

The Fragmented Self in a Hyperreal Society: Identity Crisis in Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*

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ABSTRACT:

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This article examines the representation of self-fragmentation in Don DeLillo's *Point Omega* following the theoretical frameworks of Baudrillard's simulacra and the hyperreal, alongside Jameson's late capitalism. The article argues that the characters' fractured selves reflect a larger postmodern condition, where reality is substituted by the hyperreal governed by ideological dominance. The analysis deepens our insight on how contemporary fiction addresses issues of selfhood and reality.

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I -Introduction

Being one of the most prominent contemporary American writers, Don DeLillo has established a firm ground for postmodern ideas in literature. His writings explore a profound examination of postmodern themes like identity fragmentation, the nature of reality and truth, ideological power, among many others, in a culture that is significantly governed by media, technology, and capitalism. DeLillo's style of writing, which is distinguishably complicated, reflects the complexity and the confusion of the postmodern society. His style of writing does not prevail over the content he conveys. In fact, DeLillo expresses intense ideas and information as fiction, yet they function as a fundamental representation of the theoretical frameworks voicing the American society, in particular, and the postmodern culture in general.

Ranging from his response to terrorism in *Falling Man*, to exploring the theme of capitalism in *Cosmopolis*, to his stimulating expression of the consumer society in *White Noise*, among many other themes in many other works, DeLillo's fiction reveals the way humans' experience has not only changed, but it's drastically shaped by a system of beliefs dominated by power. *Point Omega* is not different from the previously mentioned novels or other DeLillo's works. Though it is short in pages, the novella is condensed with meaning that mirrors a postmodern state of individuals, ideological system, and by extension an entire culture.

This study examines how Don DeLillo's *Point Omega* displays the fragmentation of the self, and by extension the loss of the self, in a postmodern society through the representation of its characters. Reading the novella through applying the concept of Baudrillard's Simulacra and Jameson's late capitalism will argue that the characters' fragmented-self echoes the fragmentation of the postmodern condition, which is the primordial factor of creating a social and a personal identity crisis.

Point Omega centers itself around inquisitive questions that are embedded in the story's themes carried out by its characters and settings. The novella revolves mainly around four characters: the unknown man in the gallery, Jim Finley, Richard Elster, and his daughter, Jessie. However, most of the story's events are related to the intellectual and former war strategist, Richard Elster. Due to his experience in his field and to the accumulated information he acquired working with the government, Jim Finley- a film maker- tries to convince him to film his experience in a "one continuous take" (DeLillo 23). The plot does not follow a chronological line of events, as the story shifts in time and place, from

the scenes of the gallery in New York and the events occurring in the desert of California. The novella scrutinizes, not only, political themes especially with regard to the Iraq war, it dives deep into the mind of an intellectual chosen to structure the American war, exhibiting a self-fragmentation throughout the story as the analysis will argue in this study.

A significant deal of material has been published discussing the novel, which on its own right has established a ground for different readings and interpretations. In her article entitled “Welcome to the Desert of the Real: The Politics of Terror in Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*” (2018), Fatima Z. Bessedik provides an analysis of the novel through applying Lacan's theory and Žižek's theoretical concept of the “Real.” The article mainly discusses the idea of the Real and the way it is related to terror in the novel. Relying on theory, Bessedik argues that in order to fetch for the Real, characters should go through terror, for it is the way to find the it. Although the study highlights the idea of the postmodern dependence on the screen being the referent of the real, the analysis is carried primarily through a Lacanian lens. To sustain this, the writer maintains that “Lacan's definition of the Real as the ‘essential object which isn't an object any longer’ may be convincingly suitable in the context of the character's meditation of the prolonged scene” (24). This present article focuses on the fragmented self that is led by a fragmented reality in postmodern parameters. The Real referred to in the aforementioned study operates within the Lacanian psychoanalysis, while the Real alluded to in postmodernism is fundamentally different as it pursues a cultural condition.

Other studies conducted on *Point Omega* discussed ideas from different perspectives. In the article “War as Haiku: The Politics of Don DeLillo's Late Style” (2016), Matthew Shipe examines the novel from a completely different stance. The scholar connects Edward Said's notion of “late style” to the political implications of the novel mainly the 9/11 terror and the War on Iraq, as he argues that “*Point Omega* most fully illuminates the political implications that are contained within DeLillo's late style” (9). Similarly, another article ““Too [M]any [G]oddamn [E]choes’: Historicizing the Iraq War in Don DeLillo's *Point Omega*” (2014) scrutinizes the novella from a political perspective deducing a comparative historical study with DeLillo's novel *Underworld*. The article, referring to *Underworld*, creates an analogous reading arguing that both works comprise similar aesthetic techniques and thematic aspects to allude to two wars: the Iraq War in *Point Omega* and the Cold War in *Underworld*. Eve, in this article, argues that through this parallelism one can deduce DeLillo's political rationale “that a nostalgia for strong, state-driven conflict is to blame” (586).

