected fiction aligns with Baudrillard's concept of codes and 'coded determinism' present in postmodernist society, as it discusses how contemporary living can be anticipated through the careful study and observation of these codes and algorithms. This viewpoint resonates with various critics, such as Douglas Kellner (1999) in "Theorizing the Present Moment: Debates between Modern and Postmodern Theory" discusses how Ellen Meiksins Wood, the editor of *In Defense of History* (2006), identifies and credits the emergence of the postmodern era as a theory that celebrates "the triumph of capitalism and the joys of consumerism," which aligns directly with Baudrillard's idea of the 'image' surpassing the product (Meiksins 639-656).

In *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: 'America' in Contemporary Pop Culture* (2008) Jaap Kooijman argues that "The "America" that is depicted in the photographs by Erwin Olaf and other pop-cultural artefacts is not a representation of the nation-state USA but of an imagined America" (Kooijman 10), it refers to how the present existence of America and its reigning position of a global icon is a 'made-up' characteristic that is equally substantiated by the

appended aesthetics through the media and its subsidiary, the 'pop culture', which proactively participate in the continuous 'recycling of images' that is imitated to the point of no return.

These images serve the purpose of conventional truths that stem from the clichés that have spread around the identity and purpose of America. Kooijman talks about how this 'artificialness' is a direct consequence of the imitation game that is present in the cycle of signs that the postmodern is full of, as well as, he identifies this characteristic as "not an act of dismissal but rather the recognition of one of its most attractive and seductive characteristics" (Kooijman 10) in *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: 'America' in Contemporary Pop Culture* that was published in the year 2008.

Media in its present form is an invading force that is culturally very powerful and almost omnipresent in the contemporary scene. The network of media makes it possible for the cultural imperialism that is subtly called 'Americanization' for global accord to occur, the media hence is capable of invading and annexing the innermost circles of circuits that run the cosmopolis structure of today's world. As a result, the 'mass culture' that emerges from it, is not only 'conceived' and 'propagated' but rampantly 'consumed' across the globe. This initiates the subtle cultural imperialism of which American ideology is a triumphant pioneer. The globally accepting attitude towards the American ideology and the idea of an 'American dream' that can be achieved by any and every person across the planet is accredited to the powers that media possesses. It also ensures that the same is accepted as the norm of a liberating power that guarantees freedom of expression in a land that belongs to the whole world.

This has also often led to the emergence of subcultures that are popular amongst the youth especially as the trend is to get assimilated within it and represent an identity that is inclusive of all and hides away any clear demarcation between the original and the commercialized versions.

This attempt covers the ‘shallowness’ that is exerted in the implicated America because of the hyperreal extant and is thoroughly managed by a careful embodiment of an image that America engages in passively and without any criticism. This has become the norm and has integrated within the belief system of American ideology as George Ritzer as quoted in Kooijman (2008) in *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: ‘America’ in Contemporary Pop Culture* argues that:

Ritzer argues that the American-style capitalist expansion of multinationals has turned into one global consumer market, in which the very same products are being consumed in very similar surroundings around the globe – thus passive consumption and global homogeneity (Kooijman 12).

This hints at how American society has convulsed into one giant global market of mass production as well as consumption that allows for the capitalistic ventures to foreground themselves and further expand. These capitalistic endeavours are undertaken only when one has the means to not only mass-produce but also control how this mass production is distributed to and availed by the common folk. Therefore, in light of the same argument, Fredric Jameson the most respected cultural commentator and Marxist critic, as quoted in Stuart Sim’s (2013) *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers*, argues that “postmodern culture is the internal and superstructural expression of a whole new wave of American military and economic domination throughout the world... (Sim150).”

Jaap Kooijman agrees with Jameson’s sentiments and underscores a similar argument that says the American hyperreality is compounded with its justification of the American political beliefs and systems. It ascertains and maintains the position that America has garnered and pop culture aesthetics and cultural artefacts are not only mediated by the media but is blended in a certain way that ensures that anything produced via the means of television and

other visual performances, enables the imagined image of America to present itself in a connotative association with the political standpoint, it aims at justifying the same as effectively as possible by emphasizing the notion of America as a nation-state.

Jean Baudrillard, as quoted in Jaap Kooijaman's *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: 'America' in Contemporary Pop Culture* (2008) paints America as the land where life 'becomes a movie' rather than being 'like a movie'. His criticism of America, through the landmark text, entitled as *America* which was originally published in the year 1988, offers insight into how American life is perceived as a life of hyperreality because the 'real life' has been systematically taken over and replaced by a life that is supplanted with continuous images whose influx is from the different sources such as the television, and other media sources like the news, Hollywood and even print media like fashion magazines.

The American culture thus, revolves around the American dream and Baudrillard comments on the same by arguing that the American dream may not come true but is perceived to be true enough through the constant mythical construction of the same. He is quoted in Kooijman (2008) arguing that "In America, cinema is true because it is the whole of space, the whole way of life are cinematic" (*Fabricating The Absolute Fake* 71) thus Baudrillard instigates the argument that America is the result of when Simulacrum, in its purest form, takes over. Hence, America can be viewed through the lens of a utopia that was possible to achieve only through hyperreality and pertinently via fictionalization and embodiment of the American dream by translating mythical and virtual characters as representatives of Hollywood and other commercially successful industries that are based off of pure screen time.

The virtue of being 'virtual' in contemporary times comes from the transition that the world has seen in the realm of science and technology. The rampant growth in the sector of

technology has not only aided the postmodern world but is seen as the strategy that authorizes the path to a bright and innovative future. Technology has not modernized the sector of media alone but has also revolutionized the market in the praxis of consumerism especially in the fields of modern medicine and military technology such as weapons of warfare and technology that allows surveillance and data collection of sensitive areas. The same technology has now transcended into a power that is ubiquitous and is capable of creating a virtual panopticon that renders all the information visible despite the proverbial privacy settings. With the induction of artificial intelligence, modern technology has only been on the rise. Modern battles have also transcended from physical to virtual capabilities, these battles are also now designed around emerging technology such as bio weaponry that is owed to the broadening of the field of genetic engineering.

The upsurge in other extensions of technology such as that of cybernetics and artificial intelligence consequentially has led to a world that exists at a considerably far removed position from the authentic reality, the current extant is hence, governed by the strategic usage of these technical affiliations. It is these hi-tech appendages of modern living that ensure that modern technology is thus viewed through the lens of a duality because of its possibility of a revolutionary aid that is capable of redeeming the world or for its apocalyptic tendencies that can be viewed as possible points of disjunction in the modern world.

Don DeLillo's selected fiction thus not only deals with the hyperreal America that Jean Baudrillard has conjured and criticized in his seminal texts. Both DeLillo and Baudrillard look at these advancements through the lens of great progressive elements of a society as well as powers that are capable of destroying the social fabric of the same. Baudrillard in *The System of Objects* which was originally published in the year 1968, has been vocal of his stance related to the rise

in technical paradigm as he instigated the criticism, however, his main concern has always been with the notion of how these technologies enforce their production as well as convenient consumption. He deduces the significant ways in which technology paved the way for transition of the society from the modern world into a postmodern world especially the rise of a consumer society. Don DeLillo on the other hand, evidently portrays this transition as his characters navigate the 'mediascape' that slowly becomes a being of its own and exerts dominance and control over the people existing within its boundaries.

Technology in DeLillo's selected fiction is also seen as an object that was created to ease the efforts of human labour for his various characters, however, because of their inability to stop their excessive dependency on the same. His fiction deals with how technology navigates, interacts and bridges the divide that exists between the two. It doesn't just look at technology invading the private space of humans but also explores how media and all computational techniques and methods are engaged to make modern living diversely effortless through the use of evolving technical paradigms such as toolkits and services. It also draws concern to the repercussions of this engagement since this technical turn has evolved to what critically is now known as the era of the 'Digital Anthropocene'. DeLillo, through his fiction, gives a critical reading of the entanglement between the digital turn and the praxis of human living, it also includes a commentary of the changes that have consequentially occurred in the following but not limited to, ecological, psychological, medical, biotechnological and commercial perspectives. The technoscape that DeLillo aims to underscore in his texts therefore, discusses how the relationship between humans and the non-human component of the contemporary world has expanded and entwined to produce a more hybrid sphere where this relationship is more than symbiotic in nature. It has slowly but steadily transgressed into the realm of posthuman and

DeLillo's selected fiction traverses the same subtle transition. It presents the changes such as the posthuman, transhuman, and the effect that artificial intelligence has on the average modern-day American man.

Baudrillard's criticism of America and that whether it is built of 'images of reality' or a 'simulation' that is being run makes it indiscernible, that whether 'America' viewed as such is true or false as well as real or fake. This can be read alongside the criticism that Roland Barthes provided in his pertinent text, which was originally published in the year 1957 entitled *Mythologies*. It was translated from French by Annette Lavers and published in the year 1972, and includes the most prominent of Barthes' essays entitled, 'Myth Today', and in this essay, Barthes describes 'myths' are nothing but a system of communication that includes a 'message'. These messages are made possible by a "mode of signification" (Barthes 109) that then gets assimilated into society through various modes of consumption that are governed purely by social dictums.

Barthes goes on to describe how these myths and the discourse pertaining to the same incorporate different forms of representations, including but not limited to, photographs, cinematic representations, news reports, sports events, live shows and all forms of endorsements and promotional advertisements. These representations are thus endowed with a meaning of their own which can be located within the societal constructs, as they come with a notion of presupposed consciousness that allows the imposition of meanings as such. Barthes deduces that the myriad modes of communication that developed as a result of the advancements follow the same semiological science that is able to encode messages within (Barthes 112). The modern idea of 'publicity' via these encoded messages that are then dispersed into society through different communication methods ensures that the chain of representation remains unending.

Thus, Baudrillard's take on this modern 'age of consumption', where he sees it being nothing but a culmination of accelerated productivity in the name of capitalistic rise can be connoted with Barthes's idea of how the chain of signification never ends. It is also pertinent to note that with the evolutionary progress and the digitalization of modern day equipment and processes, the critiques of production, as offered by these critics, may be significant but denote the pre-digital conception of the same, thus, presenting a point of view which is important to understand how the transformation of the society happened in a gradual but rampant manner. This acceleration has thus not only aided consumerism but established a new kind of consumer culture that has sustained its transformation from analytical purchasing to a more evolved and complex digitalized provision.

This evolutionary progression as witnessed in DeLillo's selected fiction instills a vision of the author's personal interaction with the technological advancement. It paints a picture of how the digital culture was slowly introduced and then injected into the system of society. It also elucidates the 'fascination' that technology and its diffusion into everyday American life brought. His literature illustrates the metamorphosis of the American landscape into a 'mediascape' and this transformation ensured that the mechanization only assisted in 'computerizing' the entirety of American culture and adding to the consumerist notion that previously prevailed. Thus new form of consumerism shifted from physical labor to a more digitalized form of production and distribution. It also revolutionized the means through which these products were communicated to the general public as the field of advertisements and the era of 'new media' technologies came into existence.

In *White Noise* which was published in the year 1985, DeLillo describes a common man's ordeal with the ever-changing atmosphere of contemporary times. He discusses the

evolving 'techno-sensibility' in terms of how America faced the oncoming evolutionary proceedings, as the relationship between technology and everyday existence not only deepened but complicated beyond the point of being able to be distinguished. As Susana S. Martins (2005) in "White Noise and Everyday Technologies" argues "*White Noise* ostensibly functions as a cautionary tale about high-tech America... (Martins 89)." She articulates how DeLillo's selected fiction elucidates on the deferring of technology has become a part of American 'everyday' as the author of the work:

depicts a world of infinite connectedness, where all thoughts, language, and actions fall into patterns governed by impersonal forces, a complex political and social landscape in which the individual is not just impinged upon by the "outside" forces but may in fact no longer exist as an individual at all (Martins 89).

The novel thus, brings forth the minute changes that occurred at the time and how these micro-changes were deeply seated in an average American's life. It translates the struggle that people had to go through to understand and cope with the threatening and dystopic 'postmodern' world that DeLillo carefully narrates. The novel elaborates on how this excessive mechanization has side effects that affect both physical and mental fortitude by introducing anxieties and questions, as there is an overlap between fear and acceptance of the same. DeLillo's characters in the novel therefore, experience this strenuous relationship but also provide the reader with a keen insight into how this revolution in the field of technology brought about certain 'pleasures' that were rooted in the acknowledgement of the changing times.

The very first chapter begins with Jack Gladney, the protagonist, taking notice of how when the college begins, the very first day his students are moving in with bits and pieces of

equipment that will purposefully make their life easier by permeating themselves into the average American's everyday habit. Through Gladney as a mouthpiece, DeLillo states that:

As cars slowed to a crawl and stopped, students sprang out and raced to the rear doors to begin removing the objects inside; the stereo sets, radios, personal computers; small refrigerators and table ranges; the cartons of phonograph records and cassettes; the hairdryers and styling irons; the tennis rackets, soccer balls, hockey and lacrosse sticks, bows and arrows; the controlled substances, the birth control pills and devices; the junk food still in shopping bags – onion-and-garlic chips, nacho thins, peanut crème patties, Waffelos and Kabooms, fruit chews and toffee popcorn; the Dum Dum Pops, the Mystic Mints (DeLillo 3).

DeLillo has ensured that he not only establishes but incorporates most of the subtle changes that have happened over a diverse range of functioning of human praxis hence, Jack not only takes notice of the gadgets that were newly introduced in the American consumer culture of the Eighties but he also introduces the readers to the advancements that were happening in other fields of science and technology such as Medicine, Media and the Food industry. Jack's comments on the kind of food that teenagers are attracted to such as chips and toffees speak of how even 'health' and 'nutrition' have turned into an industry where 'products' are created based on the targeted demography.

Jack Gladney isn't a mute spectator of the changing times. He not only witnesses these changes but partakes an active role in supplementing these happenings along with his family representing an average American family that is under the influence of the current material culture and consumerist temperament. When Jack's daughter Steffie comments on her mother's shopping habits and argues that "she feels guilty if she doesn't buy it, she feels guilty if she buys it and doesn't eat it, she feels guilty when she sees it in the fridge, she feels guilty when she

throws it away” (DeLillo 9), it denotes how an average family that is exposed to the material centred capitalist cycle, they are caught up in the never-ending cycle of buying without any actual need of the product, but since, the product visually appeals to the eyes of the buyer and the idea of storing it in a ‘fridge’ makes it look like an average household that has all the necessities. It hints at the social conditioning that is brought alongside ‘modern’ living. The modern take on living hence is an approach that is filled with what Baudrillard mentioned as a ‘system of objects’ that connect to each other in such an efficient manner that any product or service if used individually makes it an uncertain purchase, therefore, the utility of one product comes with an arrangement of other products and services that are necessary to render the illusion of a normal household, as seen in the family of Gladneys.

This modern living is thus endowed with a ‘reality’ that is commercial in nature and in the Eighties it served as an instigator of the subtle transformation that an American household has gone through without being aware of the profoundness of the changes that had occurred. The introduction of products like a ‘car’, ‘stereo’, and a ‘personal computer’ etcetera to the living system apart from the much-needed requirements like a ‘house’ or ‘medicine’ likely induced a commercial static figure that became of primary importance in an American household, hence America in the Eighties gave birth to a culture that protested less against this invasion of technical paradigm but celebrated it as a revolution that enabled ease, comfort and modernity. It united the human consciousness with the technical complex and savour the benefits as DeLillo in *White Noise* (1985) writes “...as they witness the chairman walking across campus, crook’d arm emerging from his medieval robe, the digital watch blinking in late summer dusk (DeLillo 10).”

This slow encroachment of products based on technology and scientific evolution however brought along this subtle shift in the American environment as Murray Jay Siskind, the

protagonist Jack Gladney's friend in DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) puts it in his statement while discussing the modern landscape that:

Heat. This is what cities mean to me. You get off the train and walk out of the station and you are hit with the full blast. The heat of air, traffic and people. The heat of food and sex. The heat of tall buildings. The heat that floats out of the subways and tunnels. It's always fifteen degrees hotter in the cities. Heat rises from the sidewalks and falls from the poisoned sky. The buses breathe heat. Heat emanates from crowds of shoppers and office workers. The entire infrastructure is based on heat, desperately uses up heat, breeds more heat. The eventual heat death of the universe that scientists love to talk about is already well underway and you can feel it happening all around you in any large or medium-sized city. Heat and wetness (DeLillo 11).

It evidently details how the author Don DeLillo himself resonates with the fact that though the change in the living praxis may have been for the better of mankind and the arrival of 'tall buildings', 'subways', 'trains' and 'tunnels' etcetera may have alleviated constrictions of physical labour and time but it has also created a sensory exhaust despite the intrigue it brings along. These 'cities' hence become the breeding ground of simulation as signs beget other signs. The achievements of mankind create a paramount of structures that have entwined with each other to generate a system and this system then governs the mass population through subtle signs and uniquely different modes of communication, marking an identity of its own. It asserts what critic Annjeanette Wiese (2012) in "Rethinking Postmodern Narrativity: Narrative Construction and Identity Formation in Don DeLillo's "White Noise"" argues that DeLillo's *White Noise* exemplifies the intersection between "the narrative form of life within the turbulent environment of a hyperbolically postmodern America" (Wiese 4) that highlights how "experience affects our

cultural imagination and self-awareness at a time in which narrative structure is often repudiated by the consumer-oriented and media-informed content of our lives (Wiese 4).”

DeLillo’s fiction often focuses on how the American transformation was not just mechanical but emotional as well. His attempt at underscoring how the American dream and American identity have been controlled by media are rooted in the idea of media being responsible for gripping and shaping the mind. Technology thus has invaded ‘the realm of information’ and birthed what now is understood as a ‘mediascape’. This mediascape is an example of there is collapse of the real as the images and electronic representations have carefully invaded and replaced the direct experience. The digital revolution thus, brings about an interaction of the economic, societal, cultural and political spaces. It replaces the analogous logic that prevailed in a pre-digital world and DeLillo through his compelling writings takes note of this serious query as to how humans that came into existence in a pre-digital era have now slowly shifted and evolved into beings that are heavily dependent upon tool use and technical supremacy as exemplified by DeLillo through his protagonist Jack Gladney when he writes in *White Noise* (1985) that “The radio said: “It’s the rainbow hologram that gives this credit card a marketing intrigue”” (DeLillo 142) shedding light on his discussion about the changing modern ways of how currency in the contemporary times flows. It depicts how the people in the Eighties slowly transitioned from a physical form of currency into a more complicated and digitalized version of the same that was utilized through the dissemination of plastic cards as witnessed.

Because of the technical paradigm being introduced to capitalism, what was once available in print media and was supplemented by magazines, pamphlets and newspapers, was then taken over by digital technology, and therefore, the capitalistic powers behind the same, ensure that there is some degree of relative obscurity in order to maintain the capitalistic gains.

The cultural transformation through technology has widened the geo-spatial limits of technology and it has allowed for the 'mediascape' to change how the market works. It has restructured the way products are advertised, marketed and sold. This restructuring has only been aided by globalization and with the world market coming to a point of convergence through ventures like 'online shopping', media has taken a strong hold and rooted itself in the praxis of modern living. It has now become a way of living after infiltrating and almost colonizing the innermost consciousness levels and turning into a cultural element that is now also globally connected.

This transformation can be traced in DeLillo's works as well. The arrival of digital prints that allowed broadcast and advertising over a larger area of targeted crowd subtly sent subliminal messages to the same. The experience of the real is however deterred in this global marketplace, and the 'inter-connectivity' between these 'portals' only assists in the accumulation of capital as both the production and consumption are increased because of being constantly exposed to an influx of images of the service or product to be consumed. DeLillo shows this influx in his *White Noise* (1985) when he writes "Soon the signs started appearing. THE MOST PHOTOGRAPHED BARN IN AMERICA. We counted five signs before we reached the site" (DeLillo 13) as Jack Galdney is in discussion with Murray J Siskind regarding the changing landscape of America. It points out that technology was appropriately used to promote the consumption of the experience of the barn, however, the repetition of it takes away from the actual experience of witnessing the place in person for the first time.

The experience is further diluted when gadgets are employed to enhance the experience, but, the social force behind such instruments of technology conquers the innermost places of consciousness and influences man. People are thus, hijacked by images and culturally reflect a living that is suspended in simulation which is driven by contemporary media and the social

power it holds to influence. This is evidently seen when DeLillo writes in his *White Noise* (1985) that “All the people had cameras; some had tripods, telephoto lenses, filter kits, a man in a booth sold postcards and slides – pictures of the barn take from the elevated spot” (DeLillo14), the projection of images of the barn is a continuous process that happens in the text hence when Jack Gladney and Murray Jay Siskind visit the barn itself, Murray says, “Once you’ve seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn” (DeLillo14) as the replication of the site via photographs, postcards and sign-boards render it down to a ‘collective experience’ and it becomes more of an ‘operation’. The hijack by media outlets and dispersion by the same thus remove away from reality as one experiences ‘representations of representations of representation’. This is backed up by critic Katrina Harrack (2013) in “Embedded and Embodied Memories: Body, Space, and Time in Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* and *Falling Man*” in which she states how DeLillo’s writings reflect upon his concern with the “nature of time, the minute details of human existence, and how human beings interact with the spaces around them” (Harrack 2) in the contemporary setting.

The advent of digital technology in the contemporary era thus can be seen as a mutation that has created an illusion of connectedness however it has created a new kind of ‘space’ that is primarily ‘virtual’ in nature. It has, therefore, enabled the capitalistic powers to take over space that cannot be limited by geographical boundaries. The digital circuit and networking expand this space over to almost all aspects of life rendering each facet open for commodification. The idea of ‘virtuality’ only adds to benefit the spheres that have risen out of it such as globalization, neoliberalism, post-modernism and even digitality itself. The present times are that somewhat of a postindustrialist and postcapitalist era however, the eighties were driven by capitalism and industrialism, so much so that they were shaped by digital technology and revolutionary

technical enhancements. These advancements made the transformation possible via 'flexible' means of organization and changing how 'networking' is perceived, exists and further grows despite how sudden the digital turn occurred. The virtual space is now the space where most of the socio-cultural, economic and political exchanges take place, and this space has become highly automatic. And with the increased automation, the virtual has become ubiquitous, being present in all spheres, as it has been made possible by reducing human labour and increasing the efficiency of production.

DeLillo writes about this digital influence in his writings, in his 1985 published *White Noise* he elucidates on how technology has invaded and started to naturalize itself in the contemporary living praxis through his protagonist Jack Gladney's interaction with technology. Don DeLillo writes "The phone rang and I picked it up. A woman's voice delivered a high-performance hello. It said it was a computer generated, part of a marketing survey aimed at determining current levels of consumer desire" (DeLillo 58) presenting a theophanic situation as a mechanized voice is handling the computational requirements that were previously done by manual effort. He becomes the consumer that equates the monetary value of the commodity with the resource that is being utilized however in this particular incident, he is not enticed by the service being offered so he hands over the phone to the targeted audience of the call, when Steffie, his daughter takes over the phone, Jack Gladney comments "When it became clear that she was occupied with the synthesized voice, I Spoke to Babette in low tones..." (DeLillo58) it emphasizes that the new generation was already reeled in by the technical panorama and the older generation was fascinated by the way technology primarily replaced human endeavour. The entire system is coded in such a manner that the targeted consumer is always in favour of the productivist ideology and partakes in the process of the same.

The process of consumption is thus that of an active one and it does not just consume a material object alone, but places the consumer within the structure of communication and exchange because the materialistic object also holds a symbolic meaning for the consumer apart from the rational need of the object. The system thus holds its concrete foundation based on the cycle of reproduction that is repeated both for the labour of production as well as code that ascertains the aforementioned process of consumption. This 'code' was critiqued by Baudrillard in his criticism of the 'political economy' in which he discusses the productivist ideology from which modern capitalism has evolved. This form of capitalism thus, detaches the signifier and signified from the sign in any exchange of communication that takes place and renders it without a definite referent. Hence, a commodity that is seen as a commercial product and has a 'given value' or 'use value', can be stripped of the associated production values such as who made the product or was exploited in the making of the product during their service of labour etcetera. Further, this product when reaches the consumer after being devoid of the associated values, is used by the user as the commodity that adds a value of its own to the consumer's life without ever being associated with the principle mechanism of production or distribution. Therefore, what is consumed by the consumer is not a mere materialistic thing or a byproduct of a complex process of production, but, is merely an element of a 'code' that allows monopolizing of available capital because it doesn't threaten the system and indefinitely extends the capital.

DeLillo's *Mao II* which was published in the year 1991 brings forth a discussion that is pertinent to understand how technology not only has invaded and established itself into the modern paradigm but has carefully altered the praxis of living itself. Inadvertently, it has become a conduit of issues that have risen out of this technical covenant, which can be termed as the by-product of the same. *Mao II* (1991) takes a look at these 'by-products' that are more than

often the 'side effects'. In a critical review that is present at the very beginning of the novel before it starts, *Newsweek* comments that the novel, *Mao II* (1991) is "A dark satire on the manipulation of images by artists, terrorists and news hounds... he creates scenes of memorable and disturbing clarity (*Mao II* 3)." In this novel, a sequential journey of DeLillo's thoughts can be traced from *White Noise* that was published in the year 1985 because it not only incorporates the advent of technology but also the heights to which it had staked its claim in the day-to-day American life. The rise in technical grandiose led to a complicated intimacy between humankind and technology. *Mao II* (1991) thus, paints the picture of what a relationship between art and terror can look like. It reads both 'art' and 'terror' as a product of living in a society where the prime focus is on the image.

This work entails the murkiest of depths in human consciousness as DeLillo presents palpable characters that remind us of how fragile humans are. DeLillo's characters are more confident in dealing with technology now as he writes "...Grabbed a flight, got a hotel, took the subway, passed through the metal detector and here they are, trying to comprehend" (DeLillo 3) depicting the journey of his character, Karen's parents, who have come to contact their child and take her away from the cult-like Church's plan of a mass wedding in the name of 'Unification Church Blessing Ceremony'. DeLillo attempts to show the technoscape that has slowly and steadily evolved and established into the contemporary setting of America with nothing existing outside of it. The characters now can not only interact but use these gadgets to put up with the modified living. Technology is seen as a serving aid to humans because it serves the purpose of their desires, for example, in a scene in *Mao II* (1991) DeLillo writes "...Look at that girl in the front row, about twenty couples in from the left. He adjusts the eyepiece lever and zooms to max power, hoping to see her features through the bridal veil" (DeLillo 4), it is evidence of how in the

Nineties, the common American man had accepted the technical bend that ensnared almost everyone at the dawn of a new millennium.

The charisma of modern machinery and its influence was so deep that man and machine almost seem to be present within each other's spaces, or within the proximity of each other. The distinction between the two seemed impossible, as the 'functioning' of the two became inseparable, in Part I of his *Mao II* (1991) the author presents the scene of a booming American economy that used this technical advantage to its maximum. DeLillo writes "He walked among the bookstore shelves, hearing Muzak in the air..." (DeLillo 19) thus, implying that the technical shift occurred for the pleasing of man, and its main purpose was to satiate man's comfort. The 'stores' that man built now had an added feature of soothing and bringing comfort to its possible buyers. The shoppers are engrossed with the playing of a soulful tune amidst the bustle of people that they are surrounded by. The neat packaging of books entices a possible buyer, but, what keeps them engaged into looking for something perfect while browsing amongst the shelves is the music in the background, and the only way that this is possible is because technology allows man to 'choose' and 'control' the outcome which in this case, is the 'level' and 'kind' of sound that is 'produced' by the 'speakers' which are again connected to a 'sound system' that 'takes input' for music from an 'electronic source' which could be anything like a CD, floppy disk or even a flash-drive.

DeLillo's *Mao II* (1991) is also a critical commentary on how authors have turned into a commodity for the market itself. His protagonist Bill Gray is a recluse author, working on a new novel but he cannot finish the same because he holds the belief that the extensive production of his creation will annihilate the genuine essence of the 'real Bill'. Bill also has an issue with how technical advancements have helped in the rise of terrorism that he links with capitalistic values

and commercial growth. He is thus of the opinion that writers have become outdated as the aftermath of capitalism, including terrorism, has replaced 'art' and the 'raids of consciousness' that were once solely achieved through exceptional works of art. Prior to this takeover by such a negatively impacting by-product of capitalism, 'art' was the original source of 'jolting' and 'transforming' the culture at large. However, with the advent of gigantic machines such as the war aircrafts and technology that can operate as a means of ending human life, art has been replaced with incidents that can engulf the mass of contemporary American society and change it to the core with a mere pressing of a button.

Mao II (1991) disrupts the perception of reality by portraying the conflict between the concept of a modern world and the instinctual sense of impulse. This is best described by an interaction between the characters Scott Martineau and Brita Nilsson. The two meet in a lobby that can be reached only by an elevator. Brita is carrying her camera case and that is how Scott can identify her, pointing inadvertently to the fact that, the possession of a high-end gadget adds to the person's identity and often becomes a marker of their personality. The two of them then discuss how the city has transformed into a labyrinth of technical gizmo that can astound people as Scott exclaims about the sudden displacement that he notices is a result of the 'revolving bar' that they are at. They are there together to discuss a meeting with the protagonist, Bill Gray, who insists on being a recluse, far away from the influence of technology that adds to capitalism, which he strictly wants to avert.

This is where Scott notices:

Above the bar area, there was a clock rotating in an openwork tower. From the table, he could see through the bare trellis and clock framework to the elevators. He thought he could easily sit all afternoon watching the elevators rise and drop, clear pod ringed with pinpoint

lighting. They moved soundlessly, clinging to the surface of a vast central cylinder. Everything was moving, everything was slowly turning, there was music coming from somewhere. He watched the people inside the elevators, deftly falling. High up, on the walkways, an occasional figure looking down, head and upper body. He wondered if the thing the woman tried to give him in the street might be a newborn child. The same musical phrase over and over, coming from somewhere (DeLillo 24)

it shows how machines have become a part of contemporary extant and its day-to-day activities. These machines are so silent and obscurely fitting that they have now established a place for themselves in the functioning sphere itself, therefore, the normalcy in American culture thus, comes from highly functioning and mechanically enduring gadgets that make their lives easier. The reality that is exhibited in the text is not that of an analogous one, but, it represents the shift that has come via the mechanical turn. The induction of ‘elevators’ and other ‘machines’ that make ‘higher walkways’ to give a view of everything and everyone provides Scott with a surreal feeling but it doesn’t look out of place, it appears to be a part of the existing culture. The constant playing of the same phrase of the musical piece in the background is an indicator of how this evolutionary relationship with machines has now stabilized and naturalized itself thus, it will never be retracted again, making dependency on machines for normal functioning, an extension of human action itself.

Scott and Brita then further proceed to have a conversation that shows how this dependency isn’t just enough for it to appear real and the world needs more than that. Brita says to Scott “...But people still want the image, don’t they? The writer’s face is the surface of the work. It is a clue to the mystery inside” (DeLillo 26) showing how the representation mirrors production and this further substantiates the process of consumption. The ‘images’ from Brita are

thus open for digital consumption and will represent the 'real' Bill Gray, however, mere images of Bill Gray do not suffice the reality of him as it does not represent the intellectual prowess that Bill holds, yet the marketing for this digital consumption is perceived as a valuable output of the real. Therefore, the 'image that makes the real' is nothing but a hyperreal façade that is a result of the productive forces.

To see the depth of this amalgamation between this rising technical paradigm, the hyperreal advent and the American cultural scene DeLillo writes:

The elevators climb and fall, the clock rotates, the bar slowly turns, the signs appear once more, the traffic lights change, the yellow taxis come and go. Magno, Minolta, Kirin, Sony, Suntory. What does Bill say? The city is a device for measuring time.

"There are kids up there. See Them? Around the twentieth floor. Can you believe it?"

"It's safer than the streets. Leave them alone," she said.

"The streets. I guess I'm ready now."

"Then we'll go."

