MEMORIES OF MEDIA NOISE

by

OLIVIA MARIE GRAHAM

(Under the Direction of Adam Parkes)

ABSTRACT

Since the early nineteenth century, writers of literature have engaged in publicity interviews, complicating the production, reception, and dissemination of their autobiographical work. Developments in communication technologies such as the newspaper, the recording devices used in radio and television, and later the invention of the internet, shifted the dynamics of the interview. Consequently, twenty-first-century writers use these mediascape channels to interact with their audiences in more direct and self-referential ways. The internet increased the accessibility of a writer's biography for readers and scholars, creating an opportunity for authors to extend the frame devices of their fiction to the creative spaces of the online and print publicity outlets. To control the dissemination of his work in the internet age, the American writer Don DeLillo employs strategies of self-presentation to frame his autobiographical writing and his fiction, as well as the publicity events that have played their part in his career.

INDEX WORDS: Authorial self-presentation, Celebrity, Framing devices, Internet age, Mediascape, Opinion Leadership

MEMORIES OF MEDIA NOISE

by

OLIVIA MARIE GRAHAM

B.S., The University of Georgia, 2020

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2024

MEMORIES OF MEDIA NOISE

by

OLIVIA MARIE GRAHAM

Major Professor:	Adam Parkes
Committee:	Susan Rosenbaum
	Ed Pavlić

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER I

Reading and Writing in the Internet Age

This study seeks to examine strategies of authorial self-presentation in autobiographical writing and fiction in the Internet age. To better understand the experience of reading and writing in the twenty-first century, scholars in literary and media studies have begun consolidating the intersecting approaches in their fields to analyze "framing as authorial strategy" in life-writing (Schmidt 131-132). The theories of framing devices and self-presentation both assess the relationships between author, text, audience, and media discourse. The overlapping agendas in these theories indicate the necessity for a greater consideration of how the emergence of the internet and digital media changed the ways in which writers of literature navigate and perpetuate their position in society. Biographical criticism explores the link between the biography of authors and their life-writing (Veggian 2), and similarly, the history of celebrity signifies the desire of the public to know personal details about celebrities (Inglis 35). In this thesis, I examine the role of framing devices in the production, dissemination, and reception of writing across different literary genres. I specifically focus on what the American author Don DeLillo's novels, non-fictional essays and prefaces reveal about representing the self in the internet age.

Many literary authors have adjusted their strategies of self-presentation in response to the shifting demands of genre and audience, both of which have long been mediated by the publishing industry (Jaffe 1-2). Communication technologies developed

during industrialization in the nineteenth century, such as the newspaper and the camera, and in the twentieth century, the world of radio, television, and other advanced media technologies placed writers and critics more directly in the public eye. This led authors of literature to experiment, in newly self-conscious ways, with the effects of their public personae on their writing and to assess the relation between those personae and the authorial personae established through their collected works. Richard A. McCabe explains that, "The creation of an authorial 'persona' is arguably the principle means by which a poet negotiates his own 'canonicity', engaging in a dialogue with posterity through the contemporary reader" (246).

In the internet age, writers have extended their self-presentational strategies to online spaces. Public interest in the biography of writers is not new; the idea of the process of their craft as eluding the understanding of their readers emerged as writing became a profession, and subsequently, writers attained celebrity status in society (Jaffe 20, Griffin 877, Inglis 275-285). In the internet age, the book publishing industry mingles in the same commercial circles as other aspects of popular culture, including the attention-grabbing media coverage of celebrities. Consequently, some twenty-first-century literary authors use their celebrity as a means of establishing their authorial control over the dissemination and reception of their work. Authors of life-writing extend their self-presentational approach to publicity opportunities such as interviews and book talks, to prolong a reader's engagement with their life-writing. Especially when discussing the process of writing their autobiographical works during interviews and appearances, literary authors clarify their intentions as they write about different perspectives on life.

Twentieth- and twenty-first-century authors of life-writing have utilized the publicity opportunities offered by their literary eminence as outlets for authorial control. Advances in digital forms of media prompted many literary authors who produced autobiographical works at the turn of the twentieth century to strategize their self-presentation. I analyze DeLillo's engagement with the mediascapes surrounding his work, meaning all forms of media in the late twentieth and early twenty-first-centuries including print, radio, television, digital, and film.

DeLillo is a liminal case compared to the self-presentation strategies of other authors in his generation such as John Updike and Thomas Pynchon. While all three of these literary authors contributed to conversations about dominant narratives in American society, the internet cultures surrounding their work reflect their different kinds of participation in it. Updike engaged with radio and televised publicity more than many American writers, and his celebrity-like smile in photographs circulated through the mass media complicates the reception of his literature in the twenty-first century (Heddendorf 108). Both DeLillo and Pynchon protect their private lives by setting boundaries with publications around the release of any biographical details or photographs to the public. But Pynchon's playful relations with the print and online mediascape cause unpredictable developments in his public personae and generate a distracting, lore-loving culture of internet users around his work (Poirier 151). Many twenty-first century writers such as Zadie Smith and Ocean Vuong and utilize the interactivity of publicizing their work on the internet by contributing to literary and commercial magazines.

The major reason for analyzing the work and life of DeLillo in this context is that he maintains the consistent self-presentation of a fiction writer with the principles of

integrity of a journalist across his life-writing. Reflecting on his career as he accepted the National Book Award Medal for Lifetime Achievement in 2015, DeLillo described his career "as one writer's shifting response to the challenges and public upheavals of the last 60 or 70 years" (Italie). His dedication to offering observations on American society from a fixed standpoint, especially the constant theme of mediascapes influencing the nation's collective memory in his novels, makes his career important to consider in conversations about reading and writing in the internet age.

As new media continue to emerge in the internet age, so will the analytical methods of literary criticism regarding the relation of a writer's biography and their work. In his book *A Short History of Celebrity* (2010), Fred Inglis breaks down the "social roles-and-meanings" attributable to the types of celebrities (271). He explains that they each "perform different functions" to uphold the significance of the social category in society:

> Amelie Rorty flips swiftly through a list of the terms we use to think about human beings in ordinary conversation: 'Characters,' 'Figures,' 'Persons,' 'Souls,' 'Selves,' 'Individuals,' 'Presences.' Each has its application in picking out particular ways of seeing and interpreting human conduct. (Inglis 271)

The characteristics of DeLillo's celebrity relate to the social category of "'Persons,'" who according to Inglis, "have their own will and stand by their personal responsibility" (275). Persons are "assigned personhood ('personality' being something different and unsound, flashy, a thing on show, detachable from a person)" (Inglis 275). Media outlets cannot capitalize on creating a spectacle of Persons to garner "envy, admiration, or malice" towards them in the same ways they commonly do for other celebrity types (Inglis 270).

The invention of the internet has changed how writers such as DeLillo engage with readers of their novels in the twentieth-first century. Now, literary authors use

interviews and other publicity opportunities as profitable authorial press releases into the mediascape. As Inglis states, "Celebrity, it is a commonplace to say, is a product of culture and technology" (10). He also distinguishes "honor and renown from glamour and celebrity," in European and American society, citing the "rise of urban democracy, the two-hundred-year expansion of its media communication, together with the radical individualisation of modern sensibility," as primary reasons for fame becoming a "much more transitory reward" in the eyes of a public that has "changed the expression of devotion into one of celebrity" (Inglis 5).

In the first chapter, I analyze DeLillo's novels *White Noise* (1985) and *Libra* (1997), both published during a period of his career that is widely regarded as marking his initial ascent to a position of literary eminence (Veggian 24). My aim here is to show how he portrays the process of historical writing. The prefatory materials and after-matter of DeLillo's fiction influence a reader's experience of his narratives. He creates a continuity across his self-presentation in his autobiographical novels and in his nonfictional communications with readers, which include his interactions with media outlets. By employing a similar framing strategy of self-presentation across his oeuvre, DeLillo offers readers another perspective on the moments in American history that he depicts in both novels—one that stands in opposition to what he regards as the noise of the related mediascape.

In the second chapter of this thesis, I decipher the category of DeLillo's celebrity to examine how he uses publicity opportunities as part of his authorial strategy to control the dissemination and reception of his life-writing. He deploys similar framing devices in his self-presentation across his oeuvre: repetition, irony, and self-referentiality. The

interactivity of these framing devices from a reader's standpoint indicates DeLillo's intention to increase his audience's awareness of the potential for digital media to create the illusion of mass opinion in the internet age. Literary authors offer imaginative spaces in their written works for exploring the conceivable outcomes of the confluences of art and consumer culture in the world of digital technology. I conclude this study by discussing how DeLillo's strategies of self-presentation reveals his concern about how digital technologies may be used as tools for political manipulation of mass society.

CHAPTER 2

VERBAL COPY AND PASTE: FRAMING AS AUTHORIAL STRATEGY IN LIFE-WRITING[1]

[1] Graham, Olivia. To be submitted to the *Journal of Modern Literature*.

He speaks in your voice, American, and there's a shine in his eye that's halfway hopeful.
(*Underworld* 223)

Abstract

In this chapter, I discuss self-presentation as part of the authorial strategy of framing in autobiographical writing and fiction in the internet age. I center my analysis on the work and life of American writer Don DeLillo, who uses the publicity opportunities presented by his literary eminence to extend the effects of his self-presentation in his life-writing into the related mediascapes. Ultimately, DeLillo mirrors the framing devices of media outlets around current events and issues in his writing continuities of self-presentation across both his nonfiction and fiction.

Life-Writing and Narrative

New forms developed in the genre-overlapping domain of autobiographical writing and fiction in the twentieth century, further complicating authorship and possibilities of representing the self in literature. In recent years, scholars have begun to consider interviews as a literary form and practice that changes with the invention of communication technologies mentioned above (Roach 4-6). Examining interviews as part of a writer's oeuvre illuminates the effectiveness of the form in autobiographical writing and fiction and its connections to developments in the culture of celebrity. In this chapter, I examine American writer Don DeLillo, an author of seventeen novels, a writer of short stories, screenplays that have been adapted into films, essays for magazines like *Rolling Stone*, and yet, a creator of zero social media accounts despite his rise in literary eminence as the internet age began (Veggian 22-23). DeLillo offers the perspective of an ordinary American observing society across his autobiographical writing and fiction—and he employs a similar framing strategy in his interactions with the discourse around

his work in online and print publications. His strategy of self-presentation indicates how twenty-first century writers must experiment with how the internet continues to shift the dynamics of literary dissemination and reception.