The aforementioned scholarly examinations, among various studies, investigate DeLillo's works focusing on the political implications they convey with a particular emphasis on the writer's involvement with the 9/11 event. Additionally, the examinations have indeed spotlighted the fractured identity in postmodern contexts; however, this article puts forward an argument centering on identity crisis in a hyperreal society contending that the awareness of this hyperreality fails in setting individuals free from the simulated images that construct their world and adds to their self-crisis. To put it simply, despite the individual's conscious awareness of the hyperreal atmosphere they live in, a true liberation to witness authentic experiences appear impossible in a postmodern culture.

II – The Liminal Observer: Simulacra and the Suspension of Meaning in *Point Omega's* Gallery Scene:

The fragmented identity of fictional characters that, in fact, represents a fragmented self in the real world is a key concept in the postmodern readings of texts. This fragmentation is the outcome of the blurred reality subjects are living in an era where the real and the unreal are mingled and melted together. One of the foremost philosophers and theorists analyzing the postmodern society and culture, Jean Baudrillard, explored this broad idea. Likewise, another leading theorist and critic in the ocean of postmodernism is Fredric Jameson, who shares similar ideas and hypotheses with regard to the fragmented self, reality, and social identity.

Baudrillard's famous theoretical concepts of simulacra and simulation would help reading the text and explaining the idea of the self-fragmentation and its factors in a contemporary setting. The primary suggestion of this theory is that the disparity between reality and its representation is almost unattainable. Baudrillard contends that the postmodern society has substituted reality and genuineness by representations creating a mediated world structured by simulations and simulacra. The former concept is "the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal" (Baudrillard 1), while the latter concept indicates a sign or a representation with or without a referent origin; in fact, "the simulacrum is never what hides the truth - it is truth that hides the fact that there is none. The simulacrum is true" (1). To put it simply, simulation is not simply a representation or a misrepresentation of something real; it is actually the creation or the generation of a real, which does not exist or has no origin to refer.

Baudrillard has drawn on this idea to highlight the state of reality in postmodern societies lacking truth or any reference to the real and being detached

from authentic experiences through creating signs and situations that are merely representations of illusions. The opening as well as the closure of the novella best embody Baudrillard's ideas. DeLillo dedicates significant parts of the story to describe the installation of "24-Hour Psycho", which is a piece of art recreating or regenerating Hitchcock's film *Psycho*. This description, where the unknown man's prolonged contemplation of the slowed-down film, manifests the creation of a representation from a fictional film as a reference to reality. In fact, establishing a scene out of an already work of fiction and deeming it as a reality translates the lack of truth and the act of fetching for it by the unknown man. In a moment of observation, the man appears to be in an operation of linking the fictional to the real, as he "began to think of one thing's relationship to another. This film had the same relationship to the original movie that the original movie had to real lived experience. This was the departure from the departure. The original movie was fiction, this was real" (DeLillo 18). Therefore, the fact of being in the gallery for so long does not reflect the mere observation of the piece of art, but rather a search for meaning, for the real that does not seem to make sense in the outer world.

The implementation of such a scene in the story demonstrates how simulation has become more real than the real itself. In another utterance, the narrator reveals what the man thinks of what lies in front of him, "it felt real, the pace was paradoxically real, bodies moving musically, barely moving, twelve-tone, things barely happening, cause and effect so drastically drawn apart that it seemed real to him, the way all the things in the physical world that we don't understand are said to be real" (DeLillo 19). The assertion of the character that the movie's reproduction is the real illustrates the notion of Baudrillard's hyperreality. The aforementioned quote further strengthens the idea that the man stands in the gallery neither because he likes the piece of art, nor because he has time to spend observing it, it is rather an attempt to find a meaning to his surroundings.