They found the car and Scott drove north along the Hudson and across the bridge at Beacon into dusk and secondary roads, connecting briefly with the thruway and then dropping into networks of two-lane blacktops, hours into night, the landscape reduced to what appears in headlights, to curves and grades and the signs for these, and there were dirt roads and gravel roads and old logging trails, there were steep hills and the sleet-spray of pebbles firing up at the car, there were pine stands lit by the moon. Two near strangers in night confinement inside the laboring drone of the small car, coming out of long silences to speak abruptly, out of long

memory chains and waking dreams and every kind of mindlife, the narrative that races just behind the eyes, their words sounding clean and shaped in the empty night... (DeLillo 27)

The excerpt discusses how commodities that eased their way into the general understanding and living temperament of the American culture, revelled in the cycle of production that generated this bubble of a living sphere that simultaneously shifted the dimension of how America functioned as a culmination of time and space. The betterment has allowed advantages like a safer environment alongside the ease of mobility that is also seen in the excerpt. Apart from that, this advantage has also ensured a better means of communication with the perks of being extremely cost-efficient. With all fields being slowly revolutionized and improved, the innovation in technology has also rendered cities a more feasible structure, which is easy to transform further, when need be. It has created an effective network system that is linked together and is convenient to navigate. This has made globalization an easier process to occur, further allowing the economies to grow and trade to flow freely across international boundaries. As a result of these changes, the American society portrayed in DeLillo's texts had easier access to goods, services and products that brought together the section of society because of the common thread of consuming. This revolution may have aided in minimizing the socioeconomic stature between people, but it comes with a consequence for its capitalistic possibilities, as it is derived from the conversation between Scott and Brita when they discuss how Bill, who is an author by profession, still lives a simple and reclusive life, away from the hype of marketing gimmicks and benefits of exploiting his works for monetary gain.

These changes set the course for how contemporary society has ensured a 'surface appearance' that is credited to capitalism. The materialist roots then later manifested into the 'experiential reality' that surrounded the common man by exhibiting itself in the forms of

commercial stores like Magno, Minolta, Kirin etcetera that represent the economic manifestations of capitalism, however, these manifestations mostly remained obscure but it intended on reducing the world into a single unit of one capital and one market space. It also came with the sensibility of a safety that addressed this 'compression' of the world as the new age and new spirit of the modern times. It reiterates what Baudrillard (1987) in *The Ecstasy of Communication* published originally in French, asserts that a 'change' had occurred because of the 'satellite-delivered television' and this modern period that is laced with a newer technique of simultaneous production and consumption has now given rise to an era of networks and connections that span across global circuits. These circuits are also substantiated by the investments that are part of the globalization accord.

The manifestations of this new circuit ran deeper and wider than expected as it not only influenced but also altered the modern-day human praxis because with this change humanity, as a collective unit, had arrived at a point in time from where there was no return to an absolutely true history as the amalgamation of the social reality and capitalism brought together a series of change in the political and economic realm which in turn affected the praxis of functioning. The arrival of free markets and the availability of surplus goods and services deepened the power of capitalistic regalia that heralded the age of advertisements. The advent of TV commercials changed the way a product was conceived, produced, marketed and finally sold.

It has assisted the bourgeois to conquer the modern world because it caters to the geographical and spatial domains, where capital is invested as a means to grow exponentially, as a result of which America turned into a geographical entity with huge corporate capitals and institutions that administered proper bureaucracy. This in turn built the economic force that had major cultural changes in the spatial site where the tool of 'modern infrastructure' including the

present class of 'media' resides, and this holds enormous power including that of influencing and shaping via its totalizing prowess. The media thus, acts as a subsidiary power of capitalism that primarily functions as a means to 'mobilize' the masses by 'manufacturing' truth and its dominant representations.

Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997) and a review of the book published by the New York Times, which is given at the beginning of the novel itself, states:

Astonishing... This bravura master of cerebral pyrotechnics also knows how to seize and rattle our emotions... in this remarkable novel, DeLillo has taken the effluvia of modern society, all detritus of our daily and political lives, and turned it into a dazzling, phosphorescent work of art (*i*).

It is pertinent to note that this novel is centred around the theme of an 'encounter with the real', this real however is also noticed to resist 'symbolization' therefore, more than often in *Underworld* (1997) the 'real' lies beyond the signs that DeLillo has used but manifests itself through different forms. It is also concerned with how the consequences of living in a modern world such as the bombings and cold war that have been described in the text affect the postwar American scene since these are projected into the societal setup through means of media and mass communication methods. Through, the primary focus of DeLillo in this text aims at reconstructing trauma and the experience of it as a collective impact after the incident has already occurred but the author has done so in a well-versed-tiered manner. He constructs the narrative in a backward manner implying that one experiences trauma in flashbacks, by visiting and revisiting it alongside similar incidents that occurred side by side in contemporary times. Thus, DeLillo's attempt at creating alterity still addresses the 'reality' of what has already taken

place because these 'real events' have settled into the cultural consciousness and are often revisited through anniversaries of remembrances.

A critical interpretation of DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997) also establishes that the work is a commentary and periodization of the monumental and historical impact that the Cold War had. It looks into the post-Cold War era and reworks and revives the chaos and decentering that the landscape had gone through. It looks at the modern day symbols to comprehend the political and economic impact that can be accredited to the power that they hold. As Phillip E. Wegner (2004) in "October 3, 1951 to September 11, 2001: Periodizing the Cold War in Don DeLillo's 'Underworld'" argues that "The concern for making connections that is an essential component of any Periodizing narrative emerges as an explicit theme..." (Wegner 52) and DeLillo asserts that these 'connections' are not just surface level because the two possible connections are brought together by a massive system that connects them beyond easy comprehension. His attempt at discussing how the 'real' is purely hidden and concealed forever in the cultural consciousness through 'dream' like enveloping is what the novel takes a deeper look at.

These connections can only be recovered through a careful enquiry of how the post-historical idea of this present is embedded in the postmodern landscape of the novel because it not only just revisits an important historical event but creates an account of how characters interacted with this event to portray the personal and social changes that they experienced, it also makes sure to create images of the same to justify the actions that these characters take. Apart from that another major theme in this text is that of the 'production of wastes' which entails the issue of how consumerist ideology has led to the mass production of waste that takes over physical space, thus highlighting how such spaces of waste can be both physical as well as

metaphorical, pointing towards the disarray that has evolved as a consequence of excessive modernization which DeLillo portrays through the fragmented narrative structure of the novel.

Wegner further elaborates that:

Underworld opens with a prologue focusing upon a group of characters, fictional and historical, in attendance at a baseball game in New York City in the fall of 1951, and concludes with an epilogue set in the Bronx, as well as in Kazakhstan, in the 1990s. The six major sections of the novel explore a discontinuous set of historical moments, presented in reverse chronological order (Wegner 55)

implying that DeLillo's narrative technique of reverse chronology is a significant portrayal of his search for the return to what 'real' is since, DeLillo's fiction is suggestive of the fact that the 'images' that we are surrounded with, are a direct result of the space that media has created and controlled since its inception. It discusses the moment of transition between the historically, socially and culturally different periods. The presence of electronic gadgets has only added to the soft restructuring of senses towards these changes as it impacts the balance that one has between the self, others and the sense of reality. The contemporary world is hence the place that is no longer contained in the mere physical framework of grids and structures of power.

When the unnamed narrator in *Underworld* (1997) visits 'Dodger Stadium' for a game to enjoy he witnesses how the world has a sense of familiarity yet it is so thinly veiled in distinction that it becomes difficult to separate the two. Through the third-person omniscient narration, the narrator states:

We were set apart from the field, glassed in at press level, and even with a table by the window we heard only muffled sounds from the crowd. The radio announcer's voice shot in

clearly, transmitted from the booth, but the crowd remained at an eerie distance, soul moaning like some lost battalion (DeLillo 91)

DeLillo here implicates the changes living in the Nineties had brought, not only did it primarily focus on ease and association with modern technology, it allowed the familiarity with this technical upgrade to settle into a phenomenon of every day. Since the mode of production in any advanced political economy governs the shift to a more technocratic synchronization, the Nineties in DeLillo's fiction thus, portrayed how an ambiguity of the future of this codependence was hopefully taking a positive turn. It deduces the way a common man's workplace was structured in the shift that America had experienced slowly but steadily. It delves into how that structure facilitates all its communication and how the relationship between a common man and his community, family and environment is influenced by these developments. There is no segregation between the world before the technical advent and the world after the impossible became possible since an incredible transformation in the technological and social apparatus has occurred that has made a conscious change in the symbolic interaction that humankind shares with the 'real' as it has changed into a polis of hyperreal now, where technical aids and materialism announce themselves clearly and the crowd becomes muffled, just like Don DeLillo depicted in his *Underworld* (1997).

DeLillo furthers his assimilation of these two worlds in the text when he acknowledges that the language of technology and culture dominates the reality of the modern world and provides a guiding force for the functioning of the present world. DeLillo comments on how electronic media has diffused into the living praxis and created a discourse of its own which is now prevalent in the world, this discourse is exactly what the contemporary world relies on. DeLillo emphasizes this and elucidates on it through his narrator who states "Classic looks at me

and said, “We need video helmets and power gloves. Because this isn’t reality. This is virtual reality. And we don’t have the proper equipment (DeLillo 92).”” DeLillo implicates how the scientific culture of today operates in the world, predominantly, how it harmonizes with the day-to-day functioning, making it appear to be our real ‘real’. This alliance between scientific grandiose and capitalistic prowess thus dictates how this contemporary technoculture has now become an ideology of its own that exercises its effect and justifies its presence in the modern world.

DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* was published in the year of 2003, it chronicles the journey of this transition of American society into a virtual space at its best. It describes the property of being virtual in a typical DeLillo fashion by highlighting the reality of technology as the main contributing factor to the growing hyperrealistic interjections. The novel is a modern take on James Joyce’s *Ulysses* which was published in the year 1922. The protagonist Eric Packer undertakes his odyssey across the city of Manhattan to get a haircut but is conveniently obstructed by various factors such as traffic jams, riots and even a funeral procession.

In a critical appreciation of the book published in the year 2003, New York Times book reviewer Walter Kim writes how Don DeLillo, in his text, has established an ‘intimate relationship’ between his protagonist Eric Packer and his assassin Benno Levin to subtly comment on the clash of values that is occurring in this age of information. DeLillo’s commentary on the ideas of privacy, product designs and the rise of technological paradigm illustrates how it still caters to the dichotomy of progressive versus meaning in fulfilment alone. Kim refers to how DeLillo’s characters are “barely corporeal cerebral entities that populate the pages of “Cosmopolis”, a novel about the alleged insanity of Nasdaq-era hypercapitalism...”

(Kim 2003) and the emphasis lays on how the text discusses ‘unbridled materialism’ as well as the ‘rampant dehumanization’ that it brings along.

Kim further comments on the hyperrealistic turn that DeLillo presents in the novel by stating that, his tone is that of a ‘hyperbolic deadpan’ to demonstrate how the modern shift has brought about a coldness and aimlessness in the characters of DeLillo. He argues for DeLillo’s protagonist, Eric Packer, that he is a “superrich currency trader who sets out one day in a high-tech white stretch limo equipped with oodles of Get Smart thingabombs, from multiple pop-up video screens to a tiny bathroom, on a book-length trip across midtown Manhattan” (Kim 2003) to present how the technical turn has made the contemporary people rest in a self-containment zone. The characters thus embody the desensitization that the people in modern times have been subjected to because the presence of simulacrum that defers their actual reality and compulsively convinces them of a powerful ‘future’ is what DeLillo has attempted to ridicule in his text.

DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* (2003) thus, discusses how technology has become synonymous with efficiency and adequacy as Eric Packer thrives because of his capability to calculate the global market trend with the help of multiple gadgets and screens that he uses to view the global dynamic of the currency exchange taking place in real time. This indeed points out how the flow of information is also a mere ‘spectacle’ in contemporary times given the rate and speed at which it occurs. DeLillo’s humour is dark and his characters portray that lack of spontaneity, but his writing affirms how he enlivens the ordinary cityscape and mystifies it in text just like the changes brought to contemporary living praxis due to technology which subsequently has brought an atmosphere of transcendence and mystique.

The rapid transformation surpasses itself with every turn that technology takes, reflecting on the changing significance of technical objects and concepts in society, DeLillo, through his

mouthpiece Eric Packer, in the novel writes “He knew these devices were vestigial. They were degenerate structures. Maybe not the handgun just yet. But the word itself was lost in the blowing mist” (DeLillo 19), it emphasizes how the contemporary praxis is so far down the technical rabbit hole that certain old technologies become vestigial and then are replaced by a better and enhanced version. This replacement is significantly missed by most but not by DeLillo, whose postmodern satire in *Cosmopolis* (2003) reflects on how the hyperreal extant has naturalized the indecipherability that exists in the present times. In an age where everything is customized to the liking of the people’s perfection and filtered accordingly, DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* comments upon the borderless commercial transactions and the technical aids that allow this to maintain the stronghold of interested political powers.

The novel hence, discusses the anthropocentric turn that has been made feasible only through the revolution in the sector of technology, especially in information and computer technology. The technical paradigm has ushered in the posthuman era where the thin line blurring the difference between man and machine is almost wiped out. DeLillo thus thinks that technology isn’t a tool of emancipation and the present scientific grandiose is leading further away from the reality of human existence. In an interaction between his characters, the protagonist Eric Packer and Michael Chin, his currency analyst, both of whom exist in the high-functioning technoscape and chart the changes that take place in the global exchange of economy through their indispensable hi-tech setup, DeLillo writes:

“He looked at Chin, adrift in his jump seat, lost in rambling thought.

“How old are you?”

“Twenty-two. What? Twenty-two.”

“You look younger. I was always younger than anyone around me. One day it began to change.”

“I don’t feel younger. I feel located totally nowhere. I think I’m ready to quit, basically, the business.”

“Put a stick of gum in your mouth and try not to chew it. For someone your age, with your gifts, there’s only one thing in the world worth pursuing professionally and intellectually. What is it, Michael? The interaction between technology and capital. The inseparability (DeLillo 23).”

DeLillo has thus endeavoured to comment on the fundamental harmony that now exists between technology and materialistic growth that has been witnessed in the contemporary world. The interaction between the two has transcended boundaries and the distinction that separated these two distinct paradigms of human existence now is seen as an ideological appendage of the contemporary praxis of existence because science and technology have not only revolutionized the living praxis but blurred the line between mode of production and legitimation of the same. The power of autonomy that mechanization has introduced in the mechanism of the market, has allowed it to become an independent sphere of action that is more efficient than any manual apparatuses of economy. This in the context of Baudrillard’s criticism can be read through the lens of kinship that objects share with the system of production and how their distinction has been rendered down to almost nullified.

Owing to the independent nature of the system of objects that cannot be separated, similarly, DeLillo’s novel points at the social signifiers that have been manipulated by society to satisfy the logic of consumption, and this entices DeLillo because it paints the picture of how the

contemporary praxis has slowly been completely mechanized as well as how a dissent of the hyperreal is amongst us since ‘technology and humans’ have become one now through the intellectual bond that has been created between the two. Therefore, the objects that are consumed in this present society aren’t just products but signifiers that have been far removed from their code, the ‘inseparability’ of which DeLillo expounds and exemplifies in his *Cosmopolis* (2003).

DeLillo’s protagonist is thus, obsessed with gadgets that help him feel as one of the most powerful beings present in the novel’s contemporary scenario. When Eric Packer gets himself an airplane, which happens to be a strategic bomber, capable of destroying a small city on its own, he’s drunk on the power that his material wealth has allowed him to acquire. While discussing the features of this airplane with Vija Kinski, who happens to be his ‘Chief of Theory’, Packer states that “I bought it black-market and dirt cheap... U.S. dollars, Thirty-one million” (DeLillo 103) to emphasize how a new kind of symbolic exchange within a new system of signs is occurring now to highlight the interdependence of technology and the cultural shift that technology has brought alongside the ease in production and previous symbolic exchange.

To contextualize this union in his text, DeLillo in his novel *Cosmopolis* (2003) writes:

“She closed her eyes and thought. The screens showed charts and graphs, market updates. She clutched one hand in the other, tightly, veins going flat and blood drained from her knuckles.

“People will not die. Isn’t this the creed of the new culture? People will be absorbed in streams of information. I know nothing about this. Computers will die. They’re dying in their present form. They’re just about dead as distinct units. A box, a screen, a keyboard. They’re melting into the texture of everyday life. This is true or not?”

“Even the word computer.”

“Even the word computer sounds backward and dumb (DeLillo 104).”

This can be read in the Baudrillardian context to identify how Packer’s identity can be understood only in terms of his relation with the objects he has and the meanings he consumes because of those. His identity doesn’t rest on the type of work he does, therefore, through the aforementioned excerpt DeLillo carefully illustrates how the materialist code is constantly being rewritten as the norms of consumption change even after the presence of screens and gadgets that allow monitoring of this evolution. Thus, we have a constant evolution of the signs that denote what true ‘real’ for this era and age of consumption is. The set meaning of these evolving codes is inherent and the old ones are slowly replaced because nothing ‘authentic’ exists anymore. Any commodity that exists in the contemporary world thus, adds to the hyperreal extant as it is a direct product of the mechanized world but along with that, after a certain point in the exchange system, the sign loses its referential authenticity and is reduced to have ambivalence in them.

Don DeLillo’s *Point Omega* (2010) deliberates upon the technological-economic complex of modern society and discusses how contemporary times are almost laden with ‘software’, a concept that has also been discussed by Peter Boxall (2016). The novel hence examines the contemporary evolved society and contrasts the same with the traditional cultural fantasies that manage to transcend the boundaries of evolution in some way. The novel, therefore, is a commentary on the concord of capitalization and globalization. And though it bespeaks of the political aesthetics of the Iraq War as studied by Martin Paul Eve (2015), it depicts the usual DeLillo criticism of hyperreal and capitalistic ventures as critiqued by the DeLillo critic Askold Melnyczuk (2010) who comments that DeLillo’s *Point Omega* (2010), is an accurate argument of how America reinvents its cultural fantastic through becoming what he calls to be a ‘hermetically sealed Disneyland’.

Sven Birkets (2010) looks at Don DeLillo's *Point Omega* (2010) through a lens that doesn't incorporate the familiarity of American novelistic conventions, but Birkets argues that the novel represents DeLillo's endeavour to comprehend the conceptual distinction between 'radically dissociated realities' that have become 'inseparable' in contemporary times. He argues further that the American population is deeply immersed in what he terms the pool of digitalized media which has enveloped itself in the technogauze, rendering everything else obsolete and irrelevant. In DeLillo's writing, this discussion examines and studies the 'modifications of the human in situational process,' leading to the creation of characters like Elster, Finley, and Jessie to acknowledge and confront the changing times in terms of both 'space' and 'temporal' which are abstract units. DeLillo employs the element of time in both 'hyperreal' and 'unreal' senses to contextualize the spatial and temporal realities fabricated by the contemporary world, almost approaching a point where human existence and collective consciousness are reduced to absolute zero, becoming an obsolete entity.

Point Omega (2010) by DeLillo therefore, endeavours to emphasize the supremacy of the virtual realm over the real, where hyperreal existence in a suspended simulation becomes the quintessential 'reality' of the contemporary world and his characters associate themselves with similar experiences. In *Point Omega* (2010) the author attempts to construct the idea of the end of the century which eventually dissolves into a simulation, symbolizing the modern-day functioning society acting as evidence of the simulation of the working world. This notion reflects Baudrillard's idea of how our postmodern societies are subjected to advancements, capitalism, and fragmentation, particularly highlighting the fact that they are media-run. This pervasive digitalization of everything has inundated us with images, leading to the sensory overload that Baudrillard refers to, making individuals passive and akin to 'pure-screen' or what

he more aptly names as the ‘terminal’ (Baudrillard 1983). DeLillo’s novel *Point Omega* (2010) exemplifies the author’s belief that reality and its meaning are being further removed from mankind due to the aloof and parasitical relationship with wayward technical innovations. DeLillo marvels at the attainment and sustenance of collective human consciousness, wherein meaning is constantly drawn from the process and web of signification, ultimately culminating in the paradoxical reality of existence. The dependence on these ever-evolving technologies blurs the lines of demarcation between real and imaginary.

DeLillo is renowned for initiating a crucial discussion about how emerging technology does not hold the key to humanity’s salvation. Instead, he believes that it leads to the depletion of human consciousness. Through the dialogues between his characters Richard Elster and Jim Finley in *Point Omega* which was published in 2010, DeLillo questions how in contemporary times there is a possibility of transcending boundaries to become entities more than human, DeLillo writes:

“He paused and drank again.

“What are we?”

“I don’t know.”

“We’re a crowd, a swarm. We think in groups, travel in armies. Armies carry the gene for self-destruction. One bomb is never enough. The blur of technology, this is where the oracles plot their wars. Because now comes the introversion. Father Teilhard knew this, the omega point. A leap out of our biology. Ask yourself the question. Do we have to be human forever? Consciousness is exhausted. Back to inorganic matter. This is what we want. We want to stones in a field” (DeLillo 66-67)

thus, DeLillo refutes the idea that technology should be viewed as something separate from humanity. However, the author is unable to escape its pervasive influence, resulting in his works reflecting a complex mentality. Within this mindset, the experiences of the author express a combination of fascination and trepidation towards the progress and expansion of the scientific industry, which could profoundly impact humans. What DeLillo consciously implies through his characters is that this fascination represents humanity's vulnerable spot, comparable to an "Achilles heel." It alludes to the possibility of our innovations triggering a violent and tumultuous shift in reality, ultimately contributing to humanity's downfall.

DeLillo's world is one of hyperreality, where the America he grew up with is being replaced and rewritten. The introduction of television sparked curiosity but eventually led to a turning point in human existence as people became glued to their screens. The dominance of 'images' over 'products' aligns with the Baudrillardian idea that a seismic shift has occurred due to these viewed ideas or images. The connection between technology that shapes individual lives and the collective existence of mankind creates a living ecosystem.

In his novel *Point Omega* (2010) DeLillo opens with the section 'Anonymity' where an unnamed narrator observes Douglas Gordon's installation of *24 Hour Psycho*. The shrine-like screen fascinates the people present as they watch someone 'mimic' the action being displayed on the translucent surface. This detail sets the tone for the unnamed narrator's interest in how screens control human minds. DeLillo continues to play with the reader's perceptions as another unnamed character shifts to the other side of the screen witnessing the 'reversed image'. This oddity intrigues the narrator commenting that "...move along the adjacent wall to the other side of the screen so he could watch the same action in a flipped image" (DeLillo 4), exploring how images can manipulate perception and generate intellectual excitement. However, DeLillo

balances this notion with the idea that contemporary images may not accurately reflect the events they portray, as their representational value is influenced by rhetoric. Consequently, these images create a sense of reality that is far removed from the initial reality.

DeLillo renders the subconscious corruption done by technology visible through the portrayal of his character's inner turmoil and self-doubt by writing prose like:

Nobody was watching him. That was the ideal world as he might have drawn it in his mind. He had no idea what he looked like to others. He wasn't sure what he looked like to himself. He looked like what his mother saw when she looked at him. But his mother had passed on. This raised a question for advanced students. What was left of him for others to see? (DeLillo 10)

In DeLillo's fiction, anonymous characters repeatedly visit the same artworks and art venues, as if they are inexplicably drawn by an inner urge to comprehend these art pieces and the intense desires they provoke, particularly from the perspective of the 'male gaze'. In *Point Omega* (2010) there is an art stalker who acts as a conduit, reinterpreting the artwork through the lens of a spectator who has been reprogrammed by the art's influence. There is a constant looming threat of icons being duplicated, leading to a multiplication of simulacra, resulting in an intricate web of simulacrum controlled by the mechanisms of these icons and the meanings they generate. This concept aligns with Baudrillard's idea and is skillfully utilized by DeLillo in his work.

Chapter 3

The Implosion of Technology in Consumerist Society

“The fundamental stake is at the level of television and information. Just as the extermination of the Jews disappeared behind the televised event Holocaust – the cold medium of television having been simply substituted for the cold system of extermination one believed to be exorcising through it – so The China Syndrome is a great example of the supremacy of the televised event over the nuclear event which, itself, remains improbable and in some sense imaginary (Baudrillard 53).”

- Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994)

Chapter three connotes the third research objective which was to explore and expound on the contemporary culture of technology that has been established making it the ‘technoculture’ of today that prevails in the present American society that has been depicted in the selected fiction by Don DeLillo. Through the selected fiction it becomes evident that DeLillo has discussed how American society has evolved slowly to naturalize and embrace the simultaneous sophistication that is a direct result of the humongous technological complex of contemporary society.

The flow of American television has never stopped, it has regularly run and aired its programs for as long as the television has been present and integrated into American culture. This flow is bound by the idea of maintaining an intricate balance between what is considered to be ‘public service’ and the ‘commercial interest’ that garners the revenue for production houses. The common American household is exposed to a media density that can only be considered to be at a point of almost saturation however, television is still the most common

form of media that not only subsidizes entertainment for American households but also, allows its viewers to ‘make sense’ of the world outside of America. It channels the cultural ethos, drifts and contemporary trends apart from the recent happenings and facilitates an exchange of information across the bubble space within which the present American mediascape exists. However, it still feeds into the ‘global media culture’ and partakes in the experience by providing spectacular ‘shows’ that can influence people outside as well as the ones living inside the bubble of a great American dream. These shows are not just televised on an international level but are more than often available for selling as commercialized units, being labelled as bestsellers and distributed through CDs, DVDs or the recent technically glorious development like NETFLIX.

The chapter, therefore, aims at locating the socio-political technoculture that permeates the modern world and furthers the dissent of tragedies that are borne out of this trend despite how the characters of DeLillo look at technology as their saviour and means of salvation, this is best exemplified in DeLillo’s selected fiction *White Noise* (1985) and *Cosmopolis* (2003). Since technology in modern times regulates the existence of its subjects, the link to reality in this technoscape has not only been disconnected but also lost altogether. The dominance of consumerism and the presence of simulacra is what defines the reality of contemporary times and DeLillo’s *White Noise* (1985) serves as an example of how characters resort to an unreal life where they relentlessly pursue salvation in science and technology but this quest leads them into a conflict as there are unwelcomed consequences of technology that brings the cataclysmic change in people’s lives. DeLillo in his 2003 published *Cosmopolis* writes that “He knew these devices were vestigial. They were degenerate structures. Maybe not the handgun just yet. But the world itself was blowing in mist” (DeLillo 19) to provide an understanding of how the

evolutionary relationship with technology often implodes in an apocalyptic and catastrophic manner and this antiutopian sentiment is more than often resonated in DeLillo's literature as his characters lose their faith in technology after witnessing the havoc and destruction that is caused by the same equipment that is supposed to bring a positive change in the lifestyle of the common American.

In addition to the technical disasters, the powers of mass media have always held a special place of interest for postmodernists and it has been an ongoing debate since time immemorial, since it is a pertinent evolutionary tool that has been utilized for selfish purposes. It is important to understand how mass media is used as a means to serve its purpose for the socially elite and politically powerful. A comprehensive examination of the significant influence wielded by mass media and the hyperreal world in shaping the contemporary narrative concludes with how media 'manufactures' most of the material for consumption and the relation between media and the state is the governing factor behind it as most political outcomes are determined because of this relationship. Daniela Daniele (2011) in "The Achromatic Room: DeLillo's Plays On and Off Camera" attempts to understand how DeLillo relentlessly examines 'the society of spectacle' in his works and how he implicates the modern-day 'video culture' as a tool that has overtaken the traditional practices like the interactive theatre making the act of participation fall prey to 'technological overkill'. She further deduces how DeLillo's works can be read through the lens of investigation of the modern-day psyche as there is a constant overload of information and modern man is hypnotized by the force of media and advertising.

Culturally, media and its varied sources are used to construct meaning that can then be used as a set narrative whose meaning is rooted in the social contextual position it holds, for example, DeLillo in his *Point Omega* (2010) through the mouthpiece of his unnamed narrator

states “The film’s merciless pacing had no meaning without a corresponding watchfulness, the individual whose absolute alertness did not betray what was demanded” (DeLillo 6), describing the art installation setup of the movie that is visited by this anonymous character in the epilogue and is obsessed with this art piece, it asserts on how media is situated in the meaning-making process that people are socially endowed with due to their reflections and experiences.

The power that lies in the hands of the contemporary mass media has allowed it to become an institutionalized force to reckon with. It also has a hold on a pertinent position that allows it to gain an insight into the economic and political happenings firsthand, this is utilized mostly to trend and support the dominant perspectives. This becomes possible when events are perceived by people through the prism of political and cultural connotations.

Aiden Hehir (2011) in “Hyper-reality and State building: Baudrillard and the Unwillingness of International Administrations to Cede Control” attempts to critique the faith that mankind has put in the rise of technology. He critiques the misconceived notions of democracy in Western societies and their obsession with the idea of perfection as he exemplifies ‘Disneyland’ as being something that is seen as an example of a ‘perfect city’. With the rise in scientific grandiose, the author discusses how the West has developed ‘systems’ like that of a security system, to protect from any threat beyond that of the ‘perfect cities’ in which they exist. Hehir thus critiques the West’s position on the amount of ‘power’ that they have garnered after the rise of the hyperreal cosmopolitan.

Media allows the reflection of such important events and sets a narrative, this is what author Piers Robinson (2001) loosely calls “manufacturing consent” (Robinson 525) in “Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics”, as most journalists happen to follow a rigorous process of self-censoring apart from feeding their personal political and cultural

agendas, since most of these point of views happen to be supported by certain frames of references. Media is often utilized in the context of conforming its content to the agendas of the ruling government in power and such media coverage serves consistently with the major policy interests, thus, media does not possess the power to either criticize or even challenge the policymakers that it is bound to serve. Hence, it can be concluded that the modern media follows a cyclical pattern of influencing the common people as well as getting influenced by elites in power.

Robinson further goes on to theorize how whenever media tends to cover important issues, it is mostly done to fulfil the professional duties that media houses hold, implicating that media criticism, if and when it occurs, is only possible because it does have the power to influence certain policies as well. This sometimes allows them to become active participants who are no longer just the recipients of official information but have institutionalized themselves to become powerful. The author thus writes “critical journalism is unlikely to surface concerning issues that fall within a sphere of consensus” (Robinson 531) and hence when media is used to portray a situation, especially, news media, it sometimes is constructed in a manner to produce a certain understanding or a particular kind of perception. This is indicative of the fact that ‘media’ is used as a medium of displaying any spectacle and turning it into an event, therefore, an event covered in media is an entity that has been created with a lot of effort, making it a constructed reality for its consumers, who seek an honest source of information. The naturalization of media is witnessed in DeLillo’s fiction as well and he aims at providing a sharp commentary on how this naturalization has now been embedded deep in the psyche and it becomes one with the people of contemporary American society as articulated in his *Point Omega* (2010) that “one or two would turn and leave and then the others, forgetting what they’d seen in the seconds it took

to turn and move toward the door” (DeLillo 12), depicting how the visitors at the art installation do not care about the beauty in the art that they have just witnessed, to elucidate that being surrounded by technology is no more a spectacle alone but it is this current paradigm of existence that appears to be an extension of human existence itself.

In the section of *Simulacra and Simulation* entitled, “The Beauborg-Effect: Implosion and Deterrence” published by Jean Baudrillard, Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson in the year 1982, the authors thus attempt to understand the relationship between signs, their influx, the networks that they create and the circuits they build through a thorough discussion on the simulacrum of cultural values that is often undermined. Baudrillard addresses the system of media that governs these circuits and how irreversible they have become in modern-day existence. He critiques how this advent in technology has led to the emergence of a ‘zone of surveillance’ and deterrence that encompasses the realm of technical, ecological, economic, and geopolitical complex which he designates as the ‘buffer zone’ (Baudrillard 61).

DeLillo’s oeuvre, therefore, is a sharp and critical commentary on how technology and especially, media has evolved as a tool that is often exploited to misconstrue and fabricate. He just doesn’t look at media alone but addresses the changing paradigm of information flow also. The technical panorama that modern existence has created is embedded in his commentary. DeLillo underscores this transition from primitive landscape to futuristic technoscapes to the contemporary digitalized mediascapes in his works and narrates it as someone who has experienced it himself. The author’s fiction is also a commentary on how the analogous machines were slowly taken over by a more evolved and complex system of machines, which allowed the surreal experience that one had before this, to evolve into a hyperreal extant.

The takeover by machines was earlier viewed as a sign of an evolved paradigm as life

became smoother, but this transition soon took over the difference that demarcated the boundaries of being machine or being a human. The decimation of this boundary also ensured that the technical cataclysm occurred as humans not only just lost grip over what was being invented but the creations were powerful enough to end human means of existence, DeLillo who is a keen observer of this transcendence of technology writes in his *Cosmopolis* (2003) depicting the modern day uniform for the Chief of Security staff named 'Torval', bodyguard for the protagonist 'Eric Packer' elaborating at how "the handset of his cell phone was belted under his jacket not far from his voice-activated firearm, Czech-made, another emblem of the international tenor of the district" (DeLillo 18) to contextualize how evolution as a process has led the contemporary times, and especially the American society, to a point where technology is no longer an aide in the progress, but, it has evolved the world into a place that is substantiated, immersed and uprooted by the technical gizmos at the same time. These gadgets do not seek to benefit humans anymore and are causes of tension and systemic issues that pertain to psychological manipulation, physical violence, carnage, destruction and catastrophe in general.