This chapter analyzes how DeLillo uses framing devices as authorial strategy, not as a response to the print and online discourse surrounding his work, but to urge readers to reflect on how America's mediascapes shape its collective memory. Silke Schmidt proposes a methodology for studying framing that accounts for the intersections of media, literary, and cultural studies, and cognitive science to "reveal the effects of autobiographical writing on public discourse and not the reverse" (134). As Schmidt states, "Framing as authorial strategy, however, only becomes visible if framing is embraced also as a theory of reading *and* writing ... analysts need to be able to identify the frames interacting in mediated life writing" (132). DeLillo establishes his identity as an anonymous American through his portrayal of how the various forms of media present in the narratives of his characters change their view of themselves and the world around them. DeLillo employs his authorial strategy through his intentionally limited explanations for his writing process in the prefatory materials of his novels, and in the publicity opportunities of his career such as interviews and book talks.

Public Personae

DeLillo is not necessarily a reclusive writer, a label that he protested in an interview for the *Washington Post* in 1992, stating that it has been relentlessly attached to his name because "people want to believe this because it satisfies some romantic conception of what a dedicated writer is and how he ought to live. 'I know you never do interviews.' They say that to me all the time. 'But here I am' is my stock reply a hundred

times" (Streitfeld). Print and online media organizations pose subjects like up-and-coming sports players, the next breakout popstars, and commercially successful writers and artists like DeLillo, to create the highest profitable story from their likeness. But, this framing strategy that works best for them when writers like DeLillo play along. Posing DeLillo as reclusive adds a level of exclusivity to his presence in print and online, using his literary eminence as a platform. He forms a "stock reply" for recurring interview questions, rather than rephrasing his responses to present himself in a mediated way beyond his work. Ultimately, DeLillo's verbal copy-and-pasting of his answers to media outlets allows him to publicize his work while controlling the development of his public personae.

DeLillo's responses to interviewers show his intention to only comment on his writing, stifling any associations commonly formed through the lens of biographical criticism between a writer's life and art. By not providing media outlets with details about his personal life, he creates an air of mystery around his life. But DeLillo's consistent approach to publicity allows him to generates just enough public interest in his work for him to enter the margins of America's mediascape. He establishes his credibility as a person possessing the type of American social character of pre-internet generations by restricting his presence in online and print publications. Having studied "communication arts" in college in the late 1950s (*Britannica*), DeLillo is likely familiar with two influential analyses of how media technologies shape the development of individuality: Marshall McLuhan's writings on the function of the media as a primary medium of communication notably impacted current understandings of the individual in relation to the mass in his books *Understanding Media* (1964) and *The Medium is the Message*

(1967), which I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter III, and David Riesman's earlier analysis of social character in his seminal book *The Lonely Crowd* (1950).

In *The Lonely Crowd*, Riesman elucidates how shifts in a society's dominant behaviors and attitudes relate to changes in the demographics of its population. He classifies three general types of social character in Western Europe and the United States, two of which encompass individuals in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Riesman defines the *inner-directed* type (Renaissance to twentieth century) as individuals who receive most of their values from authority figures and elders as the population of their society is increasing at a steady rate (12-16). He describes the *other-directed* type as individuals whose values are subject to change because they are largely shaped by peers with whom them identify with because the population of their society is high but also leveling off (17-24).

DeLillo, born in 1936 (*Britannica*), exhibits the social character of inner-directed individuals in his self-presentation as an American citizen offering his perspective on the nation, which has experienced multiple generational waves of other-directed people. The communication technologies of the twenty-first century may only exacerbate the tendency for other-directed individuals to be open to changing their perspectives and conforming to the values of the online mass. DeLillo uses his self-presentation to create a continuity in his oeuvre and the discourse surrounding it. He expresses stable personal values in his portrayals of American society that firmly establish his authority as an author and stand in great contrast to the varying social standards of the mass media.

Not only do writers of autobiographical works offer their perspectives on their society, but they also present possibilities in the narrative of its history in their depictions

of real-world events and people. So, their ability to influence public opinion is based in the value historically attributed to the profession of writing (Jaffe 3). Changes in literary dissemination have expanded the social status of writers to include the function of *opinion leadership*, and the origins of the term in the field of political science denote the influence of opinion leaders in a society's view of itself and its history. The first recorded use of the term "opinion leader" occurs in *The American Political Scene* (1936) when political scientist J. K. Pollock remarks that "Opinion leaders used every means available for making their propaganda perceived" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Multiple fields of study have adopted the term due to its breadth, but it is largely used to refer to "An individual who helps to shape or set public opinion by virtue of prominence in public life, whether in a religious setting, politics, business or commerce, the mass media, the performing arts, or elsewhere" (*Oxford Reference*). Attracted by the "nature of the message they seek to convey or the behavior they demonstrate for others to imitate," the public following of an opinion leader is considerably swayed by the prominent individual's views on current events and issues (*Oxford Reference*). DeLillo, like other writers in the internet age, can project his social commentary into receiving media channels.

The ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of autobiographical fiction writers are received on the individual level of the solitary reader seeking words that elicit the lived experiences of another person. Opinion leaders garner their credibility "based on personal and professional experience," similar to the standards of both news reporters and authors of life-writing (Schmidt 126). Even though the social status of a literary author is “linked to their intellectual and this cognitive potential" (Schmidt 125), their augmented public

exposure changes how they are represented by the mass media; and therefore, their written works are received by twenty-first-century readers in conversation with the first page of links in an internet search of their name.

The invention of the internet upgraded the dynamics of commercial and non-commercial literary dissemination, increasing the ability for both authors and readers to engage in the process. An author's biography has become an inextricably linked part of the experience of twentieth-century novels, especially among readers in Generation Z (born between 1997-2012) and Generation Alpha (born from 2010-2024), who had access to technology at young ages and likely do not recall living in a world without the internet (Dimock). For these generations, largely desensitized to the effects of information overload, *searching* for biographical details about a writer during or after their experience of a novel is not congruent with *researching* exactly; the amount of effort feels more like a literal interpretation of the phrase "to look something up (on the internet)."

To clarify the inextricability of a writer's biography from his or her work in the internet age, it is important to distinguish between the biographical methods of literary writers and scholars and the tactics of a twenty-first-century reader typing a writer's name into search bar of a web browser such as Google. Consulting a source for biographical details on any prominent figure is educational entertainment for readers in the twenty-first century because they are interested in (and unconcerned about forgetting) the results of their search for two major reasons: 1) they are seeking to extend the experience of a novel and their perceived proximity to the author, and, especially for readers in Generations Z and Alpha; 2) the internet allows them quick accessibility to multiple perspectives of the same information; and 3) as with many generational shifts in the

placement of trust, Generations Z and Alpha trust the unknown contributors to trusted platforms like Google and websites like Wikipedia.

In the twenty-first century, the online presence of authors plays a significant part in the non-commercial dissemination of literature. Internet users contribute to subcultures on online platforms related to writers and literature where community members share book recommendations and content about writers and their work. These online archives of reader reactions to literary works, clips of interviews with authors, book quotes displayed on aesthetic background images, and biographical details about writers all play a role in the experience of writing and reading in the internet age. A Google search of DeLillo's full name provides users with a digest of his life generated through the platform's connection with Wikipedia, so that readers can quickly learn details about him such as a list of other writers by whom he is supposed to have been inspired, the date of his marriage, and where he attended college. Clearly, writers including those who navigate the publicity aspect of their profession discreetly, as DeLillo does, can only minimize the online mediascape that accumulates around his work.

A notable portion of the digital media content related to DeLillo's life and career is in the form of audio and video recordings of his in-person publicity events such as book talks and readings (Electric Cereal, The John Adams Institute, Library of Congress). The inadequate visuals and low-quality audio files uploaded to the platform featuring DeLillo indicate that the use of recording devices to document the events is a secondary goal of the content creators. They function more like digital artifacts than artistic podcast episodes, meaning listeners can still hear the grainy mediascape around his writing. While the limited online engagement of major institutions such as the Library of

Congress and the John Adams Institute are marginally comparable to the appealing writer profiles and interviews in the book sections of media organizations like *The New York Times* or *Rolling Stone*, their content falls in line with DeLillo's method of self-presentation. He maintains necessary analytical distance from the entertainment guise of the mass media's marketing efforts and emphasizes his intention to create literary artifacts that reflect American society.

Twenty-first-century writers maintain their public personae in online spaces as a means of engaging with the discourse around their canon. DeLillo specifically relinquishes control over the development of his public personae in the twenty-first century, treating the internet as an uncontrollable space of voices and images. He parallels the irrepressible setting of his profession with his intentional framing of himself as an ordinary American citizen offering a perspective on problems facing society in his novels. Neither DeLillo, nor his characters, nor his readers can escape the compelling presence of media noise. The continuities he establishes between the execution of his self-presentation strategies in his writing and fiction allow him to inhibit the accumulation of internet content about his life and work over time.

Literary criticism on DeLillo's work divides his fiction into two waves of critical readership that set the foundation for a non-scholarly following of readers (Veggian 22). The first range spans from the 1970s to the mid-1980s, and Veggian cites Hugh Ruppersburg and Tim Engles' assessment of this early point in DeLillo's writing career: "'During this phase reviewers began to recognize DeLillo's abilities as a novelist, his interest in 'ideas,' and skill with language and humor.' Prominent reviewers included novelists such as Joyce Carol Oates, Anthony Burgess, and John Updike (not all of whom

were kind in assessing DeLillo's novels)" (22). Throughout the second major time period in DeLillo's career from the mid- to late 1980s, scholars including Tom LeClair, Frank Lentricchia, David Cowart, and John McClure advanced studies of DeLillo's work through their publications and conferences about his writing (Veggian 22-23). Internet record of the 1990s documents the increase in "Online forums, reader's guides, and websites devoted to DeLillo," and Veggian indicates the impact of "journalists and writers" who "explain DeLillo to new audiences" in the development of DeLillo's "international readership" by the 2000s (23). Receiving the National Book Award for *White Noise* in 1985 (*National Book Foundation*) added to the foundation of his credibility as a writer capable of representing American society. The expansion of his academic readership and the notable growth of his success in the commercial book industry coincided with the emergence of online content about his reputation as a writer. The streamed and shared data files algorithmically attached to DeLillo's name influence the reception of his work with greater complexity than the commentary from publications on the back cover of one of his novels. DeLillo's career is an example of how the invention of how the internet changed the dynamics of literary dissemination and reception by placing reader responses in similar spaces as those of critics in literary and commercial media outlets. Twenty-first century writers can experience resurgences in public attention to their work due to reader discourses on social media platforms and websites.