In point of fact, we may all relate to the man's experience. The contemporary world is saturated with simulations that we perceive everywhere, through different media filters like TV, social media feeds, advertisements amongst many others. We tend to rely on these means to search for news, to know about the world's politics, economy, ecology etc.; however, the tendency to trust and believe in the media presented to the world is significantly presumed. Actually, media has become a reference to what occurs in the world, people use the news from media as proofs and allusions to back up their logic deeming it the "Real." In line with

this Baudrillard contends "...we are in a logic of simulation, which no longer has anything to do with a logic of facts and an order of reason" (Baudrillard 17). Hence, for Baudrillard, the individual experiences no meaning or truth in a postmodern culture; things are simply copies of copies.

With relation to the aforementioned line of thought, Fredric Jameson, in his grand book *Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), highlights the idea of representation and its relation to identity in a postmodern culture. Jameson argues that one of the most significant effects of late capitalism is the emergence of a fragmented identity with no genuine experience, but a sheer production of simulacrum having no original reference. In fact, the broad notion of postmodernism itself is delineated as "what you have when the modernization process is complete and nature is gone for good. It is a more fully human world than the older one, but one in which 'culture' has become a veritable 'second nature'" (Jameson ix). Hence, the idea of representation, according to the theorist, is a policy to generate images and signs as a mode of cultural and economic manufacture. In this conception, Jameson argues "...in postmodern culture, 'culture' has become a product in its own right; the market has become a substitute for itself and fully as much a commodity as any of the items it includes within itself" (x). The concept of representation in postmodern societies is highly related to the self-formation and by extension to the self-fragmentation, as it exhibits the source of this identity loss being accommodated due to late capitalism and a consumerist style to which subjects are prone.

As alluded to earlier, the man in the opening and the ending scene in the novel expressively reflects a postmodern subject in quest for an answer. Having a close reading to this part of events and relating it to Jameson's idea of the modification of the past would provide an insightful interpretation to the loss of the self in the midst of layers of simulations. Jameson contends that:

The new spatial logic of the simulacrum can now be expected to have a momentous effect on what used to be historical time. The past is thereby itself modified: what was once, in the historical novel as Lukàcs defines it, the organic genealogy of the bourgeois collective project—what is still [...]—has meanwhile itself become a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum [...]. In faithful conformity to poststructuralist linguistic theory, the past as "referent" finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced, altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts. (18)

In this passage, Jameson builds on Baudrillard's ideas of representations. Jameson bringing up the disappearance of the past further points the idea of the loss of

reference, as a point of reality. According to him, the past has faded as we no longer experience history in a linear traditional way, instead we learn about history through a collection of images and reproductions, which are generally presented via media feeds. Therefore, due to this disconnection between the past and the present, history is lost and the meaning of the past has vanished. Consequently, when the past is not understood, people would be misplaced in the postmodern present, attempting persistently to look for an answer to the Real in the midst of a realm of copies. This explains the scene of the unknown man in the gallery spending much time there, relinquishing his actual life in the outer world, in fact, "there was nowhere else he wanted to be, dark against this wall" (DeLillo 18).

As a final point, the gallery in the novel is open to be interpreted both as a mirror and as a space of escape from the world. The unknown man seems to come to a recognition of himself in front of what he is exposed to in the gallery, starting to understand and to make sense of things and their relationship as "he began to think of one thing's relationship to another" (DeLillo 18). This scene provides the idea that the man has opened his eyes on how to perceive his surrounding due to the slow motion of the exhibition. In fact, living in an accelerated moving society that is a significant trait of the postmodern life, one could fail to identify the sense of the objects and the subjects in their space. In the novel, the narrator affirms that "it takes close attention to see what is happening in front of you. it takes work, pious effort, to see what you are looking at. He was mesmerized by this, the depths that were possible in the slowing of motion, the things to see, the depths of things so easy to miss in the shallow habit of seeing" (18). Additionally, Baudrillard expresses that "we live in a world where there is more and more information, and less and less meaning" (79). The statement of Baudrillard infers that the amount of signs and images individuals come across persistently and that are of a significant rapidity influences their own conception. Therefore, the gallery, which could be deemed as a diminutive opposite world of the unknown man's external world, provides a floor for conceiving what the man is watching due to the concise slow information it delivers.

From another aspect, the gallery is the unknown man's outlet, for he finds refuge in "the slowing motion" far from the rapid pace of life in his real world. In fact, it is the place, which he does not want to quit, as he is constantly present in the gallery. The narrator illustrates this idea stating questioning whether "[he would] walk out into the street forgetting who he was and where he lived, after twenty-four hours straight... or even under the current hours, if the run was

extended and he kept coming, five, six, seven hours a day, week after week, would it be possible for him to live in the world? Did he want to? Where was it, the world?" (17-18). The narrator, similarly to the unknown character, shows desperate quest for meaning that appears absent elsewhere, exhibiting acute skepticism about the exterior world of the man.