Susan Gerofsky (2006) in the research article "Communication: Simulation, Reality, and Mathematical Word Problems" discusses how the contemporary world is no longer a world of frameworks, grids or checklists that can articulate the complex relationship that has developed between humans and technology that assists in simulations, often rendering an assumed external reality. Gerofsky uses Baudrillard's argument of hyperreality to address the modern-day issues that arise because of the 'electronically-mediated' world. She critiques the modern simulations in the form of reality TV, computer games, and fake crises shown on television and theme parks. Baudrillard in his *Simulacra and Simulation* the English translation of which was published in the year 1994, comments on the same lines and states that "Closer to us, this is

what terrorism is occupied with as well: making real, palpable violence surface in opposition to the invisible violence of security” (Baudrillard 57), arguing about how because of the exploiting power of media and the rich culture of technology that is omnipresent today, there is an emergence of terrorist outfits that again misuse this power of media to highlight the modern sense of safety and faith that the humankind has in today’s technology, and it is nothing but a façade, also it is the same technology that becomes the conduit of distress when exploited properly by the people in power.

DeLillo’s works thus, criticize the modernizing America which has the Baudrillardian amalgamation of sign, the hyperreal and entertainment, with him paying close attention to what is being produced for consumption in the contemporary American scene. His distinct observation of commercialization that has been rendered as a symbol of capitalistic greatness reflects the aesthetic value that is often associated with objects in a hyperreal setting. The inadvertent arrival of the hyperreal world, thus, can be accredited to the technological revolution that occurred immediately after World War II. It soon became imperative that the analogous machines be replaced by the ones that could compute and produce superficially enhanced and digitalized results. DeLillo traces this change in his novels, but he adds a sense of mystification to it, which more than often results in a convoluted sense of judgment. The characters found in DeLillo’s fiction are mesmerized by the thought of technology and cannot separate the idea of what is real and what is mythical as witnessed in his 1985 published novel *White Noise* where the protagonist Jack Gladney visits an ATM vestibule and remains in awe of the machine and the way it works.

DeLillo’s fiction hence, carefully attempts to discern the transcendence that America witnessed after the arrival of the age of machines. He also made certain of the fact that his

oeuvre discussed not only the transition but the honest difference between the new digitally equipped systems and their analogous predecessors, and the changes that it brought into the living praxis of the contemporary American extant. The technological improvement made it possible to highlight how America was viewed and its potential to shape the course of history by metamorphosing into a country that changed the game in the digital context of evolution. DeLillo's choice of words, his subject matter and the imagery that is produced in his works together form evidence of how DeLillo understands the concepts of faith, redemption, belief, agency and human relations. DeLillo's literary oeuvre therefore, exemplifies the mystical touch since it becomes difficult to separate the real and the mythical, whose origins lie in the capitalistic turn. The novel *Cosmopolis* which was published in the year of 2003 is an example of this amalgamation at best. The protagonist Eric Packer, who happens to be studying the flow of currency information, hints at how mighty and fully elaborated the cybertechnology is and how it shapes lives on an unimaginable scale.

Terry Caesar (1994) in the research article "Brutal Naivete and Special Lighting: Hyper spatiality and Landscape in the American Travel Text" discusses America as a subject that has been of interest to travellers like Baudrillard who view it as a product that has been reproduced repeatedly. America thus is seen as the hyperreal nation that is full of 'factual inaccuracies, descriptive ecstasies and pervasive stupidities', because, to Baudrillard, it is nothing but the 'material fiction of the image' as the land of America more than often converges into hyperreality from where it can't escape out. This can be indicative of the fact that 'images' are the primary mode of representation of what America is. DeLillo uses this information to expand on the narrative of how America as a subject is consumed by the changing modes of how an image is captured.

The contemporary American society's consumerist mindset utilizes these modern technologies to differentiate between the sections of society that can afford these products and those that cannot. It aligns with Baudrillard's perspective of postmodern societies being influenced by capitalistic ventures especially promoted through media. DeLillo discusses about the same in his 1985 published *White Noise* through the conversation that Jack Gladney has with his kids during the public television of the 'airborne toxic event' stating that:

These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in low-lying areas get floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornados. I'm a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don't happen in places like Blacksmith (DeLillo 133).

DeLillo's criticism of the amount of power that media houses hold is witnessed in his 1992 novel *Mao II* which discusses how an author's hard work creates a novel which is subsequently mass-produced only to destroy the essence of the work. In *Mao II* (1992) this is witnessed by DeLillo's protagonist Bill Gray, who out of pure fear of being commercialized does not finish the novel that he is attempting to write. Don DeLillo here attempts to appreciate the reclusive authors who refuse to let the media take control of their creative work and then mass reproduce the same for open consumption. It is DeLillo's way of sympathizing with the era that was not corrupted by the technoculture of the contemporary extant since such authors refuse to participate in the consumption and disposal of their image as an author. DeLillo through the words of his protagonist Bill Gray's states "You have a twisted sense of the writer's place in society. You think the writer belongs at the far margin, doing dangerous things (DeLillo 97)."

In his 1991 published *Mao II* therefore, DeLillo opines that this trend and culture of media not only devalues the author but binds the author to the automated mechanism as if the entire process of creating a body of work were part of the system of machines that have been developed in the modern era.

It is noteworthy to observe that DeLillo comments upon how the machine systems that may have been developed for a specific task in the evolutionary context, still posed the issue of an ethical dilemma of freight, as technology and its advantages were now evolving into a system that was beyond the human control. This new technoculture did not reserve its right to be operational through only human control and progressed into surpassing the limitations, an example of which is the development of artificial intelligence, the subject matter of DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* which was published in the year 2003. The strength of contemporary technoculture resides in its ability to mass produce as well as mass consume, especially with its power to incorporate a diverse range of criteria through the power of capitalism. Garen J. Torikian (2010) in the research article entitled "Against a Perpetuating Fiction: Disentangling Art from Hyperreality" discerns how modern art serves the purpose of both an object as well as a function. Torikian examines it through the lens of something that allows us to not only encounter our present reality but supplement it. Torikian also discusses how the advancement in technology has aided fetishization as well as questioning the authenticity of items that are mass-produced in the name of art in modern times. The article further delves into the relationship that art shares with technology as its mediator and mass producer.

American technoculture hence, is the representative of the 'absorbed differences' and how America conceptualizes the modern world to be. With the help of the modern forms of media such as television, films or even news, in that case, the language and style of advertisement is

often formulated as well as dictated in a manner that results in the globalized version of how modern technology functions in an American household, making it possible to intertwine an ‘imagined America’ with the real America that is no longer real. This mixed form of America is an exemplified form of hybridized technology that mimics the conceptually American original and connects it all through random associations. Jaap Kooijman in the seminal text *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* which was published in the year 2008, comments that “the perspective of hyperreality opens up ways to analyze an imagined America, both within as well as beyond the geographical borders of the nation-state USA, and particularly the ways in which such an imagined America is globally mediated and emulated (Kooijman 17-18).”

Don DeLillo’s fiction also engages with this technoculture focusing on how the evolutionary relationship is now at the peak of amalgamation between humans and their mechanical counterparts, with the immediate need to control the initial and the end of the process, especially for technology that can bring in destruction. Through his novels, the author discusses the idea of technology that can turn offensive such as the nuclear waste in his 1997 published novel entitled *Underworld* as well as a similar ‘toxic event’ in his 1985 published *White Noise*, along with that, DeLillo has furthered the discussions how technology has risen to a giant stature in the modern times because, in the novel *Cosmopolis* which was published in the year 2003, DeLillo writes “But your system is so micro timed that I couldn’t keep up with it. I couldn’t find it. It’s so infinitesimal” (DeLillo 191) to reiterate the fact that technology has settled in such a manner into the American scene that human attributes like intuition and experience have also been overtaken by automated machines that are highly capable of doing so. It is a cautionary indication that modern existence often disregards any implications of

technology, and with the contemporary praxis becoming more and more mechanized, it is deduced that with an increase in the digital systems that are wired to function based upon their own coded logic and artificial intelligence, the removal of human participation and human authority is absolutely possible and is almost true for a certain section of operating technology.

In “Paradox and the Consumption of Authenticity through Reality Television” the authors Randall L. Rose and Stacy L. Wood (2005) critique how television now serves as a consumer practice in the postmodern times and how the viewers/consumers are subjected to a state of self-referential hyper authenticity via the process of encountering and blending of fantastic elements of television programs with that of indexical elements connected to their lived experiences.

Modern technology thus, is capable of creating these industrial complexes that blend different aspects of human praxis and evolving technology to initiate a system that is rooted in economic and power growth. These complexes therefore override any kind of ethical concerns that may pertain to the development, application or effect that these systems may have on human behavior as well as human existence altogether. DeLillo exemplifies this continuity in his 2010 published *Point Omega* where the author demonstrates in the opening scene of the epilogue, at the art installation, he writes:

I realized what it was that had passed out of mind until this moment. It was the film. I remembered the film. Here it is again, man and wall, face and eyes, but not another talking head. On film the face is the soul. The man is a soul in distress, as in Dreyer or Berman, a flawed character in a chamber drama, justifying his war and condemning the men who made it (DeLillo 124)

to denote how modern technology has slowly stepped into the paradigm of being openly

instrumental. The large-scale developments of modern times have taken a digital turn, with the contemporary world now having the ability to be compared to the one that was created by merely objects. This is proven in the complexities of the modern world where digital circuits represent an unending chain of symbols, evolving into a web of digitalized and 'computable' symbols of today. These symbols then increase in their complexities to present more efficiently working, more reliable and fastest computing digital machines.

However, a general conclusion can be drawn from DeLillo's fiction that modernization was a slow process of transition and technology in the eighties was predominantly dependent upon man since it had an analogous origin. It required humans to become fully operational and was functional only under vital commands that were processed by human operators, however, the development of digital circuits allowed an unprecedented growth of the technical paradigm that soon didn't require humans to function properly. It led to the eventual disintegration of the human-machine dichotomy and functionally, human and machine entered into a new union that historically led to the emergence of automated digital systems and circuits that shaped the new extant and formulated an ideological change and shift with its arrival.

The rationale behind such a complex technical paradigm that guided this newly evolving relationship is what turned into the contemporary technoculture that then shifted into its cataclysmic variety during one of the most historically poignant and significant events, i.e., the Cold War between the USA and USSR, a subject matter that even Don DeLillo has discussed in his 1997 published novel *Underworld*. The period of the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union is characterized by the geo-political tensions that pushed the technical boundaries of both the USA and the Soviet Union, as these two superpowers did not engage in direct war but allowed proxy wars and hence, the direct threat that was mortal in nature, led to the brewing

of newer technologies that were potentially quicker in retaliating to the possible devastating attacks from both sides like author Robert Hassan (2020) in *The Condition of Digitality: A Post-Modern Marxism for the Practice of Digital Life* argues:

The history of the shift to automated digital systems is unavoidably a technical one. But technological forms and functions were shaped by ideological choices that emerged out of the inter-agency closed world discourses within the overall context of US government's Cold War Strategy (Hassan 40).

Hassan further establishes how this digital turn led to the evolution of what he calls 'a networking logic' that was the initial precursor to the 'commercial internet and web' which not only concealed the history of automation but also the functionality that humans possessed. Hassan quotes Paul N. Edwards in *The Condition of Digitality: A Post-Modern Marxism for the Practice of Digital Life* (2020) to argue how this developmental progression led to the arrival of this new age where:

Computers were used first to automate calculation, then to control weapons and guide aircraft, and later to analyze problems of human command through simulation. The final step in this logic would be to centralize it and remove responsibilities from 'lower levels' as the 'ultimate goal' (Hassan 40)

thus, consolidating modern cybernetics and technological evolution into what is now a comprehensive network of digital circuits that cannot be controlled anymore. It possesses the power to bring a dangerous situation to life through the capability of orderlessness and chaos. The power that these machines hold renders them 'ultimate' control and classifies them as 'intelligent' without any supply of help or information from their human counterpart. DeLillo in

the novel *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997, writes about the power that these machines hold due to the military-political complex out of which such aggressive machines have been born and then further the propagation of mechanical cataclysm. DeLillo writes:

Powerless. Understand, this is how they remind us of our basic state. They roll out a periodic crisis. Is it horizontal? One great power against the other. Or is it vertical, is it up and down?" He seemed to lose his line of argument here. "The U.S. is putting up a naval blockade. Fine, good, groovy. D'ya hear what she said?" And Lenny did his basso head of State. "Any offensive military equipment being shipped to Cuba gets stopped dead in the water by the U.S. fleet." He jabbed at some imaginary lint on his lapel, signalling a shift, a bit. "And there's this woman sitting out there in Centralia listening to the speech. She hears, Maximum peril. She hears, Abyss of destruction. She has a job dishing out meat patties in the school cafeteria and she comes home exhausted and turns on the TV and it's the President of the United States and he's saying, Abyss of destruction. And she sits there in her cafeteria whites... (DeLillo 507)

this is indicative of how events like wars are also rooted in economic decisions as much as they are in politics and power, however, an event of that scale does not have the possibility of occurring alone in the socio-cultural context, these events are facilitated by the technologically aided instruments of destruction that have been pioneered from technical challenges that humans faced before the digital turn. DeLillo's America has embraced these challenges and their instrumental solutions to develop a more sophisticated form of repression that is a direct consequence of the evolving cosmopolitan. These repressions do not limit themselves to the digitally manipulative machines but can also come from other aspects of modern life that have heavily altered the praxis of existence and contemporary living.

The presence of this high-tech culture has led humankind to a stage where the boundary

between the human and the artificial has been removed and the rapid development suggests an impending catastrophe that is rooted in this technical expansion. Most of this grandiose comes s accompanied by man-made dissent and tragedy. It is pertinent to note that the mitigation of these disasters is possible and bound to the very technology that causes the collapse of the human world as exemplified in DeLillo's 1985 published *White Noise* where humans form the 'SIMU-VAC' teams that were essentially needed to respond to the 'air borne toxic' event and therefore, DeLillo writes:

A few minutes later, back on the road, we saw a remarkable and startling sight. It appeared in the sky ahead of us and to the left, prompting us to lower ourselves in our seats, bend our heads for a clearer view, exclaim to each other in half-finished phrases. It was the black billowing cloud, the airborne toxic event, lighted by the clear beams of seven army helicopters. They were tracking its windborne movement, keeping it in view. In every car, heads shifted, drivers blew their horns to alert others, faces appeared in side windows, expressions set in tones of outlandish wonderment.

The enormous dark mass moved like some death ship in a Norse legend, escorted across the night by armored creatures with spiral wings. We weren't sure how to react. It was a terrible thing to see, so close so low packed with chlorides, benzines, phenols, hydrocarbons, or whatever the precise toxic content (DeLillo 148)

to implicate how the core of the society has been replaced with a technical one that may have initiated from the need to find viable solutions for problems of the society but it progressed from the need for a stronger defence system to a commodity that can be manufactured, updated timely and can be used as an opportunity for trade and business. This further evolved into a complex relationship with machines that now have been naturalized in the contemporary extant

as it gets reflected in the society and culture of today. The gradual encompassing of every human facet by technology has revolutionized the entirety of human existence. The world optimally opened to the possibilities of this technological resurgence, which then was relayed through a continuous production of advertisements, through the use of high-tech culture and digital media, to effectively increase the consumption of technology itself, such as the emergence of tech-based industries like Apple in the early Eighties. The development of this new age techno-sensibility and the techno-logic thus, persuaded a seamless transition into contemporary technoculture.

The relationship that humans share with this technological advancement therefore developed through the years to become more complicated and it is evident in the selected fiction as well. Technology slowly began to imitate modern existence and led to the careful construction of this hyperreal realm, where it became pertinent for humans to interact with it and hence, their survival and thriving depended on their knowledge of evolving technology. Technology, therefore, became a tool of empowerment and it also succeeded in controlling human praxis, as a consequence, it soon developed to such an extent that it is now capable of also controlling man itself as Robert Hassan (2020) in *The Condition of Digitality: A Post-Modern Marxism for the Practice of Digital Life* argues “Marx’s ‘man’ stands essentially apart from the technology (or is an accessory to it) and under capitalism is oppressed and exploited by it to a much more efficient degree” (Hassan 42) to discuss how technology has also undergone commodification, as most of the technological developments that have happened in the modern times, have only come from a relationship between needs of production and capability of mass producing.

Cristina Della Coletta (2012) in the research article “Of Work and Leisure: Digital World’s

Fairs and the Active Fairgoers” argues and juxtaposes the Baudrillardian arguments in context of Arthur Kroker to critique the prevalent technoculture especially as the technological advent allows gigantic ‘fairs’ which represent consumer passivity and their obsession with grand spectacles. She critiques the culture of exhibitions as it blurs the line between ‘real’ and ‘unreal’. Ana Calvete (2019) adds to this criticism in “I Object to Your Position: Hyperreal Decontextualizing of Objects” by arguing that in postmodern times, hyperreality produces a decontextualization of cultural objects and affects the status of the object alongside its aesthetic interpretation. She critiques the shift in aesthetic judgment and the position of recontextualization that occurs for characters of importance produced in this era. She also argues that the emergence of hyperreal objects has led to the establishment of an independent simulacra with its functioning hyperreal copies.

Therefore, this proliferated system of machines and contemporary technoculture is evidence of the greatness of human potential and serves as an example of how capitalistic endeavours of today are on a trajectory that is guided by these. The digital relationship of today between humans and technology also dictates how humans have been evolving specifically in a proportional relationship with this technoculture and in contemporary times the two are almost inseparable. This leads to the creation of a community through shared means of technology since it becomes individually impossible for all members of the community to interact with each other however, with modern technology and through the use of different media a collective identity for the entire nation is first constructed then broadcasted to reach throughout the length and breadth of the nation, hence, confirming that this identity transcends boundaries and conceals the distinctive inequalities of power that prevail in the society only because modern technoculture makes it possible.

The audiovisual media forces such as television and films are a powerful modern technical aid to allow this construction and maintain the hyperreal vision of this identity, these modes of verbal representations are therefore present in order to produce culturally appropriate stances or are used to reinvent the entirety of it alongside reinforcing and undermining the notions that previously existed in the society. Hence, when any media force that exists in this imagined state called America, it recycles its mediated representations that are often interpreted and reinterpreted constantly by both the common American as well as people that exist outside their bubble, the American identity is reimagined every time and this is possible only because of the exceedingly smart interconnected systems of technology that are at the dispense of those with political power. It not only thus, foregrounds what is to be reinvented but carefully reiterates the associated rules, for representation of societal setbacks for example, terrorist attacks such as that of September 11, 2001, which happens to be one of the most notable events in the American history alongside events like the Gulf War, Cold War and other societal issues that have cropped up due to large scale disproportionate power balance that occurs due to difference in access to these powerful tools leading to other events such as political assassinations, abductions and economical repressions etcetera and DeLillo's fiction draws pertinent conclusions from these media representations to deduce how the locus of these issues is rooted in the revolutionary upgrade that technology has brought alongside the unrest that social protests cause.

Media therefore becomes a powerful tool in downplaying these cataclysmic events in human history as the technical turn not only leads to a smooth transition but also births a sect of what Mark Poster (1995) in *The Second Media Age* argues to be the rebels that came from, "two groups in transition: the artisans who were losing their independence as they moved into the

factories; and the peasants, who came to the factories from the countryside, a world apart from the industrializing cities” (Poster 96), he critically analyses the position of these proletariat groups that were forced into the exploitative structure that was constructed by the capitalistic forces because it led to the increased impoverished states of the people who did not have access to the capitalistic greatness that the technical turn brought in for the people with monetary, political and social power.

The industrial labour that started this revolt against capitalistic supremacy was then soon taken over by other marginalized sections of society that looked at America as the epitome of a modern consumerist empire and landed in the heart of the land so that they could fulfil the great American dream, this led to the gradual influx of people from around the world, especially the third world nations to seek the American greatness and revise the relationship between technology and the cultural changes it brought to the living paradigm since the technical turn took an active role in bettering the economic conditions of the country by transforming the socio-economic apparatus through the technological evolution that constructed the perceived reality with the help of disseminating media and other electronic appendages into the everyday life and living in a union of technology and the contemporary living praxis with its prevalent technoculture.

Poster’s analysis of Baudrillardian writings leads him to draw a definitive conclusion that reiterates Baudrillard’s stand on the capitalistic habitude of the present times. In *The Second Media Age* (1995) Poster argues “According to Marx, human needs are not fixed, but alter with changes in the mode of production”, this resonates with the capitalistic turn of the modern-day and thus when he further states that, “If that is true, capitalism has successfully instituted an infinite cycle of production and consumption” (Poster 105) it marks the Baudrillardian notion

of a 'system of objects' that has been created through this developmental pursuit that thrives on the need to labour as well as the pertinent exchange in symbolic difference as the material good that they possess becomes the societal marker of 'display and consume', which is why commodities emerge as social signifiers that are facilitated by this developed and still developing technology. These technologies allow the social encoding of messages transforming how media views language and uses it to broadcast a specific kind of message that is repeatedly interjected in the society to conform the society to a code of consumption. Baudrillard's criticism speaks of the correlation between these two factors.

Therefore, the shift towards this technical paradigm bridged the distance between humans and their non-human counterparts however, this adaptation to the contemporary praxis has now led to a bond of dependency between the two, further causing alterations to the original extant in which humans existed. The original extant has almost been completely removed from contemporary times as humans have expanded their horizons and added dimensional growths to the human-technology complex. The contemporary existence is thus an example of augmented human capacities as the human effort seems to have minimized and has been replaced with tools and techniques that overcome human limitations. Despite being a testament to human intellectual prowess and innovative capabilities, these modern technologies are a contradictory force as humans tend to be limited by their analogous means but machines have taken a digital turn thus, simulating a world of their own making it possible for them to create 'images behind more images' in a manner where illusion of reality comes into existence from within the orders of contemporary simulacra and cause 'hyperreality' or a predicament that is more real than the actual real.

The presence of mechanical systems in present times thus, allows the world to become

more intelligible, controllable and manageable however the products that emerge out of this kind of symbolic exchange lack an original because such objects are mass-produced and hence rarely have a symbolic obligation because of their repetitiveness and are possibly conceived out of this property of reproducibility alone. The hyperreal is thus, a consequence of the produced object's ability to evade codification and lose its referential value alongside mass production with the help of the technical realm but according to Baudrillard's discussion on orders of simulacra, this further leads to an eruption of paradoxes and dialectical controversies therefore, in society there are remnants of discontent, violence, conflicts, inequality or even hatred. And these remnants then are reflected in the capitalistic ventures such as explained by Martin Weinreich (2004) in "'Into the Void': The Hyperrealism of Simulation in Bret Easton Ellis's 'American Psycho'" who argues how Baudrillardian notions of hyperreal and simulations are the tools that Ellis utilized to write her novel *American Psycho* which was published in the year 1991, giving it a structural identity that exists within the ideas of Baudrillardian aesthetics. It is again an empirical attempt at understanding how the simulacrum has seeped into the concurrent reality, manifesting its presence in all sources of production and capitalistic ventures.

Digitality and the transition to technical paradigm have just added to these upheavals as signs have imploded today because there is no justified distinction between the signifiers and the signified anymore, what is present in the modern media is technology's ability to mostly recount a reconstructed 'real' that is represented through approximations, this is justified by Mark Nunes (1995) in "Jean Baudrillard in Cyberspace: Internet, Virtuality and Postmodernity" argues "Just as the highways once transformed our country, the "information superhighway" offers an image of dramatic change in American lives through a change in virtual landscape" (Nunes 315) to represent the metaphorical as well as the functional changes that are attributed

to the modern technology. He further discusses how modern technology therefore allows the proliferation of “spatial and kinetic metaphors” (Nunes 315) that denote the ‘scene-screen’ amalgamation and intensify how the modern world has transcended physical boundaries.

Baudrillard (2003) in *The Spirit of Terrorism* critically comments on how this transcendence is affecting the world through its newly emerging issues that did not exist prior to the existence of contemporary technical paradigm. Almost all conflicting and negative events in human history have been recorded and televised to give them global coverage. These events are symbolic to Baudrillard as he claims them to be ‘attacks’ that have the tendency of decentralization. His idea can be implicated in the fictional writings of Don DeLillo who argues that hijacks, kidnappings, political assassinations, suicide bombings, terrorism, gun violence, pollutions, fires, landslides, military invasions, nuclear disasters, drug abuse and many pertinent physical and psychological complications that have emerged in the postmodern society are a direct consequence of this excessive mechanization. DeLillo’s fiction tends to mimetically portray these events in human history and argue the state of human existence in this technically sufficient world as exemplified in his *White Noise* which was published in the year 1985.

These events are then used by the people with political powers to control the narrative and exercise a controlled response to any destabilizing event and conceal any risks that may affect their position of power directly. This hence, becomes a disturbing crisis of its own because it tends to increase the severity of the disaster and DeLillo comments on how these calamities are not just man-made but additionally also have political cover-ups because of the distorted versions that are transmitted through the use of media. The system of modern technology is therefore exploited to fill in any gaps that may stem from the crisis and can be blamed on the authorial figure hence, there is always a conscious and deliberate attempt at concealing

pertinent information pertaining to the disaster and then reconstructing it to further it away from reality. These events are significant in understanding the predicament of the post-industrial world, especially in the context of American capitalist ideology and the political struggle for power.

The contemporary extant is hence, an imperative discussion on how the complex system of modern technology is characterized as progress and efficiency, however, the development of newer machines and techniques may necessarily not provide the same benefits as envisioned prior. The relationship with technology therefore remakes the world and roots itself in science and technology and as the technical paradigm slowly rose to its prominence, it was no longer under human control. The contemporary world is therefore what Martin Burkhardt as quoted in Robert Hassan's (2020) *The Condition of Digitality: A Post-Modern Marxism for the Practice of Digital Life* argues that the present world is a world that has "turned into a gigantic word processor, orbited by satellites and shrouded by an ether of information" (Hassan 49) and it is infinitesimally connected at every axis. Therefore, the intersection between technology and humans is the point at which Burkhardt imagines signs of a modern cataclysmic event emerge.

The digital era hence is more potent to bring in calamities because of the hybridity between automatism and the mysterious nature of technology that has surpassed the human praxis and functional criterion. DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) critically is also a sharp commentary on how innovations in the chemical industries have caused havoc in all forms of natural resources, i.e., it has polluted almost all entirety of water, land, and air exemplified by DeLillo's writing that "Fire and explosion were not the inherent dangers here. This death would penetrate, seep into the genes, show itself in bodies not yet born" (DeLillo 135) to poignantly pointing towards the dangerous path this technical advancement was heading to. These man-made catastrophes

therefore not only have adverse effects on the health of humans living in proximity but these events also influence the course of human history as their representation in televised form and other media is often misrepresented to conceal the actual truth.

Mark Nunes (1995) in “Jean Baudrillard in Cyberspace: Internet, Virtuality, and Postmodernity” furthers the Baudrillardian idea of ‘fatal technologies’ and implicates Baudrillard in a utopian ideal community to argue that the presence of multiple screens to immensely mediate the functioning of the contemporary society, often leads to fabrication by circulating the simulations on the screen, often leading to the disappearance of ‘real’ and ‘self’, however, he argues that “This threat of disappearance by proliferation is far different from the fears of informational “overlords” or computer-mediated panopticons” (Nunes 324) to understand that America has become the centre of deterrence because only in America, is it possible, to create and have access to a world of information as well as the threat to this world of information is under controlled supervision of what is to be delivered to people outside of the system.

The evolutionary predicament of technologies is at a stage where the sophistication in it allows for such convincing simulations that there is a depthlessness to everything present on the screens. Media in the present times tends to have both a positive or negative impact on the people consuming it and the negatives of this modern media have led to what Baudrillard (2003) in *The Spirit of Terrorism* state that the American media has fabricated the West to be omnipotent and legitimate, he further argues that, “The countless disaster movies bear witness to this fantasy, which clearly attempt to exorcize with images, drowning out the whole thing with special effects” (Baudrillard 7) to comment on how modernization creates a sort of digital magic in which the physical boundaries of the world tend to disappear and the entire human

praxis disappears with it however, the after effects of this disappearance in this mechanically charged world include what Jaap Kooijman (2008) in *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture* states as “oversimplification, trivialization, and sensationalism, as serious issues tend to be reduced to confessions of personal scandal and sexual lifestyle meant to entertain rather than inform the public (Kooijman 47).”

DeLillo through his fiction offers comments on these man-made dissents that are then utilized as fodder for American television. The novels of Don DeLillo represent the social, economic and psychic dismay that is caused by such events and the fallout that is often televised to diffuse the event itself into the American consciousness. Contemporary digitality, therefore, is somewhat of an assault on the social reality of the present times as American consciousness today is equated to being a commodity that can be automated and instrumentalized for technical manipulation of opinions that are pertinent to an ideological understanding of technology. Baudrillard (2003) in his *The Spirit of Terrorism* writes that:

The more concentrated the system becomes globally, ultimately forming one single network, the more it becomes vulnerable at a single point (already a single little Filipino hacker had managed, from the dark recesses of his portable computer, to launch the ‘I love you’ virus, which circled the globe devastating entire networks). Here it was eighteen suicide attackers who, thanks to the absolute weapon of death, enhanced by technological efficiency, unleashed a global catastrophic process (Baudrillard 8)

to elucidate that the annexation of contemporary times by technology has led to the arrival of a system that allows monopolizing over such events where technocracy aids in the destruction and seizes all control. Conceptually, according to Baudrillard, is how terrorism is not only born but governed through this systematic exchange. DeLillo’s fiction on the other hand makes

people aware of how such tragedies that are born out of this technocracy are turned into spectacles that are televised in order to serve as narratives of grief, representing the unspeakable horrors that this technoculture has led to.

In the essay “In the Ruins of the Future” published in the Harper’s Magazine, Don DeLillo focuses on how events like 9/11 that are embedded into the American consciousness have a purpose of presenting the representational truth that is supposed to be voiced by the subject who perceives it. Also, DeLillo’s fiction tends to have a nostalgic tone to reiterate the effects of such events that impact the contemporary scenario. He attempts to give these characters that bring about such apocalyptic events, a three-dimensional structure by underlining their backgrounds and psychology, only to trace how their relationship with technology reinforces their attempt at destabilization via creating a man-made chaos. DeLillo also is known to present what Linda S. Kauffman (2008) in “The Wake of Terror: Don DeLillo’s “In the Ruins of the Future,” “Baader-Meinhof,” and Falling Man” argues to be the “disconnect between America’s self-image and its image in the eyes of the world” (Kauffman 353) to persuade that technical paradigm of the contemporary times has evolved into a praxis that can destroy the contemporary civilization if put to test. Terrorism hence becomes the man-made agency that facilitates a massive shift in the political and economic dimensions and shapes the authoritarianism that the States have underscored in contemporary times owing to their significant technical supremacy.

DeLillo’s fiction thus, looks into the major conflicts that have come from the generators of such impediments, which again arise from the technical shift that America has undergone. The modern technoscapes of the author hence, paint a vivid picture of the negative aftermath of this technical revolution that has led to ideological conflicts and other factors like injustice or

internal power struggles, these factors thus, tend to have a dire effect that are social, and political, economic, cultural as well as psychological in nature. DeLillo's fiction also predominately deals with the criticism of this modern-day overlap that adds to the complexities created due to globalization, the present rate of consumerism and the neocolonialism that is rooting itself in the contemporary scenario. The technical progress thus provides a direct stimulus for such cataclysmic events because it provides for the practical aspect of such a mishap and aids in the development that advances their efficiency. This relationship with technology, therefore, leads to the generation of newer kinds of events such as 'cyberterrorism' since technical progress provides opportunities to make social disruptions even more prominent through means of anarchy. The primary attempt is to wreak havoc on the environment and humans with the brutality levels crossing all levels of violence. Therefore, the majority of these cataclysmic events impact society in a manner that almost effectively changes the social fabric and has pertinent and long-term consequences.

Hence, the growing discontentment with this evolving technoculture is because this evolution is viewed as a threat to the interests and attitudes of people in the community. The economic burdens of people thus, introduce an aggression based on the social transformation and this soon turns into an expression of collapse. Most of the human-induced disasters are events that occur due to human choices or human error and the frequency of such events in the present times is increasing alongside the damage that they cause because of the increased mechanization of the urban centers. Cities now come weaponized with their labyrinth of construction that is layered with connecting cables ranging from telephones, internet, and subways to railways etcetera.

