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**POLITICS OF CONSPIRACY AND PARANOIA:  
DISSEMINATION OF POWER AND RESISTANCE  
IN DON DELILLO'S *THE NAMES*, *MAO II* AND  
*UNDERWORLD***

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## ÖZET

### Doktora Tezi

Politics of Conspiracy and Paranoia: Dissemination of Power and Resistance in  
Don DeLillo's *The Names*, *Mao II* and *Underworld*

Mehmet BÜYÜKTUNCAY

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Don DeLillo romanları temel olarak çağdaş Amerika'daki toplumsal, politik ve kültürel bağlamı çeşitli ilgili kurumlara da atıfta bulunarak resmeder. Bu nedenle geç dönem kapitalizminin farklı veçheleriyle temsili onun yapıtlarının konu bakımından ayrılmaz bir parçasını oluşturur. DeLillo'nun 1980'lerden itibaren yazdığı romanlar üretim ve kültür endüstrileri özelinde somutlaşan kapitalist aygıtın işleyişini post-Fordcu toplumdaki iktidar yapılanması ve tahakküm tasarımı esaslarına vurgu yaparak gerçekçi bir şekilde yansıtır. Bu tezin temel amacı, DeLillo'nun *The Names* (1982), *Mao II* (1991), *Underworld* (1997) adlı romanlarında yansıtıldığı biçimiyle, iktidar yapıları paralelinde kültürel ve politik tahakküm oluşumunu incelemek ve bunun yanı sıra direniş örüntülerini irdelemektir. Bu birincil hedefe esas olarak hem kapitalizmin kültürel biçimlerinde hem de küresel sermaye ağlarında mevcut olan iktidar yapılanışını göz önünde bulundurmak suretiyle ulaşılabacaktır.

Bu çalışmanın bir diğer odağı da direniş örüntülerinin gücünü aydınlatmak amacıyla DeLillo romanlarındaki komplo ve paranoya dinamiklerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. DeLillo romanlarındaki paranoyak spekülasyon ve komplocu yorum politikalarının kullanımı mevcut toplumsal iktidarın uygulanışı ve yayılımında etkin olan yönetimsel mekanizmalar ile egemen kültürel direktiflerin değerlendirilmesi için eleştirel bir çerçeve sunar. Buna ek olarak, çeşitli Marksist kültürel ve toplumsal eleştiri kuramlarını da hesaba katmak suretiyle, bu tez çağdaş Amerikan toplumundaki farklı iktidar ve direniş stratejilerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Post-Marksist kuramlar bu bakımdan çağdaş toplumsal çatışmaları ve iktidar-direniş ilişkilerini konumlandırmakta faydalı bulunmuştur. Ayrıca bu çalışmadaki diğer önemli bir yaklaşım tarzı da post-Marksist eleştiri ile komplocu ve paranoyak düşünüşü birbirine eklemek yönündedir. Böylesi bir yöntem birbiri içine geçmiş iktidar ve direniş ilişkilerini irdelemeye katkısı bakımından DeLillo romanlarındaki "paranoya kültürü"nü incelenmesinde özellikle isabetli

**görülmektedir. Bu çalışma temelde DeLillo'nun romanlarında iktidar ve direniş örüntülerinin ağ biçiminde yapılandığını ve de geç kapitalist kültürel tahakküm mekanizmaları ile uluslararası iş ekonomisinin sivil toplum ve özerk birey aleyhine işlemekte olan esas komplonun gerçek faileri olduğunu savlamaktadır.**

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İktidar ve Direniş Stratejileri, Tahakküm, Yayılım, Ağ, Geç Kapitalizm, Komplo ve Paranoya.