III -Richard Elster's Fragmented Self and Hyperreality in *Point Omega*:

As stated in the above section, Don DeLillo is an eminent writer, who does not merely write fiction to show, but also and more importantly, his writings align perfectly with the theoretical frameworks on the postmodern condition. Most of his writings shed light on the individual's state in a world that is saturated with mass media, technology, consumerist policies and the loss of meaning and self, in the postmodern society. *Point Omega* is not an exception of such writings. Indeed, the novel displays more than a narrative; it triggers a reflection on the contemporary life with a stress on the absence of sense and communication, time lapse, and self-loss. This section examines how the main character, Richard Elster, embodies the fragmentation of self and the loss of meaning in a postmodern condition as theorized by Baudrillard and Foucault.

Richard Elster, who is a former war intellectual and strategist, epitomizes the postmodern individual, demonstrating a crisis of identity that is typically caused by the postmodern condition. Elster's professional character collides with his self after he was cleared from his job. As a war plotter, "he sat a table in a secure conference room with the strategic planners and military analysts. He was there to conceptualize, his words, in quotes, to apply overarching ideas and principles to such matters as troop deployment and counterinsurgency" (DeLillo 21-22). His sensitive job provided him with a high intellectual rank in society dealing with ideology mainly speaking. Hence, the role of a war planner is actually detached from reality and from the war soil, which has created an inner fracture in Elster because what is shaped as an intellectual framework turns out to be completely different from the tangible truth in Iraq as Elster puts "I'll tell you this much. War creates a closed world and not only for those in combat but for the plotters, the strategists. Except their war is acronyms, projections, contingencies, methodologies" (30). Therefore, being part of conceptualizing the war for a long period, for it was his ultimate job, has created a clash for Elster between what is real and what has ideologically been constructed. The character has realized that his role as a strategist lies merely in utilizing abstract concepts to rationalize the violence of a war only to end up with results that have no reference to what he participated in structuring, as he says, "I still want a war" (32). This utterance

quoted calls into question whether what took place on the actual territory of Iraq was a different war from what a war strategist would want it to be as Elster proclaims. Thus, Elster in this instance incarnates the detachment and disassociation between the abstract and the real in postmodern societies. What is more, later on in the story, we discover that Elster ironically fears violence saying that “violence freezes my blood” (49); lending credibility to the reasoning that people generating models of realities are distant and detached from the actual events taking place on real soil.

The instance of the war in its actual and ideological form illustrates a disturbing truth about the postmodern society leading to a precarious impact on individuals. In fact, Elster represents the group of people, who creates and shapes reality through language, as he refers to the realm of abstraction ‘acronyms, projections etc.), and media. To illustrate, in a conversation between Elster and Finely, Elster declares, “There were times when no map existed to match the reality we were trying to create” (30) and when Finely asks “what reality?” (30), Elster’s reply appears quite intriguing. He answers,

This is something we do with every eyeblink. Human perception is a saga of created reality. But we were devising entities beyond the agreed-upon limits of recognition or interpretation. Lying is necessary. The state has to lie. There is no lie in war or in preparation for war that cannot be defended. We went beyond this. We tried to create new realities overnight, careful sets of words that resemble advertising slogans in memorability and repeatability. These were words that would yield pictures eventually and then become three-dimensional. The reality stands, it walks, it squats. Except when it doesn’t. (31)

The reply shows that generating the truth or the real, which is monopolized by the group he works with, through hyperreal instruments such as words and projections, produces a disparity and a split between those who conceptualize and those who put into practice and undergo the consequences. Hence, this split fractures the ability of individuals to sustain steady linkage to reality knowing that reality is unstable oscillating between interests and power. When Elster declares, “human perception is a saga of created reality,” an interpretation suggests that there is no authentic reality, instead there exists a fabricated reality that one cannot fully trust. This untrusted reality, thus, generates a deep questioning about the human presence in this postmodern world. Additionally, if a world were to be built upon “careful sets of words” no solid ground would be established in order to form any sort of identity; be it professional, personal, collective etc. Consequently, a reality that is based on disconcerted set of words that are used to

shape reality mainly to serve the benefits of those who generate it, results in producing a fragmentation of identity because being in a setting where reality itself is not stable and steady, inevitably leads to a formation of a self that lacks coherency and consistency.

