

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS & ENGLISH LANGUAGE

N° :.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES

STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE

OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**Hitler as a Mask against Death Anxiety  
in Don DeLillo's '*White Noise*',  
A Psychoanalytical Study of Jack's Psyche**

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of  
the Requirements for the Master Degree**

**Submitted by**

**Djihad Hadjab**

**Supervisor :**

**Mourad Touati**

**November 2017**

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**November 2017**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled, “Hitler as a Defence Mechanism against Death Anxiety in Don DeLillo’s ‘White Noise’, A Psychoanalytical Study of Jack’s Psyche” is my own work and that all the sources I have quoted have been acknowledged by means of references.

**Signature**

**Date:**

## **Acknowledgement**

First and foremost, I am profoundly grateful to Almighty Allah for his mercy and guidance. Utterly thankful for the strength He gave me to accomplish another critical step towards pursued success.

Second, I would gratefully acknowledge my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Mourad TOUATI for his guidance and patience, yet his faith in and appreciation of my abilities. My eternal utmost appreciation, devotion, and gratefulness go to my parents. My deepest recognition and special gratitude are devoted to Ikhlas HADJI who has bestowed her encouragement and provided enlightening insights throughout the course of conducting this study, to Zohra Smahi, who has been so patient and extremely helpful, to my dearest friend Jihad BOUAZZA for her support and faith in me along the way, and to my twin sister Hala Hadjab that gave all possible help for my work to see light. Great appreciation is devoted for Zakaria Salaye. I thank Muhammad Kharfi Alhussayni for his valuable help, and the same goes to Asma Chaddadi for her generous aid. I would like to extend my expressions of gratitude to the panel of jury for the hard effort they put into the examination and adjustment of this work. My everlasting expressions of gratitude to Mrs. Nassima Amirouche whom I consider the “Soul of English Department”, she has been of a great help, I would not accomplish this step without her assistance along the way.

Lastly, I offer my regards to each and every one who has stood by me in any respect during the previous years.

# Dedication

**‘For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease’**

(Qur’an: 94, 5)

To those who never give up on their ambitions no matter how hard it gets,  
To the true BELIEVERS who, by all means, work hard and devote themselves  
selflessly to espouse peace in this world.

**It is NEVER too late.**

## **Abstract**

In order to understand the changes that are affecting the course of history, shaping the current present, and forming the face of future, it is necessary to conduct a profound study of literary works that provide with its characters, which reflect real people, a sample of different individuals throughout history. These characters can be studied from a psychological point of view in order to understand human behavior and actions that led to the reality of present-day. Hence, it is crucial to shed light on the postmodern man that led to the rapid pace of changes in the world. In this respect, Don DeLillo's *White Noise* is a work that provides one of the oddest characters; *Jack Gladney* that represents postmodern Americans. With the aid of this—considered literary genius, American writer, this present study aims at analyzing the psyche of the character Jack and how he relates to postmodern Americans, with proper regard to Jack's eminent obsession with the, highly controversial, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler to conceal his fears. Furthermore, this research will employ a psychological approach with emphasis on Psychoanalytical theory, mainly Freudian and Lacanian, from which the findings of this study will be drawn.

**Key words:** Postmodernism, Fear of Death, Death anxiety, Defence Mechanisms, Hitler, Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Don DeLillo, *White Noise*.

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## General Introduction

Literature has always been a mirror of societies' deepest ideological, social, as much as psychological conflicts. Literature tends to reveal the inner selves, the psyche and hidden side of characters who are, in many occasions, a reflection of real life people, yet it reveals stories with incidents based on real life events. Thus, it is plausible to use one of the American literary writings as sample of study in order to explore the post-modern man's psyche and the influence of his environment and interactions on him and those whom he interacts.

Don DeLillo's novel '*White Noise*' is one of the crucial works of American literature, written and published in the post-modern era in 1985, which provides a sample of study that could offer a fruitful result. DeLillo's protagonist Jack Gladney is the chairman of Hitler studies department at the College-on-the-Hill. Jack seeks immortality and surrounds himself with things that make him look weighty and dignified using Hitler's persona as a mask to achieve that goal. Yet, he uses it to hide his biggest fear which he and his wife are plagued with: Death anxiety due to the continuous barrage of health and safety warnings he, and every twenty-first century American, is facing everyday whether from media or the packaging on the consumer products he buys. Jack's beliefs, feelings, reactions, thoughts, and actions are always influenced and influential. This thesis focuses on the study of Hitler's influence on Jack, and denotes the similarities and differences between them using a psychoanalytical perspective to understand both Hitler and Jack's psyches.

*White Noise*, winner of the *U.S. National Book Award for Fiction* and included in the *Time*'s list of "*Best English-Language Novels from 1923 to 2005*," is considered as one of the most significant works of post-modern Literature. It explores the impact of consumerism as the catastrophe on the American culture.

DeLillo's treatment of Jack's character was fairly studied by many critics. What is noticeable is that critics have generally not viewed the use of 'Hitler' in the Novel as at least a problem to begin with. Many discussions and studies of *White Noise* do not take Hitler as a basic aspect of the study; most touch on the subject only in passing, seldom even noting the oddness of what DeLillo does with Hitler in the novel, yet not what he wanted to use Hitler for.

DeLillo's work *White Noise*, when studied with the intervention of the psychological variables and psychodynamics of his main character Jack Gladney, offers a deeper understanding of the character's

actions and beliefs. It also demonstrates the connection between the character and Hitler to explain why Jack picked the Fuhrer, and invented a whole department named 'Hitler studies', rather than any other person.

Many researchers and scholars have attempted to deeply study Don DeLillo's writings. In 1985, *White Noise* was published. The novel won the National Book Award and established DeLillo's reputation as a serious mainstream American novelist. The themes DeLillo tackles in his novels are postmodern in the anxious, skeptical way they treat the question of knowledge. Philosophically, postmodernism contends that real, definitive knowledge is impossible and that truth is forever shifting and relative. Complex and intricately woven, DeLillo's novels string together a never-ending web of connections that ultimately frustrate any attempt to draw definite conclusions. For such reasons, researchers have carried out many studies in order to provide more comprehension of the Novel and mainly of the character Jack.

Those works presented ideas related to this subject and their findings and suggestions are reviewed here under the aim of identifying the reasons behind the main character's fears and his obsession with Hitler. Moreover, it demonstrates the motives that drive Jack to reach his aims in life.

Many post-modern and contemporary studies have attempted to discuss the language usage and its power in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*. This side is shown in Pr. Paul Giaimo's *The Names and White Noise: A New Faith in the Power of Language* (67), and in his book *Appreciating Don DeLillo, The Moral Force of a Writer's Work* (2011) in which he tackles the power of DeLillo's Language and the description of characters, themes, and the use of language of the main characters and their discussions.

Another work is Pr. Patrick O'Donnell *What Happened to History?*, in his book *The American Novel Now, Reading Contemporary Fiction since 1980* (2010), which deals with the themes tackled by DeLillo in his Novel and focuses on the main character's interaction with the changing world that surrounds him. It explains how the events affect Jack, who represents the post-modern American and their fear of death and their belief that technology and the reliance on consumer products would grant them a longer and satisfactory life that may reduce their death anxiety.

On the other hand, Pr. Peter Boxall in his book *Don DeLillo, the Possibility of Fiction* under the series of 'Routledge Transnational Perspectives on American Literature' dealt with DeLillo's *White Noise* from different angles. Boxall mainly tackled this work in relation to contemporary political and

economic global capitalism, and U.S. cultural imperialism and the effects of all these aspects on the character, yet on all Americans of the post-modern era.

Underlying all three works, it is noticeable that they are limited to some extent by focusing much more on the technological, economic, and consuming habits of modern America that influenced the character and lead to his failure. The existing literature on *White Noise* does not yet extend far enough to sufficiently address and cover the position of Hitler and his influence on the character. Hitler's presence in the Novel seemingly has not got the attention it deserves.

Aiming at providing an understandable coherent work, it is important to identify the questions that this study is attempting to answer. The main question that will give birth to this thesis is: How does Jack use Hitler as a mask to cover his own fear of death? This study will equally deal with the following sub-questions: How was the phenomenon of Hitler presented in the Novel? What is the impact of Hitler on Jack, and which side does Jack take as a role model? (The authentic and factual information about the Führer or those mythical and artificial ones). Are there any similarities and differences between Hitler and Jack? Does Jack represents the postmodern and modern-day Americans?

The aim of this research is to prove that *White Noise* can be interpreted from a psychoanalytical standpoint, hence, demonstrating the reasons behind the main character's attempts to conceal his real person can be explained through psychoanalytical analysis, to shed light on the phenomenon of Hitler as mentioned in the Novel. Moreover, this study will identify the impact of Hitler's persona on Jack psychologically and socially, to identify the similarities and differences between Hitler and Jack in order to demonstrate how Jack uses Hitler as a mask to disguise, and hide behind his own created persona to cover his vulnerable and weak inner self, and to investigate the Americans of the twentieth century's society through studying Jack's ideology and behaviors taking him as a sample, yet providing evidence to confirm this premise.

This psychoanalytic study of Don DeLillo's *White Noise* is innovative because it brings together a deeper analysis of the major character Jack Gladney with the study of psychological variables that directly resulted to his personality and to the way he deals with his fear of death. Most importantly, the research will shed more light on the phenomenon of Hitler equally as it deals with the main character, in order to identify the reasons behind choosing Hitler rather than any other figure as a mask to conceal the fears of death and to seek a certain high position in Jack's society.

This research can be helpful because it improves readers' understanding about the psychoanalytic theory. Besides, People can anticipate responses for cases similar to the main character throughout the comprehension of how the inner psyche functions. It also encourages them to know more how the Americans deal with their fears and how they seek eternity and happy life. This work at hand endeavors not be a rigid analysis of a character, but it rather constitutes an ongoing impact on readers.

This study will be divided into two main chapters. The first chapter will be devoted to explaining the theoretical foundations of this study including the psychoanalytic theory –Freudian and Lacanian concepts, and a brief overview Hitler Fiction in the American Literature. The Second part will provide an analysis of the figure of Hitler and of Jack's persona and psyche in an attempt to explain the reasons behind his death anxiety and his disguise under an artificial persona of Hitler through using a psychoanalytical perspective.

## **CHAPTER ONE: PSYCHO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

### **Section One: Psychoanalysis from Freudian and Lacanian perspectives**

#### **Introduction:**

The psychoanalytical theory has been applied for various literary texts and it serves at exploring and interpreting the motives that led to the creation of such works, it, furthermore, identifies the ideologies, feelings, behaviours of particular characters, it explores the unconscious minds of characters and even reach to understand the unconscious of writers, and provides scientific and experimental application of the psychological and psychoanalytical principles in order to obtain the most accurate results.

In order to understand the application of these theories on Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, this chapter will provide an overview of the required psychoanalytical principles to be applied on the novel. Firstly, by explaining the Freudian and Lacanian concepts and principles that will be applied on Hitler and the characters' psyche as presented in this novel. Moreover, by providing brief explanations of Death Anxiety –fear of death, which is affecting Jack Gladney, to be able to fully understand the issues caused by such an anxiety. Secondly, by providing a historical overview of Hitler Fiction in American Literature in order to demonstrate Hitler's position, personification, and significance in American Literature throughout time. Finally, this chapter will introduce the writer; DeLillo, then identify his constant use of Hitler in his writings and mainly in *White Noise*. The latter will be given in a brief summary to introduce the main elements of the story, which will be deeply analysed in the second chapter.

#### **1. Freudian Psychoanalytic Criticism**

The sphere of psychoanalysis was fundamentally established by Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) who believed that in order to understand one's thoughts and motives –which lead to particular actions– thus being able to help providing accurate treatments, one should release the repressed emotions to make the unconscious side of the mind conscious. Freud could prove the significance of his studies that dealt the unconscious and its effect on people's lives. Psychoanalysis became no longer merely related to the spheres of psychology. It has grown –due to the quick pace of changes occurring because of technology and science– to mark its impact on many other fields such as sociology, history, and literature. The latter has been highly influence by the ideas of psychoanalysis, hence it adopted its principles to apply them on the characters of different literary texts in order to gain more accurate understanding and interpretations.

## **1.1. Selected Freudian Concepts and Principles Required in the Study**

Based on the Freudian classical psychoanalysis, a given selection of required concepts, which serve the complement of this study, is to be explained.

### **1.1.1. The Freudian Theory of Psyche**

People might act in very unusual, yet irrational ways. Freud notes that there are reasons and motives to such behaviours and actions. Therefore, he began to use the concept of unconscious to explain those actions. One of the very notable contributions to psychology that Freud divided the conscious mind up into three components: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious (Freud 159).