## **ABSTRACT**

**Doctoral Thesis**

**Politics of Conspiracy and Paranoia: Dissemination of Power and Resistance in**

**Don DeLillo's *The Names*, *Mao II* and *Underworld***

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**American Culture and Literature Program**

**Don DeLillo's canon of novels mainly portrays the social, political and cultural context in contemporary America with reference to various institutions. In consequence, representations of late capitalism, with its multifarious facets, have thematically been an integral part of his fiction. His novels, following from the 1980s, truly reflect the implementations of the capitalist apparatus, namely the production and culture industries, touching upon the organization of power and the design of hegemony in the post-Fordist society. The main purpose of this dissertation is to examine the power structures, the formation of cultural and political hegemony, and to investigate the resistance patterns as pictured in DeLillo's *The Names* (1982), *Mao II* (1991), *Underworld* (1997). This primary objective is basically met by taking into consideration the organization of power inscribed within both the capitalist cultural forms and global finance networks.**

**Another major focus of this study is to reveal the dynamics of conspiracy and paranoia in DeLillo's fiction in order to illuminate the power of resistance patterns. The use of the politics of paranoid speculation and conspiratorial views provides, in DeLillo's fiction, a critical framework for the evaluation of the administrative mechanisms and the dominant cultural imperatives that have influenced the exercise and distribution of social power. In addition, this dissertation, by taking into account various Marxist cultural and social theories, aims to present differing models of power and resistance strategies found in contemporary American society. Post-Marxist theories are, thus, helpful in positing the contemporary social conflicts and power-resistance relations. Furthermore, another significant approach in this study is conflating post-Marxist criticism with the dynamics of conspiratorial and paranoid lines of thought. Such a methodology is especially appropriate for analyzing the**

**“culture of paranoia” in Don DeLillo's novels in order to explicate the entanglements of power and resistance. Basically, this study argues that, in Don DeLillo’s novels, power and resistance patterns are organized in the forms of networks and that late capitalist cultural mechanisms and international business economy are the real sources of conspiratorial plots against the civil society and the autonomous individual.**

**Keywords:** Power and Resistance Strategies, Hegemony, Dissemination, Network, Late Capitalism, Conspiracy and Paranoia.

**POLITICS OF CONSPIRACY AND PARANOIA: DISSEMINATION OF  
POWER AND RESISTANCE IN DON DELILLO'S *THE NAMES*, *MAO II*  
AND *UNDERWORLD***

Yemin Metni	ii
DOKTORA TEZ SINAV TUTANAĞI	iii
ÖZET	iv
ABSTRACT	vi
CONTENTS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1 WESTERN MARXISM, AND CONCEPTIONS OF POWER AND RESISTANCE	11
1.1. ASPECTS OF POWER	11
1.2. NEO-MARXISM: ANTONIO GRAMSCI, FRANKFURT SCHOOL, AND THE FRENCH MARXISTS	14
1.3. BASIC PREMISES OF POST-STRUCTURALISM	44
1.4. MICHEL FOUCAULT: DISCIPLINARY POWER AND THE MICROPHYSICS OF POWER	46
1.5. JÜRGEN HABERMAS: PURPOSIVE-RATIONAL ACTION AND THE COLONIZATION OF THE LIFEWORLD	55
1.6. POST-MARXISM	60
1.6.1. <i>The New Times</i> Project: Globalization, Post-Fordism, and the Proliferation of the Sites of Social Antagonism	64
1.6.2. Fredric Jameson: Postmodernism as the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism	67
1.6.3. Postmodern Spatiality and Power Relations: Fredric Jameson, Henry Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau	73
1.6.4. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe: Hegemony and Diversity of Struggles	78