Another major facet of such human-induced cataclysm is the presence of genetically

engineered bio-weapons, exemplified in DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) when the protagonist Eric Packer, who is holding a weapon in his hand, is informed by his head of security Torval that, "The mechanism doesn't activate unless the voiceprint matches the stored data (DeLillo 145)." Machines that can kill on command is the peak of technical evolutionary stance and when Eric uses Torval's weapon to kill him is a testament to how technical evolution has also, in certain ways, poisoned the common man for they draw on an unintelligible amount of power that such gadgets possess. When DeLillo elucidates on how the protagonist Eric Packer killed his head of security Torval in fear of him being the only person who knows about Packer's weaknesses, DeLillo writes, "He shot the man. A small white terror of disbelief flickered in Torval's eyes. He fired once and the man went down. All authority drained out of him" (DeLillo 145), DeLillo attempts at commenting on how the strength of these cataclysmic inventions is on the rise and how the human praxis is almost at the stage that it doesn't matter what commands are loaded into these inventions to keep them under human control, there is always a way in which these commands can be overridden to cause violent acts that lead to imperative death, destruction, and brutality. Hence, it can be deduced that the modern technical paradigm is tainted with means of savagery and the intensity of such acts is getting stronger with every new upgrade that occurs.

This bio-weaponry can also be related to bio-wars that are instigated sometimes in the form of endemics or pandemics because of their capability of killing mass populations after infecting the majority of the members of the community. Such attacks on humanity are an attempt to have major effects on the political stance of the government in charge. It also severely affects the channels of communication and media, as media can also be manipulated because it is a scientific tool that is only as good as the data that is fed to it. However, this data can also be

subjected to distortion based on its quality as well, because such systems of dispensing information do not wait for the accurate data but for the first data, to respond to any critical situation, sometimes it may be generalized to accommodate certain specific requirements or simplified to be more relevant.

DeLillo's selected fiction deals with the onset of such cataclysmic events in a typical postmodernist fashion. His novels also show how the evolutionary progress can be traced in context to the onset and handling of such calamities. DeLillo's *White Noise* which was published in year 1985, presents how the protagonist Jack Gladney, who is an eminent scholar as well as the pioneer of Hitler Studies at the 'college-on-the-hill', is in awe of how technology that has taken over almost all of the living praxis. Gladney looks at this technological praxis appealingly because, "the power haunts, the sources" (DeLillo 7) but at the same time he is so used to the technology around him that it doesn't bother him anymore even when, "the smoke alarm goes off the hallway upstairs, either to let us know the battery had just died or because the house was on fire. We finished our lunch in silence" (DeLillo 9). The complexities that technology has added to the protagonist's life are rendered as trivial as his avant-garde insight is beyond the technical shift. Jack Gladney doesn't quite understand these changes but has adapted to them as the protagonist is scared of death, a natural phenomenon. His obsession to delay death or possibly avert it altogether, allows him to seek refuge in the same technical praxis that the protagonist doesn't potentially like much.

Jack Gladney is also of the opinion that modern technology is the cause of regressive stances but does not speak loudly about it, rather he is vague in his approach. DeLillo illustrates this subversion in the novel *White Noise* (1985) through Jack Gladney's character, he writes, "Babette had made it a rule. She seemed to think that if kids watched television one night a

week with parents or step-parents, the effect would be to de-glamorize the medium in their eyes” (DeLillo 18). Interestingly, Jack’s wife fails to understand that Jack has a different opinion on this approach, he sees this as a sort of punishment and Babette’s attempt of avoiding the trance of such technological might by, “its narcotic undertow and eerie diseased brain-sucking power would be gradually reduced” (DeLillo 18-19) will not materialize.

The protagonist Jack Gladney often reacts to the influence of TV by focusing deeply on his Hitler studies and according to him, his scholarly pursuits put him in a different class socially. In the case of the ‘toxic air borne’ event in the novel, which is a representative of how technical evolution has led to a point where humans invite calamities on their own, Jack reiterates this to his wife Babette:

These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it’s the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in low-lying areas get floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornados. I’m a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his street in one of those TV floods? We live in a neat and pleasant town near a college with a quaint name. These things don’t happen in places like Blacksmith (DeLillo 133).

This is indicative of how superfluous consumerism has suspended itself in American households and made a common American oblivious to the moral fibre that binds humanity across the globe. It connotes the idea of how automatism today includes personalization and the whole idea of production is in favour of systematic control of structural and developmental marvels. However, the contemporary modus operandi of achieving these consumption goals also reveals that the contemporary technocratic and capitalistic praxis puts forth the goals and needs of an individual which can soon turn fatal for the entire society as witnessed in DeLillo’s

fiction. This also resonates with the Baudrillardian criticism that,

if humanity were ‘innocent’ in this respect, if the production system alone were responsible for technology’s immaturity, there would indeed be an accident here – a contradiction just as inexplicable as its diametrical opposite, the bourgeois fiction of ‘advanced’ technology held back by moral ‘retardation’ (Baudrillard 128)

as argued by the author Jean Baudrillard (1996) in *The System of Objects* and herein, he establishes that the production system and accidents may be linked structurally but socially there exists a close relationship between technology’s ability to cause an accident, even if it is to collapse within itself, and order of production’s capability of making it a negative complicit. The contemporary technical realm therefore has the potential of turning regressive as it embodies the developmental conflicts which have an eventuality of a catastrophe and the present technical praxis is filled with this anxiety. The presence of a strong technical network for upperclassmen like Jack Gladney is a reminder of how even in the present times there is a fine line that demarcates the social classes and governs their etiquettes. Hence, the technical paradigm that was welcomed to alleviate the social and economic disparity has become an agency of repression and crisis itself. It is the progenitor of various tragic events like the ‘airborne toxic event’ in DeLillo’s fiction exemplified in *White Noise* (1985), *Underworld* (1991) and even in his most recently published *Point Omega* (2010).

Jack Gladney, the protagonist of DeLillo’s 1985 published *White Noise*, therefore, represents the average American who has acclimatized to this regressive system of objects that is at play in the contemporary technical paradigm. While his wife Babette worries about the kind of disaster that can turn fatal without any prior warning, Jack Gladney thinks that the aftermath of this technical paradigm may be threatening to some extent but is not lethal. When

Babette says, “Let’s think about the billowing cloud. Just a little bit, okay? It could be dangerous” (DeLillo 134) pointing out towards the mass of toxic cloud with unknown gases and their respective levels of toxicity, that was slowly encroaching towards the residential area where the Gladneys lived, Jack replies, “Everything in tank cars is dangerous. But the effects are mainly-long range and all we have to do is stay out of the way” (DeLillo 134) hinting towards how ephemeral events that are rooted in the modern technical sensibility may be somewhat hostile but avoidable as most of the order of production is socially exploitative but still exists and survives because of the contemporary praxis.

DeLillo is a natural at rendering the everydayness of this technical paradigm and the automatism that surrounds the common American man. However, the mechanistic triumph also comes along with its drawbacks, as the systems so developed coexist in a hierarchal apparatus with one function in subordination to the other and this complication in technology is seen as a sign of progress whereas, Baudrillard looks at this automatism as a sign of weakness as the sense of self-sufficiency completely removes the agency of human and their responsibility completely making it a halt for any further upgrade. This halt thus corresponds to the perfect technoscapes that are present in the modern world, as machines become more equipped with the ability to respond to outside stimuli without the support of a human operator. This poses a challenge because it endows machines with the power to supersede human judgment and bypass any decisions that may have been made that further pose a threat to human existence and praxis. Baudrillard in his *The System of Objects* which was published in the year 1996, also looks at this automatism as the ability of these modern machines to possess supra-functionality echoing the power of human consciousness which is a threat to the human paradigm for the fear of over-signification.

The tragedy in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) therefore comes in the wake of this existing technoscape that is enriched with the technical gadgets and gizmos of everyday use and he writes, "Floodlights swept across the switching yard. Army helicopters hovered at various points, shining additional lights down on the scene" (DeLillo 135) hinting at how modern-day's induced catastrophes are also bound by the technical landscape within which they occur. The author then continues, "Colored lights from police cruisers crisscrossed their wider beams. The tank car sat solidly on tracks, fumes rising from what happened to be a hole at the end" (DeLillo 135) positing how these technoscapes are functionally tied together. DeLillo has underscored the potential scene where the initiation of this tragedy occurs because of machines that have been invented from the human desire for absolute mechanization and he writes further:

The coupling device from a second car had apparently pierced the tank car. Fire engines were deployed at a distance, ambulances and police vans at a greater distance. I could hear sirens, voices calling through bullhorns, a layer of radio static causing small warps in the frosty air. Men raced from one vehicle to another, unpacked equipment, carried empty stretchers. Other men in bright yellow Mylex suits and respirator masks moved slowly through the luminous haze, carrying death-measuring instruments (DeLillo 135)

to enunciate how the capitalist and technical pursuits have mutated into the contemporary system of objects, that dominate modern times and are central to the technological transformations that have occurred over time but simultaneously, in cases of such induced catastrophic events, the interaction between humans and machines is often governed by a poor sense of control and an absolute lack of perfect instrumentation. There is also the case of inadequate training on the operating procedures of such giant machines, which when mishandled lead to events that are challenging and lethal. Also, in such extreme cases, the

complexity of modern machines and operating techniques again ensures that there is a limitation in being able to diagnose the exact source of the problem or there is always the probability of being influenced by some erroneous assessment, till it often becomes hazardous and extremely dangerous.

The aftermath of such events in modern times is nothing but information that is taken over by the media to dispel its own personal agenda, most of the time by compiling it into what is known as ‘data’ in contemporary times. DeLillo describes this the novel when there is an interaction between Jack Gladney and his young son, DeLillo writes, ““You want me to say it won’t come this way in a million years. Then you’ll attack with your little fistful of data. Come on tell me what they said on the radio while I was out there”” (DeLillo 136) to confer how data in such events is the most powerful tool and information in such events is the key to mitigating such cataclysmic events. DeLillo further writes:

“It doesn’t cause nausea, vomiting shortness of breath, like they said before.”

“What does it cause?”

“Heart palpitations and a sense of déjà vu.”

“Déjà vu?”

“It affects the false part of the human memory or whatever. That’s not all. They’re not calling it the black billowing anymore.”

“What are they calling it?”

“The airborne toxic event.”

He spoke these words in a clipped and foreboding manner, syllable by syllable, as if he

sensed the threat in state-created terminology. He continued to watch me carefully, searching my face for some reassurance against the possibility of real danger – a reassurance he would immediately reject as phony. A favorite ploy of his (DeLillo 136).”

DeLillo here attempts to underline how in situations like a calamity, the governance has a very fragmented understanding of the situation and the risks pertaining to it and more than often the information readily available is based only on the perception of the first responders hence, the data accumulated on the operational functionality in such events may be erroneous but at the same time they are reflections of the catastrophe itself. Hence, it becomes mandatory to comprehend the complexities of technology to get an in-depth insight into technical shortcomings that may contribute to such events.

DeLillo’s *White Noise* (1985) therefore bespeaks the chaos of technology that is mitigated with the help of technology itself. It is the constant hovering of helicopters or the sound of the blazing air-raid sirens that keep the Gladneys informed about the state of the disaster as Jack Gladney notices that, “it was as though the sirens heralded the presence of some controlling mechanism – a thing we would do well not to provoke with our contentiousness and spilled food” (DeLillo 138), he also speaks of the “decorous hysteria” (DeLillo 138) that this situation has condensed into as the Gladneys become some of the last people that agree to evacuate from their inhospitable spot due to the toxic event. This displacement is pertinent and resonates with the instinctive need to eliminate any further risk as identification of the potential of the ongoing hazard takes precedence while the Gladneys hear a continuously bombarding sound from the amplified speakers that kept repeating, “Abandon all domiciles. Now, now. Toxic event, chemical cloud” (DeLillo 139) as they’re navigating their way to the rescue spot through “trekking across wasted landscapes” (DeLillo 142) with the feeling of “a sense of appreciation

for the vivid and unexpected (DeLillo 143).”

DeLillo's *Mao II* which was published in the year 1991 takes a shift from his previously selected novel in narrating America's technical progress, it tells the story of a struggling author who does not intend to complete his book for the fear of becoming a commercial entity. However, the novel also deals with the theme of 'political terrorism', a feature that has clearly developed in contemporary America from its roots in the evolutionary praxis of modern times. The aftermath of such events that are rooted in terrorism have a dire effect on the social fabric and such cataclysmic events are immortalized in human history but in *Mao II* (1991) DeLillo's transition of an evolving America can be traced. The author's skilful narration incorporates words that have come into the dictionary only after the evolutionary paradigm demanded to include these new inventions.

In the very opening section of *Mao II*, DeLillo (1991) writes “They had almost no warning. Grabbed a flight, got a hotel, took the subway, passed through the metal detector and here they are...” (DeLillo 3) to denote the perfection that this mechanical world had come to, making life in contemporary extant in proportion to extensive automatism that governs the functionality. Technology therefore is seen as adding an intrinsic value to living in present times because of the advantages it offers by becoming a part of a larger functioning archetype. DeLillo looks at this naturalized commercial aspect of technology while he comments on the same as he writes, “And here is the drama of mechanical routine played out with living figures” (DeLillo 7) to argue how machines and mechanization are regarded as perfection that precedes 'man and making' altogether. DeLillo continues, “This really scares him, a mass of people turned into a sculptured object” (DeLillo 7) to introduce the normalcy that is suggested throughout the novel with respect to the technical advent as technology becomes an aesthetic valuable to the normal

American household. DeLillo's characters therefore represent the constant contribution of people as active members of society, but these members are heavily dependent on the technical regime as liberation from it becomes impossible because of the consistent orbiting around it.

The modern technoscape becomes a topic of discussion between the two characters in DeLillo's 1991 novel *Mao II*, i.e. the protagonist of the novel Bill Gray, and the photographer who only clicks writers, Brita Nilsson. The two characters discuss how the modern-day landscape that has imbibed this technical change into itself, has now taken a toll on the human psyche while Brita focuses on Bill Gray with her camera, this is a playful jolt of how the modern populace is not only centred around, but, also immensely susceptible to the technical drift. During their discussion, Bill and Brita talk about New York City and that is when Bill comments, "Eventually the towers will seem human and local and quirky. Give them time" (DeLillo 39) pointing towards how the innovative powers are evolving into an abstractness of their own which is potentially dangerous in the long run. This desire for automatism is seen as a basic need or necessity and is appreciated as the new normal. Their conversation further goes like this:

"You'll wonder what made you mad."

"I already have the World Trade Center."

"And it already harmless and ageless. Forgotten looking. And think how much worse."

"What?" she said.

"If there was only one tower of two."

"You mean they interact. There is play of light."

“Wouldn’t a single tower be much worse?”

“No, because my big complaint is only partly size. The size is deadly. But having two of them is like a comment, it’s like a dialogue, only I don’t know what they’re saying.”

“They’re saying, ‘Have a nice day.’”

“Someday, go walk those streets,” she said. “Sick and dying people with nowhere to live and there are bigger and bigger towers all the time, fantastic buildings with miles of rentable space. All the space is inside. Am I exaggerating?” (DeLillo 40)

it resonates with how technical sensibility is the new rationale and is experienced as the new reality that is desirable. It entices the modern population with the feature of being able to work on its own hence slowly decreasing the human agency that is required to function, turning the very function by the machine into a form of miracle that is rooted in modern-day evolutionary stance of technical paradigm. This automatism is preferred as the sense of reality is dissolved into a mixture of wonder, awe and assimilation and becomes the accepted truth. The modern praxis therefore provides an obscure sense of happiness which is again derived from the ability to not see the action being done. DeLillo writes in his 1991 published *Mao II* that, “They feel that space is contagious. They’re here but also there, already in the albums and slide projectors, filling picture frames with their microcosmic bodies, the manikin selves they are trying to become” (DeLillo 10) to discuss how even an event like a wedding transcends its boundaries across space and time to appear surreal, all because of the gadgets involved to cover it, taking an utmost priority than the objective of the prime event itself.

This upgrade in technology therefore brings in an autonomy that is firmly rooted in how technical evolutions and the so-produced objects, are an image of the world and by that

definition, the very extension of the human paradigm hence, the autonomy that they possess duplicates the human conscience and its ability to create and be compliant. This structural interlinking also points towards the symbolism that is being shared in the relationship between men and machines, as it becomes more and more deferred rather than concentrating on the primary function alone. Therefore, the present relationship that human praxis shares with the technical paradigm focuses primarily on alleviating the need for any human to take control of the machines. It emancipates humans from the technical domain and unifies them with the technology itself thus discarding any binaries after an over-signification of what the relationship between humans and machines is supposed to be like, hence, removing any barriers between the two. But this absolute unification between the two is also the root cause of disasters that are borne out of the same desire to become one with technology as the next step in this evolutionary phase. This technoculture thus prevails and leads to newer perspectives like that of contradiction between asserting the dominance of human intelligence over the artificial takeover that is witnessed in the current times.

The political extension of this contemporary technoculture, when examined closely, debates that technology in modern times has taken a turn towards working against humanity. DeLillo in his 1991 published *Mao II* writes about how a writer isn't just kidnapped but held hostage and is used as a medium to negotiate about personal gains. It is the stance of terrorists and an activity of terrorism that describes how technical advancement hasn't always been in favour of human development. DeLillo in *Mao II* writes, "Then Bill said, "How do they plan to get me into a hostage situation?"" (DeLillo 132) contextualizing the threat towards a writer who merely is writing his version of the truth, but is traded off as a pawn only to be employed as an underpin, to reap personal benefits. The author, Don DeLillo, elucidates how technology has

gained a kind of power that can reshape human history. DeLillo expounds on this further and illustrates the same by depicting the situation in which, when the Maoist negotiators say, ““Oh I don’t know. Lure you eastward somehow. The colonel was vague here.” “We don’t blame him, do we?”” (DeLillo 132) depicts how technology has also become the means to manipulate other people according to one’s wishes and desires. DeLillo here attempts to point towards how society as a collective agency is affected and in turn, affects the system.

A change in the praxis from the pre-technological times has been conceived and exploited for the sake of gaining hand at more power. The whole technological complex has become a tool of exploitation for the consumerist notions of society and its capitalistic transactions. DeLillo expresses these concerns through his characters when they interact with the evident technoculture, he furthers the criticism of this technological complex and its dangerous turn with inventions that are possibly deadly by describing how ‘technology’ becomes the progenitor of destruction. DeLillo (1991) writes in *Mao II* ““Not a bit. He said the explosive was Semtex H. A controlled amount. They could have brought down the building if they wanted to”” (DeLillo 132) to depict how the recent advances in technology, especially in the military and warfare sector have allowed the creation of devices and means that are capable of creating casualties as well as are fatal. Inventions like guns and explosive devices are used as deterministic tools to argue a political stance and implicate a politically charged and favoured position.

In the 1991 published novel *Mao II*, DeLillo also paints a picture of how this technical evolution has also allowed the sedimentation of suffering and provides it with the ability to be revisited through different means, the author writes, “In the loft she went through many books of photographs, amazed at the suffering she found. Famine, fire, riot, war. These were the

never-ceasing subjects...” (DeLillo 174) to illustrate through the action of the character of Brita, the photographer, who is going through her collection of pictures to carefully reminisce about the times that the technical culture and its inventions, like the camera, has helped in preserving remnants of dire effects that are a consequence of what technology has led the human praxis to.

When DeLillo writes, “Mao used photographs to announce his return and his vitality, to reinspire the revolution. Bill’s picture was a death notice. His image hadn’t become public yet and yet he was already gone” (DeLillo 141), the author attempts at critically examining the power that has been accumulated by technology over the years and how since past, this power is seen objectively as a quaint means of reshaping the narrative of the geopolitics. The ability to use multimedia as a mode of dispersing a particular thought, that entails a legacy of mirroring commercial and political beliefs, and purposefully shape contemporary culture and practice exemplifies how powerful modern technology has grown and how in the wrong hands it is a beacon of onset of disasters and cataclysm, best exemplified by DeLillo in his 1991 published *Mao II* writes, ““What terrorist gain, novelists lose. The degree to which they influence mass consciousness is the extent of our decline as shapers of sensibility and thought (DeLillo 157).”

Don DeLillo’s *Underworld* (1997) centers around the character Nick Shay who happens to be a ‘Waste Management Executive’. The novel, apart from all the sub-plots and distinguished themes, also sheds light on pertinent topics such as the spread of pressing violence, the usage of media, the genesis of wars and the proliferation of nuclear power, especially in the development of missiles and bombs, as well as, the huge amount of nuclear waste which is toxic and is generated as a byproduct. The novel evidently, begins with a prologue that is entitled, ‘The Triumph of Death’ insinuating the trend in modern technology that was prevalent in the early

Fifties and then can be traced throughout the novel towards the evolutionary reflections of the Nineties.

The prologue of the novel garners attention to how DeLillo interweaves the different categorical themes into a condensed form as the novel opens with a baseball game that is being played at the 'National League' between the two iconic teams of 'New York Giants' and 'Brooklyn Dodgers' on October 3 in the year 1951. There is also the presence of an important political figure at this game that is being televised and the person is none other than the first FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover who, in the middle of the game, is informed of the first test of the 'hydrogen bomb' created by the Soviets. This immediately sets the precedence of how technology from different factors of life comes together to bind into what prevails in a common American man's life, be it the violence of 'Texas Highway Killer' that is mentioned in part 2 or the germophobia that Sister Edgar is haunted with or the miraculous appearance of Esmeralda's picture on a billboard in the last part of the novel. From the televisation of the game of baseball to the genesis of a nuclear bomb, it all posits the 'everydayness' of technology and its acclimatization into the common man's life.

The novel also builds an interlinked story with the help of six parts, in a non-linear narrative pattern, that oscillates between the present and the past and creates a story despite the many digressions of Don DeLillo. The author in the very opening of the 1997 published novel *Underworld* writes, "He wants to be here instead, standing in the shadow of this old rust-hulk of a structure, and It's hard to blame him - this metropolis of steel and concrete and flaky paint and cropped grass and enormous Chesterfield..." (DeLillo 11) and introduces the readers to a scenario of modern-day America in the 1950s, that has acclimatized itself to the large structures having been created from the advancements based on technology and science. The architecture

so developed is a part of the familiarity and commonness with technical paradigm, that then manifest itself in the other spheres of existence and Don DeLillo establishes how the transition into this technically enlightened and enriched culture, that is the premise of the modern-day America, is normalized because of the ease in the arrival and dissemination and acceptance of technology.

DeLillo illustrates the relationship that a common American man shares with this slowly developing paradigm of technology-based living, through the character of Cotter Martin, a young boy living in the Bronx in the 1950s, “Cotter sheds these elements as they appear, sheds a thousand waves of information hitting on his skin” (*Underworld* 13), here, the author implicates the level of advancement that these technologies have had in the Fifties, as there is a constant ‘construction’ or ‘creation’ of information that is then modulated for ‘consumption’ by the local masses. This evolutionary relationship has thus progressed into the production of people who are what DeLillo states to be ‘businesslike’ as he further writes, “...feeling sleek and unmussed and sort of businesslike, flying from Kansas City with a briefcase full of bank drafts” (DeLillo 13) depicting that technology has evolved alongside its human companions and today instils itself in the most basic etiquette of human interaction and function. DeLillo expresses how the technological praxis has arrested itself by entering into a dynamic equilibrium with the conventional values that have been placed on its relationship with humankind and their nature of consumption.

It is pertinent to note that Baudrillard’s criticism deduces that the current state of this technical advancement is that of stagnation, in his 1996 version of the published critical work entitled *The System of Objects* he states that:

If connotation and personalization, fashion and automatism, all tend to focus upon those a-

structural features whose irrational motivations the logic of production seeks to control and systematize, this is perhaps also because man has neither a clear will to transcend nor any great prospect of transcending the aforementioned archaic structures or projection; or at least he has a deep-seated resistance to sacrificing subjective, projective virtualities and their eternal recurrence on the altar of concrete structural development (both technical and social); or again, to put it in the simplest terms, that man has a profound resistance to imposing rationality upon the purely arbitrary goals of his needs (Baudrillard 128).

It can thus be observed how technology serves a dual purpose in which it provides humankind with liberation while concurrently limiting itself to a 'capacity' that humans did not possess before the technological revolution, as the modern technical paradigm has now infiltrated the common man's life to the deepest. DeLillo, interestingly, associates his texts with this criticism and discusses the transition from the pre-digital to the digital world to present the level of 'estrangement' and 'simulation' that exists in the contemporary world, because humans have alienated themselves from the historical approach towards tools and have become more mechanized and automated to render the world's natural order obsolete. There is a sense of disconnect in this digitally constructed world and it becomes increasingly out of reach from the physical boundaries that had been laid down prior. Furthermore, this new digitalized era provides a virtual means of destruction alongside the notions of modern-day disasters such as war or the inception of instruments of death.

The Don DeLillo novel *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997 delves into this post-digital era and eventually locates itself in the transitioning elements of society and the changes that discuss how modern technology has intoxicated humankind and confined it to a simulacrum that is complacent in bombarding common man's screen with waves of

information. The rise of these significant scientific changes is witnessed in DeLillo's writings as well, and DeLillo remarks on this affordable consumption in *Underworld* (1991) through the character of J. Edgar Hoover, who happens to be at the baseball game that is being televised across borders. When Hoover comes across a situation where he is in proximity of contamination from outside and immediately attempts to save himself, the narrator discusses how Hoover, "...holds his breath. He wants to hurry to a lavatory, a zinc-lined room with a bar of untouched soap, a torrent of hot water and a swans down towel that has not been used by anyone else" (DeLillo 18). Evidently, it thus becomes debatable, how the amount of personalization that technology has been able to provide to its modern consumers, is the reason behind its sustenance since the primary demands of humans are met and subconsciously the consumption of objects is more preferred to the functionality that they possess.

DeLillo throughout the novel continues to critically comment on this scientific development and opines further through Edgar's analysis of his environment, where he believes that his environment comprises of, "Just more germs, an all-pervading medium of pathogens, microbes, floating colonies of spirochetes that fuse and separate and elongate and spiral and engulf, whole trainloads of matter that people cough forth, rudimentary and deadly" (DeLillo 18-19) and this deduction in the early 1950s is a testament to the rising scientific grandiose, that later evolved into the contemporary technoculture, after repeated revolutions in the field of science and technology. However, this indicates to the evidence that technology today mediates the relationship that humans share with their environment and it is feasible to manipulate this very relationship to initiate a conflict, that later snowballs into a cataclysmic event.

Hence the 1950s that DeLillo tries to paint in his 1997 novel *Underworld*, also covers the hunger for money amongst all common men inhabiting this modern America. DeLillo

comments on how this urge for economic betterment and capitalistic desires of the developing American world, explicitly led to the rise of this prevalent technoculture. DeLillo depicts how the world has miniaturized through the possibility of compressing the entire process of production and communicates its final product into the market to signify how the market is, therefore, the ultimate representation of transformation. Thus, when DeLillo writes, “the vendor’s hands seem to inhale the flying metal” (DeLillo 20), it depicts how a common American is fending for himself by trying to make more money at each chance available. Technology has thus been infiltrating the common American life since the early 1900s. DeLillo in the novel depicts how even in the Fifties, the culture of making everything as technical as possible, took a digital turn in the Nineties and has governed the social and technical realms since then. Despite how these technologies have developed from the desires that humankind possessed, it is evident that the current technological paradigm has forced man to the sidelines.

The technoculture in modern times thus is self-sufficient and is the representative of capitalistic greatness and ensures that things are easily circulated amongst all societal fronts. It is thus considerate of the Baudrillardian idea of how ‘systems’ are developed through objects that enunciate this new technology and present themselves in the ‘modern life’. It hence becomes evident how modern life is susceptible to being transient, because, with every renewal in the form of an upgrade in technology, is what Baudrillard implicates to be ‘irrational desires’ for humans.

DeLillo’s *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997, discusses this upgrade in technology as a result of the irrational human desire. It is witnessed when during the baseball game Director Edgar J. Hoover is approached by Special Agent Rafferty with the report that the Soviet Union has recently conducted an atomic test and DeLillo writes, “Then he and Rafferty

walk up the stairs and find an isolated spot midway down a long ramp, where the special agent recites the details of his message” (DeLillo 23). It sets up the tone for the discussion that will happen next, where the sense of power and autonomy that technology brought to the common American man, is taken away from them when rival countries attempts to improve their technical prowess and succeed in doing so. DeLillo further writes:

It seems the Soviet Union has conducted an atomic test at a secret location somewhere inside its own borders. They have exploded a bomb in plain unpretending language. And our detection devices indicate this clearly what it is – it is a bomb, a weapon, it is an instrument if conflict, it produces heat and blast and shock. It is not some peaceful use of atomic energy with some home-heating applications. It is a red bomb that spouts a great white cloud-like some thunder god of ancient Eurasia.

Edgar fixes today’s date in his mind. October 3, 1951. He registers the date. He stamps the date.

He knows this is not completely unexpected. It is their second atomic explosion. But the news is hard, it works into him, makes him think of the spies who passed the secrets, the prospect of warheads being sent to communist forces in Korea... (DeLillo 23)

to bring the attention of the readers to the fact that technology plays a pertinent role in shaping political perspectives and ideologies. It connotes to Baudrillard’s perspectives of soft war or the virtual war, technology aids the concept of war in general. It can thus be deduced that technology imperatively sustains the cataclysmic properties and functions as a prospective aid to death and destruction which is purely man-made in nature. Therefore, modern technology has evolved, to a certain extent, towards the direction of causing conflicts and the control that

humans previously exerted over this technical paradigm is slowly shifting towards the other side of the spectrum, with machines taking over the total control over humans and producing the final product. Traditionally technology was a means to use tools to create results which Baudrillard deemed to be 'craft-produced' but in modern times, technology has revealed the possibility of 'mass producing', a concept Baudrillard has explored in all his seminal texts and concludes to be a key contributing factor in the rise of the technocratic and hyperrealist environment.

The modern aspects of technology hence often determine a certain way towards death, destruction and violence which can be contested in the Baudrillardian sense, to be either real or an event that is simulated, but the virtualization of these aspects does not diminish that these forms of technology can be weaponized and used for bringing in death and destruction which is now seen as an apparent function of technology. Baudrillard in the critical text entitled *The Spirit of Terrorism* which was originally published in the year 2003, deduces a hypothesis surrounding the idea of terrorism and how it has consequences that have global aftereffects. Events like 9/11 are etched in human history and constitute acts of terrorism that have shaped the narrative of history itself by pointing towards the flaws of global prowess. Baudrillard however also attempts to understand these acts of terrorism from the lens of people retaliating to the exploitation at the hands of capitalistic powers, since global expansion and the advent of the technical bend has created a divide amongst the distinguished social classes based on the ease of access to these modern resources. Baudrillard considers 'terrorism' as an act which puts up a front that is rooted in, "no meaning, no objective, and cannot be measured by its 'real' political and historical consequences" (DeLillo 57) because such acts have no meaning and that they constitute, "an event in a world increasingly saturated with meaning and efficacy (DeLillo

57).”

These attacks are culturally seen as acts of revolution that are immortalized by the exclusive spread throughout the globe with the help of power of media and this dissemination is predominantly what shapes the geopolitical space and narrative. Such events leave behind a legacy that is milked by the digital industry and purposefully stops them from becoming obsolete.

Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* was published in the year 2003, and it presents a slightly upgraded world from *Underworld* (1997). The novel is a representation of the contemporary mediascape and the level of 'encoding' and 'digitalization' that the modern world has gone through. It comments on the sharp turn in the economic revolutions that have transformed culture and economy as a result of excessive automation. The trajectory of this growth seems to have significant effects on society as the contemporary world lives in an age of image despite DeLillo's attempts at bringing attention to the historically pertinent events like the Cold War, political assassinations like that of President Kennedy, environmental threats in the form of nuclear waste and life-altering events like terrorist attacks of 9/11 through his fictional writings.

DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003) narrates the tale of Eric Packer, who is a billionaire and uses his 'money' to 'make more money'. Eric Packer introduces the readers of DeLillo to the advantages of living in a new millennium and how unbelievable strides have been taken in the field of technology. Symbolically, it can be seen in Eric Packer's choice of vehicle for his travel across Manhattan town i.e. a limousine that isn't just spacious but is fitted with all the latest technical gadgets, allowing Packer to keep an eye on the rise and fall of the 'Yen', his choice of currency for trading in the capitalist market. DeLillo writes about this infusion of technology into the everydayness of any common American by describing how Eric Packer paid for a

luxurious car in which, “He sat in the club chair at the rear of the cabin looking into the array of visual display units” (DeLillo 13) to identify as the ‘consumer’ who derives pleasure from the benefits of owning capitalistic wealth but at the same time Packer is also a businessman who exploits the technical revolution for his capitalistic ventures and procures more wealth in return. The protagonist is not just surrounded by these technical modifications but is immersed in the technical culture as it naturalizes itself to become a permanent part of the capitalist expansions. DeLillo further writes, “There were medleys of data on every screen, all flowing symbols and alpine charts, the polychrome number pulsing” (DeLillo 13) to elaborate on how an average American can locate himself in the intersections of such technical grids as they provide a new rhythm to the flow of information. DeLillo then continues:

He absorbed this material in a couple of long still seconds ignoring the speech sounds that issues from the lacquered heads. There was a microwave and a heart monitor. He looked at the spy-cam on a swivel and it looked back at him. He used to sit here in hand-held space that was finished now. The context was nearly touchless. He could talk most systems into operations or wave a hand at screen and make it go blank (DeLillo 13)

to elucidate how the union with technology in contemporary times has combined the two aspects of modern existence and created this contemporary ‘techno-logic’ that governs the lifestyle of today. This modern extant is therefore fortified because of the pragmatic changes that have occurred in the evolutionary praxis and turned the American landscape into a technoscape that is encoded through excessive mechanization and computerization. This mechanization has proven to merge humans into technology and creates an interaction that is mutually responsible for the development of both, human culture as well as technology. The feature of digitality in the present times has overcome the geographical boundaries of capitalism

and expanded the dimension into a free market space. This digital overtake has an impact on cultural development because it creates a hybrid of the two with a digital interface for the cultural output which is often optimized through exercising control over computerized mechanics since machines are more proficient and produce better results as the chances of error are minimal.

The symbiotic relationship that is shared between modern machines and their human counterpart is also well explored by Don DeLillo in *Cosmopolis* (2003) and the novel also delves into how the progression of this relationship has evolved into an abstraction that is now encoded into all systems of existence, making humans an almost electronic being. Humans today, therefore, speak a codified language that reiterates the decimation of the boundary between the real and the virtual. The contemporary extant, therefore, has imploded and created a catastrophic playground that eliminates all tangible differences with an artificiality surrounding all possible human interaction and means of sustenance. This artificiality can be viewed as a means of violence that violates the natural order of existence that has been established primordially. It is the deviation that shifts the human praxis by creating an anomaly in nature.

When Eric Packer, the protagonist of DeLillo's 2003 published *Cosmopolis*, gets stuck in the middle of riots that takeover the city of Manhattan, he analyses the technical realm that he had partly helped in creating and the subtle takeover that was established with this move. He notices that:

On the other side of Sixth Avenue, the car moved slowly past the brokerage house on the corner. There were cubicles exposed at street level, men and women watching screens, and he felt the safety of their circumstance, the fastness, the involution of it, their curling embryonic

ingrowth, secretly and creaturely. He thought of the people who used to visit his website back in the days when he was forecasting stocks, when forecasting was pure power, when he'd tout technology stock or bless an entire sector and automatically cause doublings in share price and the shifting of worldviews, when he was effectively making history, before history became monotonous and slobbering, yielding to his search for something purer, for techniques of charting that predicted the movements of money itself (DeLillo 75)

hinting at the nuanced and more modern social system that has lost all-natural symbolic structure to depict the sophistication with which technological advancements have embedded within the contemporary extant with their power of encoding, re-coding and over-coding. This signifies how there is an apparent haste within this system that today is capable of self-regulating because of the technical connectivity and complexities. This complexity in technology also ensures that the information exchange in the modern world becomes a tool of power and its exchange is controlled and exercised by a select few. Hence, the majority of the modern system is carefully structured and programmed, where the expansion in technology represents what Robert Hassan (2020) in *The Condition of Digitality: A Post-Modern Marxism for the Practice of Digital Life* calls 'transcoding' which means that there is a "technology-cultural interaction, that contains a component of active human agency" (Hassan 132), this is 'agency', therefore, is of prime importance and is the contributing factor, "to a future and a culture that may be visible and predictable – at least in outline" (Hassan 132) he continues.

This interconnectedness between culture and digital circuits, however, does not forecast the eventual tragedies that arise from it often. These catastrophes that begin as mere endemics or epidemics eventually turn into greater calamities as there comes the hegemonic supremacy of the digital world makes sure that these cataclysmic events are turned into hugely orchestrated

and dramatized events. Events like that of 9/11 and the Gulf War about which Baudrillard writes extensively exemplify how 'violence' in modern times has become a source of recreation and entertainment. There is always a ripple effect that is created when viewers are emotionally charged due to exposure to what is shown in media in context of the dangerously volatile situations. The imagination that is associated with these incidents causes effects that have a wider effect than the actual impact of the cataclysmic event. The political lens behind such worldwide events ensures that these incidents are immortalized and reinforced repeatedly via effective media channels only to promote dissatisfaction with the established government and spread biased information that later on discredits the credibility of the ruling power. Hence, the catastrophic power of these events rises in magnitude with the help of the power of media because visuals are viewed, reviewed and disseminated in a calculated and premeditated manner.

DeLillo in *Cosmopolis* (2003) paints the scenario of such an incident that highlights how violence in modern times has become a part of the contemporary extant and it exhibits traits that can be traced to its inception residing in the technical paradigm. The catastrophe of this mechanical panorama is that violence in the modern-day cannot be separated from the mechanism of machines, and with the increase in the level of sophistication with which the machines are manufactured, there is also an increase in the sophistication of the repression and violent elements. The factors of entertainment and leisure are added to this mixture of media-based information and thus produce the fatal and catastrophic event that is televised for an eternal virtual experience. When Eric Packer, the protagonist, gets stuck in a traffic jam caused by violent riots, he is shielded and sealed in a highly advanced and mechanized car that serves the purpose of a protective layer of defence. His head of Security Torval informs him of,

“Threat condition blue” (DeLillo 32) depicting the coded language that has evolved alongside the technical evolution. It elucidates a specific meaning that can be understood only by Torval, the associated security and the protagonist, Eric Packer. Torval also informs Packer of how a man is down, depicting at how the violent riots had just claimed a man’s life pointing towards the extremities with which technical rigour is applied in such cases. DeLillo writes:

The man down was Arthur Rapp, managing director of the International Monetary Fund. Arthur Rapp had just been assassinated in Nike North Korea. Happened only a minute ago. Eric Watched it happen again, in obsessive replays, as the car crawled toward a choke point on Lexington Avenue. He hated Arthur Rapp. He’d hated him before he met him. It as a hatred with purest bloodlines, orderly, based on differences if theory and interpretation. Then he met the man and hated him personally and chaotically, with a sizable violence of heart.

He was killed live on the Money Channel. It was past midnight in Pyongyang and he was making final comments to an interviewer for the benefit of North American audiences after a historic day and night of ceremonies, receptions, dinners, speeches and toasts.

Eric watched him sign a document on one screen and prepare to die on another.

A man in short-sleeve shirt came into the camera range and began to stab Arthur Rapp in the face and neck (DeLillo 33).

to present his critical insight into the contemporary era’s digital culture and capitalistic traits and the traces of violence that are well concealed within such an environment. The modern cataclysm, therefore, is not only limited to violent events but can be illuminated in the various capitalistic exchanges, the representation of it in the media, the technical influence and the hierarchy that it establishes in the cultural context. The dissemination of these events in media

and the virtual tendency with which they have an outward effect, in all directions including finances, emotional, physical as well as psychological, creates this modern catastrophe that is heavily rooted in the information relayed through modern methods of communication and media. Information thus becomes the tool that is used as the basis of modern technical warfare amongst all capitalistic powers. Its chaotic prowess is used to manipulate and create duress after fabricating political unrest and civil riots. Despite the transparency that is claimed by media sources, the modern calamity is mostly virtually borne and spread. The modern form of cataclysm, therefore, cannot claim emancipation from the highly evolved modern technology as liberation that comes with it, is more than often also associated with cultural turbulence and an artificial deviation.

There is hence a kind of exposure to the outside world that is purely artificial and can have prominent aftereffects because there is an innate virtuality, that coincides with modern existence. The presence of this virtual blanket that engulfs and encompasses all strata of modern living, therefore, is a deviation from the primordial and natural order of existence. The signs more than often become interchangeable in the virtual world and soon are completely removed from the chain of signification. Baudrillard in his seminal work *Screened Out* which was published in the year 2002 states that, “we are all transsexuals... we are all symbolically transsexuals” (Baudrillard 10) arguing how humans of today possess the ability to transcend any kind of physical limitations to embody the transgressions of the modern world that mostly appear in the mechanical form. These are the exaggerated versions of the primary necessities that were previously governed through manual means, but, today have artificial alternatives that are more accurate and precise in mechanized forms. This ‘perversion’ in the Baudrillardian sense has infiltrated all aspects of contemporary life exemplified in the political, theoretical and

ideological warfare alongside the scientific and architectural marvels of today.

Baudrillard continues in his *Screened Out* (2002) that these exaggerated infiltrations and mechanical indulgences have even affected the conceptual makings of what is an identity and what makes identity different for every individual. Baudrillard writes “We have to have an instant memory which can plug into immediately – a kind of promotional identity which can be verified at every given moment” (Baudrillard 11) addressing how the contemporary is all about protocols that are implemented at the given moment and are guided by images found neither in history nor in our future. These images are projected from the ‘happenings’ in now that is our present. It is the idea of ‘instant’ that governs the exchange of information and this exchange is verifiable due to the technical and digital aspects of the images which are exchanged, creating a large chain of signification. Baudrillard contextualizes this with the sexual liberation of the human body to elucidate how in recent times, the idea of a body and the implicated meaning along the lines of purity and piousness, have been adulterated by a more radical and erotic change that comes through a more mechanized form in acts of sexual liberation such as the presence of erotica and porn. These changes that have occurred due to revolutions happening in the technical fields thus facilitated sexual liberation as images about this exchange are curated with electrifying ease and mechanical robustness. Baudrillard also elucidates that in the socio-political context, this exchange and liberation is guided by the free will of the people that are carefully located within the disseminated information. He argues further that with these revolutions come the aspects of, “indeterminacy, anxiety and confusion but many other pleasures too: choice, pluralism, democracy” (Baudrillard 12) elevating the standard humans by providing them with an option to transcend boundaries that were set prior and marked the limitations in information exchange.

In DeLillo's America this mechanization that ensures such powerful transcendence in itself is an impactful force. In contemporary times, the omniscience of mechanization and virtuality entails the borderlessness and power that this evolutionary praxis holds. There is an implicit power that the virtual world holds and this power is used for influencing what is called today the 'online' world. Americans in contemporary society share a very intense relationship with modern technology because of the arrival of platforms like social media and digital technologies that enable instant connections. It has revolutionized the digital space by creating identities that are purely virtual and are constantly 'living and connecting' like Baudrillard's idea of being in a constant chain of signification. This has both positive and negative impacts since technology in its modern form has developed into a complex and interwoven system that has become the fundamental and basic of modern living. The modern culture is not only aided by technology but is also progressed by transmitting it to the next generations. It makes the communication of the extraordinary and the revolutionary to a wider audience much easier as witnessed in the formation of a 'global connection' such as the internet and the social media that regulates the existence in these hyperreal technoscapes.

In the world of these microprocessors that govern the flow of information, DeLillo keeps up to date with the same technology and relies on it to paint a picture of an absolutely modern technoscape, that he is part of, at the time of writing *Point Omega* (2010). This novel by DeLillo discusses the peak of exhaustion for human consciousness in its own delightful ways. It is a careful representation of a world where digitalization isn't just limited to the system of computers and the internet but is marked by a more nuanced version of technology in all fields. This mechanization of the modern world ensures that the range is flexible with which information exchange is carried out as well as the speed of this trade is monitored, controlled

and regulated. The characteristic property of being virtual is the lack of its physical or materialistic identity, this is the idea with which DeLillo plays in his 2010 published *Point Omega* where the text itself begins with a section that is entitled ‘Anonymity’ and ends with ‘Anonymity 2’. It can be attributed to modern technology that humankind can find its virtual representations without lacking a physical structure that does not act as a barrier of limitation. On the contrary, it provides man with the power to take over absolutely anything. Today this ability influences the global market in all fields of capitalism that encompass food, health and entertainment industries.

The transcendence from a ‘biological entity’ to a ‘manufactured being’ for the sake of a virtual identity that people have adopted in modern times is what DeLillo is critical of. He also looks at this existence in technoscapes through the liminal lens elucidating how the modern technoscape is an entity that is neither here nor there. With its physical boundaries being transcended every day with the help of newer technological limbs, the modern technoscape represents the space that cannot be contained within and yet is intangible. The modern cataclysmic events that emerge from these spaces thus, are also intangible and are representative technologies of today are the guiding forces behind absolute transcendence and shift in paradigm of existence. Because of the shrinking of the boundaries and the eventual space, that the modern technoscapes have experienced both geographically as well as virtually, the impact of these cataclysmic events is felt on a global scale, since, technology engulfs the entirety of the physical world and all possible realms.

In DeLillo’s *Point Omega* (2010) the modern technoscape is at the junction where technological turn and its negative impact comes in the form of the protagonist who happens to be a military strategist. Richard Elster who was once a war advisor, wants to, “reclaim the body

from what he called the nausea of News and Traffic” (DeLillo 22) by leaving behind the city to arrive at the cabin located in the desert for a project that happens to be recording of a documentary. Elster comes from the modern world that used technology to expand its boundaries and he had left that life behind because after, “more than two years of living with the tight minds that made the war” (DeLillo 23) his scholarly pursuits in the search of ‘space’ and ‘time’ took precedence. In the time of the machines, Elster readily figures out how these also carry a political and economic meaning, which the capitalistic forces have exploited for their good. The modern times hence are a time of digital circuits and coded information that is spread through such circuits in numerical format. The emergence of newer forms of technology like AI has updated this mechanized world and upgraded and armed it even further. Richard Elster in conversation with his documentary maker Jim Finley, thus comments to him that:

“I’ll tell you this much. War creates a closed world and not only for those in combat but for plotters, the strategists. Except their war is acronyms, projections, contingencies, methodologies.”

He chanted the words, he intoned liturgically.

“They become paralyzed by the system at their disposal. Their war is abstract. They think they’re sending an army into a place on a map” (DeLillo 35)

to elucidate that the commercial gains that are helmed by technology have deepened their roots into the art of making war too. Technology acts as an aid with the help of which wars are carefully constructed. Machines are used to ‘think’ moves to cause maximum possible destruction, as well as, tools to extract the greatest degree of information. Therefore, technology acts as a conduit of influence on the decision-making process and it offers an additional force of

surveillance in contemporary times. The term 'surveillance' when contextualized in terms of technological upgrade also additionally acknowledges that there is a constant 'monitoring' of people's independence through media and modes that the general public is unaware of.

However, on the contrary, because of the easier assimilation of technology into everyday lives, there is an integration of panopticons and modern capitalism which subtly threatens the people and the current world without being too obvious.

The contemporary technology and the revolution that it has brought therefore becomes the instrument of bringing in a radical change that cannot be quantified but is now an accepted reality of the modern technoculture. Technology is in its prime today and hence offers solutions to problems that are a creation of human effort in actuality. When DeLillo's protagonist in *Point Omega* (2010) Richard Elster and Finley discuss an essay he had once written, Finley analyses how Elster had begun the essay with the line, "A government is a criminal enterprise" (DeLillo 41) and in the conclusion of that article Elster comments that:

In future years, of course, men and women, in cubicles, wearing headphones, will be listening to secret tapes of the administration's crimes while others study electronic records on computer screens and still others look at salvaged videotapes of caged men being subjected to severe physical pain and finally others, behind closed doors, ask pointed questions of flesh-and-blood individuals (DeLillo 41-42)

thus, the discussion between the two characters is pivotal in understanding how technology warrants itself beyond the physical and virtual boundaries that have been set, creating a world that has arrived not only in a digital age but an age of panopticism, envisaging the modern society that is theoretically endangered by its own revolutionary inventions. The modern man's consciousness is hence cohesively bound to modern technology causing vanishing of any

demarcations between the real and the virtual.

This marks technology as the central key figure in functioning as well as governing of modern societies. Technology that is outright developed in the name of safeguarding human rights is the same reason behind abuse and unequal distribution between withholders of power. This is also rooted in the capitalistic paradigm that develops simultaneously with the modern technoculture and is apparently aided by it. The evolving technology hence is a mutability in the living paradigm that is constantly evolving and eventually has turned to dangerous and self-harming implications. The commercialization and exploitation at the hand of this modern technology is rooted in the mechanics of every day and it cannot be mitigated anymore but the magnitude of it is being widened more, owing to the capitalistic ventures.

Technology in today's time therefore governs and dictates the 'right' and 'wrong' with a keen eye on what is also 'good' and 'bad' commodifying all action that happens in the technocultural praxis. The ability of data-mining, one of the prominent features of modern technology, ensures that the system generated through the interconnectedness of the multifarious devices and applications, constantly enquire and infer the cultural and social information as well as the political standpoint from the societal point of view. There is a comprehensive detailing of how media is presented and its consumption ensuring that social consensus is more than often drawn from what is being circulated and it has an impact that is carried further through generations as a byproduct.

Chapter 4

The Simulation of Collapse in Hyperreal America

“...The war as entrenchment, as technological and psychedelic fantasy, the war as a succession of special effects, the war become film even before being filmed. The war abolishes itself in its technological test, and for Americans it was primarily that: a test site, a gigantic territory in which to test their arms, their methods, their power (59).”

-Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994)

Chapter four of the thesis also corresponds to the third research objective furthering the attempt at understanding how the contemporary technoculture in America has not only foregrounded itself into the American lifestyle but now has led to the emergence of dissent and tragedy that is rooted in the contemporary evolutionary paradigm and the technological complex of the modern world. The selected fiction details the account of the naturalization of technology and its integration into American praxis and how this assimilation has given rise to havoc that is aided by it.

Jean Baudrillard (2003) in his seminal text *The Spirit of Terrorism* argues “Current terrorism is not the descendant of a traditional history of anarchy, nihilism and fanaticism. It is contemporaneous with globalization...” (Baudrillard 87) pointing towards the evident truth that with rampant globalization, there developed a free market for the exchange of ‘technologies’ and these transactions impacted the ways of man. It affected the biological, social, economic, political as well as the cultural level. The institutionalization of technology and the technical turn in itself is an era of constant progression and change. Hence, with every reconfiguration in the technical upgradation and statistical value, humankind is not only liberated but at the same time,

it is endangered by the probable damage and loss, determined by external factors such as excessive mechanization.

In the critical work entitled *The Revolt Against Humanity: Imagining a Future Without Us* which was published in the year 2023, the author, Adam Kirsch outlines how the contemporary times are the times in which human primacy shall be challenged and there is an intellectual turn against the same. The antihumanism that is witnessed in modern times is a direct consequence of human activities and despite the critique that is offered at the social level, human activities are still rooted in capitalistic gains and not the harmonious progression of nature and man together. Therefore, owing to the present technoculture, the previously established ecological crisis has gained momentum of its own and today poses a challenge to humankind, aiding the path of self-destruction that humankind is on. Hence, the modern apocalypse will not be just in the form of an environmental crisis alone but it can be reimagined as a collective outburst towards the rejection of humanity altogether.

The absolute glorification of the power of reason led to the inception of an age that was characterized and defined by the progress made by scientific communities and technological supremacy, however, after the establishment of the technical paradigm, it became clear that the scientific upgrade is not the route of progression but is the root of the crisis in the modern times. The modern times therefore act as an epitome of the high-tech culture and this culture then delves into the other aspects of modern living. The contemporary, therefore, can be viewed through the lens of the digital and as Baudrillard in his *Simulacra and Simulation* that was published in the year 1994, argues, “The war became film, the film becomes war, the two are joined by their common haemorrhage into technology” (Baudrillard 59) to depict how the world’s collective consciousness has abandoned any interests in the actual happenings of it and is

concerned with the result that is viewed through bite-sized images on the screen. This effectively collapses the codes that were established before the dissemination of images. It also ensures that the images are not only transferred from one screen to another but are multiplied in the modern media and communications system, enhancing their power of going 'viral' which is convoluted by the addition of networks of signs and programs.

The predicament of modern times hence lies in the fact that it cannot escape the ground network that the prowess of media has laid. The contemporary is substantially influenced by the images from the past and it, in turn, affects the future, as Baudrillard in his 1994 published *Simulacra and Simulations* argues that "...like the real has vanished and become illegible" (Baudrillard 54) because barriers between the real and the virtual are not only decimated and the union between the two is also characterized by the ever existence of the images that become suspended in the consumerist societies for the rest of eternity. Here lies the tragedy of the hour, as Baudrillard continues his argument by stating that the disappeared does not hold the worth that is equal to the actual event but the circulated images in the media because according to him the images are nothing but the representation of "...in its imminent catastrophe, it does not work on the imaginary plane: the drama unfolds on the screens and nowhere else" (Baudrillard 54) eradicating any boundaries between what caused the war and what was the effect, rather there is a portrayal of the same war through images that remain as digital fragments of virtual truth, haunting the civilization as reminders of another similar threatening possibility of mechanization and digitalization.

The postmodern culture of technology overlaps with the mechanical world's notion of reinventing innovation repeatedly and then forcing it into replication through the consumer society's production structure. With this, there occurs the coding and recoding of information

that is 'constructed' for 'consumption' and concentrates on and around the artificialness of the modern world. It can be fairly deduced that machines and the prevalent technoculture in the contemporary world are part of the living breathing structure and partake in the circulation of ideas through multiple generations of media technologies. These are the same pieces of individual technologies that have formed a substantially sustaining network, ideologically similar to Baudrillard's concept of a 'system' that is formed out of 'objects', which are linked through interconnections as well as tangentially. It is these technologies that have caused the reevaluation and redefinition of what makes a 'human' living in a technical praxis that again is also constantly evolving into the posthuman era.

The contemporary is therefore an amalgamation of the various 'representations' that are emulations of versions of 'real' that are dispensed into the world. These versions are the ones, where the personal opinions of the figure in charge of disseminating the factual information, as well as the individual perception of the received factual information, are present. With the aforementioned two factors, another pertinent factor is that of how the dissemination of information is carried out, i.e. the operational modus operandi of the entire program is entwined with the earlier two, making it almost impossible to separate the three and hence, contemporary times are full of 'representations of representations' which move within the media generating a Baudrillardian simulacrum but in the highest order of hyperreal that is acclimatized to the system of computers and artificial intelligence. In his 1994 published *Simulacra and Simulation* Baudrillard comments on his idea of the 'apocalypses of now' in the section that is entitled the same i.e. "Apocalypse Now" (Baudrillard 59) and this chapter aims to expand on the very same idea, that how the apocalypses of today, do not limit themselves to just 'theatrical releases on the screen' but are outsourced into the world through the contemporary technical paradigm. The

evolutionary technical praxis and the network of evolved gadgets and technologies, when juxtaposed and utilized with the help of artificial intelligence, are capable of wreaking havoc on humankind as evident through the byproducts of evolving technology.

These consequences of technology in modern times come in a myriad of forms. There is a creation of this subtle and extremely sophisticated form of repression that is neither outwardly presented within the contemporary praxis nor is taken enough cognizance of. It is constantly deferred because of the presence of the contemporary technological complex and rigorous modern living paradigm that is technical to the highest degree. This soft repression can also be deduced to be a direct derivative of the technoscapes that have evolved from the natural landscapes and in contemporary times which are predominantly urban in nature, these technoscapes are infused with existing in the times of 'montaged confusion' because of the constant influx of media and images from sources that are again rooted in technology. Besides this form of repression, it is also evident that living in contemporary times has also instigated the arrival of a plethora of additional issues such as mental, physical, psychological as well as financial complications etcetera.

The chapter thus, aims at attempting to underscore how the gradual expansion of the technical paradigm from simple mechanical tools to huge multi-faceted and cross-layered technological complex in contemporary times, especially in the postmodern world has led to catastrophes that are born in this technical paradigm. It also aims at locating the noticeable after-effects of technology in the evolving cosmopolitan of contemporary culture as well as the social, political and economic complex. There is also an attempt at underlining the Baudrillardian idea of the 'hyperreal' which promulgates the concept of existing in the 'virtual space' that encompasses the technocratic landscape. This technoscape which represents the modern living

spaces, especially in America, that is the epitome of globalization as well as the peak of capitalism, are pockets of geographical spaces, existing in the global concord that can be taken as the miniature representatives of the contemporary cosmopolis, can be used to study the snowballing effect of the panorama that is purely mechanical in the present times. Hence, it can be safely admitted that because of the rising scientific grandiose in modern times, technological evolution is also accompanied by man-made dissent and tragedies, the root of which is purely in this evolutionary paradigm and the mechanical complex that has been garnered due to revolution in the mechanical and technological industries.

DeLillo's selected fiction, therefore, delineates the complexity of existing in the postmodern and hyperreal America and embodies the duress that this extensive mechanization has expounded on the contemporary living paradigm. It depicts an urban dystopia where the constantly evolving and ever metamorphosing technical advancements are not just located but this evolutionary paradigm also leads to consequential effects on humankind. Despite elucidating the anthropocentric turn through his texts, DeLillo attempts to call attention towards the repercussions of human tendencies of expansion. He comments on how the world has slowly evolved and transcended from the urbanized megalopolis to a well-structured and influential mechanized cosmopolis that catalogues the massive shift that has been incurred in the living paradigm. This shift in the praxis of living in contemporary times is owed to the results of developmental pursuits that are beyond human comprehension and are aided by the mechanical ease of huge machines and systems of technologies. This in the Baudrillardian sense of understanding can be seen in how the machines and the technically resilient systems, are here as a 'replacement' or 'enhanced versions' of the functioning gizmos that are the results of the human power of invention and scientific innovation.

The mechanical world therefore becomes the modus operandi of how the current ‘socio-temporal’ reality can be significantly altered with the assisting powers of heavily industrialized and mechanized capabilities of mass production. The direct consequence of this severe mechanical influence is the current stage of human existence which is a superfluous state as noted by Baudrillard in most of the seminal texts authored by him throughout the ages, where he developed the conceptual framework of his theories. The artificialness of postmodern life is thus dictated by the network setup of technologies, channelling information exchange through virtual pathways. In the contemporary praxis it is almost impossible to separate the two hence, information and the exchange pathways are almost embedded into each other. This is how the postmodern world has slowly progressed into what is now the contemporary understanding of a posthuman world. The technical world is nothing but an auxiliary limb of the human praxis and acts as an extension of the living breathing mechanism of survival.

There is thus, a connection between the organic life and constructed components that are purely electronic and mechanical as N. Katherine Hayles (1996) in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics* argues “When information loses its body, equating humans and computers is especially easy, for the materiality in which the thinking mind is instantiated appears incidental to its essential nature” (Hayles 2) to elucidate on how humans in the modern times have a very complex relationship with technology and the existence of one as independent of another is nearly impossible since, together they act as one single operating unit. Hayles reiterates how in contemporary times the relationship that humans share with technology is more or less only about the union of human praxis with mechanical intelligence.

The hyperreal America in Don DeLillo's fiction thus connotes the idea of how successful this amalgamation of man-machine unit has been and in the present context, the complexity of this relationship has increased significantly from the traditional demarcation which has been blurred in the current cultural understanding of what makes up for the ideological representation of a cosmopolitan America. Hayles has furthered these critical insights to draw upon a possibility, centred on the idea, that the future of the human race holds 'apocalyptic visions' since the evolutionary trajectory is now heading towards the 'post-biological' world rooted in newer subjectivities and the coming together of 'autonomous agents' to operate together to make one 'self'. Hence, in the contemporary extant, humans themselves have become a composite of organic-mechanical components, capable of processing bits of information and channelling it further, thus, equating modern humans with machines themselves.

In DeLillo's fiction, this evolutionary conglomeration that the technological complex has achieved is explicated into a colosseum of the hyperreal that tends to exuberate and aim at total control. However, through the Baudrillardian understanding of the contemporary living praxis, this cosmopolis is critically evaluated to delineate the interjecting simulacra that proceed to the final stages of evolution by collapsing into itself. Then is repeatedly simulated in the present through an endless circuit of images, information, communication and channels of media that support this transactional circulation. Hence, in the present times, there is a network of avant-garde technologies that are not just innovative, but, promote a more comprehensive reworking of the communication system which is employed in the current times. And with the developments in the field of artificial intelligence, there is also a gruelling system that has found its inception only for the sake of monitoring and analytics. These complex systems are channelled through a

shared physical and cyber unit that goes beyond the boundaries of physical limitations and integrates into the virtual realm by enacting like a versatile machine of today.

Contemporary extant thus has the presence of a complex system of automatics that goes beyond the real-time monitoring alone. The achiness of today is part of a systematic placement that follows a specific pattern, signifying the aspect of supplementing as well as complementing the contemporary lifestyle and with every layering that occurs in this complex relationship, each turn contributes in its significant way, to the channel through which information tends to flow in the present times. Hence, the everydayness of these modern technologies, that have invaded the innermost sanctum of the people inhabiting the world of today, comes from their ability to maximize the utilitarian aspect of this technological shift. Therefore, the emergence of media and its aiding technologies tend to intersect and intervene in the contemporary lifestyle as these are seen as a form of force that inscribes and inserts themselves into the everyday setting of the present extant.

Here lies the apocalyptic turn of modern times. It is the radical manifestation of the evolutionary predicament that violates the natural order. Whereas, the foreseeable destruction is rendered oblivious under the guise of expansion of scientific and mechanical limbs of human subsistence and its inherent quiddity. Under the pretense of roaring development, rampant mechanization has not just expanded the human living paradigm but has hidden the catastrophic shift that this turn has taken. It conceals the modern form of apocalypses from the sensory system of the user since these technologies have taken over the mediation between the evolving technological paradigm and the recipient humans. As a result, there is always the presence of a simulacrum of evolution that is consistently simulated even though, the society is breaking down and faces an imminent threat from the same evolutionary relationship with technology because

contemporary times are moving towards an era of civil disorder and the innate technical revolution has led to the emergence of a rebellion that is rooted in the same technological advancement.

The tragedy of modern times also lies in the fact that the arrival of 'mob mentality' in the social predicate of contemporary times is infused with an aggressive form of tactics such as riots and civil unrest etcetera. These add not only to the tragic element but are multiplied in effect as well as impact, through tactful usage and manipulation of media technologies. The anthropocentric turn thus has taken a shift because of the technical paradigm and the contemporary times are hence the times of calamities that are anthropogenic. Modern-day apocalypses like the holocaust, 9/11 or even the recent coronavirus pandemic are an outcome of humans yearning to surpass the precincts of intellectual dimensions laid down since time immemorial. Contemporary living is apparently disposed to urban functioning that has acclimatized to a system of objects, evolved in a consumerist society through inter-related objects that are insignia of a modern aesthetic but it is making the contemporary extant more and more hostile and uninhabitable gradually. The result is this inter-related event of disruptions that make for a greater calamity at hand which is rooted in human activities and the technical turn that the human living paradigm has taken.

Baudrillard in his seminal text *Simulacra and Simulation* that was published in the year 1994, has argued that people themselves have become superfluous and the 'real' so produced, is through genetic miniaturization of both 'code', 'stimulus' as well as 'memory' (02). He has also furthered the argument of how meaning is created through the power of capitalism and history by casually replacing 'acts of work' with 'technology' where an implosion of signs occurs only to evoke hyperreality. Baudrillard also has delineated the implosion of the simulacrum in the fields

of medicine, psychology, divinity, ethnography etcetera and how these have now become the referential simulacra.

Hence, in this hyperreal realm all 'acts of God' are manmade and synchronous with technical paradigms as Baudrillard has furthered his argument by delineating how these events and their replication through the contemporary media technologies is no longer a question of real or simulation. These events account for catastrophes that aren't just limited to the ecological crisis of the modern world but additionally bring forth the evidence that such events are purely man-made and humans, at large, are in threat of their own creations. The contemporary is evidently also full of how human activities are also responsible for other crises including global warming, rising of sea levels, failures of crops because of climactic changes, extinction of animal species at the hands of man, wars, terrorism, refugee crisis, and violations of human rights across the globe etcetera. The contemporary literary discourse that centres on these changes and such events catalogues the apocalyptic turn that the human paradigm has taken and the selected fiction from Don DeLillo thus paints a picture of how the present times are gradually heading towards a complete breakdown of society because of its deeply fragile structure, since the current technological complex has created a great imbalance in the man-machine dyad. He addresses the recklessness in human activities to decipher how its prolonged effects include events that are borne out of the technical panorama but are cataclysmic in nature.