When people are aware of particular thoughts and things that occur around them, such operation happens at the conscious level. According to Freud, when one is aware of his children's first names or what he had for dinner, as such are at the preconscious level where the availability of thoughts or memories is easily called up despite the fact that one is not currently aware of. Freud even resembled the preconscious to a 'mental waiting room', in which thoughts settle until they 'succeed in attracting the eye of the conscious' (Freud 306). However, the unconscious contains memories, thoughts and motives –these might include early childhood memories, secret desires and hidden drives– that are not easily brought to consciousness (Wilson 120, 135). While –what Freud calls the ego and superego, which will be given further explanations, include materials at all three level of consciousness, the entire id is unconscious. Freud compare the mind to an iceberg and divided human personality into three parts (see Appendices, Figure 1).

### **1.1.2. Freud's Notion of the Unconscious Mind**

Saul McLeod in his article explains the value of Freud's contribution to psychology by setting particular principles to understand the importance of the unconscious in shaping human behaviour. He notes that Freud did not invent the notion of conscious versus unconscious mind, according to him, Freud bears the responsibility of making it prominent to the world.

Freudian theory lays great stress on the role of the unconscious mind in maintaining behaviour. He believes that one's past experiences –with emphasis on the childhood experiences– affect to a great extent one's feelings, thoughts, decisions and motives which are all stored in the unconscious. Freud maintains that people are only mindful of what their conscious is aware of; however, they are blind to

the stored memories and information in the unconscious mind. McLeod denotes that the main purpose of psychoanalysis is to decode the motives of particular defence mechanisms (which will be explained), yet to make the unconscious conscious. Freud explained that the unconscious discloses its motives in different ways, such as dreams, slips of the tongue that are called “Freudian slips”. A very common example given by Freud to illustrate such a slip is when a British Member of Parliament stated “the honorable member from Hell” referring to a colleague that he used to be irritated with. He actually meant ‘Hull’ (Freud 1920).

Freud sets three key aspects that personality –psyche– is composed of. The first one is called *the id*, which is the primitive and instinctual part of the mind, yet it consists of all biological components of personality present at birth, including sex instinct that is called Eros and it contains the libido (life drive), and the aggressive instinct called Thanatos (death drive) . Id contains the unconscious, basic and primal urges. Freud explains that the newborn child has a personality that is controlled only by the id, but it develops an ego and super-ego later (Freud 1, 66).

The second aspect of personality is *the ego* that “is part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world” (Freud, 1923, 25). In other words, it is the part of the personality that balances the urges of unrealistic id and the external real world in order for one to behave in an acceptable realistic manner. The ego works as a protection mechanism that works on satisfying the id’s demands; however, it avoids using ways that lead to negative consequences. Freud made the analogy of the id being a horse while the ego is the rider. The ego is “like a man on a horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse” (Freud 15).

The third and final aspect contains ideals and values or morals instilled –into one’s personality– from society and fundamentally in childhood from parents, it is *the superego*, which strives for perfection, and functions to make one behaves according to these morals through controlling the id’s impulses and urges particularly the behaviour that might contradict society’s values. It directs the ego to turn to moralistic aims rather than realistic ones. The superego consists of two components or systems: the conscious and the ego-ideal (ideal self). The latter is the imaginary picture that one creates about how they ought to be, how perfectly one’s treatment should be with other people, and one’s reputation in the society, which ought to be idealistic. Freud explained that the feeling of guilt is a result of the superego treatment of a particular action, that is, if the ego responds to the id’s urge, the superego causes a feeling of guilt as a result –precisely a punishment (Freud 1, 66).

### **1.1.3. Defence Mechanisms in Psychoanalysis**

*“Life is not easy!”* (Sigmund Freud)

Anna Freud (1937) –who followed her father’s footprints– worked to develop the notions her father had brought. In order for the ego to deal with the problems and conflict, moreover, to overcome the anxieties and pains in one’s life, yet to bring back stability and comfort, Freud set a range of what he called “defence mechanisms” in his psychoanalytic theory –which had been developed by his daughter Anna who would add five other defence mechanisms of her own. Other psychoanalysts have added various types of defence during the process of developing the theory.

Freud explains that when the ego receives negative indications that something is malfunctioning (anxiety, or the unpleasant state that is sought to be avoided), it then attempts at dealing with these anxieties or conflicts created by the id, superego, and reality; however, if the ego fails, it then employs particular defense mechanisms that manage shielding the ego.

### **1.1.4. Type of Anxiety in Freudian Theory**

Freud identified three types of anxiety and emphasized on the notion that these anxieties do not stem from the same sources:

- a. Neurotic anxiety: which happens when the unconscious leads to punishment for the behaviour that fails to reach the required standards, or when it is considered inappropriate. It is the unconscious fear of losing control of the id's impulses.
- b. Reality anxiety is fear of real-world events. Aiming at reducing this type of anxiety, the solution occurs in a form of avoidance. The cause of this anxiety is usually easily identified.
- c. Moral anxiety involves a fear of violating one’s own moral principles.

Although we may knowingly use these mechanisms in many cases these defenses work unconsciously to distort reality; furthermore, they can be unhealthy particularly when they are overused when evading difficult responsibilities and dealing in times of hardship and with problems. If one is faced with a particularly unpleasant task, the mind may lead them to forget their responsibility in order to avoid the dreaded assignment. In addition to forgetting, other defense mechanisms include rationalization, denial, repression, projection, rejection, and reaction formation.

### 1.1.5. Selected Types of Defence Mechanisms

The defence Mechanisms lay under four-level classification, presented by the psychoanalyst George Eman Vaillant:

- **Level I:** Pathological Defences (psychotic denial, delusional projection, conversion, splitting).
- **Level II:** Immature Defences (fantasy, projection, passive aggression, acting out, wishful thinking, somatization, introjection, idealization).
- **Level III:** Neurotic Defences (intellectualization, reaction formation, dissociation, displacement, repression, isolation, rationalization (making excuses), regression, undoing, withdrawal).
- **Level IV:** Mature Defences (humour, sublimation, suppression, altruism, anticipation, tolerance, patience, respect, moderation, courage, forgiveness, gratitude, humility) (73, 786-794).

The presented defences are a selection from the previous levels:

**A. Denial** is the most common defence mechanism used to deal with the different anxieties in which people deny that they are under pressure, or refuse to believe or admit that something has really occurred because of their disability, deal with particular problems of reality that seem to be unpleasant to them; they, moreover, tend to avoid an eminent truth, or minimize its importance despite their admission of it; however, others would accept the seriousness of a particular–unpleasant– fact, but they ascribe its responsibility to force majeure or blame others. Traumas and shock could motivate such a defence to function to keep the unacceptable feelings from conscious awareness (Chang 1-2).

**B. Projection** acts to reduce anxiety through projecting –ascribing– one’s unacceptable qualities or feelings to others. The ego cannot recognize when the impulses are relieved through projection. An example for such a mechanism is when one believes that someone hates them whereas it is one’s own dislike or loath that implements such an illusion. (Clifford 589, 599)

**C. Repression and Suppression** are very common mechanisms. In one hand, repression works to keep the unwanted information –that will continuously affect the one’s behaviour and influences negatively their psyche– out of the conscious awareness, whereas suppression acts to force the unwanted information out of one’s awareness, but it does it consciously in some case, while it occurs unconsciously when removing anxiety-provoking memories (Clifford 591).

**D. Displacement** involves taking out our frustrations, feelings, and impulses on people or objects that are less threatening (Winson 02).

**E. Intellectualization** is the reduction of one's anxiety or block of the confrontation with an unconscious conflict by thinking about events in a scientific, logical, or clinical, yet cold way to avoid the unwanted feeling (Gabbard 35). Therefore, the brain focuses on the intellectual aspect of a situation rather than thinking about the negative unwanted feelings caused by the situation (Vaillant 274).

**F. Rationalization** acts to prevent anxiety and it, moreover, might protect self-esteem and self-concept. It works to avoid the true motives of particular behaviour or feelings through explaining them in logical or rational way. A student might blame a poor exam score on the instructor rather than his or her lack of preparation (Bateman & Holmes 92).

**G. Sublimation** is considered as a positive defence mechanism by which one converts the unacceptable urges into a more decent way. Freud believed that sublimation was a sign of maturity that allows people to function normally in socially acceptable ways. One might give full vent of anger or frustration in martial arts or sports that require energy and strength.

**H. Regression** is defence mechanism that was developed by Anna Freud. It is described as the temporary return to a former psychological state –from the stage of psychosexual development in which they are fixated– which is not just imagined but relived. It is when one returns to an earlier age in order to deal with a difficult situation they face. One might cry or sulk when facing hardship or unwanted feelings because they are fixated at an earlier development stage (Beak 06).

**I. Idealization** is attribution of or the perception of oneself or others' qualities as positive, yet in an exaggerated way (McWilliams 60-130).

**J. Reaction Formation** reduces anxiety by taking up the opposite feeling, impulse, or behaviour. In other words, it is expressing the opposite of the inner feeling in the outward behaviour.

### **1.1.6. Critical Evaluation of Freudian Perspective**

The Concept of the unconscious mind caused a considerable confusion and frustration to many researchers such as the Behaviorists –that tend to examine and test under experimental objective circumstances– who were sceptical of the arguments Freudian psychoanalysts gave concerning the processes operating at an unconscious level. In spite of this, researchers of different perspectives have

agreed that the notion of the unconscious is utterly crucial in modern-day psychology and that the void that might separate psychoanalysis and psychology has been decreasing over the years and achievements of the development the sphere has witnessed.

It is remarkable that the empirical research in psychology has indicated the limits of Freudian theory of the unconscious mind, it, furthermore, developed the theory thus McLeod argues that Freud “[had] underestimated the importance of the unconsciousness” and explained that in terms of the iceberg analogy “there is a much larger portion of the mind under the water” and he maintains that the mind “operates most efficiently by relegating a significant degree of high level, sophisticated processing to the unconsciousness (381, 403). Today’s psychology views that the mind consist of a collection of modules that has gradually developed and operate outside of consciousness, unlike Freud that considered the unconscious mind as a single entity (Tulving & Donaldson 381, 403).

Finally, The modern notion of ‘adaptive unconsciousness’ differs from the psychoanalytic one. Thus, modern-day psychology understands that adaptive unconsciousness is where most information processing resides outside consciousness for reasons of efficiency, rather than repression, whereas Freud believed that primitive urges remained unconscious to protect individuals from experiencing anxiety.

As psychoanalysis developed to be a worldwide movement, it became widely used in different domains of study. It extended to influence –not only psychiatry and psychology– literature that adopted its principle in the study of literary texts under careful consideration to the work itself –with all its components, such as characters, events, settings, and the context influencing the narrative. It is significant to note that the analysis of a literary work from a psychoanalytical perspective should be careful according to simplified –and not exaggerated– interpretations (Dobbie 55).

This study is going to undertake the Psychoanalytical theory to analyze the character Jack Gladney in one of the most significant outbreaks in postmodern American literature in the novel “White Noise” by the postmodernist Don DeLillo. The story is centered on Jack’s obsession with Nazi controversial leader Adolf Hitler in order to conceal and overcome his extensive fear of dying (as so-called death anxiety).

## **2. Selected Lacanian Concepts**

According to *Standford Encyclopedia of philosophy*, Jacque Lacan’s “teachings and writings explore the significance of Freud's discovery of the unconscious both within the theory and practice of analysis

itself as well as in connection with a wide range of other disciplines”. In this respect, it is significant to shed light on and explain some of Lacan’s concepts that the present study requires.

## **2.1. The Register Theory (the Symbolic, the Real, the Imaginary)**

In the 1950’s, Jacque Lacan developed the three psychoanalytic ordered symbolic-real-imaginary triad during a series of lectures. Lacan’s triad is originated in the mirror stage –which will be explained. His picture of the symbolic-real-imaginary orders are deeply rooted in Freudian notions of the Oedipal phase, infantile sexuality, and the project of uncovering unconscious processes through language and associations (Loos 2002, RT).

The Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real can be thought of as the three fundamental dimensions of psychical subjectivity *à la* Lacan. It is significant to mention that Lacan's Register theory evolution into three main periods, with each period being distinguished by the priority of one of the registers: the early Lacan of the Imaginary (1930s and 1940s), the middle Lacan of the Symbolic (1950s), and the late Lacan of the Real (1960s and 1970s). These registers develop within the Mirror Stage and shapes its characteristics throughout the life of a person.

## **2.2. The Mirror Stage and the three Orders**

Lacan’s explanation of the Mirror phase was presented in his article "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I" (1936, 1949). It centered on the early ages of an infant. It is when infant –aged between six to eighteen months– suddenly see its reflection on a mirror, it is bombarded with an image of itself as whole. The infant sees itself “mirrored” back to itself in the reactions of its mother if it has not seen the reflection of itself on the mirror. The infant; however, before the mirror phase experiences its existence as a fragmented entity and random formless mass, with libidinal needs. In other words, the infant is not capable of recognizing the difference between the self and its environment. The infant, for instance, does not acknowledge that its toes are part of its body, they are rather objects to be explored and placed in the mouth just like a toy or another object in its environment. That is, the infant does not know that parts of its own body are parts of its own body.