DeLillo, however, has maintained a level of anonymity in his public identity from the start of his writing career, which began in the early 1970s (Remnick, Decurtis). Even throughout the period of his career between 1985-1997, when he received significant

critical acclaim for *White Noise*, *Libra*, and *Underworld* (Veggian 23), DeLillo concealed personal details from the media throughout the publicity rollout of each subsequent novel. His clear intention to establish his focus in interviews and book events as solely text-related certainly complements the minimalist approach to language for which his readership values him. In an interview for *The Paris Review*, DeLillo describes his start to writing as an unconscious process that allows him to present his artistic imagination as naturally occurring and somehow distant from his identity as a person (Begley). This functions as a way of using fiction writing to examine the boundaries between the individual and the digital crowd.

DeLillo establishes himself as an eyewitness to American society by exhibiting the stance of an anonymous man before the public, as if he were a citizen one passes by on the street, or a person that a newscaster might question to add depth and further engagement in their report. Schmidt details the "connection between autobiographical storytelling and reporting: 'Personal storytelling is doubly powerful because the skeptic is confronted with not just a real person, but an eyewitness – someone who can say ‘not only did this really happen – it happened to me' (22)" (126). The use of "the fictive and the auto/biographical" by literary authors in their work has been documented since "fictional possibilities of life-writing-forms" emerged in the late nineteenth-century (Saunders 11-12). By setting the foundation of his authorial voice as an individual in America's increasing digital crowd, DeLillo creates an experience for readers that demonstrates the process of historical writing.

Historical Writing

DeLillo exhibits the related processes of life writing and journalistic writing in the narrative of his novels, as the plots of most of them center on events that particularly affected the collective memory of American society. His characters face an "airborne toxic event" in *White Noise* (1985), and the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in *Libra* (1997), as I discuss in Chapter III. DeLillo develops structural similarities between the framing devices implemented in the novel form and its mediascape such as: 1) the use of omniscient narrative voices and trusted newscasters who also refer to sources close to a story, 2) the audience-centered presentation of stories rather than getting into the in-depth bulk of the story and the directed gaze of a news camera, 3) the incorporation of fragmented documentation like clips from articles, interviews, or other related stories in the narrative to provide audiences with the backstory of the people involved, and 4) the division of narratives by dates and location to establish credibility as an informant. Like a reliable newscaster, DeLillo avoids publicizing aspects of his life, which are not related to his profession. He creates operative space between himself and readers of his nonfiction and fiction writing to ensure that his authorial presence reflects his interpretation of present-day American society. The sensitivity of younger generations to mass opinion in the twenty-first century, following Riesman's theory of the social character of *other-directed* individuals (17-24), increases the value that they place on the subjective perspectives offered by DeLillo's generation of writers.

The information presented in such novels as *White Noise* and *Libra* elicits an assessment by readers of national and international events or aspects of American society. Readers must compare their memories of the media noise surrounding real-world

events with DeLillo's representation of mediascape presence in his fictional depiction of the same occurrences in the narratives of the two novels. This process mirrors a common source of confusion expected in the internet age as media organizations push their particular angle on various events and topics, creating an illusory buzz that compels people to evaluate the truth of their experiences. America's collective memory is influenced by daily mass communication about national and international events. In an interview with *The Guardian* in 2018, DeLillo describes his view of the mass media's influence on how the American people remember events in this way: "The national memory lasts 48 hours, at best. And there's always something else coming at us down the pipeline. You can't separate it all out. You get lost in the deluge" (Brooks).

Schmidt connects journalistic memoirs to the "professional roles of autobiographical writers in media discourse":

> Readers of autobiographies buy and consume autobiographical works like they consume other non-fiction media content. Since genre-related expectations steer the cognitive processing of media information, readers of life writing as media consumers experience the same framing effects. (123)

DeLillo fulfills the genre-related expectations of autobiographical writing and fiction by using historical documents in his process; in the case of *Libra*, he obtained copies of the primary texts "generated by the same moment in Dallas," as he writes in the "Preface, 2022" (633). He used the "twenty-six volumes of the Warren Commission report on the assassination," "the expanse" of the testimony of Lee Harvey Oswald's mother, Marguerite Oswald, and "roughly seven volumes" of other books to write the novel, along with his travel across Oswald's "path to Dallas, Fort Worth, New Orleans and then back to the Bronx" ("Preface, 2022," 633), all of which is a fractional amount of information compared to the mediascape of the assassination of President J. F. Kennedy.

DeLillo's critical acclaim as a writer and his lived experience as an American citizen during the attack and the fallout after it intensify the influence of his opinion about the subject on readers who were also alive during the event.

DeLillo highlights his attentiveness to the material realities of the assassination in the narrative of *Libra*, in the epistolary elements of the narrative, and in his limiting of the subject matter of interviews to his writing process. Instead of providing biographical details in the publicity about his writing, DeLillo reveals the autobiographical parts of the narratives of his novels in his discussions about the process of writing them in the accompanying front and end matter.

DeLillo employs the front matter of *Libra* and *Underworld* to simulate the framing created by the accumulation of input from writers of fiction and history and the corresponding mediascape. He highlights the similarities between his life and Lee Harvey Oswald's biography in the "Preface, 2022" of *Libra*, remarking that Oswald "had lived briefly with his mother in the Bronx, within walking distance of the house where I grew up, when he was thirteen and I was sixteen" (633). Furthermore, DeLillo creates another spatial link between himself and the "accused assassin," by providing readers with the list of cities that he traveled to as he wrote the novel, following Oswald's "path to Dallas, Fort Worth, New Orleans and then back to the Bronx" ("Preface, 2022," 633). DeLillo indicates his intention to link the process of news writing and life writing when he outlines the steps in constructing the narrative of *Libra* as simply, "walking the streets, looking hard, making notes, finally back home to write actual fiction" ("Preface, 2022," 633). While most people possess the ability to complete the tasks on his itinerary, the compilation of individual perspectives eventually crowds the story of an event in the

media, and the prospect of uncovering the truth starts to seem futile. DeLillo emphasizes how the narrative of *Libra*, or the "actual fiction" that he creates from the biography of Oswald, began along the same lines as his tentative nonfictional notes. He causes readers to consider their position as spectators of both the moments in the narrative and of the events that transpired in the real world when he writes, "as I re-read parts of the novel, I'm not always sure whether certain characters belong to history or to fiction" ("Preface, 2022," 634).

DeLillo underscores the lack of clear boundaries between his fiction and the mediascape that he traverses as a writer in the preface to *Underworld* (1997), the novel that followed *Libra*: "And reading these pages again I sometimes forget that this is fiction" ("Preface, 2022," 217). Similar to that of *Libra*, the plot of *Underworld* centers around the construction of historical narratives, as the main character Nick Shay, attempts to document a domestic event in American history, the 1951 Brooklyn Dodgers and New York Giants baseball game that included the Shot Heard Round the World. DeLillo frames Shay's narrative with the international context of the simultaneous nuclear arms race at the fraught moment when Russia exploded its first hydrogen bomb in 1955. DeLillo's description of his writing process in the prefaces of both novels influences readers to consider his narratives in conversation with historical documents, a status comparable to the growing acceptance of inputs about major events from the surrounding mediascape, but not as a fully established part of the discourse of a nation's history.

The documented details about his process when writing *Libra* that DeLillo includes in the "Preface, 2022" with for the Library of America's series edition *DeLillo: Three Novels of the 1980s*, calls up the image of a journalist sifting through piles of notes

about a project in chronological order. In the opening lines, DeLillo indicates that the mediascape surrounding the assassination of President J. F. Kennedy shaped the archive of the country's history:

> Where were you when Kennedy was shot?
>
> This is what people said incessantly after the events of November 22, 1963. And for the next two decades, the opinions and theories and controversies continued. (633)

DeLillo's question evokes the demand on "I want you for the U.S. Army" recruiting posters from World War I, and both the question and the call-to-action prompt readers to account for themselves by recognizing their role in American society, as largely defined by the nation's rampant media messages. He figuratively stacks *Libra* with other major texts in the national record of the Kennedy assassination: "And on the bookshelf behind me as I write these words—the twenty-six volumes of the Warren Commission report on the assassination" (633).

Changes in the production, dissemination, and reception of writing and reading in the internet age coincide with a reconceptualization of society's understanding of individuality. Scholarly and commercial critics associate DeLillo with the generation of writers like Thomas Pynchon and John Updike, to name a few, as these writers also contended with the external environment of the online mediascape in various ways through their fiction writing. "I think fiction rescues history from its confusions," explains DeLillo in a 1988 interview for *Rolling Stone*, "So the novel which is within history can also operate outside it... it attempts to provide a hint of order in the midst of all the randomness" (Decurtis 294). Here, DeLillo clarifies his use of fiction as a form of historical writing. DeLillo states that in *Libra*, he makes an "extended argument," in his depiction of the assassination of President Kennedy, rather than creating a text that

expounds on the chronology and meaning of a historic moment (Decurtis 288). In the same interview, he details his initial interest in the impact of the heavy media coverage of the Kennedy assassination on the American psyche (Decurtis 288). Moreover, DeLillo explains his subsequent shift into building an argument about the contemporary age's state of information deluge through writing fiction about historic events.

Yet his explanation complicates the distinction he draws between the processes of fiction writing and the mass media's forming of the "general contours" and the "agreed-upon characters" that he included in his portrayal of the national tragedy (Decurtis 288). DeLillo describes a shift in understanding the assassination through the lens of the average media-spectator following the news of current events and his approach to the subject as a fiction writer by emphasizing the journey to the perspective that he offers in *Libra*: "So this is the path I had to drive through common memory and common history to fiction" (Decurtis 288). Not playing with media outlets out of annoyance, DeLillo uses the microphones clipped to his shirt collars as conduits of his self-presentation. His intuitive strategy reflects generations of fiction writers who uniquely grappled with the ways in which both authors and readers began to allow the mediascape into their non-fictional communication in the internet age. Through his self-presentation, DeLillo responds to the growing sense of the novel as an anachronistic form for relaying the self in twenty-first-century fiction. He embraces how his engagement with the publicity aspect of his writing career highlights the distorted projections of mass opinion by media organizations and platforms: "It is my feeling that readers will accept or reject my own variations on the story based on whether these things work as fiction, not whether they coincide with the reader's own theories or the reader's own memories" (Decurtis 288).