Don DeLillo's fiction also details an account of how humanity is progressing towards destroying itself through repercussions of technology such as acts of war and crimes on humanity. The fiction comments on the radical changes in the field of science and technology, especially the field of biotechnology, and discusses DeLillo's anxiety over bioweaponry and biohazards as presented in the novel *White Noise* which was published as early as in the year

1985. It can be deduced that while technology was paving the way for a better life even in the 1980s but DeLillo's keen observational skills helped him in seeing right through this transition. The author acknowledges this flaw in the trajectory of human evolution. He communicates his fears that the evolutionary relationship with technology is not leading to prosperity or a life of comfort but is a gradual descent into tragedy. The current culture of technology does not provide the gratification that humans associate with the evolving technological complex, rather this evolutionary rise in scientific grandiose acts as a force that usurps the natural order of existence.

DeLillo's critique of the emerging technical warfare and the rise of violence through weapons, acting as an agency for bringing change, into the socio-political order of contemporary times is also discerned in the novel *Mao II* which was published in the year 1991. The author concurs with the radical idea that the divide that previously existed between man and machine, is no longer in place, hence, the demarcation is more prone to being fallacious in the current extant. Because of the provision of evolving technology and the ability to access and manipulate it easily, capitalistic powers across the globe have used it extensively for domination, this has further redefined the socio-political order of the global cosmopolis and DeLillo confronts this in his novels, delineating how human paradigm in itself is endangered by the rise of this technological unit.

Don DeLillo has also contemplated the topic of nuclear technology and its innate ability of destruction in the novel *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997. The author discusses how the creations of humans are capable of eliminating themselves completely and the immediate threat that they pose, as witnessed in the scene in the novel, when Edgar is informed of the Soviets testing the atomic bomb, he reacts in a very concerned manner. DeLillo's novels insinuate the God complex that humans have developed because of the greatness associated with

the ability to be able to control machines and exploit technology. DeLillo's commentary on the arrival of the posthuman world and the new way of thinking that the people residing in the contemporary extant have developed thus argue about how in the present times an actual transformation is occurring in both the world as well as humankind. The selected fiction traces and elucidates on this journey from the pre-industrial era to the postindustrial world, however, it also enunciates upon the subtle commentary of DeLillo where he states that there is an immediate need for deindustrialization and slowing the expansion of technical shift. The author's concern for the amount of power that technology holds over humans in the current times is indicative of the predicament that humankind faces today. It depicts the destabilization that is rooted in the social, economic and political disparities since there is no limit to the human appetite.

The control exerted by technology in the current times and its ability to reshape and remould the living paradigm is witnessed in DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* and *Point Omega* which were published in the years 2003 and 2010 respectively. The novels depict the free range of technology and how the technical paradigm has now succeeded in invading the innermost sanctum of human existence. DeLillo reiterates the paradox that exists in the present times, illustrating how the man-machine boundaries have been decimated and there is an exponential growth in the field of science and technology that has now become almost incomprehensible and uncontrollable despite the radical association formed between it and the human counterpart utilizing it. The novels also have exemplified the changes that have been inflicted on the changing paradigm, implicating how the scientific grandiose and rise of the technical paradigm, that established this current technoculture, has led humans away from the natural order and the

present trajectory defends the cataclysmic power of developing technologies under the guise of material consumption and comfort that is primarily associated with these technical pursuits.

Through the conceptual lens of Baudrillardian writings, it becomes apparent that Jean Baudrillard was known for his discontent with the emerging hyper-capitalistic trends in the postmodern society. Baudrillard's critiques on the evolving technological complex and the consumerist society delineate how contemporary times will implode into a simulation without an original real, owing to the presence of media and communication technologies that defer the real until it is lost completely within the chain of signification through an influx of images. Baudrillard's criticism also elucidates how contemporary society and its hyperreal existence can be underscored through a careful scrutiny of the relationship that humans share with the evolutionary paradigm since the simulacra and the subsequent simulation, can be traced back to being located within the extension of technological advancements.

The rise in hyperreal and capitalistic societies across the globe has also ensured that media technologies are used as strategic equipment to monopolize the growing economy and market. Baudrillard has also extensively discussed how it is these media technologies that exercise a deep authoritarian control because of having developed into a strong force of domination across all social platforms. Stuart Sim (2013) in *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers* writes a critical appreciation of Jean Baudrillard stating that:

It is easy to mock Baudrillard in his more provocative mode, but he does succeed nevertheless in directing our attention to some very profound changes that have occurred in contemporary consciousness. Mass media have come to play an inordinately large part in our lives, and at times it does seem as if we can hardly envisage the world without them: to be is to text or to tweet; nothing is real until we have seen it on television (Sim 33)

implicating how in contemporary times all has disappeared and the reality that is suspended in the consumerist paradigm is dispensed through media. This 'reality' is hence neither verifiable nor comprehensible without context which may or may not be dispensed along through the media channels of communication. Baudrillard's writing also criticizes how the modern forms of apocalypses such as the Iraq war or 9/11, which are rooted in human activities and the present technoculture, are rendered as mere images that are recycled every year to create a conscious memory of an event that is in the past. In *Screened Out* by Jean Baudrillard, which was published in the year 2002, he calls this as "We no longer have the strength to forget; our amnesia is the amnesia of images" (Baudrillard 17) pointing towards how the contemporary times are thus a never-ending simulation in which the even the cataclysmic events are posited as questionable over their authenticity.

The modern tragedies are therefore a part of the ongoing simulation, the details of which have been hidden purposefully through media technologies and other channels of communication. They are also strategically used for manipulation and altering the experience that humans have during these apocalyptic events. Baudrillard has also extensively commented on the aspect of terrorism that has developed as an offshoot of a radical sociopolitical standpoint. It is a consequence of the indoctrination that is rooted in a particular agenda which has political as well as ideological backing. In this sociopolitical impasse that contemporary society finds itself concerning the present idea of terrorism, media has been used as a medium of portraying the reality which again is laced with political and economic pursuits for capitalistic powers across the globe.

Besides media, the present culture of technology is also responsible for altering the reality of experiencing such an event. The revolution in the field of science and technology has

not only provided an upgrade in comfort and lifestyle but, also has a deep influence on how the technical industries especially aviation, arms and ammunition as well as the defence-military complex come together, to produce signs in the contemporary times that impact the human psyche leading to trauma and because these signs are circulated within the media channels, there is also an annual recycle of these signs at every anniversary. With the innovative arrival of artificial intelligence, the technological world has been taken by a storm. This invention has significantly proven to be ultimately superior to the rest of the innovations in the technical paradigm.

The combination of media technologies and artificial intelligence has placed humans at the periphery and rejects the roles that have been assigned to them traditionally, which were being at the centre of all processes. However, with the creation of a powerful alternative with the competence and critical abilities in the contemporary technological complex, the humans that inhabit the world today are put at greater risk of being subservient to this technical paradigm or even being almost removed completely. Hence, it can be evidently deduced that the technical turn for humanity is more of a dangerous threat that poses the risk of elimination of humankind altogether since, the 'real world' that was available to humans before this turn has now carefully been replaced with a simulation in the contemporary times and the cultural, capitalistic, political and economic boundaries for the entire globe are all redefined through this technological-economic complex that has risen out of the innovations in the field of science and technology.

In the selected fiction of Don DeLillo, a trace can be made of how America gradually transformed from a scenic landscape to a cosmopolitan 'mediascape' that now has evolved into a more complex 'technoscape'. America has now also become an epitome of global representing the 'miniaturization' that Baudrillard has often expressed in his seminal critiques. The

complexity in the living paradigm also amounted to the fact that in contemporary times the act of 'living' has been occurring primarily in the virtual space. This 'life in the virtual space' is as artificial as the technology that is used to simulate it, however, it is royally treated as the 'real' in the current extant. In the present times, the acceptance of this virtual space as the real comes from social behaviour that is not just accepted but learned. It can also be deduced that because of the current technoculture the living paradigm has completely switched to screens and technology in the contemporary extant holds extreme power and dictates the functioning in this present complex because of the constant presence of an interface that acts as the medium of dispensing reality and communicating.

The shift towards this engaging technological complex has reshaped the living experience and it has also become inherent to the contemporary living paradigm that the present way of life comes with an acceptance of the virtual panorama. Thus the present lifestyle in the technical paradigm, that the affluent American can afford, is influenced by the mass media and communication technologies that govern the postmodern and posthuman scene. With the rise in hazards and disasters that are rooted in human activities and the technological complex, the present times are also substantiated by the ideas of doubt and skepticism. It is this doubt and skepticism that reestablish how contemporary living occurs in a network of systems which, owing to the benefits of media technology, creates a simulacrum of distortions or perversions. It allows the misreading of what is real because there is already a prevalent system of disbeliefs in what is dispensed through media and other channels of communication. In case of any cataclysmic event that turns into a modern form of apocalypse, the powers of media are used to create a position of doubt about the same.

The powers of media thus supplant the ulterior bias of the institutes in power and the capitalistic authority, almost negating the commonly lived experience of any modern tragedy that occurs due to modern technological development. At the same time, this technological complex offers the possibility of breaking free from itself and this creates a feeling of fascination for the people inhabiting the current extant. DeLillo's writings and the selected fiction thus establish the apparent but mutually pertinent changes that have occurred in the lifestyle due to existing in the living paradigm. These changes have altered the praxis of life altogether and in the present times, there exists what Jean Baudrillard argues in his *Selected Writings*, originally published in the year 1988 and edited by prominent Baudrillardian scholar and critic Mark Poster, that the present times are immensely influenced by, "a hyperreal henceforth sheltered from the imaginary, and from any distinction between the real and the imaginary, leaving room only for the orbital recurrence of models and the simulated generation of difference" (Baudrillard 167).

This junction between the hyperreal and the contemporary cosmopolis is of absolute significance as it delineates the complex systems that influence the functioning of the hyperreal world. It includes the system of governments, industrial experts, authoritarian managers, opinion makers, and watchdogs from the field of media and communication as well as the military-industrial complex, a prominent capitalist venture in the present times. This complex of multiple systems acts as the imperial force dictating the 'what', 'how', 'where' and 'why' in the flow of the information. This is also characterized by substantiating the information flow with the rhetorical powers of persuasion but, this always occurs under the guise of scrutiny and monitoring. This constant surveillance and panopticon is only possible because of the contemporary technical paradigm, and it aids in the concealing and subduing of truth. This truth is of prime importance to the present living situation however, the technical influence and

infiltration has seeped into the deepest corners and thus, this truth is hidden away amidst the simulacrum and complex chains of signification. This further leads to deferring of the real, removing truth from one's reach altogether. This forestalling of real or the truth has become so apparent in the present times, that it is now almost naturalized as a process thus, an acceptance for whatever is floating around in media in the name of truth is established and it can be accredited to the contemporary technological complex.

Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) presents a first-hand eyewitness account of a common American man's interaction and his relationship with the evolving technological paradigm. It also evidently presents details on how this technical turn has led to the genesis of a very complex relationship with advancing technology. The novel has catalogued even the tiniest bit of change in the contemporary praxis that occurred in the Eighties and DeLillo's writing depicts this transition from a mere landscape to a self-sufficient, mechanically thriving and capitalist as well as consumerist society. The technical expansion in the novel also happens to set the precedence for caution because of the complexity of its existence. DeLillo's high-tech America has undergone a technological expansion causing not only deferring of the truth but it threatening the modern world with the genesis of a dystopic world which transcends into the boundaries of being postmodern as well as posthuman.

The selected fiction by Don DeLillo posits the author's anxiety about existing in the modern technoscape because even with the freedom that this technical turn has provided, the present society has decimated all dichotomies and boundaries that demarcated between the real and hyperreal or the physical and the virtual. The easy access to machines and subsequent mechanical systems that have aided in the process of commercialization and capitalistic takeover, has upgraded the current society into a virtual one. The presence of this virtual space is

what fuels the 'data-driven' nature of the present system. It is also capable of invading any personal space that humans claim in the present system thus, ensuring absolute detachment from any form of reality.

Don DeLillo in *White Noise* (1985) writes:

Heat. This is what cities mean to me. You get off the train and walk out of the station and you are hit with the full blast. The heat of air, traffic and people. The heat of food and sex. The heat of tall buildings. The heat that floats out of the subways and tunnels. It's always fifteen degrees hotter in the cities. Heat rises from the sidewalks and falls from the poisoned sky. The buses breathe heat. Heat emanates from crowds of shoppers and office workers. The entire infrastructure is based on heat, desperately uses up heat, breeds more heat. The eventual heat death of the universe that scientists love to talk about is already well underway and you can feel it happening all around you in any large or medium-sized city. Heat and wetness (DeLillo 11) generously pointing towards how modern apocalypses do not occur suddenly, but, the dependence that the present society has on these technical upgrades in the living paradigm, is the reason behind such a cataclysmic shift. The onset of such cataclysmic events is situated within the introduction of machinery and the mechanical paradigm into the everyday life of the common American man. DeLillo views these modern inventions such as the 'tall buildings'; 'subways'; 'trains'; and 'tunnels' as a kind of sensory exhaust, highlighting the intersection between postmodern America, with all of its turbulent changes that are occurring simultaneously, and result in altering the living praxis completely and the contemporary narrative surrounding the 'real' America.

DeLillo's America has thus, become a postmodern playground where the capitalistic forces have driven an aggressive campaign against the humanistic counterpart. These forces

hence, aid the simulation that occurs in the contemporary extant and henceforth cause regression of the ability of critical thinking in humans. Since humans in the contemporary praxis are preoccupied with the simulacrum, and are engaged in the direct practices of consumption of the same, the idea of escaping from the grips of the technological complex are furthered away till the constructed virtual reality completely takes hold of the paradigm that the contemporary praxis exists in. This technological complex is also responsible for thwarting and causing hindrance in how the 'real' and interactive situations are experienced by people living in the present times. In DeLillo's 1985 novel *White Noise*, this can be comprehended as, "The toneless system, the jangle and skid of carts, the loudspeaker and coffee-making machines, the cries of children. And over it all, or under it all, a dull and unlocatable roar as of some form of swarming life just outside the range of human apprehension" (DeLillo 43) elucidating how the construction of this self-referential locale is the reason behind the careful obscurity of symbolic truth. The present culture of technology is what aids this obscurity further by slowly conquering and replacing the original real hence, furthering any and all meaning that is associated with it, leading further to distortion of the reality of 'now'.

Any modern apocalypse can be defined as an 'event' which has a significant impact on the contemporary praxis and after this event ends, nothing remains the same and Richard Devetak (2009) in "After The Event: Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and September 11 Narratives" argues that an event only becomes worthy of its name when it "destroys, any pre-existing frame of reference; it exceeds intelligibility within prevailing frameworks of understanding" (Devetak 796) and creates a disruption in the human praxis that furthers the dissent of tragedy. This unsettling experience becomes the reason for the divide that is both historically and philosophically significant. It is these events which mark the testimonial sites for the modern

apocalypses or the tragic sites of collapse that are evidently man-made. As a direct consequence of this event, the world is now experienced differently. Such events end up modifying the relationship that humans share with the technological complex and the evolving technical paradigm. DeLillo (1985) in *White Noise* thus, marks the site of an apocalypse that is witnessed through the eyes of Jack Gladney, the protagonist living in the Eighties of DeLillo's selected fiction. The novel paints a picture of how Jack Gladney deliberates, navigates and interacts with the technology and discusses the issues of the emerging technical innovations that he has to embrace now.

Devetak in the research article "After The Event: Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and September 11 Narratives" which was published in the year 2009, also quotes the key postmodern critic Fredric Jameson who argues that DeLillo's community, "is a society fashioned around technologies, within built obsolescence, social saturation of advertising, mass media and telecommunications, and the spread of suburbanization and car culture" (Devetak 799) therefore DeLillo's novel employs 'simulations' to prepare the people for any event of an emergency. In the novel, these resonate with the 'disaster management drills' that often occur and the author describes the fascination of these in the contemporary societies in *White Noise* (1985) through, "I feel I'm learning important things every day. Death, disease, afterlife, outer space. It's all much clearer here" (DeLillo 42) pointing towards how the contemporary world can simulate almost anything, even something as terrifying as a disaster, because of the capability of the technical prowess in the present times.

It becomes clear that throughout the novel DeLillo is not only familiarizing himself with the astounding powers of the evolutionary stance of the contemporary technological complex but his novel also emphasizes the transition that America has gone through at each stage of this

evolution. DeLillo's novels present how the technology of today is capable of probing into the deepest corners of the core of human consciousness and make it visible, almost like a spiritual experience, as he further explicates in *White Noise* (1985) when the Gladneys are out shopping at the store with Murray Siskind accompanying them. Murray, who is fascinated with the automation of the store says, "This place recharges us spiritually, it prepares us, it's a gateway or pathway. Look how bright. It's full of psychic data (DeLillo 44)." The interaction between Murray and the Gladneys illustrates the ways in which humans started engaging with technology, so much so that it reshaped the practices surrounding itself. This transformation from how technology was traditionally consumed to how it presently circumvents all manual effort aggressively, bespeaks of how algorithmic power and the capability of artificial intelligence have almost removed humans from the equation of contemporary praxis of technoculture and poses as a threat that humans have created on their own for themselves.

The event that marks the arrival of a man-made dissent or tragedy and perpetuates the onset of a modern apocalypse in DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) is the 'airborne toxic event' and according to John Frow (1990) in "The Last Things Before the Last: Notes on *White Noise*", the novel is "about the effects of an industrial (or postindustrial) disaster" (Frow 413), he furthers this argument and states that, "industrial poison is a crucial component of the postmodern aesthetic" (Frow 414) implicating how the cataclysmic events in the current times are a "conjunction of beautiful and the toxic" (Frow 414). Therefore, these events are the sites where the modern 'collapse' situates itself as it defies the tenets of modern 'progress and upgrade'. DeLillo hence, expresses the realization that the evolutionary relationship with technology is the reason behind such modern disasters and they gradually are leading towards chaos in the human praxis.

DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) hence, discusses the rise of this hyperreal cosmopolis that has evolved amidst the technological advancement of media and information sectors. When the manmade tragedy unfolds in the novel, DeLillo elucidates the primal reaction of humans by showing how humans in the current times employ all technological tools at hand to retrieve the smallest of the information about the disaster that has occurred through all media sources and channels of communication, such as the telephone or the radio, or even the much newer gadget like the television. This is depicted in the novel when DeLillo writes, "The phone rang. Babette walked into the kitchen and picked it up... "That was the Stovers," she said. "They spoke directly with the weather center outside Glassboro. They are not calling it a feathery plume anymore" (DeLillo 132).

This thus, demonstrates how deeply the channels of communication and media technologies have infiltrated the living praxis and simulated a relationship of co-dependence, which happens to illustrate a sense of familiarity that deceives humans in actuality. The bite-sized information that is available at these sources often conceals the truth and presents a partial picture which is not concrete. DeLillo especially lays stress on how this action leads to miscommunication several times because in such scenarios, technology becomes the medium of disseminating information which is rooted in 'word of mouth' i.e. it is certainly transferred from the hosts of the news broadcast to the viewers of the show, from the announcer of the radio channel to the listener of the streamed frequency and in the case of the selected novel, it is transferred from someone speaking at one end of the phone to the other.

The consequences of these advancements and the natural assimilation of the technical paradigm into the everydayness of the contemporary extant are hence, witnessed timely in the instances of extremity of pollution, biohazards, industrial hazards, nuclear warfare, artillery

warfare, innovations in arms and ammunition, terrorist attacks etcetera. Therefore, the present engrossment with the culture of technology and the scientific paradigm insinuates a comparable ‘techno-sensibility’ which is responsible for permeating knowledge of the ‘threats and promises’ that “intersect with the register of the everyday, both in the sense of daily use and product of ‘life-cycle’” (Martins 88) according to Susana S. Martins (2005) in “White Noise and Everyday Technologies”. Despite the awareness regarding the dangers of technology, DeLillo’s selected fiction details how the fascination with the evolving paradigm does not go away and the co-dependency between the two is on the rise. People have evolved to prefer the ‘instant’ and there is availability of information in bite-sized chunks through impervious and radical means. This information may or may not be ‘real/true’ or ‘false’ but is consumed at a ferocious rate since contemporary media technologies make it possible to do so.

The inception of the man-made dissent in the selected fiction occurs with the ‘airborne toxic event’ in the second half of the novel but the novel also presents an account of how technology leads to this very dissent and is responsible for a plethora of catastrophes. As Jack Gladney is waiting for his daughter at the airport, DeLillo uses him as a mouthpiece to depict the hazardous complication that this technical realm has brought hence, he writes in *White Noise* (1985) that:

The plane had lost power in all the three engines, dropped from thirty-four thousand feet to twelve thousand feet. Something like four miles. When the steep glide began, people rose, fell, moaning began. Almost immediately a voice from the flight deck was heard on the intercom: “We’re falling out of the sky! We’re going down! We’re a silver gleaming death machine!” This outburst struck the passengers as an all but total breakdown of authority, competence and command presence and it brought on a round of fresh and desperate wailing (DeLillo107)

DeLillo here attempts to propound the idea of how the technical realm that has been naturalized into the contemporary society. It also has an aggressive potential despite the ideas of progressiveness that are associated with it. With the connection that has now been established between contemporary society and the technological complex, such catastrophic events raise queries into how these mayhems affect the psychology of the victims and how the consequent dystopia is because of the negative impact of technology. The dominance of technology has created the conduit that connects humans to the world that they exist in therefore, the established culture of technology and this dependence on it emphasizes how there is no escape out of this technological labyrinth, even if it is the root of suffering in the contemporary times.

In such cataclysmic events, humans are rendered as the prime target where the aftereffects are primarily seen. The possible creative powers that lie in the technological complex of the present times thus, are redirected to a more hostile and complicated relationship, where uncertainty and mortality meet each other. The ‘tragedy’ of such events lies in the virtualization of the cataclysm which then is simulated in an endless loop. The trauma of having a first-hand experience of these events speaks of the power imbalance that exists between technology and humans inhabiting the current extant. DeLillo thus discusses the absurdity of technology through his fiction, underscoring how this solely becomes the reason behind modern apocalypses. To elucidate further on this absurdity DeLillo in *White Noise* (1985) writes that, “...they didn’t prepare us for this death simulator in Denver. Our fear is pure, so totally stripped of distractions and pressures as to be a form of transcendental meditation” (DeLillo 107) expounding on aspects of technology that act as external factors but are relevant to how technology is the cause of death and destruction in such events. These events therefore, bring a rejuvenation in the industrial and consumerist complexes, so as to produce a safer and competent upgrade of the technology, in

order to avoid such disasters in the future because the survivors of such events learn from the never-ending simulation on how to create the possibility of a better future.

The contemporary technoculture therefore does not aid the preservation of humanistic values and approaches to life, but, it creates a disruption so as to alter the entire praxis of existence because the circulation of the simulated trauma through the use of media technologies creates the need of more and better technologies. DeLillo underscores through his fiction of how this insatiable behaviour has led to the catastrophic turn in the living paradigm. The domination of the technological complex over contemporary humans thus, underlines how humans have been far removed from the centre of things and ultimately they are in threat of a kind of extinction that is purely physical in nature. The paradox of living in the present technoculture and through means of technology hence, reiterates that the human relationship with the nonhuman components of the world have undergone blasphemous changes and the culture of technology in the present extant has almost overthrown humans from their position of power with an almost violent force. DeLillo in the selected fiction therefore implicates how modern disasters are curated through human mishap even though there are attempts at mitigating them. The author thus, brings out a sense of awareness of the surroundings where such events take place and highlights how humans often neglect it because of extreme naturalization with the technical paradigm. DeLillo therefore, reiterates the boundaries that humans in the present extant share with the things that are familiarized but possibly exist in human proximity only because of the technical aspect of them.

The technical cataclysm in the novel does not end at the disaster that sprouts from it, towards the third half of the novel DeLillo takes into account another pertinent outgrowth of the modern technoculture which is the modern medicine. He criticizes how there is an entire industry

of modern medicine that produces a copious number of different drugs which often come with side effects. In DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985), the author illustrates this complex relationship with modern medicine through the drug named 'Dylar' that affects brain competency. DeLillo employs these modern chemical compounds as a tool of how these chemically synthesized components have the harmful tendency of inducing brain disorders besides the, "...skin irritation and sweaty palms" that in DeLillo's words mainly comes after, "...But now they say nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath (DeLillo 130)". In the novel when Jack Gladney decides to kill Willie Mink, whom he sees as a rival, he is unsure of how to procure the drug that he believes will take death away but DeLillo illustrates how Mink, who can be viewed as an addict to the drug, is struggling with a disorder that distorts all distinction between words and the things that they refer to. Upon the protagonist, Jack Gladney's utterance of "plunging aircraft", Mink takes off his sandals and folds himself into a position that has been recommended during the happening of a crash.

This can be read through the lens of how modern technology therefore, orchestrates the relationship that the humans share with it and it is under the guise of the positives of technology however, what Don DeLillo aims at underscoring is how this relationship is also a simulation of its own and there is no voluntary action on the part of the humans that inhabit and observe the present technoculture. The transcending experience that technology provides in contemporary times hence is also a simulation that is carefully crafted. It appears that the development in technology and the advancement coincides with the human yearning for comfort and solace. It is guided by an insatiable hunger for power and domination over technology, but, this evolutionary relationship also leaves the two in an inoperable situation without any help from the other. Therefore, technology expands its dimensions and encompasses everything to become the only

thing that is relevant in the present times, permeating actions that may or may not be harmful to humans.

Humans hence, engage with the contemporary technoculture through choice and these choices add to the power of its cataclysmic tendencies since technology mediates the existence and experience in contemporary times almost becoming hard to control manually. In the novel *Mao II* which was published in the year 1991, Don DeLillo critiques how the nature of worshipping the contemporary technology has placed it at the center of all focal points. Technology in the modern era has ushered humans into an era of where the locus of threat also surrounds the same system of objects that enunciate the smooth functioning in contemporary times. DeLillo addresses the transition in the living paradigm that has happened from the year of 1985 when *White Noise* was published to the year of 1991 when *Mao II* was published but it delineates how this evolution has also seen a rise in the destabilization of the human living paradigm. The author attempts to underline how the contemporary society in *Mao II* is not just dominated by media technologies but it has also seen an influx of terrorism and these violent acts of terrorism occur in a smooth manner only because of the aid from the technoculture present in the society. DeLillo's protagonist for this novel Bill Gray is a reminiscent figure of Don DeLillo himself. Bill Gray is a recluse author who does not want to complete his novel because he does not want to become a part of the process of mass production. The play on capitalistic tendencies of the modern world by DeLillo bespeaks how technology has the capability of taking a unique entity and creating a web of simulacrum around it, deferring it to the point of simulation.

In *Mao II* which was published in 1991, the author Don DeLillo, discusses the Nineties and how in mere five years after the publication of his previous novel, there has occurred a vast change in the living paradigm. The presence of machines that are intelligent and competent

enough to replace the manual labor are now bigger threats to how humans situate themselves and find meaning in the present times. DeLillo supplements this through his writing in *Mao II* (1991) that, "...And here is the mechanical routine played out with living figures" (DeLillo 7) pointing at how the people living in contemporary extant have themselves turned partially mechanical under the influence of the contemporary living praxis substantiated through technology. DeLillo notes how the contemporary society is already a hyperreal cosmopolis, he writes, "Did she ever think she'd find herself in a stadium in New York, photographed by thousands of people?" (DeLillo 10) commenting on how the upgraded media technologies are now a part of the everydayness of this contemporary extant. The author furthers this statement by adding that, "They're here but also there, already in the albums and slide projectors, filling picture frames with their microcosmic bodies, the minikin selves they are trying to become" (DeLillo 10) pointing towards how technology has now not only taken over but created special roles for humans to partake in.

Technology therefore has permeated into the daily lives and has created a regime of certain authority, which it exercises over the population, with the help of media technologies in the hyperreal cosmopolis. In DeLillo's 1991 published *Mao II* when the protagonist Bill Gray is in a conversation with his photographer acquaintance Brita, he comments on this hyperreal takeover as a recluse and states that, "the image world is corrupt, here is a man who hides his face" (DeLillo 36) evidently pointing towards how the media technologies are used as a force of creating identities but these identities are also responsible of replacing the apparent 'original'. The characters Bill and Brita discuss how when writers themselves become the commodity of consumption, it does not fare well for the writer as Bill reflects on the adversity of such situations while Brita is shooting him through the camera lens. Bill Gray ponders on how he is

suffering as a writer in the present times and, "...when one of them mixed too many brandies and little violet pills or placed the nozzle of a revolver just behind the ear, the others felt both sorry and acknowledged" (DeLillo 38) hinting at how the contemporary technoculture has rendered the figure of authors into mere objects of consumption and stripped them of any individual identity. The presence of this complex technoculture is thus harmful to the idea of being an author since this very culture of technology has provided authors like Bill Gray the means to end their lives. It is the provision of violence rooted in the contemporary technoculture that amusingly has not been addressed enough because modern technology is still seen as the prerequisite for development and achievement as humankind.

The immersive experience of technology in the contemporary times therefore is a conscious choice and the technological component of this complex was initially manipulated according to the needs of the living paradigm. However, with the exponential growth in the technical paradigm and the increasing complexity between different 'systems of objects', there is the dilemma about who manipulates whom, exemplified in how technology has been governing the current extant and there is nothing outside of its locale including the disastrous events that symbolize the modern tragedies. The dystopia in the urban technoscapes can be credited to the tragic situations that technology has helped in creating or disseminating, because the technical praxis acts as a tool for fashioning such disasters alongside enhancing them. Technology, therefore, acts as the medium of the fall that human civilization has to take, because of the diversion that the living praxis has taken from the traditional route. These technoscapes hence have turned dystopic and are fueled by modern tragedies because these modern tragedies help in altering the cultural, socio-political, economic as well as philosophical paradigms. These shifts have tremendous influencing power in the contemporary times because of the power of media.

When both the characters in *Mao II* (1991) Bill and Brita are conversing, Brita briefly mentions how living in the contemporary times is scary to her because:

It's crazy. I'm devoting my life to a gesture. Yes, I travel. Which means there is no moment on certain days when I'm not thinking terror. They have us in their power. In boarding areas I never sit near windows in case of flying glass. I carry a Swedish passport so that's okay unless you believe that terrorists killed the prime minister. Then maybe it's not so good. And I use codes in my address book for names and addresses of writers because how can you tell if the name of a certain writer is dangerous to carry, some dissident, some Jew or blasphemer...

(DeLillo 40-41)

reminding Bill of how the modern times are as complicated as the technologies that have been manifested into existence for ease and smoother functioning. These technologies have amplified the dissents and tragic experiences because the technical turn has removed humans from domination and this takeover also poses a threat by becoming the external agency that facilitates oppression by exerting authority. With the assimilation of technology into daily lives, there has also occurred an unconscious acquiring of the ideology of consumerism making the contemporary times as a playground of the image substituting for real information and shaping the opinion of the entire generation exemplified in when Bill comments:

There's a curious knot that binds novelists and terrorists. In the West we become famous effigies as our books lose the power to shape and influence. Do you ask writers how they feel about this? Years ago, I used to think it was possible for a novelist to alter the inner life of the culture. Now bomb-makers and gunmen have taken that territory. They make raids on human consciousness. What writers used to do before we were all incorporated (DeLillo 41)

delineating how the contemporary has seen institutionalization of powers that have capabilities of dismantling the entire human living paradigm and all its elements including cultural, socio-political, economic as well as ideological, that are being simulated in the hyperreal extant.

The part two of DeLillo's 1991 published *Mao II* presents a much-detailed account of the kidnapping of a writer. This kidnapped writer hence, becomes a commodity that is replicated through the media technologies to critically engage with the consumer culture that is prevalent in the contemporary extant. It also represents how this commodification is part of the medium that erases the distinctive boundaries between the different social orders when issues arise from the same. The 'image' of the kidnapped writer in the hyperreal world becomes his only form of identity thus, absolutely removing him from the physical plane and hiding him amidst the simulacrum where his abduction is the 'violent act' that occurs as well as is brought out to the forefront with the help of the technological complex that arrests this exchange in a state of permanence. Hence, DeLillo writes, "But he sensed they'd forgotten his body by now. He was lost in the wavebands, one more code for the computer mesh, for the memory of crimes too pointless to be solved (DeLillo 112)." These acts of violence such as plagues, bio-hazards, terrorism and wars etcetera, that are rendered visible in the contemporary world because of the technical paradigm have put an end to the idea of being human both in concept as well as in physical realm. This technical turn corresponded with evolution of human praxis to an era of industrialized civilization from which such catastrophes emerged thus situating them in the vandalizing as well as exploitative attempts of humankind.