The children become capable of recognizing their mirror image, hence, this recognition brings them a great pleasure; however, because they are in a preverbal stage, they cannot express their feelings verbally. The image itself in the mirror is described by Lacan as the "Ideal-I" (Lacan, Mirror, 2). This ego ideal, for Lacan, is explained by Loos “the ideal ego provides an image of wholeness which

constitutes the ego. As in Freud, this is formed through an external force; in this case, the sudden realization of a complete image of self that appears in the mirror to counteract an infant's primordial sense of its fragmented body" (Loos 2002, RT). The child—before this stage—is little more than a "body in bits and pieces," unable to clearly separate I and Other, and wholly dependent for its survival upon its first nurturers (Sharpe, IEP).

Lacan argues that the Mirror Stage begins with the *Imaginary Order* in which the world of perception is created in a form of images, because the infant lacks language, which means that the only way for him to perceive and experience the world is through images he sees because he is unable to understand what he hears, yet he is unable to express what he sees verbally. In this phase, with the child's sense of himself as a whole entity, he is deluded into his control over the environment that surrounds him. Furthermore, Lacan posits his concept *The Desire of the Mother* that occurs in this Order when the child perceives that he is over his mother because she is part of him because of the mutual satisfaction they provide for each other. This phase continues until the child acquires language (Lacan, *Ecrits* 19). The formation of ego occurs during this phase, it is the result of a conflict between the perceived visual appearance and the emotional experience of the person (Evans, 112-135).

The *Symbolic Order*, according to Lacan, initiates when the child acquires language. Several changes—which, according to Lacan, are of a profound significance that affect people's lives as long as they live—occur in this phase. The meaning-making process begins through a symbolic system of signification. The child-mother dyad during the Imaginary Order witnesses its ending in the Symbolic order. The completion of the split requires passage through Oedipus, in other words, the father intervenes to end the child-mother union. This separation from the mother—after the child experiences the separation from others and starts to recognize that "I" is not "you"—causes a sense of loss. Lacan argues that people will spend their whole life looking for a substitute that could replace the lost union with the mother. Lacan uses the term '*objet petit a*' to refer to the *Lost object of desire* which people—in the Symbolic Order—will unconsciously look for to bring back the feeling of union with the mother, and Lacan believes that people will spend their entire lives looking for this replacement (Lacan, *Ecrits* 20). The repression of desire for the union with the mother that causes the feeling of loss that creates the feeling of guilt because of such desires, the unconscious, therefore is created within the transition from the Imaginary to the Symbolic Order. Lacan, in the respect, states that "*The unconscious is structured*

*like a language*” to explain that Language attempts at putting the world of object into words, so does the unconscious that searches for the lost object of desire (Lacan, Book II).

Lacan claims that “desire is always the desire of the Other” by which he the person’s ideology, desires, character and such are formulated as a result of the entrance in the Symbolic Order. It is the response of one to their own society’s ideology and values that makes one the way he is. That is, one’s baggage of beliefs, desires, and even ambitions are created and decided by –not one’s uniqueness– what one is taught. Lacan uses the capitalized o in the term ‘Other’s to refer to anything that contributes in the formation of one’s subjectivity (Evans 135).

Imaginary and Symbolic Orders both attempt at controlling or avoiding what Lacan refers to as the *Real*, which is not synonymous to reality (Evans 133). *The Real* is a particular dimension of existences that cannot be explained by using the society ideologies, thus it is then uninterpretable and it causes a disturbing feeling, which Lacan refers to as *trauma of the Real*. When the ideologies society has created fail to explain realities are beyond our ability to comprehend (Lacan Evans 135).

### **3. Death Anxiety: An Overview**

"this life we're captive of, this essentially alienated life, existing, this life in the other, is as such joined to death, it always returns to death"

*(Jacque Lacan, SJI, 233)*

In the McMillan Encyclopedia of Death and Dying, Robert Kastenbaum explains in his article “*Anxiety and fear*” that in everyday life people might happen to have particular or different fears. However, a fear is associated with a more specific threat and is less likely to disrupt a person’s daily life, unlike anxiety. And for people to avoid such fears, they can simply avoid situations that incite or cause them, or learn how to coexist with these fears in a way that they master or that which relaxes them (29, 30). Tomber notes the awareness of one’s mortality “characterizes human being”, unlike the notion of self-preservation which characterizes all species. The acknowledgement of mortality drives one to look for ways to overcome the terror that is caused by this awareness (885).

#### **3.1. Theories of Death Anxiety and the Fear of Dying**

It took psychology 125 years to finally consider death and dying as topics for scientific study. It was until the late 1800s that experimental psychology was advanced by such pioneers as Wilhelm Wundt, Francis Galton, and Alfred Binet in Europe, and by E. L. Thorndike, G. Stanley Hall, James McKeen

Cattell, and John Dewey in the United States. (Strack & Feifel, 686). However, it was Sigmund Freud (in Europe) and William James (in the U.S.) that used advanced, in-depth studies conducting “a more encompassing holistic approach” (686). Freud called the state when people show symptoms of extensive fear of death ‘Thanatophobia’. He argues that this feeling is “a disguise for a deeper source of concern” (Kastenbaum 30). Freud believed that what people really feared was not death, but because:

Our own death is indeed quite unimaginable, and whenever we make the attempt to imagine it we . . . really survive as spectators. . . . At bottom nobody believes in his own death, or to put the same thing in a different way, in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality. (*Freud 1953, pp. 304–305*)

Freud explains that people who fear death are fundamentally attempting to deal with unsolved problems traced back to their childhood. They often fear discussing those problems and might not even acknowledge themselves. Freud maintains that one cannot fear death because one has never experienced it, that is, they have never died (Kastenbaum 30).

Before Ernest Becker’s publication of his book *The Denial of Death* 1973, Freud’s theory of death was dominant. It became people’s biggest concern after Becker proved its existence. It became evident that death anxiety embraces a wide range of other various, yet specific phobias and fears, which people face daily. The need for bright lights and noises, the feeling of insecurity when being alone small places are connected to the bigger fear ‘death anxiety’. Becker even noted that people plagued with such anxiety tend to deny death in various ways trying to overcome the terrific feelings it causes. If people having death anxiety are exposed to brutal reminders of their vulnerability and weakness, they would be deeply damaged.

Many theories and approaches developed and emerged to help understanding people and making it easy for them to overcome their anxiety. Based on the anthropologist Becker’s works, ‘TMT’ Terror management theory was developed by the researchers Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski (Tomber 884). In 1996, Adrian Tomer and Grafton Eliason suggested a new approach ‘Regret Theory’. That studied the way people evaluate the worth and quality of their own lives (Kastenbaum 30, 31).

## Section Two: An Overview of Hitler Fiction & DeLillo's Hitler in American Literature

### 4. "Hitler fiction" in American Literature: From a Fascinating Figure of Power to an Epitome of Evil

"Literature is historically determined by institutions, modes of production, cultural values, but at the same time produces conceptions, forms of perception and also narratives which shape ideas about the world and herewith determine social reality in turn."  
(Reichardt 65)

Aiming at perceiving DeLillo's choice of the figure of Hitler in '*White Noise*', it is necessary to consider the representations of Adolf Hitler in the American fiction throughout time. With emphasis on the use of the figure of Hitler, not only as a character but, as a rhetorical device, a figure of speech, a trope for American culture. Jane Tompkins, in this respect, regards fictional texts "not as works of art embodying enduring themes in complex form," but as "attempts to redefine the social order." As such, texts "offer powerful examples of the way a culture thinks about itself, articulating and proposing solutions of the problems that shape a particular historical moment" (xi). Hence, Butter argues that "the figure of Hitler", which is different from the –actual– historical Hitler "has become part of the American cultural imaginary" and he "is not so much a historical persona as a free-floating signifier ready to be filled with shifting meaning, depending on the exigencies of the historical moment" (5).

Hundreds of literary works –of all genres– that featured Adolf Hitler in the American fiction were published from 1939 to 2002 (Butter 5). Alvin H. Rosenfeld observes that Hitler and Nazism have become "so plastic to the contemporary imagination as to be almost whatever one would like [them] to be" (xiv), yet he criticized many texts –that place Hitler in contexts– for distorting historical realities and for being immoral (Butter 9).

Hitler Fiction, between 1939 until 1968, has witness several changes; a rise and fall –emergence, disappearance than a big return. The first writings that mentioned Hitler, in passing, tackled his rise as a political figure. It was Upton Sinclair's *World's End series* –a novel in ten-volumes which covers the crucial event that occurred between 1914 and 1945– that turned Hitler into an interesting figure to Americans when he referred to the Munich Agreement. Before Sinclair's, precisely in 1930s, there were few writings that gave a main focus to the Nazi movement. Journalist and commentators as William

Shirer and Dorothy Thompson could not actually get public attention to what was happening in Europe due to the isolationist policy the Americans had grasped at the time.

The first two American works which represented Hitler as a character were published anonymously in 1939, entitled *The Man Who Killed Hitler* and *The Strange Death of Adolf Hitler*. Both books gave their focus to the 1938 events and attempted to explain Hitler's character drawing on the popularized and simplified versions of Freudian psychoanalysis (Butter 21).

"Hitler Speaks—and America Answers" (65) a chapter heading in Fred Allhoff's novel *Lightning in the* (serialized between August 24 and November 16, 1940) that presents the America propaganda against Hitler and Nazi Germany to boost the "American morale". The work singles out Hitler and casts him as the only responsible for the conflict after the outbreak of the war in Europe, yet it emphasizes on the need of abandoning the American isolationism to engage in a conflict between freedom and slavery; democracy and dictatorship. Hitler became extensively a representation of threat, but rare attempts made of him a subject for comic effect. In Peter Fleming's *The Flying Visit* presented thirteen Hitler caricatures, which mocked the Nazi view of "Hitler the Superman"; however, no existing literary works from then until today represented Hitler as a comic figure. Works until the end of the war focused on questioning Hitler and German's guilt (Butter 9).

After 1945, Hitler fiction publications were decreasing from the American literary arena. Only few works, which featured Hitler in various representations and all suggested that he was part of the past, were published between 1945 and 1960. Allan G. Field's short story "Pharaoh Meets Hitler" (1945), André Richard's *Lisa: A Novel of the Postwar Life of Adolph Hitler* (1950), or Thomas Sweeney's poem *Makers of War* (1951) all "confirm the power of the progressive narrative, a narrative that they help shape as they employ it to make sense of the events of World War II" (Butter 31).

In 1968, Hitler fiction resurfaced; the years after witnessed an extensive publication of works that embodied Hitler, more than eighty-five novels and short stories. "This shift is at the heart of both the emerging conception of the Holocaust as *the* evil event in history and the transformation of Hitler into *the* epitome of evil and thus into a master trope of American culture" argued Butter (19). He argues that the Hitler trope "is mostly used either for self-critique (to argue that postwar America is like Nazi Germany) or for processes of explicit othering (to construct an opposition between the United States and what Hitler embodies)" and the third type of self-other relation is what he "call[s] projection" that

lays between self-critique and othering, yet it owns elements of both. For him these works “project the concerns they engage from the American contexts onto Hitler and the Nazis” (13). He argues that

from the first Puritan settlers onwards, whose Millennial Protestantism fostered the division of the world into absolute good and evil, American culture has tended to label external as well as internal others “evil.” With regard to Hitler, this othering...took various shapes during World War II: Hitler was cast as a maniac, as a gangster, and—in the traditionally religious sense—as an enemy of God. Officially, of course, America’s war against Nazi Germany was a war against an ideological enemy and not against evil. Therefore, administration officials usually avoided the strong version of evil when talking about Hitler and the Nazis. And so did many of the texts featuring Hitler; other texts, however, and especially those that blamed the German “national character” employed the strong notion of evil, a move that appealed to those for whom the vocabulary of good and evil remained meaningful in the traditionally religious sense and to those that favored a simplistic, binary worldview. At the same time, propaganda texts often staged America’s victory, indicating that the evil Hitler represented would ultimately be overcome by the good the United States embodied (Butter 39).

The writing after 1968 cast Hitler as a continuous threat unlike the works that were written between 1940s and 1960s.

The 1970s witnessed the beginnings of the so-called Hitler Wave that “ranged from a scholarly focus on his biography to outright fascination with his personality” (Butter 37). The emergence of the Holocaust studies –after the proliferation of the “Holocaust literature”– affected the Gentile culture, unlike it in the 1960s, which started to be an issue only within the Jewish community (39). This is seen in the work of thriller *Who Will Watch the Watchers* by Edwin Fadiman in which the story leads to a conclusion that there is no future for the Jewish-Gentile couple, which implicitly means that there would be no connections between the Gentiles and the Jews. However, postmodernist works that used the figure of Hitler metaphorically to comment on and critique U.S. politics and culture and suggested that there are parallels between the Holocaust and the extermination of the indigenous American population, displayed a high awareness of the cultural contractedness of seemingly natural categories or ontological

concepts such as “good” and “evil. Charles Bukowski’s “ ” (1972), Gary Goss’s *Hitler’s Daughter* (1973), and Norman Spinrad’s *The Iron Dream* (1972) all employed the Hitler trope as a means of cultural self-critique (Butter 91).