CHAPTER 2 CONSPIRACY THEORY AND PARANOIA IN RELATION TO POST-MARXISM	86
2.1. CONSPIRACY THEORIZING IN AMERICAN HISTORY	87
2.2. (SOCIAL) CONFLICTS IN LATE CAPITALISM AND LATE MODERNITY	92
2.2.1. Conspiracy Against Individuality	92
2.2.2. Causality and Ambiguity	94
2.2.3. Intelligence Agents and Corporate Agents	96
2.2.4. Difference and Heterogeneity	97
2.3. NETWORKS AND STRATEGIES OF POWER AND RESISTANCE	99
2.3.1. Paranoid Fear	99
2.3.2. Terrorism: Political Violence	107
2.3.3. The Risk Discourse	112
CHAPTER 3 <i>THE NAMES</i> : CORPORATE CAPITALISM AND THE CULTURE OF CONSPIRACY	120
3.1. POWER DISSEMINATION AND CORPORATE BODIES	126
3.2. PARANOIA AND RISK	133
3.3. TYPES OF RESISTANCE	145
3.3.1. The Cult	145
3.3.2. Spatiality, Postmodern Placelessness and Pastoral Mediation	148
3.3.3. Metaphysics and Language	154
CHAPTER 4 <i>MAO II</i> : CULTURAL HEGEMONY	161
4.1. CONSPIRACY THINKING AS IDEOLOGY CRITIQUE	162
4.1.1. Crowds, Power and Control	163
4.1.2. Image Politics, Media and Spectacle	177
4.2. INCORPORATING RESISTANCE	195
4.2.1. Writers and Terrorists	195
4.2.2. Terrorists and Media	208
CHAPTER 5 <i>UNDERWORLD</i> : AMERICAN PARANOIA, TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND SECRECY	214
5.1. SHIFTING OF POWER BALANCES FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE POST-COLD WAR ERA	217
5.1.1. From Secure to Insecure Paranoia	218
5.1.2. From Authentic to Artificial Identity Formation	238
5.1.3. From Domestic Consumption to an Economy of Excess	248
5. 2. CORPORATE NETWORKS AND TECHNOLOGICAL PARANOIA: WASTE MANAGEMENT AND WEAPON INDUSTRY	255
5. 3. RESISTANCE NETWORK FORMATIONS	272

5. 3. 1. New Social (Grassroots) Movements	272
5. 3. 2. The Quotidian and the Ritualistic Resistance: Art of the Everyday and the Politics of Space	281
5. 3.3. Avant-garde and Waste: Politics of Montage	289
CONCLUSION	296
WORKS CITED	314

## INTRODUCTION

Don DeLillo (1936- ) has been a versatile and a prolific novelist in American letters from the late 1960s to the present.<sup>1</sup> His novels mainly track down ‘what is American’ not with reference to individual characters but with reference to the ideology and institutions of the capitalist system. In other words, his writing is mostly concerned with the rapid changes seen in the cultural and political agenda of the United States in the last decades of the twentieth century. Some of the issues DeLillo’s novels revolve around are urban crowds, media politics, the power of language, and nuclear risks. Arnold Weinstein, in his book *Nobody’s Home*, enumerates the range of DeLillo’s subjects as “football, professional mathematics, Wall Street, rock music, pornography, terrorism, espionage, the college campus, the nuclear threat,” and induces that DeLillo mainly concentrates on such central themes as “fascism, espionage, communication, power in all its guises, and the antics of the individual subject in his encounter with a systemic world” (288). DeLillo’s special talent is his keen eye for analyzing different cultural, political, historical codifications; and his art metaphorically achieves reading what is beneath the surface codes to work out the underlying power forms. As Weinstein again notes, DeLillo, as a writer of mystery and as a systems novelist, penetrates into “unsuspected worlds behind the scenes of business and diplomacy, the academy and the cocktail party. In the tradition of Fenimore Cooper and Balzac, DeLillo is out to guide his readers into verbal precincts they have never entered before” so as to outplay the subterranean operations of systemic power (Weinstein 289).

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<sup>1</sup> The products of his long career of fiction writing are as follows: *Americana* (1971), *End Zone* (1972), *Great Jones Street* (1973), *Ratner’s Star* (1976), *Players* (1977), *Running Dog* (1978), *Amazons* (1980) (under the pseudonym Cleo Birdwell), *The Names* (1982), *White Noise* (1985), *Libra* (1988), *Mao II* (1991), *Underworld* (1997), *The Body Artist* (2001), *Cosmopolis* (2003), *Falling Man* (2007). Among these novels, *White Noise* is the winner of 1985 National Book Award and *Mao II* is the winner of 1992 PEN/Faulkner Award. *Underworld* was nominated for the 1997 National Book Award. *Libra* has been a best seller that won the Irish Times-Aer Lingus International Fiction Prize and was nominated for the American Book Award (Keesey 10). DeLillo has also written three plays, *The Engineer of Moonlight*, *The Day Room* (1986), *Valparaiso* (1999), *Love-Lies-Bleeding* (2005); and a screenplay, *Game 6* (2005).