Accordingly, Michel Foucault addressed this condition in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977). Foucault proclaims, “We should admit rather that power produces knowledge” (27), it is not that knowledge is used to serve power, or that its employment is useful. In fact, power and knowledge interconnect; meaning, there exist no power relations without a corresponding field of knowledge, and similarly there is no unleashed knowledge prevailing without forming power relations (27). Foucault’s idea elucidates the context of the war in the novel in the sense that the knowledge Elster’s group provides to the world appears the most powerful tool to sustain supremacy over the Iraqi soil. However, this reality governing the policies in the postmodern world has brought about a confusion and a sense of loss to Elster, for he has come to grasp after his retirement that his whole life working for the government was a deception as he states, “that’s what I was there for, to give them words and meanings” (DeLillo 32). He realizes that his intellectual contributions whether they were taken into account or not were a surplus, since he has only contributed to building knowledge that has helped in assisting political ends. This realization drives Elster to isolate himself in the desert to reassess the meaning of his life, which displays that he has lost himself running after a career the objectives of which seem uncertain to him. Hence, someone feels the urge to find something, when they recognize they have lost it. Moreover, the timing of this realization is very significant since Elster has not questioned the meaning of his life throughout his career period, which alludes to the idea that when being under the system, individuals are prone to subjectification that is an operation to fashion people or individuals as subjects.

Taking the preceding idea a step further and in compliance with Foucault’s theorization, Elster embodies both implications of ‘subjectivation’ that appeared in the works of Foucault. In his essay “The Subject and Power,” the theorist suggests two meanings of being a subject rather than a mere individual in society. Before alluding to these meanings, an elucidation of the subject’s significance is required. The conception of the word “subject” is fundamental to Foucault, as he developed an intricate and advanced comprehension of the term. Regardless of the fact whether there is a difference between individual and person (since there

is actually a distinction between both terms as exemplified¹), Foucault refers to Man, as a human being, transforming into a subject when they occupy a position in society either as power performers or power executors. In his words, "There are two meanings of the word 'subject': subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to" ("Power" 781). In the novel, Elster illustrates both facets of the conception of "subject." First, he was "subject to someone else by control" because of his function as a war strategist in a body that is ruled by the government. Regardless of his intellectual capacity, the ultimate role of Elster is to serve a system that has eventual goals to be attained either by complying with its employees or not, as Finely reports "with a proud longing for the early weeks and months, before he began to understand that he was occupying an empty seat" (DeLillo 30). This system commands more power than Elster does. Thus, he is a subject produced by a power that governs his intellectual competence and his professional self. Second, Elster is "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge," which appears to be self-built and self-supportive; however, it is not independent from the knowledge and intellectuality employed in and gained from his position. Hence, Elster's self-conception has been constructed with the considerable effect of the power ideology he has been connected to whether in a closed or distant way. To conclude this idea, the narrative demonstrates the unraveling of Elster's sense of self, which is spotlighted when he retreats to the desert after his retirement, since he is no longer part of an institution that has long helped shaping his own identity directly or indirectly as discussed above.

It is worth noting that Elster, being a war intellectual, serves the representation of Baudrillard's hyperreality in the novel. Elster contributes in forming a reality about the war that is fabricated, as he contends, "there were times when no map existed to match the reality we were trying to create" (DeLillo 30). The latter quote articulates Baudrillard's idea about simulation; the war is a mere representation of a nonexistent reality created through a group of concepts assembling a war strategy. The instance of creating a map for a war to take place best exemplifies the inverted relationship between reality and representation; this

¹ According to John A. Creaven, as notions: an individual is more related to society and a person is more connected to the private lives of humans. He states "...a certain juridical subordination of man to society is not to degrade his dignity as a person, since social ties cannot be in fundamental opposition to the exigencies of his nature. Social life and private life are not in contradiction: they are complementary. Social life serves personal ends and personal life has a social end" (5).

relationship has been deconstructed in postmodernism. To be specific, the traditional mode of this relationship is to create maps in order to represent real regions; therefore, the region preceded the creation of the map. However, this relationship is reversed in the postmodern setting, which typifies Baudrillard's assertion that "the territory no longer precedes the map, nor does it survive it. It is nevertheless the map that precedes the territory-precession of simulacra" (Baudrillard 2). Thus, Elster's work, through abstractions, has supported the construction of a shaped concrete reality of the war. This creation of the simulation is the core of the notion of hyperreality, where representations precede reality resulting in a distrust of what to believe as true. In fact, the illustration of the war provides a wider horizon to look into how reality can be generated; through concepts and strategies, people like Elster are able to shape/create realities that have no reference in the real world making people believe in simulations and models that precede the real. Consequently, this not only exposes the way truths are built to accomplish targeted objectives, but also it shows how deeply it influences individuals creating an identity loss, as it is the case for Elster when he moves to the desert as the story progresses.