Hitler fiction in late 1970s and early 1980s used Hitler trope as a project of America’s domestic conflicts. Gus Weill’s *The Führer Seed* (1979) projects both American racism and the domestic struggles of the 1960s. Timothy Benford’s *Hitler’s Daughter . . . Wants to Occupy the White House* (1983) projects anxieties about the corruption of the American political system onto Hitler’s daughter. As othering emerged to be the dominant cultural function of Hitler fiction, Don DeLillo published his breakout Novel *White Noise* (1985) through which he exposes projection as a defence mechanism at the individual level.

A transition from using Hitler trope as a projection into using it as an external and internal othering since the Mid-1980s. Othering has been the dominant cultural function of Hitler Fiction since the second half of the Reagan presidency. Shaping and reflecting a restored national self-confidence, most texts written after 1985 project plots in which American protagonists fight and overcome Hitler, reassuring their readers that Americans are “good” and that their values will ultimately prevail over evil. (Butter 124, 126)

It was not until the early 1990s and on that writings suggested that even Hitler might not be beyond redemption. Steve Erickson’s novel *Tours of the Black Clock* (1989) undermines the notion of Hitler’s otherness. However, the period of the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the appearance of the “Geli Novels”, which were engaged on the issue of Hitler’s obsession with Geli. Characterized by the mimetic realism so typical of most other Hitler Fiction, Kris Rusch’s *Hitler’s Angel* (1998), Ron Hansen’s *Hitler’s Niece* (1998), and Andrew Nagorski’s *Last Stop Vienna* (2002) perform the cultural work of othering in various fashions (Butter 150, 171).

A shared point of view with Michael Butter that “find[s] representations of Hitler in American culture and the various uses they are put to both fascinating and troubling. They are fascinating because they speak of the traveling of tropes and concepts over cultural boundaries and testify to the productiveness of language in shaping reality. They are troubling because of the historical associations they carry, no matter how far they are removed from their original context and no matter which new uses they are put to” (16).

## 5. Hitler in Don DeLillo's Writings

*“Writers must oppose systems. It's important to write against power, corporation, the state, and the whole system of consumption and of debilitating entertainments [...] I think writers, by nature, must oppose things, oppose whatever power tries to impose on us.”*

Don DeLillo 2005 (Panic 90, 95).

Don Richard DeLillo aged 80 years old is an American postmodern novelist, essayist, and a playwright. Known for his remarkable choice of themes and technique. As a postmodernist, he has shown a great ability in using magic realism, hyperreality, parody, black comedy, and such, in his fifteen novels starting from his first novel *Americana* (1971) until his most recent published work *Point Omega* in 2010. He has been an active playwright and could produce five plays from 1979 until his latest one published in 2007. DeLillo is a member of the American Academy for Arts and letters and has been nominated to thirty-nine awards which he has won. His most notable awards are *the National Book Award* which he won for *White Noise* (1985), *Irish Times-hex Lingus International Fiction Prize* for his novel *Libra* (1988). His 1991 novel *Mao II* won the *PEN/ Faulkner Award*. “European and Asian cinemas of the 1960s shaped the way I think and feel about things,” DeLillo stated in an interview (2005) talking about his days in New York when he had little money and work at that time, that “perhaps, in an indirect way, cinema allowed me to become a writer” (Panic, 90, 95).

Mark Osteen commented on Don DeLillo's *White Noise* –which is considered as his breakout– stating that this novel “has raised [DeLillo]’s art to a higher level” and his “work has achieved greater commercial success than [his] previous works” (3).

The story of *White Noise* is narrated by Jack Gladney the protagonist of the novel, who is a professor that serves at the department of Hitler Studies whom he invented in 1968 at the College-on-the-Hill. The story is divided into three sections, ‘*Waves and Radiation*’ is the first section in which Jack describes his everyday life routine, with emphasis on the influence of the fast changes that technology and media are causing. He and his fourth wife Babette live –in a small quiet American college town Blacksmith– with four children from his previous marriages, his children are Heinrich, Steffie, Denise, Wilder, and a fifth daughter Bee who lives with one of his ex-spouses. Among Jack's inconsequential conversations,

he describes his love to his wife whom he tells everything due to her openness and honesty in which he finds comfort and relaxation.

In order to look more weighty and strong, Jack attempts at creating an artificial persona, therefore he wears dark glasses and a gown. To make his name sound more prestigious he adds initial to it. His adjustment to his name is not the only thing Jack does in order to create new identity, he, thus, uses Hitler's persona as a model to follow. He; however, knows that his whole aura is crafted and worries about being exposed especially when Hitler conference is to be held in the College he works at, while he can't even speak German, therefore, he starts secretly taking lessons to learn German, and during the process of learning, he throws sarcastic comments that satirizes German language because he finds it difficult to learn.

Jack befriends Murray, who is a professor that frequently discusses his theories with Jack throughout the book, they are centered on observing and studying the locations, events that are ordinary to Jack, but significant to Murray.

In the second part of the novel, '*The Airborne Toxic Event*'—one of the major plot elements—in which a chemical spill from a rail car releases a black noxious cloud over Jack's home region, as a result of that, Blacksmith is warned and ordered for an urgent evacuation. He accidentally gets affected by the toxin (Nyodene D) after he has been exposed to it in a gas station, Jack then is obliged to face and confront his mortality. A technician, from an organization called SIMUVAC ("simulated evacuation"), explains to Jack that the chemical cannot be cured at the present time—but might be after fifteen years—and it will last thirty years in human body.

In part three of the book, "*Dylarama*," Babette confesses to Jack that she has been cheating on him when she becomes a lab-rat in an experimental study for the terror of death, by which she could gain access to new psychopharmaceutical called Dylar. The drug does not help Babette, moreover it has side effects. However, Jack seeks then for revenge and starts a secret investigation to find the man who had supplied Jack's wife with the drug in exchange for sex. He also seeks for black-market supply of the drug for his own hoping he could overcome his increasing death anxiety that turns him into an insomniac. Jack plans to kill Mink after rehearsing a black comedy scene. Jack then has a brief conversation, and he pulls out his gun and shoots him twice and puts the gun in Mink's hand. Mink shoots Jack's wrist, the side effect of the Dylar that Mink had drove him to lose his ability of distinguishing words from things, so that if someone *says aloud* the words "speeding bullet", one under

dugs would fall to the floor to take cover. Jack –overcome by his sense humanity- takes the chance to convince Mink that he shot himself. Jack drives Mink to the nearest hospital where German nuns save Mink’s life. Jack finally overcomes his fear of death after his younger son Wilder miraculously survives when he is riding a tricycle across the highway.

DeLillo has shown a very big interest in Hitler. The latter seemed to be rooted in his writings; his treatment of the Fuhrer is found in three novels, other than *White Noise*. In his second Novel *End Zone* (1972), DeLillo names one of the work’s characters Hauptfuhrer (Duvall 55, 59).

In his third work *Great Jones Street* (1973), DeLillo presents a rock band, which he names ‘Schicklgruber’ after the name of Hitler’s father. It is important to note that Hitler’s father Alois was an illegitimate child to an unmarried peasant, aged 42 years old (Kershaw 3, 9). It is the reason he carried his mother’s name (Shirer 7). Later on the priest officially changed the birth certificate of Alois after the latter legitimized Johann Georg Hiedler as his father –who was claimed to be his biological father (Kersshaw 18).

In 1978, DeLillo published his sixth novel *Running Dog* in which a Journalist is chasing what is allegedly told to be pornographic film and possibly starring the Fuhrer himself during his last days in his Berlin Bunker in 1945 (Cantor 52, 53). Anthony DeCurtis in his conversation with DeLillo asked him the idea behind locating the pornographic movie. DeLillo then explains that the quest for chasing this film

made it an object of ultimate desirability and ultimate dread, simple because it connected to Hitler. When the Hitler diaries “surfaced,” in the early eighties, there was even a more berserk reaction to them than there was this film in *Running Dog*. If anything, I was slightly innocent about my sense of what would happen if such object emerged (DeLillo, CWDD 64)

DeLillo in *Running dog* indicates how the postmodern reality overlaps with film reality. Carton explains that through noting that two characters go to watch Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*. Hitler is presented in a ridiculous way, as playing to audience during the film, he is depicted as an entertainer, which debunks his greatness and diminishes his value as a symbol of fear and terror. Yet, his worth is reduced to the level of Chaplin’s little tramp, with whom the greater dictator is confused as explained Cantor (67). The surprise DeLillo leaves for the end of the quest is that what was thought and expected

to be a pornographic movie turns to be an “almost charming” (Running Dog 235) home movie recorded at the end of the war by Eva Braun –for the children that were inside the bunker– staring Hitler himself, moreover, clowning around and seemingly doing an imitation of Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator*. One of the characters disappointment of the film is demonstrated in his comment that “Hitler [had been] humanized” (235) and even questions the film authenticity, he suspects that even the so-seemed Hitler could be an actor: “Not that I’m convinced it’s him” (236). DeLillo debunks the whole myth of the Nazi power, as told by his character:

I expected something hard-edged. Something dark and potent. The madness at the end. The perversions, the sex. Look, he’s twirling the cane. A disaster. (237)

DeLillo draws attention to the fact that this is Hitler at the end of his career; only a broken defeated man (Cantor 67, 68).

According to Cantor, DeLillo is “fascinated with the phenomenon of Hitler, and presumably believes that to understand the twentieth century, we must somehow come to terms with Hitler and Nazism” (53). Whereas Bruce Bawer is anxious about DeLillo’s implanted Hitler and assimilated him in the mainstream of Western culture, for him “Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of *White Noise* is Jack’s fascination with Hitler”, therefore “DeLillo’s fascination”, he argues

DeLillo’s offense, to my mind, is that he refuses to make distinctions. To him, as to Jack Gladney, the question of Hitler is simply “not a question of good and evil.” Nor, it is clear, do moral distinctions enter into his appraisal of any human act. (41)

Cantor, in this respect, notes that Bawer “is being hasty” because he resembled DeLillo to his own character (52). Butter; however, DeLillo’s use of Hitler can be read as a “as a parody of what parts of U.S. culture did with domestic issues at the time the novel is set” (92).

### **Conclusion:**

The discussed elements in chapter one are interrelated. They pour in the aim of interpreting DeLillo’s work after acknowledging all the surrounding factors that helped shaping the literary work. Being able to understand the psychoanalytical concepts and principle will help understanding the motives of the

character Jack and providing a scientific explanation for the factors that formed his ideology, behaviour, and psyche.

The historical study provided in this chapter helps comprehending Hitler Fiction and being aware of its development through the years. Hitler trope is existence in thousands of American writings, and through analyzing *White Noise*, it is possible to understand, at least, one of the reasons that motivate American writers to engage Hitler in their writings, yet it provides a sample of one of the implantation of such figures and the interpretation of such use.

The next chapter will provide a practical application of the psychoanalytical concepts and principles, not only to provide a diagnosis of the psychological issues that Jack has, but also to demonstrate the psychological nature of DeLillo's works.

## **CHAPTER TWO: HITLER AS A MASK AGAINST DEATH ANXIETY IN “*WHITE NOISE*”**

### **Introduction**

In the first chapter of the present study, psychoanalysis has become applied not only in the sphere of psychology, but in other domains such as literature. The latter presents a wide range of literary works that can be analyzed from a psychoanalytical view point. Aiming at understanding the motives that drive characters to take particular actions and have or show specific feelings.

This chapter, however, will provide an in-depth analysis of the characters of the novel, mainly Jack the protagonist. The figure of Hitler, from both aspects; the historical and the psychical, will be analyzed with aim of explaining Jack’s fascination and obsession with him. Throughout this chapter, Jack’s actions, ideology, conversations, and feelings will interpreted according to Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis in order to explain his use of Hitler as a mask to conceal his fear of death.

### **1. Hitler, the Private Man behind the Public Façade**

Aiming at providing a considerable interpretation of Jack’s motives that result to his choice of Hitler as Mask to disguise his weakness and vulnerability, yet to mitigate his fear of death, it is as equally crucial to provide in-depth insights of the figure of Hitler. In this section, a maintained focus is to be given to both Hitler’s Psyche and Persona.