The recent decades exemplify how the authoritarian will of man has turned into being more and more selfish as well as catastrophic in nature leading to suffering that is publicized and digitally doctored for the sake of consumption in the consumerist society. The wide array of

technologies that have evolved alongside the human praxis enable these modern calamities to be telecasted to a wider audience. In the novel *Mao II* (1991), when Charlie Everson contacts Bill Gray in order to request the usage of his image as a recluse author, to hold a press conference, that will subsequently convince the terrorist group to release their fellow author, who has been imprisoned by this terror outfit. The conversation between the two elucidates how in the modern world, the revolution belongs at the junction between the ‘mighty pen’ and the technology, that aids the pen in bringing out the revolution through sheer terror which is then circulated through the replicated. The conversation points towards the innate sense of anxiety and violence that the American society has ushered into as seen in the discussion between the two characters:

“You have a twisted sense of the writer’s place in society. You think the writer belongs at the far margin, doing dangerous things. In Central America, writers carry guns. They have to. And this has always been your idea of the way it ought to be. The state should want to kill all writers. Every government, every group that holds power or aspires to power should feel so threatened by writers that they hunt them down, everywhere.”

“I’ve done no dangerous things.”

“No. but you’ve lived out the vision anyway.”

“So my life is a kind of simulation.”

“Not exactly. There’s nothing false about it. You’ve actually become a hunted man.”

“I see.” (DeLillo 1991)

it delineates how there has been a development of a newer dimension where intellectual wars are occurring through the medium of modern technologies. These ideological wars are not only aided by the machines but they offer a vantage point in influencing the subconscious through the repeated imagery of violence and threat. The power that the human thought holds in the modern

world, has used this advanced mechanization to disseminate and indoctrinate biased dispositions. Technology thus, also becomes the *modus operandi* for any rational deliberation pertaining to these cataclysmic events, even through the breaks in the structure of society suggesting how technology causes and permeates chaos into the modern living paradigm making the contemporary a ‘living horror’ with its threats of wars that can eliminate the entire human race. The impermanence of technology alongside the evolutionary trajectory can be implicated in how the technical turn is still evolving into a more complex structure and the presence of evolving artificial intelligence in the postmodern scene is an evidence of humans being replaced with technology thus, removing humans from the living praxis. This is thus, a representative of the cataclysmic potency that modern technology has and how it is able to create a modern tragedy that can cause changes at the social, economic, cultural as well as political levels across the globe with the help of the media technologies and its aids.

In DeLillo’s 1991 published *Mao II*, the author thus, showcases how the developing technology is at the helm of the most political decisions. The protagonist is someone whose ‘image’ is a prime possession and has never been consumed before, but Bill Gray’s acceptance for being photographed as well as appearing on TV for a press conference is immediately ceded as a threat. In the conversation between the protagonist Bill Gray with Charlie Everson about the change in venue Charlie states, ““...At noon today they began receiving phone calls. Anonymous.” “Threats.” “Bomb threats...” (DeLillo 191).” DeLillo here points towards the relationship between the production capacity of mass media for immediate consumption and the cause and effect that it has on the general populace. It evidently also implicates how the mass media and aiding technologies treat consumption as a way of catering to the entertainment it leads to.

This form of consumption affects reality in contemporary times as ‘entertainment’ in today’s world comes from the information that is received in packets of data and it stems from a complex system of creating, supplying, distributing and inferring the information which in itself comes from a conglomeration of forces that are simulations of what real information may be like. DeLillo further writes, “Mao used photographs to announce his return and demonstrate his vitality, to re-inspire the revolution” reaffirming the manipulative powers of modern media technologies. Continuing further, “Bill’s picture was a death notice. His image hadn’t become public yet and he was already gone” (DeLillo 141) to elucidate on how media is an active force in contemporary times and how it dictates the fate of people even before the cataclysmic even has occurred such as, when Scott, who happens to assist Bill Gray, is informed of his disappearance, “Scott understood it as a kind of simulated death” (DeLillo 140) writes DeLillo.

DeLillo evolves his technoscape to a higher degree in his *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997. It differs from his 1991 published *Mao II* as *Underworld* (1991) expands on the revolutions in the field of science and technology and focuses especially on how the technical paradigm and the praxis of technoculture in the modern world has not just mechanized but has also created a hybrid of political requisites and the innovative technologies at disposal of the world leaders and people in power. The machines in the Nineties had become weapons of political means and the evolved media technologies aided in the authoritarian prowess of the technical paradigm by enabling censorships and operating to influence. This was the outcome of how society had been trivialized as an entity because of the rise of scientific grandiose and readily available products for consumption that were popularized through media sources, especially through visual media. This facet of media technologies thus brings awareness

to the brutal abilities of modern technology and its destructive capabilities and the malevolence and hostility it has for living beings.

DeLillo in his novels hence comments on how the organic constituents of the modern world have slowly been replaced by technologies leading to a decline and the eventual disappearance of the physical human bodies. Even though, the present technoculture is regarded as a positive aspect of contemporary society, because of the economic opportunities that become available due to globalization, it also becomes apparent that the urbanization has led to the formation of a cosmopolis whose limitations lie in aspects like virtual reality, genetic modifications, bio-hazards, nuclear technology and its hazardous wastes as well as the emergence of artificial reality etcetera. All these limitations have risen out of the longing to violate the natural order of existence. In *Underworld* that was published in the year 1997, Don DeLillo discusses the technological progress that the living praxis has made and how it is currently furthering into collapse. The change that this technological takeover has brought to the contemporary ecosystem is a sign of the cataclysmic tragedies and the strength of the humankind to cause their own extinction. DeLillo employs the transcending powers of technology in his novels to depict the urge for human salvation through technical supremacy however, he is concerned about how technology now has the power to destroy the humankind itself. Since, technology have now colonized the living paradigm it becomes physically impossible to separate from technology, as the naturalization and assimilation of technology has now altered and transformed both the physical bodies as well as minds.

Published in the year 1997 Don DeLillo's *Underworld* delineates the story in six parts to depict the ambitions of the human race to achieve its full potential by overcoming all the shortcomings and being the dominant force. It discusses how modern technology has broadened

human horizons and transformed the living paradigm into an enhanced version where the conditions surrounding the human praxis are more artificial and independent in operation thus corresponding to any form of limitation or lack thereof. This innovative modern technology that DeLillo discusses in his novels, acts as a testament of the cognitive capabilities and sensibilities that humans have developed over the time. DeLillo writes about this proximity with technology and the evolving techno sensibility, stating “there’s a man in the upper deck leafing through a copy of the current issue of Life. There’s a man on 12th Street in Brooklyn who has attached a tape machine... It changes nothing but your life” (DeLillo 32) pointing at how technology has readily become available for anyone and everyone. It also points out how the invention of media technologies has coincidentally changed from something like ‘Life’ in the magazine to ‘life’ in total, making the transformation at the most fundamental level. This is pertinent in comprehending how the modern technical paradigm gives the illusion of taking humans away from the brink of apocalypses, even though the traditional form of these apocalypses has also evolved alongside the technical paradigm.

DeLillo carefully interweaves the crucial details of how technology was assimilated into the daily life as exemplified in when he writes about his protagonist from *Underworld* (1997), Nick Shay, who works with nuclear energy and intends on developing ways of mitigating any dangers of the nuclear waste, meets his brother Matt and talks about his mother who is to be taken to a doctor’s appointment, the brother’s discussion points at how technology has become one with the human praxis and appears to have become a part of it naturally. DeLillo further writes in his 1997 published *Underworld* that, ““Nick said, “I have to go to Jersey in the morning or I’d take her to the doctor myself.” “What’s in Jersey? Chemical waste eating people’s houses?”” (DeLillo 195) pointing at how the scientific grandiose is at a point in production that it

creates its own waste. This technological waste is an example of how the technology today has been reprogrammed to instigate threats that are most likely to be vaguely imagined. DeLillo thus condemns how the acceptance of technology into daily American lives is not appreciated by everyone as it has blurred any distinction between nature and technology itself by causing repercussions in the form of hazards and calamities. DeLillo thus critically comments on how the reshaping of the human praxis by this technical turn has resulted in not only a strong deviation but equal devastation of the physical realm of reality in which the landscape existed only to have been replaced by the modern technoscape.

Reflecting on the contemporary technical praxis and the advancement that it has made, DeLillo's selected fiction discusses the radical changes that have happened in the present extant and analyses how the modern apocalypses are not just in the violent tendencies and incidents that have occurred in the present times, but, also lay deep-seated in the human consciousness, which can be credited to the advancements that humans have made over time. He writes in his *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997 that:

...And anyway we don't depend on time finally. There is a balance, a kind of standoff between the time continuum and the human entity, our frail bundle of soma and psyche. We eventually succumb to time, it's true, but time depends on us. We carry it in our muscles and genes, pass it on to the next set of time-factoring creatures, our brown-eyed daughters and jug-eared sons, or how would the world keep going (DeLillo 235)

hinting at how the technical advancements are happening at a pace that is not comprehensible but is undeniably real. In the contemporary extant, the technical prowess is at a point where it has the capacity of violating all that is organic and natural. Science and technology have thus succeeded in overcoming the limits of human rationality paving the way for disasters that are rooted in the

engagement of human praxis with the rising scientific and technological complex. These disasters are now thus also rooted in the pleasure that humankind derives from the technological complex and the ease it brings. It becomes relevant to know that the issues that arise in the present times are somehow associated with the fact that consumption in the present times is for pure entertainment purposes, therefore, the subjects in the postmodern era now look for gratification in the virtual realm and transcend into the 'online' world for the same. It can be thus debated that the rise in technology affects the cultural outlook of the present society. Its wide impact can be seen through the domination of technology in the hierarchal system that governs the present extant. Technology thus, becomes the conduit of reinforcing the social structure and the capitalistic order. The disparities and dissent in this order therefore, creates patterns of shifts, that extend to political, economic, social and cultural contexts and the presence of media technologies is what makes it possible.

Towards the end of his 1997 published *Underworld*, DeLillo writes in the epilogue of the novel that:

Capital burns off the nuance in a culture. Foreign investment, global markets, corporate acquisitions, the flow of information through transnational media, the attenuating influence of money that's electronic and sex that's cyber-spaced, untouched money and computer-safe sex, the convergence of consumer desire – not that people want the same things, necessarily, but that they want the same range of choices (DeLillo 785)

to elucidate how the present technoculture is all about captivating and then maintaining the attention of its viewers. This is aided by the presence of the music, spectacle and the image of someone too real to be presenting the facts via a TV screen, making it a simulated form of entertainment that never ends. DeLillo's selected fiction thus, takes this concept of a modern

apocalypse and treats it like an intriguing form of entertainment that overlooks the seriousness of the subject matter, often leading to pure neglect. The contemporary hence, exists in a world of images, facts and figures or statistical data that is comprehensible through the technocultural understanding of the present world however, it is the inception of any modern form of apocalypse that leads to a simulated collapse of the contemporary extant that eventually grabs our attention. These disasters are comprehensible only till the time they are away from our physical realm in a system where an overflow of information occurs through media technologies.

CONCLUSION OF THE THESIS

Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) was a French cultural theorist, sociologist and philosopher.

Baudrillard's persona in the field of postmodern studies is best described in Stuart Sim's *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers* (2013) as "one of the *enfants terribles* of postmodern thought, a self-consciously maverick figure given to making deliberately provocative announcements... (Sim 29)." His oeuvre directly engages and critiques contemporary cultural reorientations that ushered in the late 20th and 21st centuries. Baudrillard's critiques include the analysis of contemporary praxis that encompassed a diversity of subjects, from media to intricate gender relations.

Baudrillard's arguments are known to have been taken across the point of return making his dissatisfaction with the present times clear because his works challenge Marxist notions which led to the emergence of this hypercapitalistic society. He is also of the opinion that the contemporary world and the complex communication systems that have been employed, together make an apparatus that is a direct extension of the technological structure that has evolved in the modern day. It is Baudrillard who concluded that the hypercapitalistic turn will one day implode into itself and the present extant will turn into a simulation with no true real. This implosion is what hints at the modern-day apocalypse because his criticism underscores the present society as an establishment that needs investigation for the scientific grandiose that has been garnered.

The evolution of the technical paradigm and the system of objects that Baudrillard critiques discusses the intersection of technology and consumerism. In the contemporary world, technology has become the soul of creating goods for consumption and these goods are not made out of necessity or need but are created for pure aesthetic purposes. Thus the evolution of technology has changed the relationship that humans share with it. It has a profound impact on both the cultural as well as technological praxis. The contemporary is defined through the

channels of technologies, especially, communication media and technology. The power of media and its ability to shape any rhetoric has led to the establishment of capitalistic regimes all over the world. This global conglomeration thus redefines the present extant as there is an establishment of a technical paradigm that governs the current existence. This has in turn led to the emergence of consumerist societies that are bound to the evolving technological praxis through the hyperreal cosmopolitan. Simultaneously, it has also led to the evolution of mechanized turmoil as there is also evidence of how technology apparently is now an aide in times of turmoil. The narratives surrounding such tragic incidents are carefully doctored and then submitted to media channels for consumption.

There is also evidence of how rising technological praxis and the culture of technology have evolved in the postmodern and posthuman scene to cause displacement of humans with major effects on the physical as well as psychological factors. Therefore, it can be deduced from tragic incidents like 9/11 or the Iraq war that most tragedies in the contemporary era are rooted in human activities and evolutionary paradigms. The selected fiction also has pieces of evidence of the same.

It is debatable yet evident how the current living praxis has undergone a seismic shift from the Eighties that Don DeLillo bespeaks of in his fiction. The changes in the living paradigm are responsible for reshaping the entirety of human existence, experience and identity altogether. With the emergence of AI technologies and the internet, a transformation is also visible in how commercialisation is approached. It is also evident that the commercial powers of digital technologies in today's world aid in achieving capitalistic greatness.

In the Eighties, when the powers of communication were limited by physical barriers such as landline phones or the basic wired channels of communication, it is noted in Don

DeLillo's fiction that the characters are 'hard to reach', both physically as well as metaphorically. It is so in the sense that the meaning which is conveyed through the channels of technology gets lost like the characters in DeLillo's fiction. Despite revolutionizing industries and enhancing all forms of capitalistic and materialistic productivity, DeLillo's fiction points towards the flaws that have evolved alongside in healthcare; capitalistic ventures that treat the world as an open market to trade currencies; social factors such as political assassinations, kidnappings for 'media hostage' and terrorism; modern warfare that involves nuclear power, arms, ammunition, and political strategies to win war; with almost reaching a point in artificial intelligence, where the modern man wants to unite with technology itself and become a part of the cybernetic discourse and dimension.

While Baudrillard's critical discourse highlights the rise of the technical paradigm through a carefully curated 'system of objects', it also subtly points towards the onset of the hyperreal, where there is an erosion of privacy. This vulnerability is a factor that Don DeLillo has also expounded on in his selected fiction such as *Cosmopolis* (2003) and *Point Omega* (2010). Through the selected fiction, a trace can be made of how the rise of technological praxis has traversed from aid to surveillance to now misinformation and digital addiction as also underscored in DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003).

Locating the same climactic shift in the selected novels of Don DeLillo, it can be studied that the constant evolution of technology impacts DeLillo's characters profusely. The characters like 'Jack Gladney', the protagonist of DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) represent the common American who has slowly imbibed the infusion of technology into everyday life and goes from being agitated by the loss of manual autonomy to being in awe of how technology has carved itself a niche. Alternatively, there is mention of 'J. Edgar Hoover' in DeLillo's *Underworld*

(1997), a character that is interrupted midgame with the information of how the Soviet Union has tested an 'atomic bomb' making them a direct threat to America. DeLillo's fiction thus draws heavily from contemporary existence and discusses how technology has not only revolutionized the aspects of living by generating a very comforting lifestyle but, because of its smooth assimilation into American everydayness, its soft repression and crisis is beyond comprehension for any common American man. Not only does the simultaneously evolving technology act as an aide in the imperial aggression through wars but it has also led to the genesis of arms and ammunition as a capitalistic venture, making it an industry in its own right. Then there is the inception of bio-hazards and bio-weaponry in the contemporary extant which DeLillo attempts at underscoring in his fiction. Don DeLillo, therefore, is an author who has closely traced the evolving paradigm and the after-effects of the same on humankind as the author bears himself as a witness who has lived through this evolution and its aftermath. Baudrillard (1983) in *In The Shadow of the Silent Majorities* argues "Terrorism 'represents' nothing, and between terror and the masses there passes a 'reverse energy... of absorption and annulment of the political'" (Baudrillard 56) he adds to the discussion by foregrounding that it is 'defiance of sense' and is "akin to the natural catastrophe" (Baudrillard 56). It is Baudrillard's attempt at underlining how the contemporary world has shifted to productive resources (identified with the late-capitalist economy, subsisting in the consumerist space) that demarcate themselves from genuine needs and invade to distort every aspect of human existence.

Baudrillard (1990) hence, locates the current era as an epoch where 'truth' becomes the product of consensus values and 'science' becomes anything with which prestigious 'modes of explanation' are attached. The present times therefore reproduce the "structures of thoughts through its appeal to use-value, labour-power, forces of production etc. (Norris 124)." Mark

Poster (2000), an eminent Baudrillardian critic, emphasizes how his works, “offer new bearings in an age when ‘the instant, worldwide availability of information has changed human society forever, probably for the good (Poster 8)”. Justifying Baudrillard’s (1981) argument when he states that, “they set themselves up as expressing an ‘objective reality’. They become signs: signifiers of a ‘real’ signified (Baudrillard 114).”

It posits the author’s anxiety about how this newer freedom that has been credited to the developments in the fields of science and technology as well as the easy access of the same due to practically affordable ways of commercialization, just allows the evolution of our society into a virtual one. And, this virtual reality has enabled the erosion of all ambiguity and ‘otherness’ that separates humanity from the ‘virtual existence’ with every simulation that occurs. This advantage over media and communication systems, therefore, also caters to the present world’s technological hunger which is preferably data-driven by nature, as well as, is capable of invading whatever personal space that humans crave for themselves. The after-effect of this tendency is that ensures that there is detachment from the ‘real’ and it happens in such a fashion that there is not much stimulus required for the same and it furthers the agenda of creating crippling critical abilities in the humans existing in such technoscapes.

The takeover by capitalistic forces hence, aggressively aids the process of simulation causing regression of human thought, furthering the ‘thinking capability’ which is why the seeking of emancipation from this evolving technical grip tends to fade away in this self-constructed virtual reality that the modern people exist in. This is also aggravated by hindering and thwarting the interactive experience that humans have with their surroundings because a system of ‘self-referential’ possibility is constructed that simulates the natural order of what real is.

Richard Devetak (2009) argues how certain events that occur in our modern and postmodern era are experienced only through the power of narrative techniques. It is these inherent practices in postmodern sensibility that give the social and political significance to an event. Lyotard defines an event as “an occurrence or caesura after which nothing will be the same” (Lyotard 1988) and Devetak (2009) uses this to further his argument in the research article “After the Event: Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* and September 11 Narratives” by stating that an event is worthy of the name when it, “destroys, any pre-existing frame of reference; it exceeds intelligibility within prevailing frameworks of understanding” (Devetak 796) and thus, unsettles the human praxis by causing a divide of historical and philosophical significance. These events when calibrated through human experiences mark the testimonial sites of apocalypses that are man-made. As a consequence, these events mark a pertinent change in how the world is experienced often modifying the very relationship that humans have with the world. *White Noise* (1985) depicts life in the ‘80s, it discusses the emerging technical trends through the eyes of Jack Gladney as he navigates his life that is starting to embrace these innovations.

Therefore, disasters today incorporate a numbing impact and DeLillo exhibits the same in what Matthew Packer (2005) calls his ‘supermarket satire’ by employing the real-life technological complications that cater to man-made disasters like the airborne toxic event discussed in *White Noise* (1985). The presence of a social force like that of a TV actually then presents the event not like a man-made disaster but as a spectacle that needs to be viewed, this social force thus stays in the background of most of the noise that DeLillo talks about in his novel. These social forces therefore guide through the visual representations of the issues pertaining to enhancement that technology has provided by bringing the prime focus onto the

things that need attention. Such visuals therefore present the subtext that the images hold and are open to multiple interpretations making a mesh of different perspectives.

To understand this convoluted realm Susana S. Martins (2005) in the research article “White Noise and Everyday Technologies” writes “These focal technologies require highly visible cultural work in the public arena to incorporate them into existing structures of meaning, to assess their impact on social relations and definitions of the human, and to assert governmental controls where economic, ethical or political issues are raised (Martins 87).” The present era is thus supplemented with technological aids that have invaded the deepest corner of human existence. This infestation of technology into a naturalized state includes gadgets like television, computers, phones, cameras, recorders etc. that have now upgraded into gizmos like flat screens, laptops, tablets, touch phones, DSLRs, video recorders, WiFi, etc. becoming almost an extension of existence. This signifies that the virtual world has become another dimension in which the human praxis can fit itself. This dimension exhibits a concrete digital turn as it is built and heavily dependent upon circuits, electronic media, cyberspace as well as physical spaces that are embedded with digitalized versions of machines, technology and software. The binary of man and machine seems to break down in these spaces. It makes the real far removed, almost making way for the posthuman to present, situate and establish itself, but universalizing the digital turn nonetheless.

White Noise (1985) by Don DeLillo depicts how postmodern lives engage with high technical panorama as the contemporary times are evidence of “discourses of space travel, robots, cloning, nuclear devastation, and a variety of ecological threats” (Martins 87). It also portrays how the rise in this sector accelerated political and economic freedom, furthering the

motives of science and technology and making certain that the evolving cosmopolitan is institutionalized as the facet of existence.

This elevated existence therefore allows the contemporary society that DeLillo is mirroring, as a byproduct of rising capitalistic ventures as well as a fully functioning ecosystem of its own. *White Noise* (1985) therefore, is the narrative of the dystopic postmodern world negotiating a relationship between the utopic idea of existence that transcends into dystopia, as technology that both compliments and overlaps senses, producing both fear and acceptance through the myriad of changes like DeLillo mentions in his *White Noise* (1985) that “They’ve forgotten how to collect data. In the psychic sense, a forest fire on TV is on a lower plane than a ten-second spot for automatic Dishwasher All (DeLillo 79).” While the characters in the novel experience fear and confusion in the face of mechanization, mass mediation, and the toxic side effects of technological innovation, *White Noise* (1985) also portrays the character’s encounter with fear and bewilderment brought about by extensive mechanization, mass communication, and the negative consequences of technological progress, therefore, *White Noise* (1985) also offers a glimpse into the joys and delights that technology has brought. The benefit of modern medicine that helps Jack and Babette eradicate their constant fear of death brings out the comfort that this evolution has allowed to suffice. When Jack learns of Babette’s affair with Willie Mink, he is forced to comply with her connection to him because of the easy access to the drug ‘Dylar’ that Jack can get his hands on and it can read through the lens of pleasure, that modern medicine provides, as it not only caters to longevity and good health but ensures that the mental health of human mind is subjected to susceptibility that is encoded in the relationship that it shares with the evolving scenario.

White Noise (1985) thus, emphasizes the defamiliarization that DeLillo has introduced his readers to by bringing out the convoluted visions that one is subjected to via the television and exposure to media outlets. This exposure is bound to create confusion and a feeling of uncanniness for the viewers who consume this constant stream of images.

The presence of 'SIMUVAC' teams, which were created to be the first responders in the event of a civil disaster, emulates the Baudrillardian concept of how everything is a simulation and nothing happens for real. The organizers of 'SIMUVAC' upon the actual disaster make comments that 'everything that they see tonight is real' and it presents the 'untidiness' that accompanies an actual emergency in reality. Since technology is an aide to the cause, it renders this simulation more feasible, as evidently witnessed when characters like Murray Siskind start to believe that they have been exposed to the aftereffects of this disaster, in terms of having contracted something similar to 'chemical poisoning'. Siskind further starts to imitate the 'dying man symptoms' in a desperate attempt at having a quiet goodbye however, because he is still under the control of his accumulated resources, the character believes he is ready to confront his imminent demise and wants to do so as a 'killer' rather than a 'dier', therefore, he intends to somehow use these resources to defeat the fate of death by becoming the killer. Nevertheless, media outlets in an event like this appear to not abide by any protocol as they still routinely place commercials during the coverage of these events. This presents information in a fractured manner laced with the interjection of capitalistic desires thus creating a distorted array of facts that does not seem coherent.

In the context of late capitalism, technology poses a significant threat to the overall well-being, self-identity, the ecological balance of the earth, and the authenticity of human emotions and interactions. This threat arises from the creation of cultural imitations facilitated by the

concept of 'masses,' leading to the production of cultural dupes. In *White Noise* (1985) DeLillo skillfully explores these notions of High-Tech America, highlighting the inherent dangers that they present. It also renders visible the possibility of it being a cultural dupe since it becomes difficult to maintain the true representations in a world where 'reality' itself is being constantly constructed as DeLillo sarcastically writes in *White Noise* (1985) "There were no addresses. Her friends had phone numbers only, a race of people with seven-bit analog consciousness" (DeLillo 50) addressing how the modern world is a place where nothing serves as a means of distinguishing the true or 'true-seeming'. The dependency on machines is hence on the rise because machines now have become an effective replacement despite them being capable of altering our reality and existence. This has become possible only due to strategic and significant rise in capitalistic flourishing as well as the use of media for proper advertising that takes a toll on the human psyche because in this consumerist contemporary society the idea of an urban space lures people in by creating what Baudrillard called a system of objects which are inter-related and cannot be used independently because it interferes with the contextual position that these objects provide to the human user.

The selected fiction of Don DeLillo has offered a privileged position by condensing the relationship that American households share with the innovations of the century. America has become the miniaturized world of the polis that is impacted by these technological complexes as consumer culture is now saturated with technology. The ambivalence that technology shares with humans existing in the contemporary technoculture is carefully observed and evaluated by DeLillo and he discusses the late-capitalist culture that provokes the inception of such man-made disasters. The novels makes a satirical attempt at displaying how the technical paradigm has not only marked but extended its presence into the daily American lifestyle through various means

and via its characters whose interactions with the same provide the narrative a depth like technical invasion itself. *White Noise* (1985), *Mao II* (1991), *Underworld* (1997), *Cosmopolis* (2003) and *Point Omega* (2010) thus, highlight how ideological tendencies that modern technology and consumerism hold become the conduits of how high-tech culture is naturalized. It also reimagines the entity of an apocalypse by foregrounding the disaster as an event that doesn't just happen anywhere, defamiliarizing the entirety of it as a consequence of a disorienting chain of events. Thus, the Gladneys from *White Noise* (1985) when stuck in a situation of crises, are compelled to sift through a multitude of information, processing and using it as a way to handle the disaster they face. The Gladneys therefore only partially understand their predicament by relating it to what they've witnessed on television, evaluating its significance, gravity, and authenticity based on their technological awareness. This dual perspective allows them to be both participants and observers of the experience.

Don DeLillo's selected fiction thus maps the trajectory of the rise of the technological praxis and the technical realm in the American landscape that further evolved into a technoscape and ultimately ended up as a mediascape in the current times. The fiction entails the author's personal experience from the America of the Eighties and explores how America has transcended boundaries across all physical and virtual boundaries. DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985) underscores the groundwork of how society is involved in rampant consumerism while the powers of media are on the rise and towards a point of saturation. The Gladneys are seen as the epitomes of the common American who is under the influence of the influx of images and how their surroundings are dominated by technology and media. The novel *Mao II* by Don DeLillo (1991) then delves into how media technologies are used as conduits and modus operandis of shaping the ideological grounds of the inhabitants of DeLillo's America. Don DeLillo uses Bill

Gray, the recluse author, as a mouthpiece to render visible the ways in which media images are used to dehumanize ideologically different men and reveal the terrorist notions that such people harbour. DeLillo thoroughly explores this shift towards the modern day mediascapes from a realm of technological praxis. He underscores the ways in which reality is often constructed carefully through mediated images.

In the novel *Underworld* which was published in the year 1997, Don DeLillo's fiction underscores the commencement of an age where media technologies acted as auxiliary forces that facilitated information warfare. Thus the technological praxis in the Nineties defined post-war America where globalization was conferred with an omnipresent position to media and other scientific innovations such as nuclear power. Furthermore, Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* which was published in the year 2003, addresses the dystopic vision of the scientific grandiose. In the world of Eric Packer, the protagonist of Don DeLillo's novel, any and all boundaries, between the real and the virtual have been either completely removed or blurred to the point of no distinction. DeLillo uses the figure of New York City to introduce the concept of a virtual labyrinth that is heavily relying on technology and media causing a certain disconnect.

In the novel *Point Omega* (2010) the author underscores an America which is contemplating upon the changes that technology has brought into the living paradigm. DeLillo attempts to question the human experience and the perception of truth and time. The author delves into how technology is rooted in our understanding of these concepts thus shaping the narratives of humans to understand 'time' and 'self'. DeLillo has also posited how technology shapes human perceptions and narratives altogether in this novel.

Thus the selected fiction by the author, Don DeLillo, presents a comprehensive examination of how technologies of the scientific temperaments have facilitated the transition

from the physical world to a virtual one. The modern world is a mediation from the physical landscape to a diverse technoscape, eventually culminating into a mediascape owing to the technocultural praxis of postmodern times. The realities in contemporary times are therefore tangential to whatever is circulated in the digital circuits. DeLillo's fiction thus foregrounds how the ideology of contemporary technoculture has reshaped the way humans interact and experience technology. It reiterates a more profound relationship that technology shares with the American landscape and delineates how the landscape of America has transformed into a mediascape. DeLillo's fiction hence is of primal importance because it interrogates this integration and assimilation of technology into the American lifestyle and the fundamental shift that it has caused at the core of the human living praxis determining it to be more mechanical and almost robotic or virtual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulation*. University of Michigan press, 1994.

Library Genesis,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/2459000/dbf3e860993373223d72e98fadf0f2dc/Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20Simulacra%20and%20Simulation%20University%20of%20Michigan%20Press%20%281994%29.pdf>

DeLillo, Don. *Cosmopolis*. Picador, 2011.

---. *Mao II*. Picador, 2016.

---. *Point Omega*. Picador, 2011.

---. *Underworld*. Picador, 2015.

---. *White Noise*. Picador, 2012.

Secondary Sources:

Abel, Marco. "Don DeLillo's 'in the ruins of the future': literature, images and the rhetoric of seeing 9/11." *PMLA*, 118(5), 2003, 1236-1250. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/1261462 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Baelo-Allue, S. "9/11 and the psychic trauma novel: Don DeLillo's 'Falling Man'." *Atlantis* 34(1) 2012, 63-79 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.com/stable/43486021 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Banash, D. "Alfred Hitchcock's 'Psycho' and the cinematic novels of Don DeLillo and

Manuel Munoz.” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 43(1) 2015, 4-17. Available at JSTOR-
www.jstor.org/stable/43799006 (Accessed 22 March 2021)

Barthes, Roland, translated by Annette Lavers. “Myth Today”. *Mythologies*. The
 Noonday Press – New York. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: Twenty Fifth Edition 1991.
Library Genesis,

<http://libgen.rs/book/bibtex.php?md5=BC18E2C865E9056007F6A9EC06AD24C8>

Barrett, Laura. “‘How the Dead Speak to the Living’: Intertextuality and the
 Postmodern Sublime in ‘White Noise’.” *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 25, no. 2, 2001,
 pp. 97–113. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3831638>. Accessed 30 JUN. 2020.

Baudrillard, Jean. *America*. Verso 1989. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/390000/518570968f5f8f42a50edbeeac1cc0f/Jean%20Baudrillard%20Chris%20Turner%20-%20America-Verso%20%281989%29.pdf>

---. *Fragments: Cool Memories III, 1990-1995*. Vol. 3. Verso, 1997.

---. *Impossible Exchange*. Verso Trade, 2012.

---. "In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities... Or the End of the Social and Other
 Essays." *Semiotext(e)*, 2007. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/404000/825b4e1d8c81a381ac6b197e3a9a84ca/Jean%20Baudrillard%20%20In%20the%20Shadow%20of%20the%20Silent%20Majorities%20%28Semiotext%28e%29%20%20%20Foreign%20Agents%29%20%282007%29.pdf>

---. *Simulacra and Simulation*. New York City, N.Y., U.S.A., Semiotext(e) inc., 1983.

---. *Simulacra and Simulation*. *Selected Writings* Mark Poster (ed). Stanford: Stanford

University Press: 166-184. 1988. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/358000/f25d1441ae49b8fa3e4476541ba8364b/Jean%20Baudrillard%2C%20Mark%20Poster%2C%20Jacques%20Mourrain%20%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20Selected%20Writings%20Second%20Edition%20Stanford%20University%20Press%20%282002%29.pdf>

---. *Screened out*. Verso, 2002. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/1611000/d641be018e7cfd07d68f728b64cf1f2c/Baudrillard%2C%20Jean%20-%20Screened%20out-Verso%20%282002%29.epub>

---. *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Sage Publications, 1993. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/2417000/fc7cc9b8784c7fa5cb9a99ada9c89e3a/%28Theory%20culture%20%26%20society%20Social%20Theory%29%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20Symbolic%20Exchange%20and%20Death-Sage%20Publications%20%281993%29.epub>

---. *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Second Edition, London, Sage Publications, 1993.