DeLillo can also be regarded as a jongleur of narrative styles. Among the sub-genres that he incorporates in his fiction are the travel narratives and road stories. *Americana* and *Cosmopolis* are written similar to Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957). But instead of utilizing a directly opposing view against the dominant values of a capitalist consumption-oriented culture, such as the beatnik stance, DeLillo employs central characters that are byproducts of industrialization, technology and capitalist economy. For instance, the protagonists of *Americana* and *Cosmopolis* are upper-class executives, the former in the cinema industry and the latter in finance. Even though these characters do not overtly resist the capitalist system, nevertheless they are absorbed within it. Hence, they experience the drawbacks and impasses of the system by themselves. Consequently, DeLillo appropriates the travel narrative within the American tradition of bildungsroman where most of his characters are disillusioned by the self-alienating effects of the capitalist system, and to some extent go into a process of maturation.

Besides travel narratives, DeLillo's writing style has been greatly inspired by conspiracy narratives and spy fiction. According to Douglas Keeseey, the roots of DeLillo's conspiracy novels can be found in "the tradition of morally complex spy fiction by Joseph Conrad, Graham Greene, and John le Carré" (6). Furthermore, his fiction is also associated with the works of such contemporary American novelists as Margaret Atwood, William Burroughs, William Gibson, Joan Didion, Joseph Heller, Norman Mailer, and Thomas Pynchon who also use elements of conspiracy and paranoia in their novels in varying extents, as indicated by Timothy Melley in his *Empire of Conspiracy* (8). The techniques of blurred identities, "the dance of clowns" (Weinstein 146), webs of minute details, and political intrigues in DeLillo's densely interwoven patchwork of mysterious incidents, terrorist plots, and espionage pushes his style to those of Robert Coover and Philip Roth. They happen to be in the same league due to their peculiar employment of paranoid perspectives and political plots in their conspiracy novels. What is more, Steffen Hantke, in his work *Conspiracy and Paranoia in Contemporary American Fiction*, draws correspondences and stylistic resemblances between the DeLillo's and Joseph McElroy's fiction in terms of the paranoid mode of thinking and merger of conspiratorial circles. Together with *The Names*, *Mao II*, and *Underworld*, the

analyses of which constitute the main chapters of this study, the other DeLillo novels that have a touch of conspiratorial themes are *Players*, *Running Dog*, and *Libra*.

DeLillo's depiction of conspiratorial networks and secret services at work tend to project the similar systems and networks within the wheels of late capitalism in the United States. The subduing strategies, atomizing ideologies, oppressive social mechanisms, and cultural paranoia seen in DeLillo's conspiracy novels function to disclose the corresponding tools behind the capitalist ideology, corporate culture, and media networks. Hence, in his terror-stricken world of fear and awe, which is also saturated with consumption, full of mediated images, and exhausted with communicative practices, "[e]verything is concealed in symbolism, hidden by veils of mystery and layers of cultural material" (Salyer 39). Thus, conspiratorial writing and paranoid insight provide horizons of interpretation or "interpretive grids" which are "purposeful, [and] interconnecting" (Weinstein 292). Therefore, DeLillo's critical reading of cultural phenomena, cultural symbolisms, and historical events are intertwined with conspiracy narratives to reveal the hidden power relations and ideological formations.

Keeping in mind that the last decades of the twentieth century have witnessed the most rapid rate of development throughout the world in terms of communication systems, information technologies, weaponry, technological surveillance and etc., it is natural that Don DeLillo's novels also track down the consequences of such developments in American culture and politics. The appearance of these contemporary cultural phenomena and their inherently ideological role in the public sphere has been a remarkable subject of DeLillo's novels. Either regarded as postmodern or late modern, his novels aim at obtaining an all sweeping panorama of the period they are produced in. Market capitalism, consumption habits, media systems, and their ideological impacts are laid bare in his novels. Most of his works bear a tone of encyclopedic use of language on media criticism, misinformation, advertising technologies, communalizing power of the TV, and power imposition through mass consumption of goods and images. As Mark Osteen notes in his *American Magic and Dread*, DeLillo works like a ventriloquist in his texts; i.e., he "imitates the discourses he aims to deconstruct and thereby generates a dialogue with

those cultural forms,” thus his critical vision of the American landscape emerges “cunningly from the culture itself” (193). His fiction contemplates on landscapes of war and industrial technology, electronic transmission, mass media and consumer society, as in *End Zone*, *Great Jones Street*, *White Noise*, and *Cosmopolis*, in order to expose the operation of the market economy and the culture industry. How the dictates and ideological devices of market economy and global capitalism serve as legitimate forces of power and hegemony are of primary concern in his fiction.