#### **1.1. Hitler’s Persona:**

*“Some people are larger than life, Hitler is larger than death.”*

DeLillo, *White Noise* (274)

Adolf Hitler, a pretentious name that embodies eternity to some, yet a scary one that is perceived as the incarnation of evil to others. This controversial German politician –who became later the leader of the Nazi party, could manage to create a whole persona for himself which allowed him to conceal his actual personality. “He seemed invincible” (Stewart, IMH), He gained his power from the German that wanted a leader from the people. They exchanged power and trust which made either the leader or the people more powerful (Overy, IMH). Hitler in many respects represented the German society and German values. He was leading a national revolution rather than causing one, (Pick, IMH) and the military did not question his decisions, they supported and enacted them (Kershaw 171, 395). Hitler’s

genius was that one of “understanding the public and political equivocation.” (Al-Akkad 114). He took the opportunity of the Great Depression to emerge his political force. As a Chancellor, he seized his chance to force through revolution that gave him absolute power (Harvey 60).

Power is appealing, it is even sexually attractive, and the Fuhrer was the number one loved man by German women (Sereny, A&E). Al-Akkad denotes that “the man does not lack genius and mental gift” (111); however, he explains that the genius he means is not that of the common conception people believe in, he argues that “[genius] is close to instinct and intuition rather than to reasonable thinking and studied measuring” and that Hitler owned a criminal genius (111, 112). Hitler, indeed, was imbued with power and believed that only his leadership could deliver victory (Overy 421, 425), therefore, he kept maximizing his own power (Manvell & Fraenkel 29). However, this picture that Hitler –who appeared to possess an almost superhuman self-confidence, had drawn for himself using his oratory extraordinary abilities and the propaganda, which he used intelligently, could not conceal his unspoken fears and insecurities that formed such a character filled with extreme contradictions.

## **1.2. Inside the Mind of Hitler: His Psyche**

In order to understand Hitler’s ideology, decision, and motives that shaped his character and therefore led to all the actions he took and the decisions he made, a psychoanalytical study of his childhood and empirical study between Hitler’s phantasies and ideology provides evidence of a very troubled personality and complex psyche.

In 1943, the American secret service attempted to enter inside the mind of the Fuhrer. Thus, they order a team of psychoanalysts to make every possible endeavor to predict what Hitler might do next. The American psychoanalyst Walter C. Langer provided shocking results (Stewart, IMH). Raised by a sadistic drunken brut (Pick, IMH), Alois Hitler, the Fuhrer was significantly affected. Three of Hitler’s siblings died in infancy (Kershaw 4). Langer reached to the conclusion that Hitler was plagued by the Messiah complex (200). He believed that he was chosen for a particular purpose, and was under divine protection. There is no question that Hitler believed he had Christ-like qualities (Overy, IMH), yet he refused that he might fail or make errors, and this the eminent incarnation of God complex as explained by Ernest Jones (123). The magnitude of his weakness, psychologically, led to a drive to overcome that which made him develop this compensatory messianic self (Ovrey, IMH).

The cruelty of his father led Hitler to the arms of his mother Klara Hitler. This “relationship between mother and son, their reciprocal adoration, was unusual” as told by his family doctor Eduard Bloch (Langer 117). “His loath to father, infatuation to mother” (Overy, IMH) explains the Oedipus complex that Hitler suffered from, Hitler’s refusal to conform to the strict discipline of his school onset of intense father-son conflicts (Fromm 493, 498). His mother was overprotective to the extent of spoiling him after she was affected by the loss of her three siblings. Bloch claimed that “Hitler and his mother lived in a rented apartment, small and poor, but the house was always clean, for Hitler was a superb housekeeper” and because his mother suffered from her obsessive cleanliness, which explains the affected Hitler’s “toilet training phase” (Freud) that caused a sever frustration and aroused his feelings of hostility. (Overy, IMH).

Hitler’s “struggle against death” started from the moment upon learning of his mother’s breast cancer. Hitler under a complete shock after the loss of his mother, denied her death and attempted to resurrect her through saving Germany. The denial of the death of his mother shaped his political decisions and affected him to the rest of his life.

The passage below, in which August Kubicek, Hitler's boyhood friend, describes Hitler's reaction upon learning that his mother is dying of cancer, may serve to explain Hitler’s struggle against -not only death but, reality itself:

One morning ... Adolf suddenly appeared in the room. He looked terrible. His face was so pale as to be almost transparent, his eyes were dull and his voice hoarse. I felt that a storm of suffering must be hiding behind his icy demeanour. He gave me the impression that he was fighting for life against a hostile fate.

His eyes blazed, his temper flared up. "Incurable--what do they mean by that?" he screamed. "Not that the malady is incurable, but that the doctors aren't capable of curing it. My mother isn't even old. Forty-seven isn't an age where you give up hope. But as soon as the doctors can't do anything, they call it incurable."

I was familiar with my friend's habit of turning everything he came across into a problem. But never had he spoken with such bitterness, with such passion as now. Suddenly it seemed as though Adolf, pale, excited, shaken to the core, stood there arguing and bargaining with Death, who remorselessly claimed his victim.

(Kubicek, 1955, p. 82)

Koenigsberg explains that to Kubicek Hitler says, essentially, "It cannot be true that mother is going to die. She must live." To the German people Hitler says, "Germany shall not die. She must live." (57)

Koenigsberg maintains that Hitler's perception of social reality is shaped by two central phantasies, which are projected into the world. In one instance, Hitler projects an infantile, sado-masochistic sexual phantasy into social reality. Consequently, he perceives the German people to be in danger of being attacked and exploited, and of being contaminated, debased and humiliated thereby. In a second instance Hitler projects the image of his mother, dying of cancer, into social reality.

Consequently he perceives the nation to be diseased, disintegrating, and in the process of dying. On the basis of this analysis, then, it would appear to be possible to "make sense" of Hitler's fantastic view of the world: his perceptions reflect, not a description of external reality, but a symbolic transformation of inner psychological processes. Social reality serves, for Hitler, as a "transference vehicle," providing a screen upon which his unconscious phantasies may be projected. (58, 59)

Hitler was beaten by his father regularly which plagued him with castration anxiety (Overly, IMH) and Langer argued that this extreme castration anxiety could manifest itself in adulthood in the fear of syphilis (which was named by Freud as Syphilophobia) and that Hitler himself described his horrors in an entire chapter in 'Mein Kampf', in almost all cases a fear of such sort is rooted in fear of genital injury during childhood. This can explain the odd relationship he had with his longtime companion Eva Braun who had been trying to gain his attention by committing suicide which made them later lovers (Görtemaker 51). Her second suicide attempt in 1935 failed to gain a place in Hitler's busy life (Lambert 142). Hitler asexual behaviour is explained by the fact that he and Braun never appeared as a couple in public (51) and by the previously mentioned anxieties. He believed that he was appealing to women (Knopp 16) and sexually attractive to them, too. He even aimed at exploiting this to advertise for his political image, he felt that marriage would decrease his appeal and he insisted upon remaining single (Speer 138). Any sorts of the family were out of question, in her diaries she wrote, "Once we had asked Hitler, 'Why did you never get married?' He replied, 'I wouldn't make a good family man, I don't want any children of my own...'" (qtd. in A&E). Eva was not the only woman in Hitler's life. Ian Kershaw claimed that Geli Raubal had an unusual relationship with her uncle Hitler and maintains that "whether actively sexual or not, Hitler's behaviour towards Geli has all the traits of a strong, latent and least, sexual dependence." (219). Geli committed suicide killing herself in Hitler's Munich apartment, yet with his Walther pistol (220). It is commonly believed that Hitler obsession of control harmed Geli who,

thus, ended her own life (The History Place 1996). Hitler entered a severe phase of depression then he, later, declared that she was the only woman he had ever loved (Shirer 132-133).

For Langer, Hitler's hatreds were driven by fears and insecurities rooted in his abusive cruel childhood. The hatred that formed his dreams of total glory and power, which failed him, led to his empty-self to emerge in him creating a suicidal personality which dragged him to kill himself rather than living with total shame and humiliation (Overy, IMH). He wanted to be remembered as the man that never surrenders.

## **2. Jack's use of Hitler as a Mask against Death anxiety:**

Jack's character is based upon his obsession of the persona, which Hitler had created to himself. His quest to overcome his anxiety through disguising behind "Hitler Mask" will be presented in this section with consideration to some selected concepts of Freudian theory including: unconscious mind and the various defence mechanisms Jack had used, in order to demonstrate who they interfered in forming Jack's psyche.

### **2.1. Hitler as a Mask against Death Anxiety**

Despite the fact that DeLillo published "*White Noise*" in 1985, the events of the story take place in the late 1960s. Jack Gladney, a fifty-year-old professor, obsessed with his fears of death, and unable to accept his mortality, has established a whole department of Hitler studies, he proudly narrates "I am chairman of the department of Hitler studies at the College-on-the-Hill. I invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968" (DeLillo, *WN* 4). Jack's friend Murray tells him "Some people are larger than life. Hitler is larger than death. You thought he would protect you" (*WN* 274). Jack "wanted to be helped and sheltered" from his fear of death, he wanted to "conceal [himself] in Hitler and his works" and to "to use him to grow in significance and strength" (*WN* 274). However, when Jack is forced to confront his mortality, he discovers "how totally dumb it was" to use Hitler as mask to disguise behind or strengthen by. His Hitler fails him. Jack then makes another desperate attempt to overcome his fears and basing on Murray's theory by which he persuades him indirectly to commit a crime, maintaining that "the killer lives on" because to kill equals gaining "life-credit" and if the victim dies, Jack cannot (*WN* 277), but Jack fails again, then he figures out all his ways to overcome his fear fail except that moment when he sees his six-old-son Wilder miraculously survives a nearly-happened accident when he has been riding his tricycle across the highway.

Though the events of the story, it becomes evident that Jack often hasten to disguise behind Hitler, which, eventually, does not provide the required protection. This obsession is rather increasing Jack's frustration and anxiety. DeLillo denotes that

“Gladney finds a preserve form of protection. The damage caused by Hitler was so enormous that Gladney feels he can disappear inside it and that his own puny dread will be overwhelmed by the vastness, the monstrosity of Hitler himself” (DeLillo, *CWDD* 63).

According to Butter, DeLillo “exposes projection as an escape mechanism by translating it from the collective back to the individual level” (92) and that the “effort to project his own personal anxieties onto Hitler” can be conceived as a “parody of what parts of U.S. culture did with domestic issues at the time the novel is set”. DeLillo notes that he “brought this conflict to the surface in the shape of Jack Gladney” (DeLillo, *CWDD* 63).

Jack's use of “Hitler Mask” is presented by DeLillo through different literary techniques that can be interpreted from a psychological perspective, through a closer examination to his psyche and understanding his mind and behaviours.

## **2.2. The Disturbed Psyche**

Defences, anxieties, and desires are driving forces within psyche, their interaction inside the person are the foundation that the psychodynamic approach –which contains all theories in psychology– observes human functioning. With a main focus on the unconscious, yet between the diverse structures that form one's personality and the inexorable conflict among these forces. Freud notes that personality is governed by unconscious forces that one cannot control and that childhood experiences play a significant role in determining adult personality (as mentioned in the first chapter of this study).

### **2.2.1. Decoding Jack's Perception of the World and His Use of Hitler**

In order to understand Jack's motives, it is important to acknowledge the effect of postmodern culture that led Jack to pick Hitler, furthermore, understanding Jack's view to Hitler will provide considerable information to be able to psychologically analyze his psyche. The historical Hitler is evident to the world, but the way Jack treats Hitler is notably different, for he does not seem to deal with Hitler as the

rest of the people do. Affected by the consequences of postmodernism, Jack could not help being out of mainstream.

Death anxiety haunted Jack from his early ages of youth, he confesses to his wife Babette after a long time of repression, "I've been afraid for more than half of my life" (DeLillo 188). The causes of this fear do not seem to emerge, Jack does not narrate when or how it all began to him. Nonetheless, it is possible to extract those causes through analyzing his descriptions, decisions, and behaviour. The events of the novel took place in the late 1960s, the time when the postmodern culture emerged after the WWs. The technological changes transpired, existential notions spread, lack of faith in religious beliefs, therefore, lack of faith in the meaning of life; the meaning of existence. Jack appeared to be affected by these changes, "The greater the scientific advance, the more primitive fear" (DeLillo 154). Through the story we find the repetitive description of the aspects of technology thus very detailed. Rolph notes that Jack's fear of death is a part of a larger concern. He suggests that his fear of death is the consequence of Jack's "misguided attempts at helping his community" and his "fear of living a meanings life" (Rolph 6).

Jack's perception of reality as an assemblage of sounds; the "white noise [of death is] everywhere" (DeLillo 295) It is where he lives,

"What if death is nothing but sound?" [Wonders Jack]

"Electrical noise."

"You hear it forever. Sound all around. How awful."