Library Genesis,

<http://libgen.rs/book/bibtex.php?md5=8368D6D51AE8841BD6ACB61834476E3D>

---. *Telemorphosis*. Univocal, 2011. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/2457000/1c2b9700a5ee481694f5131b5b78b6c2/%28pharmakon%29%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20Telemorphosis-Univocal%20%282011%29.pdf>

---. and Jean-Louis Violeau. *The Ecstasy of Communication*. Semiotext(e), 1988.

Library Genesis,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/2457000/1c2b9700a5ee481694f5131b5b78b6c2/%28pharmakon>

[%29%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20Telemorphosis-Univocal%20%282011%29.pdf](#)

---. *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*. Indiana University Press, 1995. *Library*

Genesis, <http://62.182.86.140/main/1405000/51e82cff6cebef8778db0b4fe9de6062/Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20The%20Gulf%20War%20Did%20Not%20Take%20Place-Indiana%20University%20Press%20%281995%29.pdf>

---. *The Mirror of Production*. Vol. 17, St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/256000/975d2aa33ed943ddc94b58db48db0546/Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20Mark%20Poster%20-%20The%20Mirror%20of%20Production-Telos%20Press%20Ltd.%20%281975%29.pdf>

---. and Maclean, Marie. "The Masses: The Implosion of the Social in the Media." *New Literary History*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1985, pp. 577–89. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/468841>. Accessed 09 Aug. 2020.

---. *The System of Objects*. Verso, 1996. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/1280000/caba902396a36e6cfa7411d36c183f04/Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20The%20System%20of%20Objects-Verso%20Books%20%281996%29.djvu>

---. *The Spirit of Terrorism*. Verso Books, 2003. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/396000/48001f4db565c3b97e80eeef4f53f8d2/Jean%20Baudrillard%20-%20Chris%20Turner%20-%20The%20Spirit%20of%20Terrorism%20-%20New%20Revised%20Edition-Verso%20%282003%29.pdf>

Baldwin, Jon. "'Self-Immolation by Technology': Jean Baudrillard and the Posthuman in Film and Television." *The Palgrave Handbook of Posthumanism in Film and Television*,

2015, 19-27.

Bazin, A., and et al. *What Is Cinema?*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Library Genesis,

http://62.182.86.140/main/2703000/883797aebd39c6d167be1358121d314c/Renoir%2C%20Jean_Bazin%2C%20Andr%C3%A9_Gray%2C%20Hugh_Andrew%2C%20Dudley%20-%20What%20is%20cinema.%20Vol.%202University%20of%20California%20Press%20%282005_2012%29.epub

Berger, J. “Falling Towers and Postmodern Wild Children: Oliver Sacks, Don DeLillo, and Turns against Language”. *PMLA*, 120(2), 2005, 341-361. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/25486164 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Birkerts, S. “Editor’s Note: Mind’s Matter”. *Agni* 71, 2010, 1-9. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/23010118 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

Bonca, C. ““Being, time and death in DeLillo’s ‘The Body Artist’.” *Pacific Coast Philology*, 37: 58-68. 2002. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/4142090 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

---. “Don DeLillo’s White Noise: the Natural Language of Species”. *College Literature* 23(2): 25-44. 1996. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/25112247 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Boxall, P. “Late: Fictional time in Twenty-First Century”. *Contemporary Literature* 53(4), 2012, 681-712. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/41819533 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

---. *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* (1st ed.). Routledge. 2006.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203315422>

Boyne, Roy, and Ali Rattansi. *Postmodernism and Society*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/2152000/8baeafd1b2e5d5fac38d0ce9b2566a4d/%28Communications%20and%20Culture%29%20Roy%20Boyne%2C%20Ali%20Rattansi%20%28eds.%29%20-%20Postmodernism%20and%20Society-Macmillan%20Education%20UK%20%281990%29.pdf>

Braidotti, Rosi. *The Posthuman*. Polity Press, 2013. *Google*,

https://ageingcompanions.constantvzw.org/books/The_Posthuman_-_Rosi_Braidotti.pdf

---. "Posthuman Humanities." *European Educational Research Journal* 12(1), 2013, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.2304/eeerj.2013.12.1.1>

Butler, Christopher. *Postmodernism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2002. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/246000/e0bb7028aa4ad6f860f9ab411be25033/%28A%20Very%20Short%20Introduction%29%20Christopher%20Butler%20-%20Postmodernism-Oxford%20University%20Press%20%282002%29.pdf>

Caesar, Terry. "Brutal Naïveté and Special Lighting: Hyperspatiality and Landscape in the American Travel Text." *College Literature*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1994, pp. 63–79. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25112082>. Accessed 30 Aug, 2022.

Calvete, Ana. "I Object to Your Position: Hyperreal Decontextualising of Objects." *Context in Literary and Cultural Studies*, edited by Jakob Ladegaard and Jakob Gaardbo

Nielsen, UCL Press, 2019, pp. 172–89. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvfrxrhb.16>
 Accessed 24 Sep 2022.

Carmichael, Thomas. “Lee Harvey Oswald and the Postmodern Subject: History and Intertextuality in Don DeLillo’s ‘Libra, The Names’, and ‘Mao II.’” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 34, no. 2, 1993, pp. 204–18. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1208548>.

(Accessed 30 Jun, 2020)

Chenteier, M and et al. “An interview with Don DeLillo”. *Revue Francaise D’etudes Americaines* 87, 2001, 102-111. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/20874747

(Accessed 10 March, 2021)

Coletta, Cristina Della. “Of Work and Leisure: Digital World’s Fairs and the Active Fairgoer.” *PMLA*, vol. 127, no. 4, 2012, pp. 939–46. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23489100> Accessed 24 Sep 2022.

Conte, J. M. “Don DeLillo’s “Falling Man” And the Age of Terror.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 57(3), 2011, 559-583. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/26287214

(Accessed 19, August 2020)

Cowart, D. “The Lady Vanishes: Don DeLillo’s “Point Omega”.” *Contemporary Literature*. 53(1), 2012, 31-50. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/23256499

(Accessed 14 March 2021)

Davidson, Ian. “Automobility, Materiality and Don DeLillo’s ‘Cosmopolis.’” *Cultural Geographies*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2012, pp. 469–82. *JSTOR*,

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44286991> (Accessed 10 Aug, 2021)

Daniele, Daniela. "The Achromatic Room: DeLillo's Plays On and Off Camera." *Italian Americana*, vol. 29, no. 2, 2011, pp. 166–80. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41440394> Accessed 18 July 2021.

Devetak, Richard. "After the Event: Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and September 11 Narratives." *Review of International Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4, 2009, pp. 795–815. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40588075 (Accessed 28 Apr, 2021)

DeLillo, Don. "In the Ruins of the Future." *The Guardian* 22 (2001): 33-40. *Google*, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2001/dec/22/fiction.dondelillo>

Dunst, A. "Ordinary Madness: Don DeLillo's Subject from 'Underworld' to 'Point Omega'." *Amerikastudien / America Studies* 62(1), 2017, 35-49 Available at *JSTOR*-www.jstor.org/stable/44982304 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

Duvall, John N. *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo*. Cambridge University Press, 2008. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/577000/0f1c00433c7c98898f8fff0c01ef9e59/John%20N.%20Duvall%20-%20The%20Cambridge%20Companion%20to%20Don%20DeLillo%20%28Cambridge%20Companions%20to%20Literature%29%20%282008%29.pdf>

Engles, Tim. "'Who are you, literally?': Fantasies of the White Self in 'White Noise'" *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, pp. 755–87. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26285577> (Accessed 06 Oct, 2021)

Eve, M. P. "'Too Many Goddamn Echoes': Historicizing the Iraq War in Don

DeLillo's 'Point Omega.'" *Journal of American Studies* 49(3), 2015, 575-592 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/24485674 (Accessed 14 March, 2021)

Frow, John. "The Last Things Before the Last: Notes on *White Noise*." 1990. Available at Academia.edu https://www.academia.edu/34286250/Notes_on_White_Noise

Garratt, Chris, and Richard Appignanesi. *Introducing Postmodernism: A Graphic Guide*. Icon Books Ltd, 2014. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/1530000/7c0a078cffa66b043cffaffe4cccf8b4/Richard%20Appignanesi%20Chris%20Garratt%20Introducing%20Postmodernism%20A%20Graphic%20Guide-Icon%20Books%20%282003%29.epub>

Gerofsky, Susan. "Communication: Simulation, Reality, and Mathematical Word Problems." *For the Learning of Mathematics*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2006, pp. 30–32. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40248533> Accessed 20 Mar, 2023.

Gogan, Brian. *Jean Baudrillard: The Rhetoric of Symbolic Exchange*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2017. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/2557000/9ffd379dcfe43d84a1044b14094fc469/Brian%20Gogan%20-%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20The%20Rhetoric%20of%20Symbolic%20Exchange-SIU%20Press%20%282017%29.pdf>

Grausam, Daniel. "'It Is Only a Statement of the Power of What Comes after': Atomic Nostalgia and the Ends of Postmodernism." *American Literary History*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2012, pp. 308–36. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23249772> Accessed 09 Aug, 2020.

Gravano, Alan J. "New York City in Don DeLillo's Novels." *Italian Americana*, vol.

29, no. 2, 2011, pp. 181–89. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41440395> Accessed 28 Apr. 2023.

Haraway, Donna. *A Cyborg Manifesto*. Routledge. 1985. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/2862000/f71cdb1a4ce162fa1411b7d814162b98/Donna%20Haraway%20-%20A%20Cyborg%20Manifesto%20-%20Science%2C%20Technology%2C%20and%20Socialist-Feminism%20in%20the%20Late%20Twentieth%20Century%20%281985%29.pdf>

Harack, K. “Embedded and Embodied Memories: Body, Space and Time in Don DeLillo’s ‘White Noise’ and ‘Falling Man’”. *Contemporary Literature* 54(2), 2013. 303-336. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/43297879 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Hardack, Richard. “Two’s a Crowd: ‘Mao II’, Coke II, and The Politics of Terrorism in Don DeLillo.” *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2004, pp. 374–92. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20831902> Accessed 30 June, 2020.

Hassan, Robert. *The Condition of Digitality: A Post-Modern Marxism for the Practice of Digital Life*. The University of Chicago Press, 2020. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/2547000/dd2cadf1c7561948a5d3e6e6a8836d47/%28Critical%20C%20Digital%20And%20Social%20Media%20Studies%29%20Robert%20Hassan%20-%20The%20Condition%20Of%20Digitality%20A%20Post-Modern%20Marxism%20For%20The%20Practice%20Of%20Digital%20Life-University%20Of%20Westminster%20Press%20%282020%29.pdf>

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics*,

Literature, and Informatics. The University of Chicago Press, 1999. *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/753000/7ca456f7edcfeaf49375fb178662733d/N.%20Katherine%20Hayles%20-%20How%20We%20Became%20Posthuman%20Virtual%20Bodies%20in%20Cybernetics%2C%20Literature%2C%20and%20Informatics%20%20-University%20Of%20Chicago%20Press%20%281999%29.pdf>

Hehir, Aidan. "Hyper-Reality and Statebuilding: Baudrillard and the Unwillingness of International Administrations to Cede Control." *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 6, 2011, pp. 1073–87. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41300307> Accessed 23 Aug 2022.

Helvacioğlu, Banu. "'Modern Death' in Don DeLillo: A Parody of Life?" *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2015, pp. 179–96. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44030428> (Accessed 30 June, 2020)

Herren, G. "Don DeLillo's Art Stalkers." *Modern Fiction Studies* 61(1), 2015, 138-167 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.com/stable/10.2307/2642177 (Accessed 14 March, 2021)

Herbrechter, Stefan. "Posthumanism and the Posthuman in Don DeLillo's Point Omega and Zero K." 2011. *Google*, <http://stefanherbrechter.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Posthumanism-and-the-Posthuman-in-DeLillos-Point-Omega-and-Zero-K.pdf>

Hicks, Stephen R.C. *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*. Scholargy Publishing, 2004. *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/540000/8595e9263a92bb95fff2e8f89055760d/Stephen%20R.%20OC.%20Hicks%20->

[%20Explaining%20Postmodernism%20Skepticism%20and%20Socialism%20from%20Rousseau%20to%20Foucault%20%282004%29.pdf](#)

Hoffman, Gerhard. *From Modernism to Postmodernism Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction*. Rodopi B. V. Amsterdam, 2005. Google, https://www.academia.edu/4351034/38615322_From_Modernism_to_Postmodernism

Hungerford, A (2006) Don DeLillo's Latin Mass. *Contemporary Literature* 47(3): 343-380 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/4489166 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. Routledge, 1988. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/536000/8b63dbef22e8cab73d5da446e9d69e63/Linda%20Hutcheon%20-%20A%20Poetics%20of%20Postmodernism%20History%2C%20Theory%2C%20Fiction%20%281988%29.pdf>

---. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. Routledge, 2002. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/1175000/ea0e44ce845e8ec0317810073c13200d/Linda%20Hutcheon%20-%20The%20politics%20of%20postmodernism-Routledge%20%282002%29.pdf>

Jane, Richard L. *Jean Baudrillard*. Routledge, 2001. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/123000/aa9b068dead19b9f191a9324ab926aa5/%28Routledge%20Critical%20Thinkers%29%20Richard%20J.%20Lane%20-%20Jean%20Baudrillard-Routledge%20%282000%29.pdf>

Kavadlo, Jesse. "The Terms of the Contract: Rock and Roll and the Narrative of Self-Destruction in Don DeLillo, Neal Pollack, and Kurt Cobain." *Studies in Popular Culture*,

vol. 30, no. 1, 2007, pp. 87–104. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23416199> Accessed 30 June, 2020.

Kauffman, Linda S. “The Wake of Terror: don DeLillo’s ‘In the Ruins of the Future,’ ‘Baader-meinhof,’ and ‘Falling Man’.” *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2008, pp. 353–77. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26287626> (Accessed 20 Jan. 2023)

Kellner, D. “Theorizing the Present Moment: Debates between Modern and Postmodern Theory.” *Theory and Society* 28(4), 1999, 639-656 Available at *JSTOR*-www.jstor.org/stable/3108564 (Accessed 10 March 2021)

Kirsch, Adams. *The Revolt Against Humanity: Imagining a Future Without Us*. Columbia Global Reports, 2023. *Library Genesis*, http://62.182.86.140/main/3601000/48ab91e7611e662bacbd8b1af35fd515/Adam%20Kirsch%20-%20The%20Revolt%20Against%20Humanity_%20Imagining%20a%20Future%20Without%20Us-Columbia%20Global%20Reports%20%282023%29.epub

Kooijman, Jaap. *Fabricating the Absolute Fake: America in Contemporary Pop Culture*. Amsterdam University Press, 2008. *Library Genesis*, http://62.182.86.140/main/409000/7cd2a931af12dd286705b6d23219af1a/Jaap%20Kooijman%20-%20Fabricating%20the%20Absolute%20Fake_%20%27America%27%20in%20Contemporary%20Pop%20Culture%20%282008%29.pdf

Laugt, E. “America in Time: Aphoristic Writing in Jean Baudrillard’s “America”.” *Paragraph* 35(3), 2012, 338-354 Available at *JSTOR*- www.jstor.org/stable/43263845

(Accessed 10 March 2021)

Leak, Andrew N. *Barthes: Mythologies*. Grant and Cutler, 1994. *Google*,

<https://soundenvironments.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/roland-barthes-mythologies.pdf>

LeClair, T and DeLillo, D. “An Interview with Don DeLillo.” *Contemporary*

Literature. 23(1), 1982, 19-31. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/1208140

(Accessed August 19 2021)

Lecouras, Peter. “9/11, Critical Theory, and Globalization.” *Interdisciplinary Literary*

Studies, vol. 12, no. 1, 2010, pp. 78–90. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41210308>

Accessed 09 Aug, 2020.

Lytard, Jean-François, et al. “Can Thought Go On Without A Body?.” *Discourse*, vol.

11, no. 1, 1988, pp. 74–87. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41389109> Accessed 10

Aug, 2020.

Lytard, Jean. F. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University of

Minnesota Press, 1984. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/255000/d820354ff5999443623a1ee6821b51ec/%28Theory%20a>

<nd%20History%20of%20Literature%29%20Jean-Francois%20Lytard%20->

[%20Postmodern%20Condition%20The%20Postmodern%20Condition %20A%20Report](%20Postmodern%20Condition%20The%20Postmodern%20Condition%20A%20Report)

<%20on%20Knowledge-University%20of%20Minnesota%20Press%20%281984%29.pdf>

Lytard, J.F., and et al. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. *Library Genesis*,

<http://62.182.86.140/main/305000/9e6e18979aec9385e0f250206365e564/%28Theory%20>

<%26%20History%20of%20Literature%29%20Jean->

[Francois%20Lyotard%2C%20G.%20Bennington%2C%20B.%20Massumi%20-%20The%20Postmodern%20Condition_%20A%20Report%20on%20Knowledge%20%28Theory%20%26%20History%20of%20Literature%29-Manchester%20University%20Press%20%281984%29.pdf](#)

Keeble, Arin. "Marriage, Relationships, and 9/11: The Seismographic Narratives of *Falling Man*, *the Good Life*, and *The Emperor's Children*." *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 106, no. 2, 2011, pp. 355–73. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.5699/modelangrevi.106.2.0355> Accessed 30 June, 2020.

Kim, Walter. "Book Review: *Cosmopolis*". *The New York Times Book Reviews*. 2003.

Kellner, Douglas. "Theorizing the Present Moment: debates between Modern and Postmodern Theory." *Theory and Society*, vol. 28, no. 4, 1999, pp 639-65. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3108564>. Accessed 22 June, 2020.

Maltby, Paul. "The Romantic Metaphysics of Don DeLillo." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 37, no. 2, 1996, pp. 258–77. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1208875> Accessed 30 Jun, 2020.

Marshall, K. "What are the Novels of the Anthropocene? American fiction in Geological Time." *American Literary History* 27(3), 2015, 523-538. Available at *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43817711 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

Martins, Susana S. "White Noise and Everyday Technologies." *American Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2005, pp. 87–113. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40643804> Accessed 30 June, 2020.

Melnyczuk, A. "Shadowboxing: 'The Falling Trees, The Burning Forest.'" *Agni* 71, 2010, 209-214. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/23010151 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

Moran, J. "Don DeLillo and the Myth of the Author: Recluse". *Journal of American Studies*, 34(1), 2000, 137-152 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.com/stable/27556769 (Accessed 30, June 2020)

Morau, C. "Consuming Narratives: Don DeLillo and the "Lethal Reading" ". *The Journal of Narrative Technique* 27(2): 1997, 90-206 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.com/stable/30225465 (Accessed 30 June 2020)

Munson, Ziad. "Terrorism." *Contexts*, vol. 7, no. 4, 2008, pp. 78–79. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41801292> Accessed 09 Aug, 2020.

Nayar, Pramod K. *Contemporary Literary Theory and Cultural Theory from Structuralism to Ecocriticism*. Pearson, 2009. *Library Genesis*, http://62.182.86.140/main/2128000/d1ba89f0000e712e6fd98e1c9f0e0000/Pramod%20K%20Nayar%20-%20Contemporary%20Literary%20and%20Cultural%20Theory_%20From%20Structuralism%20to%20Ecocriticism-Pearson%20Education%20%282009%29.epub

N.Elaati, Abdulazim. "Postmodernism Theory." 2016. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4515.0327

Nunes, Mark. "Jean Baudrillard in Cyberspace: Internet, Virtuality, and Postmodernity." *Style*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1995, pp. 314–27. *JSTOR*,

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/42946283> Accessed 20 Jan, 2023.

Norris, Christopher in “Lost in the Funhouse: Baudrillard and the Politics of Postmodernism” *Postmodernism and Society*. ed. Roy Boyne and Ali Rattansi. Macmillan Education. 1990 (119-153). *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/2152000/8baeafd1b2e5d5fac38d0ce9b2566a4d/%28Communications%20and%20Culture%29%20Roy%20Boyne%2C%20Ali%20Rattansi%20%28eds.%29%20-%20Postmodernism%20and%20Society-Macmillan%20Education%20UK%20%281990%29.pdf>

Osteen, Mark. “Children of Goddard and Coca-Cola: Cinema and Consumerism in Don DeLillo’s Early Fiction.” *Contemporary Literature* 37(3), 1996, 439-470. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.com/stable/1208717 (Accessed 30 June 2020)

Packer, M. J. “‘At the Dead Center of Things’ in Don DeLillo’s *White Noise*: Mimesis, Violence, and Religious Awe.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 51(3), 2005, 648-666 Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/26287051 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

Pawlett, William. *Jean Baudrillard: Against Banality*. Routledge, 2007. *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/1182000/48abba86388e0ca9b96e2242f9441230/%28Key%20sociologists%20%28Routledge%20%28Firm%29%29%29%20William%20Pawlett%20-%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20%20against%20banality-Routledge%20%282007%29.pdf>

Poster, Mark. *Selected Writings*. Stanford University Press, 2002. *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/358000/f25d1441ae49b8fa3e4476541ba8364b/Jean%20Baudrillard%2C%20Mark%20Poster%2C%20Jacques%20Mourrain%20->

[%20Jean%20Baudrillard%20Selected%20Writings%20Second%20Edition%20-Stanford%20University%20Press%20%282002%29.pdf](#)

---. "Technology and Culture in Habermas and Baudrillard." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1981, pp. 456–76. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1207878> Accessed 10 Aug, 2020.

---. *The Second Media Age*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.

Prete, Laura Di. "Don DeLillo's 'The Body Artist': Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2005, pp. 483–510. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4489128> (Accessed 30 June, 2020)

Reeve, N. H., and Richard Kerridge. "Toxic Events: Postmodernism and DeLillo's 'White Noise'." *The Cambridge Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 4, 1994, pp. 303–23. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42967526> Accessed 30 June. 2020

Robinson, Piers. "Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics: Models of Media Influence on Foreign Policy". *European Journal of Communication*, 16(4), 2001, 523-544. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249720557_Theorizing_the_Influence_of_Media_on_World_Politics_Models_of_Media_Influence_on_Foreign_Policy Accessed 14 March 2021.

Nayar, P.K. *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*. Pearson, 2009. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/2128000/0eef1a0183b901c6161569144e4f6ad9/Pramod%20K>

[%20Nayar%20-%20Contemporary%20Literary%20and%20Cultural%20Theory_%20From%20Structuralism%20to%20Ecocriticism-Pearson%20%282009%29.pdf](#)

Robson, Margaret. "Rubbish: Don DeLillo's Wastelands." *IJAS Online*, no. 2, 2010, pp. 75–84. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26234256> Accessed 30 June, 2020.

Rollins, J.B. "Point Omega by Don DeLillo." *World Literature Today* 84(3), 2010, 64. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/27871091 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

Rose, Randall L., et al. "Paradox and the Consumption of Authenticity through Reality Television." *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2005, pp. 284–96. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.1086/432238>. Accessed 14 March 2021.

Sample, M. L. "Unseen and Unremarked On: Don DeLillo and the Failure of Digital Humanities in *Debates in the Digital Humanities*." Matthew K Gold (ed). Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012, pp-187-201. Available at JSTOR- www.jstor.org/stable/10.5479/j.etttv8hq.14 (Accessed 14 March 2021)

Schmeink, Lars. "Dystopia, Science Fiction, Posthumanism, and Liquid Modernity." *Biopunk Dystopias: Genetic Engineering, Society and Science Fiction*, Liverpool University Press, 2016, pp. 18–70. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1ps33cv.5> Accessed 09 Aug, 2020.

Sim, Stuart. *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers*. Routledge, 2013. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/2245000/fab24b4b9b5e0e4cbfe7fca0f229caa7/%28Routledge%20Key%20Guides%29%20Stuart%20Sim%20-%20Fifty%20Key%20Postmodern%20Thinkers-Routledge%20%282013%29.pdf>

Sciolino, Martina. "The Contemporary American Novel as World Literature: The Neoliberal Antihero in Don DeLillo's 'Cosmopolis'." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 57, no. 2, 2015, pp. 210–41. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26155299> Accessed 20 Jan, 2023.

Shonwiler, Alison. "Don DeLillo's Financial Sublime." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2010, pp. 246–82. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40983495> Accessed 20 Jan, 2023.

Smith, R.G. *The Baudrillard Dictionary*. Edinburgh University Press, 2010. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/404000/82bed5ff9ec383fd255c2c109ab7392d/Richard%20G.%20Smith%20-%20The%20Baudrillard%20Dictionary%20%282010%29.pdf>

Spahr, Clemens. "Prolonged Suspension: Don DeLillo, Ian McEwan, and the Literary Imagination after 9/11." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2012, pp. 221–37. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23259545>. Accessed 19 March 2021

Suarez, A.R. "Book Review: *Terrorism and Temporality in the Works of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo* by James Gourley" *Atlantis* 37(1), 2015, 217-220 Available at *JSTOR*- www.jstor.org/stable/24757741 (Accessed 19 March 2021).

Thomas, Glen. "History, Biography, and Narrative in Don DeLillo's *Libra*." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1997, pp. 107–24. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/441866>. Accessed 20 Jan. 2023.

Thurschwell, Adam. "Writing and Terror: Don DeLillo on the Task of Literature after 9/11." *Law and Literature*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2007, pp. 277–302. *JSTOR*,

<https://doi.org/10.1525/lal.2007.19.2.277> Accessed 30 June, 2020.

Torikian, Garen J. "Against a Perpetuating Fiction: Disentangling Art from Hyperreality." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 44, no. 2, 2010, pp. 100–10. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.5406/jaesteduc.44.2.0100> Accessed 22 July 2021.

Torell, Alexander. "Ideological Technology and Posthuman Conditions in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and *Cosmopolis*." 2018. *Google*, <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1231172/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Varsava, Jerry A. "The 'Saturated Self': Don DeLillo on the Problem of Rogue Capitalism." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2005, pp. 78–107. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4489107> Accessed 09 Aug, 2020.

Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*. Harry N Abrams, 2002. *Library Genesis*, <http://62.182.86.140/main/263000/da9dbd8c4a48921671a1b1752f08d05a/Robert%20Venturi%20-%20Complexity%20and%20Contradiction%20in%20Architecture-Harry%20N.%20Abrams%20%282002%29.pdf>

Walker, Joseph S. "Criminality, The Real and the Story of America: The Case of Don DeLillo." *The Centennial Review*, vol. 43, no. 3, 1999, pp. 433–66. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23739977> Accessed 20 Jan, 2023

Weekes, Karen. "Consuming and Dying: Meaning and the Marketplace in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*." *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, 18 (4), 2007, 285-302. DOI:10.1080/10436920701708028

Wegner, Phillip E. "October 3, 1951 to September 11, 2001: Periodizing the Cold War in Don DeLillo's 'Underworld.'" *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2004, pp. 51–64. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41157911> Accessed 09 Aug, 2020.

Weinreich, Martin. "'Into the Void': The Hyperrealism of Simulation in Bret Easton Ellis's 'American Psycho.'" *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2004, pp. 65–78. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41157912>. Accessed 24 July 2022.

Wesling, Donald. "The Representational Moment in the Discourse of the Nation: Jean Baudrillard's 'America'." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies (HJEAS)*, vol. 4, no. 1/2, 1998, pp. 9–19. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41273987> Accessed 09, Aug, 2020.

Wiese, Annjeanette. "Rethinking Postmodern Narrativity: Narrative Construction and Identity Formation in Don DeLillo's 'White Noise'." *College Literature*, vol. 39, no. 3, 2012, pp. 1–25. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23266054> Accessed 30 Jun, 2020.

Wojciechowski, Sebastian. "Reasons of Contemporary Terrorism.: An Analysis of Main Determinants." *Radicalism and Terrorism in the 21st Century: Implications for Security*, edited by Anna Sroka et al., Peter Lang AG, 2017, pp. 49–70. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv2t4bgx.6> Accessed 10 Aug, 2020

Wilcox, L and DeLillo, D. "Don DeLillo's Underworld and the Return of the Real." *Contemporary Literature* 43(1), 2002, 120-137. Available at *JSTOR*-www.jstor.org/stable/1209018 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

---. "Baudrillard, DeLillo's White Noise and the End of Heroic Narrative." *Contemporary Literature* 37(3), 1991, 346-365. Available at *JSTOR*-

www.jstor.org/stable/1208561 (Accessed 19 August 2020)

---. "Terrorism and Art: Don DeLillo's 'Mao II' and Jean Baudrillard's 'The Spirit of Terrorism.'" *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2006, pp. 89–105. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44030188> Accessed 09 Aug, 2020

Wolfe, Cary. *What is Posthumanism?* University of Minnesota Press, 2009. *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/461000/e53d30e62e50d6d43208ecda0ccdc92f/%28Posthumanities%20%29%20Cary%20Wolfe%20-%20What%20Is%20Posthumanism%20Univ%20Of%20Minnesota%20Press%20%282009%29.pdf>

Wolfreys, J., and et al. *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*. Second edition, Edinburgh University Press. 2006. *Library Genesis*,
<http://62.182.86.140/main/269000/2b77f8b842e9c3570949512678ab935f/Julian%20Wolfreys%2C%20Ruth%20Robbins%2C%20Kenneth%20Womack%20-%20Key%20Concepts%20in%20Literary%20Theory-Edinburgh%20University%20Press%20%282006%29.pdf>

Wolny, R. W. "Hyperreality and Simulacrum: Jean Baudrillard and European Postmodernism." *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 3(3), 2017, 75-79. *Google*,
https://revistia.org/files/articles/ejis_v3_i3_17/Ryszard.pdf

Appendix 1

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS:

1. A Book Chapter “Comics as an aid in Educational Apparatus”, co-authored by Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, has been published in the book entitled as Lecture notes in Management.
2. A Research paper entitled “The Dark Delight in Gothic Fiction: A Kaleidoscope of Abjection in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*”, co-authored by Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, has been published in UGC-Care listed journal.
3. A research paper entitled “Reviving the Illusion: Residues of Patriarchy and Myth of Sheroes”, co-authored by Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, has been published in UGC-Care listed journal.
4. A research paper entitled as, “The Technical Turn: Investigating the Role of Modern Technology and Media Aids in an ELT Class” was presented at the International Conference organized by VIT Bhopal. It has been published as a part of conference proceedings.
5. A research paper entitled “The Modern Apocalypse: Contextualizing Urban Pandemic in Select Work of Don DeLillo” was presented in the Two-Day National Conference organized by Shri Siddhivinayak Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Karvenagar, Pune. It has been published in the AMIER Journal (ISSN: 2278-5655) as part of conference proceedings.
6. A research paper entitled “DeLillo’s America and the Digital Turn: Investigating the Modern Existence in a Technoscape” was presented in the Three-Day International

Conference organized by SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Ramapuram Campus, Chennai. It has been published as a part of conference proceedings.

7. A research paper entitled “The Evolution of DeLillo’s America: A Battle of Realities and Genesis of Hyperreal in *Point Omega*”, co-authored by Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, has been published in Journal of Pharmaceutical Negative Results.
8. A research paper entitled “Peeking in From The Periphery: DeLillo’s Technoscapes and Women”, co-authored by Dr. Ishfaq Ahmad Trambo, has been published in Journal of Namibian Studies

Appendix 2

LIST OF PAPER PRESENTATIONS

1. A research paper entitled as, “The Technical Turn: Investigating the Role of Modern Technology and Media Aids in an ELT Class” was presented at the International Conference organized by VIT Bhopal.
2. A research paper entitled “The Modern Apocalypse: Contextualizing Urban Pandemic in Select Work of Don DeLillo” was presented in the Two-Day National Conference organized by Shri Siddhivinayak Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Karvenagar, Pune.
3. A research paper entitled “DeLillo’s America and the Digital Turn: Investigating the Modern Existence in a Technoscape” was presented in the Three-Day International Conference organized by SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Ramapuram Campus, Chennai.
4. A research paper entitled as, “Reimagining the Apocalypse: The Metaphysics of Mechanization in the Select Work of Don DeLillo” was presented at the National Conference organized by SMVDU, Katra.
5. A research paper entitled as, “Peeking in from the Peripheral Locale: Women in the Evolving Cosmopolitan of Don DeLillo” was presented at the International Conference organized by Lovely Professional University.