The perspectives of artists in different periods of American society do not depreciate overtime, but a publicity strategy is essential to capture the attention of present-day citizens. Literary authors in the twenty-first century must compete with the minute-to-minute broadcasts of digital media outlets.

Individual Identity

An important way to conceptualize how DeLillo utilizes his dealings with mediascape is to examine the continuity of his self-presentation across his fiction and non-fiction writing. DeLillo presents a consistent authorial voice that clarifies the illusory nature of America's mass culture and society, especially in the internet age. In a 1997 interview, he describes himself as the type of writer who "is also creating a picture," rather than one who "is just a voice," branding his perspective as emblematic of the masses:

> A picture is like the masses: a multitude of impressions. A book on the other hand, with its linear advance of words and characters seems to be connected to individual identity.... Somehow pictures always lead to people as masses. Books belong to individuals. (Desalm)

In terms of his authorial self-presentation, DeLillo likens his approach to writing as that of a person stepping out of the category of the online mass to offer readers a materialized expression of identity on the individual level in his novels. Throughout his work, DeLillo offers a perspective on who Americans are and how they are documented—a query related to the significant changes in the conditions of fiction writing after the invention of the internet. Riesman links a society's transition from a phase of production to consumption with changes in how it "ensures some degree of conformity from the individuals who make it up" (5-6). DeLillo's generation of writers continues to adapt to the growing sense that fiction writing encapsulates an image of the self whereas online

mediascapes can suspend that image as a point of reference for the digital masses. Writers of autobiographical writing and fiction in the internet age must attend to how they present themselves across their work because consistency of voice and character attracts audiences receptive to information channels among flashing advertisements for more content and products to consume.

DeLillo demonstrates his ability to traverse two genres related to journalistic writing by the way he transfers his curiosity about the assassination of President J. F. Kennedy. to a media platform like *Rolling Stone*, where he published his 1983 essay "American Blood: A Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dallas and JFK." DeLillo writes in the "Preface, 2022" of *Libra* that he "felt the need to keep going, this time in the context of fiction" (633). In an interview with the same magazine five years later, DeLillo discussed the "power of television" (Decurtis). He states, in regard to American society, that television "has become a part of our consciousness. We've developed almost a sense of performance as it applies to televised events... So there is a deeply self-referential element in our lives that wasn't there before" (Decurtis). DeLillo portrays the presence of digital media in the daily life of people in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, and he acknowledges the influence of the noise in how he constructs the narratives of individual characters in novels. When discussing *Underworld* in 1997 with the *Los Angeles Times*, DeLillo explains:

> Of course, such documents are an important part of “Underworld.” There are a dozen documents in this book—movies and TV shows and photographs and videos and rock ‘n’ roll—simply because this is the way we know much of what we know in this culture at this time. (Ulin)

Appealing to both his academic and non-scholarly readership as an average person in American capitalist society, DeLillo does not attempt to hide his participation in the mass

consumption of entertainment media in his self-presentation. With the increase in forms of communication in the internet age, writers can bypass the mediation of the publishing industry and exercise greater control in marketing themselves to readers. DeLillo presents himself as on the side of consumers rather than producers of media. In doing so, he maintains his credibility as an author who offers his interpretation of the relationship between the individual and the digital crowd.

People ask the question "Where were you when?" to relive the past and to connect the commonalities of their memories with another's. Showcasing the growing interest in the role of an author's life in both fictional and autobiographical writings that feature major events in society, audiences have begun to inquire of authors, "Who are you and how did you react when?" The engagement of scholars, literary critics, and commercial readers with the mediascape around the profession of writing developed as an interactive version of watching an author's performance as they are reading their work at a book talk. In interviews, an author's book might as well be open as writers talk about their creative process and research. Twenty-first-century writers maintain their authorial voice and ensure the effectiveness of the framing devices that they deploy in their writing by asserting agency over how the print and online outlets mediate the publicity of their work. Strategizing their self-presentation allows for literary authors in the internet age to reach individuals reading in conversation with the online masses.

In Chapter III, I closely examine how the framing devices employed in *White Noise* and *Libra* allow DeLillo to exercise greater control over the production, dissemination, and reception of his autobiographical writing and fiction. Considering the ways that twenty-first-century authors participate in managing their work, I explicate the

continuity that DeLillo creates in his self-presentation across his writing, fiction, and interactions with the mediascape surrounding his authorship. I explore how DeLillo emphasizes the interference of mass media coverage in America's collective memory by juxtaposing its volatile noise with the consistent tone of his authorial voice.

CHAPTER 3

TYPE-WRITING IN THE INTERNET AGE: DON DELILLO'S AUTHORIAL PATENT[2]

[2] Graham, Olivia. To be submitted to the *Journal of Modern Literature*.

'The physical sensation of hitting keys and watching hammers strike the page is such an integral part of the way I think and even the way I see words on the page that I'd be most reluctant to give it up. That is, there's a sculptural quality, to me, of letter-by-letter, word-by-word, linear progress across a piece of paper as I type and as the hammers hit the page. It's more immediate. It's more physical. It's actually sensuous.' (DeLillo in an interview with Bing for *Publisher's Weekly*, 1997)

The nonvisual mosaic structures of modern art, like these of modern physics and electric-information patterns, permit little detachment. The mosaic form of the TV image demands participation and involvement in depth of the whole being, as does the sense of touch (McLuhan *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*, 1967).

Abstract

Some twenty-first century authors treat the publicity opportunities afforded by their literary eminence as part of their work. Don DeLillo creates a continuity across his self-presentation to exercise greater control over the production, dissemination, and reception of his autobiographical writing. He creates this continuity by deploying similar framing strategies in his autobiographical writing and fiction, as well as in his interactions with the surrounding mediascape of his novels *White Noise* (1985) and *Libra* (1988). Analyzing his deployment of repetition, irony, and self-referentiality in his work clarifies his intention to emphasize how readerly input may have a constitutive, shaping role in authorial self-presentation in the internet age.

Production and Display

Time, money, labor—all are factors that organize American society, and Don DeLillo represents the nation's changing habits of production and consumption in the internet age in his autobiographical work. DeLillo's choice of technology in the digital world to use in the composition of his novels, a typewriter, has remained the same since the start of his career (LeClair, 1982, Passaro, 1991, Bing, 1997, Brooks, 2018, Tempest, 2022). Computers with keyboards offer users the "ease of operation" and sense of

"accuracy" that typewriters promised individuals when they were first sold in America in the mid to late nineteenth century (Terrell). But digital technologies also ease users' minds of the laborious process of writing and editing fiction. Software features such as spell checkers allow users to undo their mistakes quickly. With typewriters, production is on display, and DeLillo uses a technology of the print-based world in the digital age to establish his authorial patent—denoting the self who composes his printed works and inspires his personae in the digital and online mediascape.

Understanding the creative aspects of marketing, Don DeLillo uses similar strategies to frame his self-presentation across his fiction, writing, and in his interactions with media in order to publicize his work. His writing and fiction serve as records of American identity as the displaced swarm of media outlets in the internet age threatens human individuation. Many authors of literature since the late nineteenth century expressed concern for the potential of the mediascape to alter the production, dissemination, and reception of their writing and fiction (Jaffe 1-2, Roach 5-9). In his study of modernism and celebrity, Jaffe explains that, "Unlike movie stardom, the matrix of associations supporting their reputations is not intrinsically image-based but predicated instead on a distinctive textual mark of authorship, a sanction for distinguishing a high literary product from the inflating signs of consumption" (1). The late twentieth and twenty-first centuries have seen literary authors strategize their engagement in the internet discourse surrounding their writing and fiction in various ways. Literary authors add depth to their public personae by distinguishing their work from the products of celebrity culture, marketing their writing and fiction as intellectual property. Especially in the case of autobiographical fiction and writing, the invention of the internet further

complicated the situation of a society's greatest novels within the narrative of its history. A level of consistency, as seen in DeLillo's self-presentation across both his fiction and nonfiction, aids literary authors in controlling the impressions they make on readers through their writing.

Repetition

According to DeLillo, literary authors pose a danger to societies hooked on images, sound bites, and videos in their mediascapes, as their written works offer clarity for those desensitized to constant communication. To emphasize the key themes in his narratives, DeLillo often uses the signal word *danger* in print and online interviews and book talks (Passaro, Bing, Arensberg, Pell, Nance, Tempest, Jensen). In an interview with Vince Passaro, DeLillo characterizes the addictive habit of media consumption in the late twentieth century as "glut and repetition and endless" (*The New York Times*). Moreover, he presents a continuous idea about his writing throughout his career: "Yes, I think my work is influenced by the fact that we're living in dangerous times. If I could put it in a sentence, in fact, my work is about just that: living in dangerous times" (Nance, 2012).

Drawing the attention of mass audiences in the digital age requires authors of literature to step out of the normal digestive process of consumer culture in the mediascape. Interviewers pick up on DeLillo's repetition of *danger*, and convey their reception of his strategy of self-presentation in the creative threads of their journalistic approach to depicting his authorship. Some examples include Vince Passaro's "Dangerous Don DeLillo" for *The New York Times* in 1991, "'D' is for Danger - and for writer Don DeLillo" by Margaret Roberts for the *Chicago Tribune* in 1992, Kevin

Nance's "Living in dangerous times" for the *Chicago Tribune* in 2012, and Jonathan Bing's inquiry into the title of *Underworld* in 1997: "What is the Underworld? A zone where information, desire, crime and capital circulate beneath the manifest events of daily life, and where wealth and power stake a dangerous, hidden claim on the American mind?".

DeLillo creates a continuity across his self-presentation by emphasizing the means by which he produces his autobiographical writing and fiction. The process of writing a novel requires a separation from the information-superabundance of the online void and an attunement to the slower pace of the offline world. As Marshall McLuhan theorized in *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (1967), environments are "active processes which are invisible... Anti-environments, or countersituations made by artists, provide means of direct attention and enable us to see and understand more clearly" (68). Moreover, McLuhan states that artists exhibit a "need to interface, to confront environments with a certain antisocial power" (68), and DeLillo's career reflects his resolution to emphasize the importance of America's peripheral media channels.