"Uniform, white." (DeLillo 189)

DeLillo's Americans in this novel are in a sea of possibilities in postmodern America, affected by technological changes, ideological freedom, and the influence of media. Cantor puts it as a simile in which history has become like a museum in which people can shop around for their values and identities (53). DeLillo attempted to explain the mentality people are adopting and Jack was his reflection to the notion. Jack just happened to pick –from all figures in the "shop of history"– the considered by majority of Americans the epitome of evil. However, Jack did not know that he will grow obsessive fascination with Hitler that he cannot later control. In fact, he "merchandises the idea [of Hitler] like a commercial product" (Cantor 55)

I invented Hitler studies in North America in March of 1968. It was a cold bright day with intermittent winds out of the east. When I suggested to the chancellor that we might build a whole department around Hitler's life and work, he was quick to see the possibilities. It was an immediate and electrifying success. (DeLillo, *WN* 4)

Jack focuses only on trivialities about Hitler, such as the fact that Hitler took piano lessons, was a sketch artist, and had a close relationship with his mother which she tolerated (*DeLillo* 71). Despite the fact that he was Hitler Studies chairman, yet he considers himself a Hitler expert, he "could not speak or read German" (31), therefore, he had to fake. He wanted to learn German when a conference that German experts are coming to attend. However, he works only to acquire enough German to give his speech "*Because I'd achieved high professional standing, because my lectures were well attended and my articles printed in the major journals, because I wore an academic gown and dark glasses day and night whenever I was on campus, because I carried two hundred and thirty pounds on a six-foot three-inch frame and had big hands and feet, I knew my German lessons would have to be secret*" (32), but then he spends the rest of the gathering time hiding in his office avoiding meeting anyone that could expose his disguise that Jack has been protecting for a long time in order to conceal his vulnerability (Cantor 55). He projects his disability of learning German to Hitler through justifying in a satirical way to reduce the frustration his feelings of shame "*Wasn't Hitler's own struggle to express himself in German the crucial subtext of his massive ranting autobiography, dictated in a fortress prison in the Bavarian hills? Grammar and syntax. The man may have felt himself imprisoned in more ways than one*" (*DeLillo* 31).

However, it is important to mention that the conference was meaningless affair that did not take Hitler seriously, who became too familiar, and the 'experts' made him "a mere subject of gossip" (Cantor 58) representing the modernist uselessness of conferences that turn to be meetings for fun:

About ninety Hitler scholars would spend the three days of the conference attending lectures, appearing on panels, going to movies. They would wander the campus with their names lettered in gothic type on laminated tags pinned to their lapels. They would exchange Hitler

gossip, spread the usual sensational rumors about the last days in the *führerbunker*. (WN 260)

Jack gave a five minute speech –in German– “from notes” (WN 261) and all he talked about was “mainly about Hitler’s mother, brother and dog” he emphasizes that “His [Hitler’s] dog’s name was Wolf. This word is the same in English and German” (WN 261). DeLillo here is demonstrating Jack’s ways to deal with his fears, he is unable to be true to himself and the others around him. He even uses the name Hitler to backup his person when he is giving his speech in the conference to cover his weak German

*I spoke the name often, hoping it would overpower my insecure sentence structure (WN 261).*

Nevertheless, Jack believes that everyone has “an aura to maintain” and “it was not a small matter”. He stated so when he had a conversation with Murray in a lecture hall. Surrounded by students and staff, Jack felt he was powerful and the topic of the conversation –which was a triviality– was of a great significance, it was about Hitler, for sure, he expresses that “I had been generous with the power and madness at my disposal...[...]. Death was strictly a professional matter here. I was comfortable with it, I was on the top of it” (DeLillo 74). Hitler helps Jack ward off his fear of death. He remains more invested in the aura and imagery surrounding Hitler rather than the actual, historical figure. Hitler comes to resemble the “Most Photographed Barn in America” that its surrounding aura seems more significant than the object itself. However, Jack loses all the power and the security he find in his fake identity as a professor once his trappings and authority are removed. It is depicted in a scene when Jack meets Eric Massingale –a former microchip sales engineer who changed his life by coming out to Blacksmith to join the teaching staff where Jack works– who had never seen Jack without his trappings and thus he wonders “You’re not wearing your dark glasses” (85) which indicates that “dark glasses” is a metonym for “powerful aura” as Lacanian stand point posits. Eric confirms this when he tells Jack later “You look different without your glasses and gown” (85). Jack feels his mask of power is shaken, he shows a sense of insecurity once Eric reached to discover one truth about Jack, that he is not as he seemed. It is when Jack describes the way Eric looks at him showing an increasing sense of insecurity “He looked me over...altering his perspective, nodding a little, his grin beginning to take on a self-satisfied look, reflecting some inner calculation” (82) Jack shows a lack of self-assured that he often pretends to have when his at the college:

"I think I know those shoes," he said.

What did he mean, he knew these shoes?

"You're a different person altogether."

"Different in what way, Eric?"

"You won't take offense?" *he said, the grin turning lascivious, rich with secret meaning.*

"Of course not. Why would I?"

"Promise you won't take offense."

"I won't take offense."

"*You look so harmless, Jack. A big, harmless, aging, indistinct sort of guy.*"

"*Why would I take offense?*" I said, *paying for my rope and hurrying out the door.* (DeLillo 82-83)

Jack is humiliated in this scene, and to overcome the anxiety caused. Instead of expressing his rejection of Eric's opinion of him, Jack says the exact opposite statement. His pride was piqued, he loathed Eric and instead of rejecting what he had heard, the reaction formation defence mechanism drove him to take up the opposite of what he wanted to reply.

The climax of the story occurs in the second part "The Airborne Toxic Event" when Jack gets affected by the toxin substance (Nyodene D) after a man from SIMUVAC, which stands for Simulated Evacuation, explains the toxin's deadliness to Jack, but only in vague, abstract terms. He tells Jack that SIMUVAC is using their experience here, at the airborne toxic event, in order to prepare for a disaster simulation. The man tells Jack that Nyodene D. lives in the system for thirty years and that, in fifteen years, they will be able to give him more detailed information about its effects. Jack's vague fear of death becomes authentic and confirmed

"Death has entered. It is inside you. You are said to be dying and yet are separate from the dying, can ponder it at your leisure, literally see on the X-ray photograph or computer screen the horrible alien logic of it all. It is when death is rendered graphically, is televised so to speak, that you sense an eerie separation between your condition and yourself. A network of symbols has been introduced, an entire awesome technology wrested from the gods. It makes you feel like a stranger in your own dying" (DeLillo 137).

Jack wishes to have his academic gown and dark glasses with him. This indicates his reliance on his aura that no longer provides protection because his death is no longer undefined. It is now confirmed and could occur at any moment and Hitler cannot shield him from his fate. He recognizes that he is “tentatively scheduled to die” (DeLillo 192) he begins “*throwing things away. Things in the top and bottom of [his] closet*” (211) Possessions reminds him of his mortality and that he is tied down by things that he will leave in death. He is trying to escape his current ego. Jack believes that “*all plots tend to move deathward*” (26). Therefore, he attempts at neglecting and forgetting his past because it is attached to his future, which its only possibility is death.

In a conversation with his eleven-year-old daughter Denise, Jack provide a clear evidence for his reliance on Hitler to project his fears,

“He was on again last night.” [says Denise.]

“He’s always on. We couldn’t have television without him.”

"They lost the war," she said. "How great could they be?"

"A valid point. But it's not a question of greatness. It's not a question of good and evil. I don't know what it is. Look at it this way. Some people always wear a favorite color. Some people carry a gun. Some people put on a uniform and feel bigger, stronger, safer. It's in this area that my obsessions dwell."

(DeLillo 63)

Therefore, Jack does not seem to be interested in the terrifying facts about Hitler, as long as the latter provides him with the protection and aids him overcome his fears and anxieties, yet makes an important man of him. Hitler makes him “*bigger, stronger, safer*”. In order for Jack to protect his self-esteem, to avoid exposing his fear, and to convince himself –before his daughter, a defence mechanism urges him to rationalize his unconvincing argument to justify his use of a terrible man that destroyed nation and puts it in a radical comment “*It’s not a question of good or evil*” (63).

Hitler can be a symbol of all irrational and destabilized modern America. It is where a dangerous dictator is domesticated and considered as part of everyday life. DeLillo demonstrated the huge influence media could do to allow such figures to emerge, yet live with people. As Cantor explains that television “brought Hitler into our homes hence domesticates him” (Carton 56).

Jack has severely suffered from the void that had been spreading in his life. In world “*full of abandoned meanings*” (184), he attempts at finding the meaning that can bring back significance to his life, hence, Hitler carried the meaning of power that could fill the gaps in Jack’s life. Carton notes that Hitler’s aura of terror and fear cannot be weakened and trivialized no matter how strong the forces of postmodernism attempt to diminish it (59). Jack’s colleague Murray explains to him:

*“Helpless and fearful people are drawn to magical figures, mythic figures, epic men who intimidate and darkly loom.”* [says Murray]

“You’re talking about Hitler, I take it.”

“Some people are larger than life. *Hitler is larger than death*. You thought *he would protect you....* ‘Submerge me,’ you said. ‘Absorb my fear.’ On one level you wanted to conceal yourself in Hitler and his works. On another level you wanted to use him to grow in significance and strength.” (*DeLillo* 287)

As it has been mentioned earlier, DeLillo explained this quote in his a conversation with Anthony DeCurtis that was recorded and analyzed in DeLillo’s published book “*Conversation with DeLillo*” in which he notes that this gap is permanent in everyone’s life, a thing that “we almost never talk about, something that is almost there” (63), that this need for a meaning drive people to find an object to substitute the loss.

It is remarkable that the characters surround Jack are, in fact, indirectly supporting this obsession as for Murray, who envies Jack for his success with Hitler:

You’ve established a wonderful thing here with Hitler. You created it, you nurtured it, *you made it your own*. Nobody on the faculty of any college or university in this part of the country can so much as utter the word Hitler without a nod in your direction.... *He is now your Hitler*, Gladney’s Hitler.... The college is internationally known as a result of Hitler studies.... You’ve evolved an entire system around this figure.... I marvel at the effort. It was masterful, shrewd and stunningly preemptive. (*DeLillo* 11–12)

Hitler became Jack's shelter to restore his self-esteem and increases the positive self-image he seeks to strengthen. It is eminent that Jack is mere weak person who does not mind to delude himself aiming at providing –what he wishes it would be– a permanent remedy for his anxiety. He eagerly worked to be distinguishable in the academic sector; however, it was not authenticity that he based on to build such a picture. He sold his genuineness that did not seem to feed his thirst for confidence and strong self-importance in exchange for an artificial and fake persona that would boost his self-image within his environment.

Death is the dominant topic in Jack's conversations and discussions with his family. Mostly with his wife. Babette hides her own fear of death for a long time, she tries to mitigate it, therefore she engages in an unauthorized experimental treatment of her anxiety, although she knew it "*was way too risky--legally, ethically and so forth*"; however, she obtains the Dylar pills from a man, whom she refers to as Mr. Gray, in exchange for sex. In the third part of the novel "Dylarama", Jack confronts her that he "found the Dylar" at their house "taped to the radiator cover" (DeLillo 177) and asks for explanations. Babette confesses that she has a fear of death and had to anything to overcome it and she tells Jack, "*It haunts me, Jack. I can't get it off my mind... What can I do? It's just there... FEAR OF DEATH... I think about it all the time*" (DeLillo 187). Jack was disappointed in her, in the fact that she has fear of death more than the fact of her cheating on him. It becomes clear that Jack married Babette, his fourth wife, because he believed she is different from his ex-spouses, whom he describes addressing Babette "*I thought it was my former wives who practiced guile. Sweet deceivers. Tense, breathy, high-cheekboned, bilingual*" (183) whereas Babette is "the happy one" thus says Jack. He believed one of the reasons "*of [his] adoration of Babette must have been sheer relief. She was not a keeper of secrets, at least not until her death fears drove her into frenzy of clandestine research and erotic deception*" (DeLillo 204).

Reading thoroughly Jack's description of his four-marriage experiences provides considerable information to explain Jack's acts. He states

"It was curious how I kept stumbling into the company of lives in intelligence. Dana worked parttime as a spy. Tweedy came from a distinguished old family that had a long tradition of spying and counterspying and she was now married to a high-level jungle operative. Janet, before retiring to the ashram, was a foreign-currency analyst who

did research for a secret group of advanced theorists connected to some controversial think-tank” (DeLillo 203)

And his third wife, Tweedy, took all his money after their divorce and remarried Malcolm Hunt, a high-level jungle operative. She repetitively calls Jack “Stupid” (DeLillo 86), yet her family and her name him “Tack”. A name that Jack “*kept expecting to hear a note of overrefined irony in their voices when they called [him] by that name*” (86). She tells Jack “*Malcolm and I once took tea with Colonel Qaddafi. A charming and ruthless man, one of the few terrorists we've met who lives up to his public billing*” (88). Jack clearly married these women because he wanted to feel important, live mystery and find the object that fills the voids in his life. Nevertheless, he discovers that he could not find the stability he wished for because he felt that his “security was threatened” and his “sense of a long and uneventful life” is lost (87). Jack tells his twelve-year-old daughter Steffie that he is not “*one of those men who keeps finding younger women*” (48) when she asked him about Babette’s age and if she is as young as her mother. Jack married younger women to alleviate his anxiety, to feel that he is young and younger women accept to be with him. He is still attractive to them. However, his plans failed and led to three divorces and a marriage on a razor edge, thus despite that he “*thank God for Babette*” (88) because she is his “*strength, my life-force*” (DeLillo 189).

