

# White noise: true meaning to mundanity

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## **The true meaning to mundanity**

The absurd interests us. A class called “ Hitler Studies” would be sure to get a ton of students just to figure out what it is. The reason why we enjoy the strange so much is because we get bored of mundanity. That is until we take a closer look at it. The book “ White noise” provides many insightful ideas as to how people view themselves, their lives and how technology is invested in their lives. By delving deeper into these aspects, we can get a better understanding of what the quotes I’ve chosen follow the theme of true mundanity.

One of the more well-known running themes of the story is the fear of death, or as the book refers to it, white noise. One of the main characters, Babette, has a fear of death that she begins to take an experimental drug, called Dylar, to destroy or suppress her fear. Some people view fear as a way that our primal senses are still infecting and affecting us, even to this day. Don DeLillo explains it as “ Fear is self-awareness raised to a higher level.” (DeLillo, 229). In this case, the self-awareness is that she doesn’t want to face an end. It would not be that far of a logical leap to hypothesize that she had a fear of her previous marriage ending. Others in the novel treat death in equally telling ways. Jack fears it but is still willing to face it. Murray, with his strange analytical way of viewing things that are mundane, views death like a movie, constantly viewing it and trying to find its true meaning. Willie Mink says, paraphrased, that there is no death without fear. It even becomes possible to fear technology, just as we fear death.

Outside of death, the main way we are separated from the mundanity of our lives is the sudden realization of that very thing, we become self-aware to our lives. We have an event, be it the airborne toxic event in the book or a death of a loved one, that changes how we look at our lives or unearths information better left buried. To Jack, the airborne toxic event made his normal mundane life in the dust as tried to get revenge on someone that would never live up to his hatred. Technology is almost like a manmade organism that evolves as we feed it. Although not as deeply as the death front, *White Noise* does delve into the idea of how technology affects us as a group of people. As a follow-up from the previous paragraph, we have discussed how fear is your self-awareness but stronger. The quote I'll be building off of it " The greater the scientific advance, the more primitive the fear" (DeLillo 161). The sentences that preview this divulge that it builds up the fear as more and more inventions are created. The airborne toxic event is the best example of fearful technology. This is what causes Jack to basically have a timer for his death and it reveals how Babette is using a drug that is still being tested, both involving technology or a side effect from technology being abused. A quote that assists in the fear of technology, " You are the sum total of your data, nothing escapes that" (DeLillo 141), reinforces that people grow to fear technology. Within our time, the idea of internet security has been a running theme in the news. We want to be secure of our history since it explains so much about us. What we choose to support or destroy also support the sum total of data. If at one point someone could merely download all we know, all we have consumed, all we have done, would they be the same as us? If that did happen, I think most

would be in both fear and awe of that. Technology is something extremely common to our lives, so much that even though it is awe-inspiring, it has become mundane. If we were able to take a step out of our lives and look at how much technology (in the current sense, meaning electronics) exists, it is impossible to imagine a life without it all. We are even capable of being confused from hearing a name of a tool we use or hear about daily. On the side of death, technology has prolonged our lives and without them we'd die, both due to the loss of simplicity of life and our parasitism towards the technology. The final quote I will be addressing in regards to White Noise is “We began to marvel at our own ability to manufacture awe” (DeLillo 153). This quote references the citizens responding to the recent ufo sightings in their area and the stories they make from that news. This can become a callback to fear where humans greatest fear is that of the unknown, which is why we get more and more afraid of the advancement of technology. Humans can create anything from any information they consume. Perhaps that is how we have survived so long on this world