Readers must distinguish between the language of DeLillo's writerly self-presentation and the text of his public image. The emergence of the video interview complicated this goal, as it does not offer DeLillo the same creative control as the print interview does in focusing the piece on the writer's language rather than their public image. The video interview takes some of the audience's focus away from the words spoken by the interviewer and interviewee, giving them an illusory understanding of the author's identity. With a higher sensory input, video interviews cause viewers to divide their attention between visuals, audio, images, and text. DeLillo indicates how the

process of video recording is not an essential component of his publicity approach in appearances such as his book talk for the 2013 National Book Festival (Library of Congress). In the video, DeLillo wears a baseball cap, which under the harsh stage lighting, casts a shadow over most of his face (Library of Congress). Through his self-presentation, DeLillo reminds his readers of the work involved in developing and maintaining an analytical perspective on American society.

A literary author's engagement in publicity opportunities is comparable to the prosumption of capitalist societies in the digital age. The term "prosumption" was coined by Alvin Toffler in 1960 (Ritzer, G. et al.). According to Bohdana Kurylo, "participatory web cultures and prosumption, whereby individuals stand simultaneously as consumers and producers," signify shifts in the relationship between the technologies and consumer culture of the late twenty and early twenty-first century environments (620). YouTube is an "affordable and unregulated," social media technology that transforms each user into an "active subject" (Kurylo 626). Although individuals in the twenty-first century may "express their agency in the production of online content" (626), consumer culture in the internet age "enables self-expression through material and symbolic means, while sustaining a dominant system that, on a grander scale, constrains personal freedom" (Kurylo 627). Authors of literature produce content for the same commercial and noncommercial publications that they may consume in their leisure time. As participants in the intersections between culture and technology, their engagement in publicity opportunities are indicative of their society's prosumption. The continuity of DeLillo's self-presentation in interviews, essays, and book talks, along with his autobiographical fiction, connotes his awareness of the fact that publicizing his work constitutes providing

products for market exchange. But commodities "provide emotional meanings and experiences" (Kurylo 627), and so like framing devices in life-writing, advertisements stimulate the imaginations of consumers, promising authenticity yet only provide an artificial sort of experience. DeLillo's steadfast perspective on the intersections between art, technology, and consumer culture unveils the illusion of prosumer agency, as its "affordability, interactivity, and visibility ... is no obstacle to the logic of commodification" (Kurylo 627).

DeLillo's choice to participate in non-video interviews, with a few exceptions, allows him to convey his self-presentation through language rather than visuals. Frederic Jameson views the consumer base for superficial images of celebrities as indicative of the normalized flattening of individuals in postmodernity, a cultural-dominant of late-capitalism (56-57). Scholars such as Joe Moran regard the ambivalent social contexts of celebrity as a significant "*locus* for debate about what constitutes an individual, and specifically an individual worthy of fame, in contemporary culture, clustering around polarities such as depth and surface, authenticity and superficiality, cultural and commercial value" (145). Additionally, Schneck compares Thomas Pynchon's *Vineland* (1990) with DeLillo's *White Noise*, arguing that both convey a "fascination with images that oscillates more between modernist mystification and alienation and is less inspired by the postmodern celebration of the image" (412). Instead, "the fictions of the image that their literature offers suggest the melancholic heroism of a dying culture— the culture of the word" (Schneck 412). In his writing, DeLillo addresses the heightened contradictions of literary authors attaining celebrity in the age of digital technology; he causes readers to compare the text of his public image with the language of his self-presentation. Rather

than completely avoiding engagements with his literary eminence, he takes advantage of the fact that his celebrity took shape during the historic confluence of consumer and celebrity culture in the internet age.

Inglis points to the development of television as a watershed in the "making of celebrity," as it spawned a "different kind of intimacy between the unknown lives of mass audiences watching in solitude and the individual but personally unknowable celebrities doing their living only in the windless spaces on the other side of the television screen" (15). While interviewers may inform their guests of the subjects of some of their questions in both video and print interviews, the participants have the ability to edit the dialogue in the print format. In the first half of the twentieth century, modernist writers "strove to get the most effect from their existing renown in the popular press, over national radio, and from associations with cultural institutions, practices which served as feedback loops for publicizing and sustaining their careers..." (Jaffe 5). Roach describes the historic turning point in the relationship between audiences and celebrities mediated by television through the frame of politicians like J. F. Kennedy (176). According to Inglis, J. F. Kennedy "was the first president imaginatively to grasp the momentousness of television, and his remains the most gripping moral fable of celebrity politics" (15), or was until 2016. Inglis emphasizes the "moral point" when studying how a figure in a position of power "dramatises and enacts, *both for himself or herself and for us*, values essential to the self-image and self-esteem of his, her, and our society" (15-16).

In the internet age, the familiarity of 1960s television talk show hosts is replicated on YouTube. Members of so-called Generations Z and Alpha are likely familiar with streaming platforms and familiar YouTubers, rather than popular television hosts on

cable television. YouTubers often have home studios where they film videos, which only amplifies the "confessional and experiential tone" that Roach attributes to television talk shows that grew in popularity in the 1960s (176). The increased visibility of literary authors in the internet age elicits the experience of intimacy in their readers and online audiences. Lack of biographical details about scholarly and commercially notable writers such as DeLillo, or, even more famously, Thomas Pynchon, increases the mystique around their presence in society. DeLillo exercises control over his authorial self-presentation by limiting his public visibility, creating a historical record of himself that focuses on language in the forms of mostly print and radio dialogues.

Irony

DeLillo ironically expresses a Romantic view of the author in society as part of his strategy of self-presentation. Many Romantic writers called for a detachment from the idea of artistic genius as a product of divine intervention rather than emanating from writers themselves (Woodmansee 429). In a 1988 interview with Ann Arensberg for *Vogue*, DeLillo describes his perspective on the role of twentieth-century American writers in upkeeping the peripheral spaces in the nation's society:

> **Q: What role can the writer play in our society at this late date in the century?**
> A: The writer is the person who stands outside society, independent of affiliation and independent of influence. The writer is the man or woman who automatically takes a stance against his or her government. There are so many temptations for American writers to become part of the system and part of the structure that now, more than ever, we have to resist. American writers ought to stand and live in the margins, and be more dangerous. Writers in repressive societies are considered dangerous. That's why so many of them are in jail.

The interview form entices readers, viewers, and listeners with the prospect of receiving certain types of truths as they discuss their work and perspective on the world. In *White Noise* and *Libra*, DeLillo criticizes the way that the mediascape imposes itself in the lives

of Americans by creating an artificial and distorted narrative of the nation's identity. "But there may also be an element in which such writers are refusing to become part of the all-incorporating treadmill of consumption and disposal," DeLillo suggests in a 1997 interview to describe his view of the publicity aspect of his profession as a writer of "books that are not easily absorbed by the culture" (Bing). He ironically self-romanticizes his authorship to highlight the value of literary works created in the dangerous location of the mediascape's outskirts.

DeLillo's idea that a writer should combat the dominant narratives of the mediascape and produce works that reveal the veiled boundaries of the collective consciousness of society connects with the contemplations of Romantic authors and theorists. For example, Wordsworth's response to critics in the Preface (1800) to *Lyrical Ballads* shows that he considered that an author's "immediate audience is inevitably attuned to the products of the past," and that the more original a literary work, the more likely it is "doomed to be misunderstood" by the public of its time (Woodmansee 429). Moreover, Wordsworth indicates that the genius of a writer culminates in an ability to convey power in writing, establishing the poet as the vital authority in interpreting his work (Woodmansee 429). Two hundred years on, digital technologies have increased the tendency for information about opinion leaders to be cited out of context in the mediascape. Writers create framing strategies of self-presentation to control their authorial voices through dissemination and reception of their writing and fiction. DeLillo exercises control over the dissemination and reception of his work by utilizing a production method that the mass media cannot replicate or use to interfere in his public image.

DeLillo's responses to interview questions in print and online publications, especially his interviews with *The Paris Review*, indicate the level of planning and editing that went into the production of the published conversations. *The Paris Review* and its ongoing "Art of Fiction" series which began in 1953, serves as an example of a magazine that presented contemporary authors with an opportunity to exercise greater authority over the published versions of the interviews that they participate in (Roach 171). In the decades after the Second World War, the dynamics of interviews with literary authors shifted to positioning the interviewee as "an expert on him- or herself," making the final edit of the interview into "a literary object that was part of the author's wider oeuvre and itself amenable to New Critical close reading" (Roach 170). Rather than reading like spoken word, DeLillo's long-form interview by Adam Begley for "Art of Fiction No. 135" reads as if edited for clarity, though the text appears without a note from the editor:

INTERVIEWER

> Do you think it made a difference in your career that you started writing novels late, when you were approaching thirty?

DELILLO

> Well, I wish I had started earlier, but evidently I wasn't ready. First, I lacked ambition. I may have had novels in my head but very little on paper and no personal goals, no burning desire to achieve some end. Second, I didn't have a sense of what it takes to be a serious writer. It took me a long time to develop this. Even when I was well into my first novel I didn't have a system for working, a dependable routine. I worked haphazardly, sometimes late at night, sometimes in the afternoon. I spent too much time doing other things or nothing at all. On humid summer nights I tracked horseflies through the apartment and killed them—not for the meat but because they were driving me crazy with their buzzing. I hadn't developed a sense of the level of dedication that's necessary to do this kind of work.

DeLillo uses the space of *The Paris Review* series to develop the lore around his literary eminence through a publication with historic ties to celebrated authors of the mid-twentieth century. But, just as novels enter the historical record, the author's engagement with print and online interviews become public records. The succinct back-and-forth movement between interviewers and interviewees indicates the production of quotations that were endorsed by writers in order to enter the mediascape around their life and work.