Jack and Babette express their repressed fear and desires through sex, because they can never revert to a state of “id-ishness”. Jack draws courage from Babette’s “breasts, her warm mouth, her browsing hands” and this makes him more determined conceal the fact of his scheduled death from Babette. McClellan argues that “this is classically Freudian; they use sex as comfort and distraction from fear of everyday life and death” (McClellan 6).

Scott Rolph in his paper “*Interpreting White Noise*” posits that Jack perhaps has separated from the Mirror Stage with “a sense of discord and a pervasive sense of uneasiness” (Rolph 3), which is seen in his Jack’s infantile nature when he nicknames Babette, “Baba”. Jack frustration when he sees her on the television is unusual, he depicts that sense, “*her appearance on the screen made me think of her as some distant figure from the past, some ex-wife and absentee mother, a walker in the mists of the dead. If she was not dead, was I? A two-syllable infantile cry, ba-ba, issued from the deeps of my soul*” (DeLillo 103). Rolph explains that Babette validates Jack’s sense of “Ideal-I” and approves to Lacan’s concept of Innenwelt, which refers to the inner world of a person. Jack and Babette live under the pressure of a suppressed, silent, and an overwhelming fear of death. Furthermore, they both are teachers, and both

deal with their fear of death in a drastic way, Jack's obsession of Hitler, and Babette's involvement in the Dylar experiment. They, moreover, parent a fourteen-year-old adolescent, Heinrich, who seems to take his parents' activities as a pattern to follow. Babette and Jack are identical version of each other and Jack confirms, "We are two views of the same person" (DeLillo 99). Rolph argues that "not only to Babette and Heinrich mirror Jack through their attempts to teach, but they receive confirmation of their identity through these actions" (Rolph 4).

Jack's relationship with his son is noteworthy and serves as an additional testimony of Jack's obsession with Hitler. Jack had named his son a German name, 'Heinrich', because he "*wanted to do something German*" and to acknowledge to his good fortune in starting his Hitler department. Yet, he projects his own fears to his son, he explains that he named him as thus because the name "*had an authority that might cling to [Heinrich]*" and thought that "*it was forceful and impressive*". Furthermore, he "*wanted to shield him, make him unafraid*" (DeLillo 63). This indicates that Jack treats Heinrich as an equal; he represents his department of study, hence Jack says, "*There's something about German names, the German language, German things... In the middle of it all is Hitler*" (63).

The novel unfolds Jack's peculiar relationship with his son that is depicted in the intense conversations they have (Rolph 2). Heinrich character complex character is analyzed through the way he present his thoughts. Jack has a conversation with Heinrich arguing about his involvement in chess game through emailing a murdered who is sentenced for life to imprisonment. He asks him if he wants to go to ashram to see his biological mother, but Heinrich responds,

"Who knows what I want to do? Who knows what anyone wants to do? How can you be sure about something like that? Isn't it all a question of brain chemistry, signals going back and forth, electrical energy in the cortex? How do you know whether something is really what you want to do or just some kind of nerve impulse in the brain?" (DeLillo 45).

Oedipus complex is present in Heinrich, and the general idea of adolescence struggle is apparent, thus Rolph notes that "Heinrich's inner motivation for these tense conversations may spring from his unresolved power struggle to win the affection of his mother or stepmother" (Rolph 3). He extends his explanation to Heinrich case through analyzing his act when he begins to lecture about the toxin Nyodene D in a temporary evacuation camp after the 'Airborne Toxic Event'. He is in the process of

forming his own self-identity, and interestingly, his actions mirror the role of his father and supersede it. That is, Heinrich's facts about Nyodene are potentially life-saving; however, Jack's college courses are trivial. Jack in surprise remarks that his "own son is at the center of things" and wondered if he was "finding himself...learning how to determine his worth from the reactions of others...mak[ing] his way in the world" (127). Despite his delight of his son's considerable step, Jack decides to move away thinking Heinrich would "get upset if he sees him in the crowd" (130), Babette refers to the tension in their relationship as a "father-son thing" (130). The novel alludes to the idea of the adolescent evolution of identity which must be resolved in the context of the relationship with one's father, argued Rolph thus (Rolph 3).

According to Lentricchia, Jack is "obsessed with the fact of death" (124). Through Lacanian lens, *the Real* is Death, and "*Hitler is larger than death*", beyond it, and through Hitler Jack repress and deny his own death (Evans 133). As explained in chapter one, *the Real* is a dimension beyond human abilities to comprehend, thus Jack does not know what death is and is occupied thinking of it all the time, he imagining it, suffering from insomnia, and wakes up frightened many nights finding his body damped with perspiration, and this state gets even worse after the 'Airborne Toxic Event' when Jack got infected with the toxin: "*In the dark the mind runs on like a devouring machine, the only thing awake in the universe. I tried to make out the walls, the dresser in the corner. It was the old defenseless feeling. Small, weak, deathbound, alone*" (DeLillo 213). Therefore, his defence mechanisms work to prevent anxiety, or reduce it at least. Jack intellectualizes death, that is, he keeps busy reading about it from a scientific logical standpoint, or reads about the ancient civilizations' treatment to death (DeLillo 98-99).

Jack's last attempt to ease his anxiety is depicted in the last chapters when he decides to kill Gray, whose real name is Willie Mink. It was the idea of Murray when he had a conversation during which Murray explained to Jack his theory about "Killers and diers". Murray posits,

"to kill a person in direct confrontation. If he dies, you cannot. To kill him is to gain life-credit. The more people you kill, the more credit you store up...The dier passively succumbs. The killer lives on. What a marvelous equation. As a marauding band amasses dead bodies, it gathers strength. Strength accumulates like a favor from the gods... The dier accepts this and dies. The killer, in theory, attempts to defeat

his own death by killing others. He buys time, he buys life. Watch others squirm. See the blood trickle in the dust" (DeLillo 277).

Jack unconsciously applied this theory eventually. For him to kill Mink is to effectively kill death. After a long investigation and search, he finds the location of Mink's residence motel that is in Germantown, in Iron city. On his way, Jack rehearses a black comedy scene in his head,

"Drive past the scene several times, park some distance from the scene, go back on foot, locate Mr. Gray under his real name or an alias, shoot him three times in the viscera for maximum pain, clear the weapon of prints, place the weapon in the victim's staticky hand, find a crayon or lipstick tube and scrawl a cryptic suicide note on the full-length mirror, take the victim's supply of Dylar tablets, slip back to the car, proceed to the expressway entrance, head east toward Blacksmith, get off at the old river road, park Stover's car in Old Man Treadwell's garage, shut the garage door, walk home in the rain and the fog" (DeLillo 290).

He repeats his plan in his head as often as he can, but the details of the plan slightly change with almost every reminder. Jack defence mechanism reminds him that he needs the reassurance of having a plan because his definitive course of action gives him energy and courage to do it fearlessly. Jack enters the motel room, has a brief conversation, during which the plan weakens long before it actually fails. Jack stumbles over the details, makes excuses, and changes the course of events. He pulls out his gun and shoots him twice. He pauses to notice him dying, he looks at his eyes that are "*totally white*" (298). He even tries to see himself from Mink's view point as "looming, dominant, gaining life-power, storing up life-credit". Jack feels a pleasurable euphoria of achievement. He and places the gun in Mink's hand to look like a suicide attempt. Mink awakes, pulls the trigger, and shoots Jack in wrist. The side effect of the Dylar that Mink had drove him to lose his ability of distinguishing words from things, so that if someone *says aloud* the words "speeding bullet", one under dugs would fall to the floor to take cover. Jack –overcome by his sense humanity- takes the chance to convince Mink that he shot himself and succeed. He drives Mink to the nearest hospital where an atheist German nuns save Mink's life and Jack feels "*large and selfless, above sentiment. This was the key to selflessness*" (DeLillo 299). While treating Jack's injury, they have an outré conversation that trembles him, thus an argument rises about faith,

death, and purpose of life. Jack learns from the nun that a false faith serves a purpose and that appearances and illusions are necessary. She sprays him in German. Although he does not understand, he assumes that was “Litanies, hymns, catechisms” (DeLillo 305), yet, he find that beautiful. He finds *her* beautiful. He then drives home, leaving Willie Mink, the incarnation of his fears behind lying on a bed in a hospital dark room. To Jack, without death, these events would have never been possible. Rolph denotes that both of Jack’s actions, –killing then saving– are “explained by his inflated ego. At first, he is a "punisher," and then he is a "savior." In these events and words, the self-important and inflated ego of Jack are depicted (Rolph 5).

It is as notable that Jack’s *objet petit a* is anything German, precisely Hitler –to say the least– for one might argue that German things, names, words, and so forth, hold for Jack the promise of a return to his early achievements and professional success.

The day after, Jack’s six-year-old son Wilder gets on his plastic tricycle and furiously pedals until he rode across the Highway ignoring all cries of the women watching from the second-story back porch. Dangerously crossing, Wilder ignores everything and nothing seemed to deter him from achieving his purpose; he had it in mind to reach determinately the other side of the highway,

“The horns kept blowing, sound waves mixing in the air, flattening, calling back from vanished cars, scolding. He reached the other side, briefly rode parallel to the traffic, seemed to lose his balance, fall away, going down the embankment in a multicolored tumble. When he reappeared a second later, he was sitting in a water furrow, part of the intermittent creek that accompanies the highway (DeLillo 307).

Wilder, who appears unimportant in the story, is crucial for Babette and Jack’s existence and ease as they attempt to repress the fears of their own death. In fact, Jack provides a more informative description of Wilder that results very significant interpretations.

Bright colors in the supermarket captivate Wilder’s attention, and he takes what he can and “*grab[s] items off the shelves*” (34) neglecting any warnings, which indicates his selfishness and infantile. Through Freudian lens, Wilder represents id, the aspect responsible for basic and primal urges and desires. Wilder is not able of talking, he rarely utters some incomprehensible words, yet he is treated as

an infant rather than a six-year-old boy. He is often missing, hence it explains the repetitive question “Where is Wilder?” and when he is first mentioned in the novel, he is referred to as a number, ““Where is Wilder?” she said, routinely panic-stricken, calling out to the child, one of hers..” (DeLillo 6). McClellan explains in her paper, “A Life of Bliss: The Necessity of Wilder”, that Jack and Babette’s view to their children as “a commodity”, in which one can be ‘one of his’ or ‘one of hers’ is emphasized when Murray asks Babette how many children she has. Babette “*appeared to pause “There’s Wilder, of course. There’s Denise.”*” (DeLillo 50) this indicates Babette treatment to her children as “possessions much more trivial than children”, hence is explained by her inability to recall easily (McClellan 3).

The opening of chapter sixteen is noteworthy, “*This was the day Wilder started crying at two in the afternoon. At six he was still crying*” (DeLillo 75). Jack’s description indicates that this is an important event,

It was rhythmic crying, a measured statement of short urgent pulses. At times it seemed he would break off into a whimper, an animal complaint, irregular and exhausted, but the rhythm held, the heightened beat, the washed pink sorrow in his face.(DeLillo 75)

McClellan notes that the use of the word “animal” connects the id to Wilder’s being, composed of basic desires. Jack’s description of Wilder’s crying are “reminiscent of a heart beating; Wilder’s crying reeks of life” McClellan argued thus.

Wilders crying seemed to bring comfort to Jack. Wilder is free and untied to any rules or values, he does not repress any feelings of fear or pain. Jack keeps listening to his son’s crying, yet he does not mind it, because Wilder is expressing feelings that Jack could never unload,

The huge lament continued, wave on wave. It was a sound so large and pure I could almost listen to it, try consciously to apprehend it, as one sets up a mental register in a concert hall or theater. He was not sniveling or blubbing. He was crying out, saying nameless things in a way that touched me with its depth and richness. This was an ancient dirge all the more impressive for its resolute monotony. Ululation....As the crying continued, a curious shift developed in my thinking. I found that I did not necessarily wish

him to stop. It might not be so terrible, I thought, to have to sit and listen to this a while longer. (DeLillo 78).

