

Most 4). the children
in their marriage



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Most post modern literature writers delve into highlighting the change that comes with modernism more especially in the family level and Delillo is not left behind.

In his book "White Noise", he creates a post modern family comprising of Jack Gladney the protagonist in the story, his wife Babette, and four children. Jack is a professor of Hitler studies at The College on The Hill and together with his family lives in the small town of Blacksmith. The story develops with an emergence of several members of the fragmented family coming up, that is spouses as well as children. His is not like any ordinary family because of its composition.

It is so fragmented such that there seems to exist no biological connection among all the family members. Their immersion into consumerism put them in a compromising situation such that family values are generally overtaken by it. Jack's is a fragmented nuclear family with father, mother, and children from different mothers and fathers. The family therefore can be said to be greatly impacted by modernity by this virtue. Traditionally, a family was made up of a trio, that is, the father, the mother and children, both were to be biologically attached to each other, for instance, the children were to be belonging to both the father and the mother. But in the case of White Noise, Delillo brings to our attention a fragmented family seamed together from different marriages.

The dignity of the family has been eroded and corrupted, it has been put to a point of questioning whether the family is upholding the values expected of it or not, that is, the modern society in a conservative society. A question

comes up whether this is the definition of family by the modern society and whether this is the way to go? Whether the children are comfortably brought up getting the love and attention expected from their parents and whether the parents are giving their children the best of their love and attention and care. The family set up is considered corrupted. A disjointed modern nuclear family in "White Noise" by Don DeLillo. No one seems to care of the number of times one gets married, this is an example of how modernity has greatly impacted the level of family ties. The family has children arising from different marriages (DeLillo, 4). The children in their marriage have got different fathers and mothers yet all of them are living together as a nuclear family but the fact that remains is that there is no biological link that unites all the children and the parents in the story.

It does not matter anymore how many fathers or mothers a child can have as long as the child gets good care and attention which is the kind of message that the parents of the four children from different marriages are passing across. In regard to the context, DeLillo has covered the American culture, the family has lost focus, and it is engulfed in the confusion of 'white noise'. It is completely immersed in the material things of the world characterized by modern consumerism.

The consumerist culture has taken over from common respect for God and also for man and the family institution. The supermarket is the place where the family derives joy from and shopping gives it inner peace, therefore the supermarket has taken the role of the religious beliefs. Consumerism, which is characterized with technology and the economic factors, is the driving force behind the change of family values. Shopping gives Jack a kind of

satisfaction that he gets from nowhere else, it rekindles the importance and appreciation for other family members especially the children (Delillo 83) Love among the family members is not the way it is naturally expected to be, not that there is no love, but when it is expressed, it has got strings attached to it. For instance we see in Jack's mind, " I wanted to be near the children, watch them sleep. Watching children sleep makes me feel devout, part of a spiritual system. It is the closest I can come to God.

If there is a secular equivalent of standing in a great spared cathedral with marble pillars and streams of mystical light slanting through two-tier Gothic windows, it would be watching children"(Delillo 36) he gets attached to the children not because it comes naturally out of love for them but rather because it makes him feel part of a spiritual system and close to God. The society in the text is a reflection of the American Popular culture. Education seemingly is an indicator of success in this society, and school is where people go to get education with which the future certainly is expected to be successful. Money is what gives people satisfaction and this is seen clearly when Jack tells Babette that " they have grown comfortable with the money" (Delillo 6) and that ' they genuinely believe entitled to it. This kind of conviction gives them a rude kind of thinking. This makes wealth to be the ultimate reason for their happiness and that their children were part of their assets, which is a characteristic of a consumerist society. Children after some time and as the plot grows, come to hold an important role in the family, specifically in the family of Jack.

. After getting knowledgeable, they help their father in making major decisions an example is seen when they are in their shopping spree and they

help in making major family decisions (Delillo 83). When they visit the supermarket together to shop, this is the time that they can share as a family and by virtue that the children are given the chance to make decisions that encompass the family interest shows that children are now considered to be part of the decision making process. When Babette engages in the consumption of a drug called Dylar, it is Denise their daughter who unearths the secret. She goes ahead and goes through the physician prescription and finds that the drug is not listed. His father thus describes her as her " as wasteful or dangerous, and is forced to defend his wife against his stepdaughter, like a boy might defend his sister against parental chastisement "(Delillo 7).. This means that children as seen through Denise are more watchful and keen of all that is happening around them.

Knowledge in the family is considered a breakthrough into independent thinking. When Jack and his son Heinrich argue about whether there exist rain on the car windscreen, Heinrich tends to differ from his father's school of thought. While Jack feels that whatever one sees is privileged and is due to the use of senses, Heinrich thinks that the media plays a major role in the way in which people should perceive things (Delillo 23). Heinrich seems to dismiss the use of the senses but rather advocates for logic, he says " Our senses? Our senses are wrong a lot more often than they're right. . . . Don't you know about all those theorems that say nothing is what it seems? There's no past, present or future outside our own mind.

The so-called laws of motion are a big hoax. Even sound can trick the mind. .

. . . What good is my truth? My truth means nothing” (Delillo, 23), yet his father tends to believe in what he sees, the role of knowledge in the family is therefore shown to be a source of enlightenment and independent thinking by all the members of the family. Overly information is seen to be harmful, it leads to misinformation. With a lot of information, things can easily be confused. During the shopping spree, all the family members seem to be overly excited with the so many commodities that are in different brands and even shop in excess. The whole book brings out the impact of the popular culture which is seen to have taken toll of the happenings throughout the book.

Over relying on information gotten from other characters whether true or false is taken seriously by the other characters. The family and society is fully immersed in consumerism and its effects loom till the end, as they continue shopping (Delillo310) life continues and the issue of death still remains. All family members in their own independent ways are depicted differently, the parents never wanted to believe in the truth and the children a whole lot of new people with different thinking rationales.

Works Cited

Delillo, Don. “ White Noise”. United States. Viking Adult. 1984