Since newspaper publishing provided everyday people with access to information about national and global events in the nineteenth century, literary authors have shown interest in the conventions of journalism in their fiction and participation in interviews. Establishing a public identity requires authors to give greater attention to shifts in reading fiction in the age of technology. DeLillo's hopeful attitude about the possibilities of art and technology aligning in ways that empower the masses connects with early twentieth-century literary critic Walter Benjamin's non-catastrophizing outlook on the same subjects. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1935), Benjamin theorizes the potential for technologies of aesthetic reproduction to change culture and society through mass society "policizing art" (20). Benjamin believed that:

> The politicisation of art encourages direct participation of the masses in the production of art, who are now critical of their conditions as a subject and endowed with power over cultural production. As a result, the social function of culture shifts its status as an object of aesthetic satisfaction to a tool of political communication. (Kurylo 623)

Sharing Benjamin's concern for the danger in the "juxtaposition of capitalism and technology" (Kurylo 619), DeLillo emphasizes the mediascape's capacity for political coercion in his strategy of self-presentation. Just as restoring technological devices to their factory-setting erases data of the individual user's preferences, he uses his self-

presentation to emphasize the importance of individual reflection on consumer culture. "There are also many conflicts that we don't know anything about because they're not covered, they're not part of the media because they're too small, they're too remote and perhaps too dangerous for people to report on. And one could say this is human nature, there seems to be more human nature than there normally is," he states about America's social and political tensions in a 2022 interview with poet Kae Tempest for *Pan MacMillan*. By "human nature," DeLillo denotes the threat of the multiplicity of narratives broadcasted by America's digital media in creating sharper divisions in the nation's social consciousness (Tempest).

Both Benjamin and DeLillo's ideas about the confluence of art and technology contain the remaining threads of Romantic ideas of the influence of the artistic consciousness on society. But DeLillo ironically romanticizes the role of authors in society. DeLillo plays an active role in the creation of his public image as a literary author by limiting his engagement with the media outlets focusing on his career. Moreover, the resulting spectacle of the mediascape attempting to reconcile his public image with his literary persona causes readers to reconsider their involvement in the culture of reactiveness that defines the online masses. Additionally, his preoccupation with iconic figures in American history such as President Kennedy, as well as notorious dictators in world history like Adolf Hitler, signifies DeLillo's deeper-lying concern with how new communication technologies in the digital age might be mobilized for political manipulation of the masses.

Self-Referentiality

In *White Noise* and *Libra*, DeLillo represents how the immensity of the digital mediascape causes a mass surrender of political communication to the control of a few dominant voices. The chief narrators of both novels contend with their ability to project discernible images of themselves into the larger narrative of history that seems to be overwhelmed by the contemporary mediascape. DeLillo portrays how Oswald's struggles with literacy skills impede his ability to write himself into history in *Libra*, a frustrating process for a result that he believed would help him construct a social identity in society (715). The President's Commission on the Assassination of President J. F. Kennedy, also known as the Warren Commission report, includes Oswald's *Historic Diary*, a volume with his contemplations about his life that he wrote in journal form during and about his time in Russia. DeLillo includes one of the most quoted lines in his fictional narrative of Oswald:

> Take the double-e from Lee.
> Hide the double-l in Hidell.
> Hidell means hide the L.
> Don't tell. (*Libra* 715)

DeLillo's influence on the narrative of American society causes him to divide his identity between his public image and his identity as an ordinary person, between producer and consumer. Glen Thomas asserts that this section of Oswald's *Historic Diary* indicates "a split in the narrating subject, so that Oswald himself becomes both subject and object of the entries" (112). Following Lacan's theory of the alienation that occurs when subjects in literature address themselves, Thomas views the "linguistic alienation" that Oswald creates through his "interchangeable references to Lee and Hidell" in his narrative in *Libra*, as a distinction between his self, "Oswald," and "Hidell," who is constructing his

figure-hood in history (112). Similarly, writers of life-writing such as DeLillo, navigate the self-alienation that occurs when the literary persona that they create in their writing merges with the image reproduced by the mediascape in online spaces.

DeLillo's oeuvre offers plentiful evidence of an attempt to grapple with the ways in which digital technology affects, if not controls, the dissemination and reception of his writing and fiction. Instead of publishing collections of his work through larger commercial publishers, DeLillo has affiliated himself with historic and government institutions such as the Library of America to classify his work as continually relevant in the nation's understanding of its identity. The Library of America's collection of DeLillo's *Three Novels of the 1980s*, include prefaces written in 2022, that contains short summaries of his writing process that he usually expands upon in interviews. The volume also includes the essays that DeLillo published on subject matter that he expanded on in *White Noise* and *Libra*: "American Blood: A Journey Through the Labyrinth of Dallas and JFK" (1983) and "Silhouette City: Hitler, Manson, and the Millennium" (1989). Bound with his major fictional works, DeLillo's essays become historical accounts of American social life. Out of all of his engagements in the publicity of both novels and his contributions to print publications during the 1980s, DeLillo selected the two essays to represent the consistency of his perspective on American society.

The consistent tone of DeLillo's authorial voice indicates his ironic detachment from his role as the writer of *Libra*. In the first line of the "Author's Note" of the novel, DeLillo declares, "This is a work of imagination," and despite his account of the ominous stacks of historical documents that he used to write the novel in the "Preface, 2022" he states, "I've made no attempt to furnish factual answers to any questions raised by the

assassination" (*Libra*, 1041). But just as the mediascape in the digital world continuously intervenes in the dominant narratives of major events in society, DeLillo contradicts his approach to portraying historical figures in fiction. He uses a legalistic tone in the "Author's Note", to emphasize the irony of any expectation that fiction might render reality completely and accurately (*Libra*, 1041). But to DeLillo, the reflective spaces provided by fiction ironically offer a level of stability amid the discontinuity of narratives in the mediascape about the same subjects:

> But because this book makes no claim to literal truth, because it is only itself, apart and complete, readers may find refuge here—a way of thinking about the assassination without being constrained by half-facts or overwhelmed by possibilities, but the tide of speculation that widens with the years. ("*Author's Note*", *Libra*, 1041)

DeLillo encourages readers to participate in understanding the emotions that commonly arise after major events in society compared to those that the mediascape's antagonistic tactics evoke in its spectators. He reorganizes the information about the Kennedy assassination available in the form of official documents into one composition. The image that DeLillo creates of the tragedy in *Libra* exemplifies McLuhan's theory of the mosaic image generated by cool media, because the isolated experiences of the characters compel readers to look inward rather than constantly listen for changes in the environment of the mediascape.

DeLillo's attention to the reception of his work indicates shifts in the placement of literary authors in the celebrity culture of the internet age. His commercial readership supports his professional esteem through their engagement with publicity. But as stated in the introduction, DeLillo's literary eminence aligns with the social category of "'Persons,'" because the association between the profession of writing and the intellectual

culture of society allows for this type of celebrity to attracts less of a mediascape spectacle of envy (Inglis 270). Well-known writers in society like DeLillo bear a career title that connotes the expected integrity of the position; the public views modern writers and artists as individuals who have ascended in social standing enough to gain perspective on society, but not too high or low to forget the existence of the media machine's power in shaping the collective memories of historic events. Inglis describes how "public dramatisation of power" generated by the "mass political spectacle" is a "*the* key feature of political life between wars. It affirms for each society some of the most important of the social values and traditions and makes the small public figures at the centre of such vast attention uniquely recognisable and still sacredly remote" (11).

Modernist literary authors often practiced a level of distance from the mediascape in their private lives to ensure their ability to form their subjective viewpoint on society to readers (Jaffe 9). This "analytical distance" from society supports an author's framing strategy of self-presentation because "geographical or cognitive separation from the object studied" is essential for effective life-writing (Schmidt 126). DeLillo divides the chapters of his tenth novel *Libra* (1997) based on location, and he offers readers a glimpse into the traveling that he did as part of his writing process in the “Preface, 2022” (633). "I think all my novels have a strong sense of place" (Decurtis 300), DeLillo stated in a 1988 interview for *Rolling Stone*, emphasizing the impression of locality in his autobiographical writing and fiction, that greatly contrasts with the spatial displacement of the mediascape in the digital world. Modernist culture formed itself with "regulative institutional, technological, and, yes, economic frameworks" (Jaffe 9). Jaffe describes how Modernist literary authors appear in the mediascape as a double-exposed image: "At

best, authors are forever elusive, off-stage paring fingernails, feigning disinterest. In their 'diminished' capacities, however, they're arranging a host of contacts, ordinary labors, and promotional exchanges" (9). Rather than "disinterest," maybe Jaffe means uninterest, because Modernist literary authors strategized their approach to maintaining a certain level of their private lives due to their inability to opt-out of the discourse around their work.

DeLillo's coherent authorial voice seems meant to stand in sharp contrast to the cacophonous distraction of media noise in the lives of contemporary Americans. He appeals to readers by rooting his self-presentation in his American identity and culture, but he also conveys an attitude of skepticism about the possibility for individuality in the internet age. The unconvinced tone of DeLillo's self-presentation when writing about the role of the online mediascape in the lives of Americans indicates his concerns about the potential for new digital technologies to exacerbate the destructive habits of consumer culture and to create the illusion of a self-determined mass. In the "Preface, 2022" of *Libra*, DeLillo emphasizes the impact of national events in the collective memory of society. He defines the American social consciousness as the shared ability to answer the question "Where were you when...?" about many events in the nation's recent history (*Libra*, 633). DeLillo exemplifies the effects of "public dramatisation of power" in many of his novels; in *Libra* (1988), many of the characters attempt to construct their own versions of history, and the main character of *Underworld* (1997) endeavors to document the history of baseball.

Similarly, in the "Preface, 2022" of *White Noise*, in the Library of America's edition of his *Three Novels of the 1980s*, DeLillo discerns how the sensory overload of

the digital mediascape obscures the relationship between the present and the past. "The sentences kept coming and I followed along, back in America, immersed in the culture of that era, imagining a classic small town, thinking of ordinary events in a context of impending disaster": DeLillo presents himself in the preface as occupying the same position as other Americans whose memories of major national events have been confused by the new accumulations of information in the digital mediascape (327). The narrator of *White Noise*, Jack Gladney, is a professor of "Hitler studies" (DeLillo 332) and hyper-aware of the mediascape's inescapable role in American lives.

In his narrative, Gladney's attention is constantly drawn to the communication technology and mediascape noise around him, giving readers a heightened amount of surface-level information about his perspective on himself and the world around him. Adam Szetela examines how the flatness of Gladney's character and his limited self-development in his narrative relates to "three non-utility advertising approaches used prominently throughout the 1970s and 1980s: product symbol, personalization, and lifestyle association" (1). In his narrative, Gladney lists brand names or lines from news, entertainment shows, and commercials from televisions, radios, and other media technologies. Sometimes these random bits of communication break up Gladney's line of thought, and other times they appear within the paragraphs of his narrative. For example, when Gladney and his wife Babette lose sight of their toddler Wilder in the grocery store, his inner dialogue goes like this: "Other looks, less pensive, and less guilty, indicated greater time spans, deeper seas of inattention. Like: "*I didn't know whales were mammals*.' The greater the time span, the blanker the look, the more dangerous the situation. It was as if guilt were a luxury she allowed herself only when the danger was

minimal" (*White Noise* 265). The super-abundance of information from the mediascape disrupts Gladney's internal monologue, connecting his sense of self with the masses engaging in the mediascape, and ultimately altering readers' reception of his narrative.