Jack's expression while describing those emotions are references to religious expressions. Nami Lee's article, "Understanding Aging and Dying from the Perspectives of Psychoanalysis and Religiosity," can explain the case. Less notes an age such as Wilder's, "youth and health equate happiness" (40). For Jack, Wilder is the utmost picture of youth and health, thus he considers him as wise (McClellan 6). Lee also claims that "modern men try to circumvent and deny their demise" although they have been given the meaning of mortality and death meaning through religion in the past (Lee 40). This can be a reference to Jack's biggest fears. Jack's contrast from Wilder, or the selfish id, places him as representative of the superego, or the ideal self. While no one truly ever reaches the ideal self, or superego, Jack attempts it through concealing his fear, vulnerability, and shame by creating an alternate identity (McClellan 6).

Jack and Babette admire Wilder. Babette tells Jack that "being with Wilder that picks me up," and Jack says "I always feel good when I'm with Wilder. Is it because pleasures don't cling to him? He is selfish without being grasping, selfish in a totally unbounded and natural way" (DeLillo 209) this description refers, in a way, to the id, it indicates that Jack and Babette envy Wilder for the freedom he has to anything he wills without being afraid of violating a superego. However, Jack is unable to comprehend the feeling of stability and sanity he gets from Wilder, but Murray explains it to him,

"Why do I feel so good when I'm with Wilder? It's not like being with the other kids," I said.

"You sense his total ego, his freedom from limits."

"In what way is he free from limits?"

"He doesn't know he's going to die. He doesn't know death at all. You cherish this simpleton blessing of his, this exemption from harm. You want to get close to him, touch him, look at him, breathe him in. How lucky he is. A cloud of unknowing, an omnipotent little person. The child is everything, the adult nothing. Think about it. A person's entire life is the unraveling of this conflict. No wonder we're bewildered, staggered, shattered" (DeLillo 276).

### 2.2.2. Jack Mirrors Hitler

The careful analysis will be provided in this element aims at exploring Jack's personality compared to Hitler's in order to identify where they intersect and differ. There were evident moment when Jack mirrored Hitler. DeLillo is an intelligent writer that do not seem to put words randomly, and it the same for his representation of his characters. When he creates a character's personality, DeLillo is aware of his choices that would serve to fulfill exactly the purpose they were created for. It is for this reason that is difficult to deny that DeLillo intended to create characteristics that Jack and Hitler share or do not.

Hitler was obsessed with the way he looks and appears to his people (Harvey 60), he would use the right photographs to propagandize for the ideal man –that is him. As a matter of fact Hitler hid a weak man behind that persona he created. Jack does the exact same thing with when he imitate his facade to create his own (Bloom & Zuba, 38). Jack overestimates the way he looks and tries to see how prestigious he is: “*as they witness the chairman walking across campus, crook'd arm emerging from his medieval robe, the digital watch blinking in late summer dusk. The robe is black, of course, and goes with almost anything.*” He assures that “*I like the idea. I like clearing my arm from the folds of the garment to look at my watch. The simple act of checking the time is transformed by this flourish. Decorative gestures add romance to a life*” (DeLillo, 9). Jack unconsciously does what others persuade him to, which demonstrates how feeble his self-confidence is. As a matter of fact, when he decides to invent Hitler Studies, the chancellor warns him “against [his] tendency to make a feeble presentation of self” (16), yet he advises him “to do something to [his] appearance and [his] name If [he] wanted to be taken seriously as a Hitler innovator....gain weight and wanted him to “grow out” into Hitler”. Indeed, Jack does thus.

Hitler and Jack shared this type of Narcissism. Jack imagines himself to be such an important figure at the College-on-the-hill “I'd achieved high professional standing, because my lectures were well attended and my articles printed in the major journals, because I wore an academic gown and dark glasses day and night whenever I was on campus” (32). It is evident in the way he felt when he was – and Murray– the center of attention when they were having a conversation in the lecture hall, discussing Hitler and Elvis while surrounded by students and staff, Jack states, “*I had been generous with the power and madness at my disposal...Death was strictly a professional matter here. I was comfortable with it, I was on the top of it*” (DeLillo 74).

Narcissism results in power starvation. Whereas Jack owned a powerful position, the Hitler Studies chairmen, Hitler was established as the most powerful man on earth for a period in the time of history. Jack looked for power, which it was a prior necessity that would ease his fears, but Hitler, the power addict, was drawn by his desire to own unlimited dominance and utter control. It is rather traced in Hitler; however, there several hints that depict Jack's need for power. As the 'Airborne Toxic Event' takes a place, Jack to evacuate justifying his act and showing his value in power,

“I'm not just a college professor. *I'm the head of a department.* I don't see myself fleeing an airborne toxic event. That's for *people who live in mobile homes out in the scrubby parts of the country*, where the fish hatcheries are” (DeLillo 115).

As Jack associates himself with higher ranked professors, Hitler considers himself as superior and of a pure race and even killed those whom he labeled as villain and unworthy of life, thus they deserved an extermination (Harvey 60-65).

The fear of failure was one of Hitler's biggest ordeals. His failures started at school when, thus his studies foundered due to his refusal to grapple with his problems at school, he could never manage to confront the strict rules of his school. He constantly quarreled with and engage his teachers and father (Payne 22), yet he repeated many exams (Kershaw 20). Thus, he left school (Payne 22). He sang in the church, loved singing and arts in general, therefore, he wanted to be an artist (Kershaw 8). He chose to study fine art in the Academy of fine arts, however, he was rejected twice (Hitler 20) (Bullock 30-31). The thrust of failure induced a great depression for Hitler, hence it changed him forever. He, as a result, had devoted his power to not fail again, and it was politics and war that dispensed an opportunity for what seemed to him an unquestionable success. Hitler took advantage of his position as the most powerful man in the world to project his previous failures and insecurities. On the other hand, Jack, in fact, has the same dear, and in order for him to conceal his own failure and inauthenticity, he create a delusion of grandeur through inventing a new discipline to lecture trivialities about Hitler, and inventing a new name, “I should invent an extra initial and call myself J. A. K. Gladney, a tag I wore like a borrowed suit” (DeLillo 17), yet he was supported by Babette who “liked the series J.A.K. and didn't think it was attention getting in a cheap sense. To her it intimated dignity, significance and prestige” (17). Besides, he does not read or write German although he is a Hitler expert. More importantly, Jack failed to protect his family from the challenges of modern life, yet he failed to provide his wife with a

secure environment to protect her from her fear of death. He deluded himself and camouflaged himself with Hitler, and the success he made proved to be full of sham, triviality and illusion (Rolph 5).

Jack and Hitler's common fear was death. However, Hitler's fear of death as described by Langer was complex, "from what we know of his psychology, the most likely possibility is that he will commit suicide in the event of defeat. It's probably true he has an inordinate fear of death, but possibly being a psychopath he would undoubtedly weigh his options and perform the deed" (Langer 22-23).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter gave a main focus on the application of the psychoanalytical theory on both Hitler and Jack's psyches aiming at providing adequate analysis and interpretations of their behaviour and ideologies. Throughout the provided analysis, it is given that DeLillo has depicted some of the issues postmodern and modern society has been facing, hence, the fear of death is one of the common fears that haunts many Americans and it is not healthily overcome.

Jack's case presents one of the wrong ways to deal with such psychological issues. Instead of confront his fears and accepting his imperfections, he, rather, kept creating a fake person for himself taking Hitler's persona as a role model, yet concealing his own fears behind his occupation on trivialities about Hitler and convincing himself that they were actual important matters. However, Jack's overcome, which occurs at the end of the novel, demonstrates that the only way to deal with such issues is to confront them and make a decisive decision to end them in a positive way. It is noteworthy that the negative environment affected Jack, neither his family, nor his friends were of good help. This explains the crucial role of the surrounding factors that could either aid one to overcome his fears or hinder from.

## General Conclusion

In his novel *White Noise*, DeLillo has depicted his influence by psychoanalytic methodology, by which he illustrated one of the most common fears in postmodern and modern world, the fear of death. Through a psychoanalytical lens, Jack's affected psyche with the fear of death and fast pace of events in modern-day life could be explored and interpreted. It is through this study that Jack's behavior, decision, ideology and motives have been explained.

DeLillo displayed the characters inner conflicts between them and their selfhoods through his indirect demonstration of the interaction between the conscious and unconscious elements of the mind.

Decoding Jack's psyche and character through a careful and in-depth analysis of his unauthenticity, fear of death, fatherhood, interaction within his environment surrounded by the people that influence his personality and shape his selfhood and attitude, reveals the state of mind and disturbed psyche of an obsessed man. Jack's ego does not function according to the reality principle, this results to Jack's confusion, uncertainty and doubt of the meaning of life and existence, and his disguise behind a mask made of a horrific figure, Hitler. He strives for years to conceal facts about his real picture and deny his own flaws, yet he attempts to mitigate his fears, weakness, and shame.

It is possible to explain the motives that drive Jack to choose a figure like Hitler to conceal his extensive and obsessive fear of death. He believes that through occupying himself with Hitler studies and creating an unauthentic person, taking Hitler as a model, he will be able to alleviate his fear of death, heighten his reputation, and increases his self-image, yet protect him from being underestimated.

Psychoanalyzing Jack discloses details about his case. He uses different defence mechanisms to avoid confronting his fears, rather than overcoming them healthily. He projects his own fears through his obsession of Hitler, which is evident, for he centers his interest in Hitler around the persona and the image of this figure, yet he believes he is important because he is a Hitler expert and the chairman of Hitler Studies department while he cannot read or speak German, moreover, he lectures only trivialities about the figure. Jacks considers Hitler a model of power and authority, which inspires him to be a strong man instead of the feeble weak man he actually is.

DeLillo's Jack is obsessed with Hitler to overcome his death anxiety. However his unauthenticity, justification of his wrong decisions, rationalization of his unacceptable acts, and intellectualization of

his fears leads to unwanted consequences that harm both Jack and his family. DeLillo illustrates the psychological consequences of such a case through his character Jack.

DeLillo not only demonstrates Jack's case, he, furthermore, depicts postmodern and modern world invaded by the massive technological changes and the race of power and dominance. Moreover, he characterizes the postmodern concept of existence and life.

The American society is facing such issues that are spreading as the pace of technological and environmental changes is rushing. It is a necessity today to openly discuss these psychological issues and effectively attempt to resolve them. Therefore, Americans need to confront their psychological disorders and inner conflicts through conducting healthier ways to deal with and overcome fears and anxieties.

On the basis of this study, the conclusion deduced is that This research could provide an explanation to the impact of Hitler's persona on Jack psychologically and socially, to identify the similarities and differences between Hitler and Jack in order to demonstrate how Jack uses Hitler as a mask to disguise, and hide behind his own created persona to cover his vulnerable and weak inner self.

DeLillo's *White Noise* depicted the postmodern and modern world, with a main focus on Americans, through the narration of Jack's own experience. Furthermore, it reveal the concealed facts about the negative impact of technology and scientific misuses that resulted to complicated psychological issues and disorders that are unhealthily and dangerously dealt with. Despite the limitation of length and the mere focus on the aspect of an inner fears, which are projected and dealt with in unhealthy ways that affect the psyche and result in many negative consequences.

The present study may be a contribution to the developing researches in the field of psychology for further investigation about fear of death and identity issues held responsible for cases that have similar features in the inner psyche and outside factors affecting it.

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## ملخص

لفهم التغيرات التي تؤثر على مسار التاريخ، والتي ترسم حاضرتنا الحالي، ثم تُشكّل وجه مستقبلنا، يلزم إعتقاداً بحثٍّ معمقٍ للأعمال الأدبية التي قدّمت بشخصياتها -التي تعكس أناساً من الواقع- نمودجاً لمختلف الأفراد عبر التاريخ. حيث يمكن دراسة هذه الشخصيات من الجانب النفسي (السيكولوجي) بهدف فهم سلوك الإنسان وأفعاله التي أدت إلى واقعنا الحالي. وبالتالي فإنّه لمن المهمّ تسليط الضوء على إنسان ما بعد الحداثة الذي تسبّب في تسارع عجلة التغيرات في هذا العالم. تحت هذا الاعتبار تُقدّم رواية 'ضوضاء بيضاء' لكاثيها دون ديليلو أحد أغرب الشخصيات 'جاك غلادني' الذي يُمثّل أمريكيّ ما بعد الحداثة. بالإعتقاد على ما قدّمه الكاتب الأمريكي المشهور له بالعنصرية الأدبية فإنّ البحث المُقدّم يهدف إلى تحليل حالة 'جاك' النفسية و كيف يعكس أمريكيّ ما بعد الحداثة مع تركيزٍ دقيقٍ على هوس 'جاك' بالقائد النازي -المثير للجدل- أدولف هتلر لكي يُخفي مخاوفه. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، هذا البحث سيعتمد منهج التحليل النفسي باستخدام نظريات سيغموند فرويد و لجاك أكن التحليلية لاستخلاص مخرجات هذه الدراسة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ما بعد الحداثة، الخوف من الموت، رهاب الموت، آليات الدفاع، هتلر، علم النفس، التحليل النفسي، دون دليلو، ضوضاء بيضاء.