To develop the idea of the desert further, the story presents the desert as a symbolized setting to assist with Elster's self-quest after its loss amid simulations and deceptive representations. The story juxtaposes the world, which is saturated with media and technology and that is characterized by an accelerated lifestyle, with the entirely different world of the desert that is free of simulations and where time and space stretch with no haste. After his retirement, Elster opts for settling down in the desert "out beyond cities and scattered towns" (Delillo21) because it represents the contrast of the hyperreal world he used to live in. Describing the choice of Elster to live in the desert, Finely adds "News and Traffic. Sports and Weather. These were his acid terms for the life he'd left behind, more than two years of living with the tight minds that made the war. It was all background noise, he [Elster] said, waving a hand" (21). The quote displays that Elster not only chose to change his place of living, but he decided on leaving behind a life that was full of disappointment aspiring to find an identity that resonates with his inner. In order to pursue this journey, Elster makes it evident that time is of utmost importance to contemplate and comprehend the world surrounding us. In the story, Finely reports how Elster feels about time as he puts "time falling away. That's what I feel here... time becoming slowly older. Enormously old. Not day by day. This is deep time, epochal time. Our lives receding into the long past" (69). This quote shows how Elster longs to a past, to a very far past "the

Pleistocene,” which is a raw period that marked humans appearance, displaying a frustration and discontent with the life he had in New York, in which reality, as Elster deduced, is highly constructed and is deeply fabricated. In fact, yearning for the past reveals Elster's desire to reconnect to an essentially authentic life where human experiences are first underwent with no reshaping or reconstructing.

In spite of that, worth mentioning is that the novel sets forth two possibilities in presenting the desert as a symbolic landscape. While it is the case that the desert stands in as the opposition of the hyperreal; enabling Elster to contemplate and escape the accelerated world he relatively participated in building, it also puts forward a place of confrontation for the character. In fact, searching for a genuine reality that would engender an authentic self after being exposed to the inevitable simulations, appear virtually unachievable. In other words, the absence of the hyperreal models that have long shaped Elster's identity establishes emptiness at the heart of his inner, which would create an additional identity crisis, as he attempts to find new references to rely upon in order to fill that void. This ambivalence designed by DeLillo reinforces the idea that individuals in postmodern societies have no escape from the systems of simulations and unauthentic truths; there is no outside world where we can refuge to comprehend our essence and realities in life. This idea is shaped in the disappearance of Elster's daughter, Jessie, in the desert, which implies that fleeing a hyperreal life does not prevent the experience of loss and enormous cost. Therefore, the symbol of the desert sheds light on the likelihood of finding meaning and authentic selves in a postmodern condition.

IV -Conclusion:

Don DeLillo's *Point Omega* functions as a platform for exploring the self-fragmentation in a postmodern society that is characterized by the hyperreal, which predominantly substitutes the real. Through the character, Richard Elster, the narrative exposes an identity crisis displaying the way individuals disconnect with actual realities by being part of constructing and creating truths that are merely simulations. This crisis is further emphasized with Elster's retreat to the desert, where he seeks meaning through calmness and contemplation only to find himself struggling with an inner turmoil triggered by the absence of familiar simulations that molded his identity for a lifetime. Likewise, the gallery scene in the novel embraces the idea that postmodern individuals desperately seek meaning in what surrounds them, as it is the case for the unknown man. Caught up in folds of representations, the unknown man appears to appreciate the slowed down projection, which gives him the possibility to understand what is presented

to him as opposed to the accelerated pace of life the man lives. The characters best epitomize Baudrillard's theory of simulacra demonstrating that simulations and representations have supplanted the real and the authentic. In addition, Jameson's idea of late capitalism offers a critical lens for the analysis of how identity is fragmented and even lost due to the effects of late capitalism that grants nothing but signs and models with no genuine reference; thus the self in postmodern societies is undermined by culture manufacturing. As a final note, *Point Omega* invites readers to consider whether there is a real redemption from a hyperreal world and whether escaping from a world built upon representations is possible in order to live authentic experiences.

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