DeLillo mirrors the presence of the mediascape in Gladney's worldview by interrupting his own address to readers in the preface of *White Noise*. When detailing the state of Gladney's social life and career before the starting point of his narrative, DeLillo points to the "so-called airborne toxic event" as the beginning of Gladney's sense of himself fragmenting:

> This becomes the moment that accelerates a kind of wobbly plot, unfolding in the hum of the TV set and the radio, the minute-to-minute sweep of product names and slogans.
>
> *Toyota Corolla, Toyota Celica, Toyota Cressida.*
>
> I have virtually no memories of writing the book, only of taking long walks on quiet streets in the community where my wife and I were living at the time. ("Preface, 2022," *White Noise*, 327)

DeLillo parallels the conditions of his life as he was writing *White Noise* with Gladney's life in the digital age before and after the toxic event. "Master Card, Visa, American Express," DeLillo interrupts his account of his daily routine as a consumer in America's superabundant marketplace, except he separates the blurb of corporations and catchphrases from the text of his narrative with more space ("Preface, 2022," *White Noise*, 327). In the concluding sentences of the preface, he explains how the "airborne toxic event" in *White Noise* symbolizes the threat of the mediascape to the autonomy of individuals in the digital age: "On the page, air-raid sirens are sounding and the family evacuates, riding along the road that leads out of town, trying to outdistance the toxic cloud, sensing the betrayal of their lives by technology, the radio continuing to bounce

out words" ("Preface, 2022," *White Noise*, 327). DeLillo creates a continuity between the tone of his voice as the author of *White Noise* with that of Gladney's narrative voice by highlighting the uniformity of experience in contemporary America due to the presence of the mediascape. The tone of his autobiographical work indicates his questioning of the ability for literary authors to leave lasting impressions on readers in the internet age.

DeLillo associates himself with characters concerned with documenting and participating in the construction of history. Studies of the semi-autobiographical characters in both *Libra* and *Underworld* indicate his intention to portray the complex nature of discerning meaning in individual American lives in the contemporary world. In Veggian's words, a biography of DeLillo that centers around his identity as a public figure, "would appear to be a life thoroughly preoccupied with writing, art, and thoughtful consideration of the role of literature in the world" (4). Yet Veggian charges ahead with his research into DeLillo's life, compiling the scant biographical details available to the public to consider how even a brief biography of a writer aids in evaluating their contributions to his or her respective society:

> In using the biography to interpret the fiction, the biography becomes a different sort of fiction— a dishonest one posing as fact. In this way the traces of DeLillo's status as the son of immigrants might help us understand the relationship between the outsiders who populate his novels but also the role he plays as an artist and observer of American life. (9)

Rather than allowing for the mediascape to distort his public identity by commodifying his identity as a cultural product, DeLillo limits his engagement with online media outlets to emphasize how the location of authenticity in the internet age is physical and unpopular. Fred Inglis clarifies that the public's conceptualization of writers as possessing the ability to "embody individuality" causes authors of literature to be "hearkened to as

teachers of how to live and live well, how to feel and think, not how to be copied, emulated, or envied, but how to take their words and meanings, and have them move in our own lives" (283). In my view, DeLillo leans into this feature of his position to enhance the perceived obscurity of the "outsiders" in his novels, such as Lee Harvey Oswald in *Libra* — an obscurity that develops when the mediascape pretends to create knowable characters out of impenetrable, real people.

DeLillo complicates the professional, and therefore, commercial aspect of authorship by aligning himself with the image of an outsider and of a writer observing American society. "To merge with history is to escape the self," remarked DeLillo in his characterization of Oswald's inability to unify the "room" of the self "with the world in general or with history in particular" (Decurtis 290). The epigraph of *Libra* is a fragment of a letter from Oswald to his brother that reads in part: "Happiness is taking part in the struggle, where there is no borderline between one's own personal world, and the world in general" (635). While this statement could be read as exemplifying DeLillo's use of the prefatory materials to link his role as the author of the narrative and his fictionalized version of Oswald as the narrator, it might be viewed as a comment on the abstraction of the self when it is reflected in the mediascape.

DeLillo's self-referentiality shows his apprehension to how the online mediascape merges the public and private lives of literary authors. When asked by an interviewer if he viewed his fictionalized version of Oswald as an "author of some kind," DeLillo clarified that "the motif in the book of men in small rooms refers to Oswald much more as an outsider than as a writer," and adds that the prevailing narrative of the lives of figures with whom Oswald claimed to identify (such as "Trotsky and Castro") probably

influenced his perspective on his relationship to American society (Decurtis 290). Moran asserts that in *Mao II* (1991), DeLillo "reproduces a particularly prevalent myth of author-recluses as transcendent figures defined by their separation from the 'mass'" (138) through the novel's protagonist Bill Gray's experiences with self-alienation due to his participation in the photographic reproductions of his public image as a writer (144-146). Moran connects DeLillo's depiction of Gray's struggle with the loss of his private life to the "attempts made by some theorists of postmodernity to explain the loss of a 'depth model' of the human personality as the product of a culture dominated by self-referential signs" (140). Similar to DeLillo's emphasis on the lack of spontaneity in the means of producing interviews, DeLillo portrays the concept of the "celebrity author" in *Mao II* as "merely a victim of an all-consuming publicity machine" (Moran 140). Furthermore, DeLillo represents the contradictions present in the social role of authors in the digital age by "reproducing a notion of an automated mass being instilled with 'good' or 'bad' influence ('who is speaking to these people?')," in *Mao II* (Moran 150).

DeLillo circumvents the noise of the online content created in the dissemination and reception of his work by avoiding obstructions to his autobiographical writing and fiction. Throughout his career, he has remained critical of the potential for social media and other digital technologies to develop into tools for political coercion. Kurylo explains that, "Crises cause a rupture in the existing system and open space for new coercive regimes ... the singling out of the 'other' can provide a sense of meaning and political action" (632). DeLillo acts as the "other" by using a typewriter, a technology of the print world, to compose novels for the internet age. He disrupts the internet's control over content to lead his readers out of the mediascape's nonlinear conditioning of the self; and

ultimately, DeLillo reminds readers of the capacity for humanity to utilize the printed word for creating cultures of individuals with media that belongs to them.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The Social Implications of Self-Presentation

What is the origin of one's desires and how might individuals trace them back in the internet age? How much of an American author's motivation in traversing the nation's new online frontier stems from the attempt to conserve existing artistic forms, as opposed to an effort to entertain a fascination with the potential for digital media to be used for political communication? Literary authors occupy a place in multiple sectors of society that relate to cultural production: the intellectual and artistic spheres and, with the development of technologies of mechanical reproduction, celebrity and political cultures. The public space of America's digital environment reflects the nation's political tensions, and, as Walter Benjamin's theories foreshadow in the history of literary criticism (Kurylo 623), the arts that represent society in the internet age function as tools for the masses to communicate about politics. Since the production practices of America's artistic media were established on the foundations of its capitalist system, their relationship to the nation's consumer culture is often concealed from the masses. Don DeLillo's oeuvre exhibits the ability for individuals to recognize their role in the social processes involved in artistic production and consumption in the internet age. Through his self-presentation, he highlights the slow and reflective process of composing his autobiographical work to demonstrate how the self may be understood with greater clarity through written language in a society that increasingly communicates through images and sound.

DeLillo portrays the media noise that results from the ways in which digital technologies exacerbate the dysfunctional aspects of America's pre- internet political culture. L. M. Sarcasas theorizes that individuals born in the internet age live in a state of incredulity in regard to the concept of truth due to the proliferation of accessible information online (6). When presented with the solutions of primarily print-based cultures where information is scarce (only coming from a limited number of sources), such as fact-checking, even individuals who have only lived part of their lives with the existence of the digital world tend to react with skepticism (6-7). New technologies change the landscape of communal relations, and Sarcasas observes that Americans exhibit both loyalty to the nation and the "shifting loyalties of digital attachments" (13). Moreover, new technologies modify our "relationship, through memory, to the past," and in the case of the internet, America's "tools for remembering" its history include "texts, images, monuments, social media feeds" (Sarcasas 13).

DeLillo positions his autobiographical writing and fiction as continually meaningful in American society by creating a continuity across his self-presentation. He deploys framing devices including repetition, irony, and self-referentiality to criticize the mediascape's coercion in America's political environment. The significance of the national events rendered in his autobiographical writing and fiction increases the possibility for his work to be archived with the accumulating input of the mediascape on the same subjects. But DeLillo's subjective perspective on events in the nation's history offers a level of clarity only attainable through detachment from the digital mediascape's emphasis on visual and auditory sense-perceptions. As a writer, DeLillo's deeper connection with the sensory experience of the products of print culture boosts the

credibility and spectacle of his portraiture of the gray areas in society that support his literary eminence.

Working within the binaries of celebrity and authorship in the digital world, DeLillo's self-presentation reveals the areas of society where emotions may be felt on an individual level. Glen Thomas asserts that DeLillo's representation of his narrators as unable to render their realities in writing "suggests that control over and knowledge of events is never absolute" (123). In the case of the assassination of President J. F. Kennedy, Thomas argues that the "'why' and the 'who' are never entirely clear; only the textual traces of the fact remain, and the efforts to understand them, to incorporate them into discourse, are themselves provisional, doubtful, and ultimately contradictory" (123). Stuart Hutchinson suggests that although Lee Harvey Oswald's "existence in the vibrant life of his nation is felt in *Libra* because of DeLillo's realising powers," his use of a gun in the actual assassination of President Kennedy only made his existence known instead of felt (131).

As the internet age continues to evolve, the imaginative spaces created by literary authors serve to recall the social conventions previously used to fashion some sort of cultural and political consensus. DeLillo specifically profiles the role of the other in American society to reveal the influence of the wealthy and the otherwise powerful in the direction of the desires of consumer culture in the internet age. Sarcasas explains how, "Under these conditions, to credit the Other's appeals to public spiritedness as genuine rather than a guise for self-interest, to believe that he truly has the common good in view, requires a great leap of faith" (17). Additionally, rather than intending to inform his readers of the truth of national events, DeLillo performs the contradictory split between

public and private life in the internet age through his self-presentation as a contributor to America's history through the marginal channels of its mediascape. Life-writing in the twenty-first century may showcase how American society's modes of communication increase the dichotomy between the individual and the masses created by the nation's consumer culture. Technology creates a "gap between feeling and writing" (Hayes 346) that individuals in the internet age must fill in countercultural ways. Representing the voice of the American self in the twenty-first-century, as seen in DeLillo's self-presentation in his autobiographical work and in his interactions with the mass media, requires the empowerment of individuals by knowledge of the role that technological mediation plays in their own lives.

REFERENCES

"opinion leader, n." *A Dictionary of Public Health* (1 ed.), edited by. Last, John M.: Oxford University Press, 2007. *Oxford Reference*, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195160901.001.0001/acref-9780195160901>. Accessed 3 Feb. 2024.

“Opinion Leader, N.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford UP, Sept. 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/2209906191. Accessed 3 Feb. 2024.

Arensberg, Ann. "Seven Seconds". *Vogue*, Aug. 1988, https://archive.vogue.com/issue/19880801. Accessed 24 Feb. 2024.

Begley, Adam. “Don DeLillo: The Art of Fiction CXXXV." *The Paris Review* 35: Issue 128 (Fall 1993): 274-306.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 1935. *Illuminations*, translated by Zohn, Harry, edited by Arendt, Hannah, Schocken Books, 1969.

Bing, Jonathan. "The Ascendance of Don DeLillo." *Publishers Weekly*, 11 Aug. 1997, pp 261-3, https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/print/19970811/22663-the-ascendance-of-don-delillo.html. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.

Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Don DeLillo." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 12 Jan. 2024, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Don-DeLillo. Accessed 11 Feb. 2024.

Brooks, Xan. "Don DeLillo on Trump's America: 'I'm not sure the country is recoverable.'" The Guardian, 5 Nov. 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/nov/05/don-delillo-trumps-america-love-lies-bleeding. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.

Decurtis, Anthony. "'An Outsider in This Society': An Interview with Don DeLillo." Introducing Don DeLillo, New York, Duke University Press, 1991, Rolling Stone Magazine, 17 Nov. 1988, pp. 43-66. Straight Arrow Publishers, Inc. https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/qa-don-delillo-69452/. Accessed 28 Dec. 2023.

DeLillo, Don. *Mao II and Underworld*. Edited by Mark Osteen. Library of America, 2023. Print.

DeLillo, Don. *Three Novels of the 1980s: The Names, White Noise, Libra*. Library of America, 2022. Print.

Dimock, Michael. "Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins." *Pew Research Center*, 17 Jan. 2019. Retrieved from https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/. Accessed 14 Jan. 2024.

Electric Cereal. "A Conversation with Don DeLillo and Jonathan Franzen." *YouTube*, uploaded by @ElectricCereal42, 29 Nov. 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OJ_iDyzxxTE.

Hayes, Patrick. *The Oxford History of Life-Writing: Volume 7: Postwar to Contemporary, 1945-2020*. Oxford, 2022; online edn, Oxford Academic, 20 Jan.

2022. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198737339.001.0001. Accessed 18 Jan. 2024.

Heddendorf, David. “The Modesty of John Updike.” *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 116, no. 1, 2008, pp. 108–16. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27549939. Accessed 7 Apr. 2024.

Hutchinson, Stuart. “DeLillo’s ‘Libra’ and the Real.” *The Cambridge Quarterly*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2001, pp. 117–31. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42967857. Accessed 25 Jan. 2024.

Inglis, Fred. *A Short History of Celebrity*. Princeton University Press, *Princeton & Oxford*, 2010. Print.

Italie, Hillel. "Don DeLillo receiving honorary National Book Award." 2 Sept. 2015, https://web.archive.org/web/20150905215900/http://bigstory.ap.org/article/5b84cbfb0f7049edbad073ac92d97073/don-delillo-receiving-honorary-national-book-award. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.

Jaffe, Aaron. *Modernism and the Culture of Celebrity*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

Jensen, Bo Green. "The Triumph of Death." Translated by Jakob Schelander, 2003. Weekendavisen, Denmark, 13 Nov. 1998, http://perival.com/delillo/interview_jensen_1998.html. Accessed 27 Feb. 2024.

Kurylo, Bohdana. "Technologised consumer culture: The Adorno–Benjamin debate and the reverse side of politicisation." *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 2020, 20(4), 619-636, https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540518773819. Accessed 7 Mar. 2024.

LeClair, Thomas, and Don DeLillo. “An Interview with Don DeLillo.” *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 23, no. 1, 1982, pp. 19–31. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/1208140. Accessed 17 Mar. 2024.

Library of Congress. "Don DeLillo: 2013 National Book Festival." *YouTube*, uploaded by @loc, 31 Jan., 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AObZbCKlEc8. Accessed 1 May, 2024.

Library of Congress. "Don DeLillo: 2013 National Book Festival." *YouTube*, uploaded by @loc, 31 Jan. 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AObZbCKlEc8.

McCabe, Richard A. "Authorial Self-Presentation." *The Oxford Handbook of Edmund Spenser*, ed. by Richard A. McCabe. Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 246–82. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9938437103902959&site=eds-live. Accessed 28 Feb. 2024.

McLuhan, Marshall. *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. Produced by Jerome Agel. Gingko Press, 1967. Print.

Moran, Joe. “Don DeLillo and the Myth of the Author: Recluse.” *Journal of American Studies*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2000, pp. 137–52. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27556769. Accessed 27 Mar. 2024.

Nance, Kevin. "Living in dangerous times." *Chicago Tribune*, 12 Oct., 2012, https://www.chicagotribune.com/2012/10/12/living-in-dangerous-times/. Accessed 6 May, 2024.

National Book Foundation, The Editors of. "Don DeLillo." *National Book Foundation*, https://www.nationalbook.org/people/don-delillo/. Accessed 4 Feb. 2024.

North, Marcy L. "Early Modern Anonymity." *Oxford Handbook Topics in Literature* (online ed., Oxford Academic, 16 Dec. 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199935338.013.12. Accessed 3 Feb. 2024.

Osen, Diane. "A Conversation with Don DeLillo." Book of the Month club and the National Book Foundation, 24 July 1997, *Windows on the Writing of Life*. Retrieved from http://web.archive.org/web/20010108123200/http://www.publishersweekly.com/NBF/docs/wwl_curri_DeLillo.htm. Accessed 6. Feb. 2024.

Passaro, Vince. "Dangerous Don DeLillo." The New York Times, 19 May, 1991, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/03/16/lifetimes/del-v-dangerous.html?_r=1#:~:text=On%20one%20level%20this%20truth,shaped%20me%20as%20a%20man. Accessed 24 Feb. 2024.

Poirier, Richard. “The Importance of Thomas Pynchon.” *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1975, pp. 151–62. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/440705. Accessed 7 Apr. 2024.

Rabalais, Keyin. "A man in a room: an interview with Don Delillo." *New Orleans Review*, vol. 38, no. 1, June 2012, pp. 110+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A321463168/AONE?u=oregon_oweb&sid=sitemap&xid=256e7cf6. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.

Remnick, David. "Exile on Main Street: Don DeLillo's undisclosed underworld." *The New Yorker* (online ed.), 7 Sept. 1997,

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1997/09/15/exile-on-main-street-don-delillo-profile-remnick. Accessed 3 Feb. 2024.

Roach, Rebecca. *Literature and the Rise of the Interview*. First edition., Oxford University Press, 2018. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9949185752802959&site=eds-live.

Saunders, Max. *Self Impression: Life-Writing, Autobiografiction, and the Forms of Modern Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2010. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9937970563902959&site=eds-live.

Schmidt, Silke. "Life Writing Theory: Constructing Life, Claiming Authenticity." *(Re-)Framing the Arab/Muslim: Mediating Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Life Writing*, Transcript Verlag, 2014, pp. 47–136. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1xxs1s.5. Accessed 14 Jan. 2024.

Schneck, Peter. "Image Fictions: Literature, Television, and the End(s) of Irony." *Amerikastudien / American Studies*, vol. 46, no. 3, 2001, pp. 409–28. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41157666. Accessed 16 Mar. 2024.

Streitfeld, David. "Don DeLillo's Gloomy Muse: The PEN/Faulkner Winner & His Novels of Conspiracy." *Washington Post* 14 May 1992, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1992/05/14/don-delillos-gloomy-muse/5187a6b7-f1f4-4199-9c05-f0b78cc77777/. Accessed 4 Feb. 2024.

Szetela, Adam. "Fetishism and Form: Advertising and Ironic Distance in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*." *European Association for American Studies*, 13-2, 29 June 2018, http://journals.openedition.org/ejas/12950. Accessed 26 Feb. 2024.

Tempest, Kae. "'My first novel took thirty years to write' – Don DeLillo and Kae Tempest discuss novels, America, and the unwritable." *Pan Macmillan*, 2 Jan. 2022, https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/literary/don-delillo-and-kate-tempest-in-conversation. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.

Terrel, Ellen. "Production on the Sholes and Glidden Type-writer Began." *Library of Congress*, 19 Mar. 2015. https://guides.loc.gov/this-month-in-business-history/march/typewriter-production-began. Accessed 17 Mar. 2024.

The John Adams Institute. "Don DeLillo on Underworld - The John Adams Institute." *YouTube*, uploaded by @TheJohnAdamsInstitute, 5 Jul. 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h01xhRxSJZ0.

Thomas, Glen. "History, Biography, and Narrative in Don DeLillo's *Libra*." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 43, no. 1, 1997, pp. 107–24. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/441866. Accessed 25 Jan. 2024.

Ulin, David. "Merging Myth and History." *Los Angeles Times*, 8 Oct. 1997, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1997-oct-08-ls-40336-story.html. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.

Veggian, Henry. *Understanding Don DeLillo*. The University of South Carolina Press, 2015. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9942952183902959&site=eds-live.

Wilson, Paul. "Don DeLillo: What I've Learned." *Esquire*, 17 June 2016, https://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/interviews/a10153/don-delillo-what-ive-learned/. Accessed 6 Feb. 2024.