Along with the depiction and criticism of the cultural phenomena within various aspects of everyday life, re-thematization of the historical facts is another supplementary vein in Don DeLillo’s novels. In addition to picturing the relevant cultural aura and mapping the cultural sites, he re-handles the widely known historical events, political affairs and the related political atmosphere of the period he picks up. He makes use of the real incidents in contemporary American political history, such as Cuban Missile crisis and the assassination of J. F. Kennedy in 1960s in *Libra* or the nuclear crisis with Russia in postwar period in *Underworld* or 9/11 in *Falling Man*, firstly to mystify the original conditions within a mass of details; and secondly to reveal the irrational forces, the contingencies and their effects on the individuals. In fact, DeLillo methodologically traces the historical, political and ideological from within the quotidian and the popular. His inclination to write within the unofficial history gives him room for a closer investigation of individuals whose traumas also have nationwide effects. In other words, his novels become masterfully devised narratives that aim to reveal the hideous relationship between the individual and his ideological conditioning. Thus, DeLillo’s vision of multi-styled writing produces a language of fiction which displays an intersection of conspiratorial plots, domain of culture industry, and American corporatism with the focus on power at play.

In consequence, tectonics of power relations and opposing forces in the contemporary American culture function as the third and most substantial vein in DeLillo’s fiction. In his novels, use of power is depicted as decentralized, dispersed and disseminated everywhere instead of being centralized. Exertion of power takes place under different forms in various sites, producing energies at different levels of

frequency and creating multiple sites of resistance. Power in DeLillo's novels is at operation through discursive practices and diverse fields such as sports/game, language, technology, waste, risk, myth, image production and art. These fields also serve as models, metaphors or discourses that reveal the dominant modes of wielding power, hegemony and resistance. In addition, these models or discourses are at play within greater sites of power struggle where interests weave complex networks, such as geography, history, politics, and culture etc. as enlisted above. Thus, the discourses of resistance are formed within the very same discourses of power. The aim of this dissertation, then, is to figure out the sites of power and resistance; explicate how power is dispersed and disseminated; and exemplify how power creates room for multiple practices of resistance within its own terrain in Don DeLillo's fiction.

The project of mapping the terrains of power struggle, the consequent practices of resistance, and the nature of the emancipation anticipated in Don DeLillo's fiction need further analysis and specification. The set of novels to be handled in this study, *The Names* (1982), *Mao II* (1991), *Underworld* (1997), all reflect the late phase of capitalism with projections of post-Fordism as the dominant mode of production. The production of the dominant cultural forms and the ubiquity of multinational corporations in DeLillo's world pose a picture peculiar to the global capitalism with regards to the mechanisms of control and domination. Within the history of the Marxist tradition, this study aims to pinpoint the scale of the practices of power exertion, hegemony and moments of resistance in the sites of culture, politics, and history. However, the need to evaluate the contemporary power practices in DeLillo's fiction requires more inclusive and expanded perspectives of social criticism than the perspectives of vulgar Marxism of the early twentieth century. Therefore, specifically, the necessary terminology is selected from the neo-Marxist and post-Marxist glossary to situate our task within an updated critical schema and to determine the dynamics of late modern American society in DeLillo's novels with exactitude. Moreover, Don DeLillo's novels are not criticized through the foci of race, gender and class in this study. Because the primary objective is mapping the terrains of power struggle and enlightening the processes of resistance formation rather than merely focusing on identity politics, conspiracy theory has

been included as a supplementary tool in the theory chapters. Namely, conspiratorial readings of *The Names*, *Mao II*, and *Underworld* will add up to the post-Marxist evaluation of DeLillo's texts.

As stated so far, the three novels, implicitly or explicitly, tend towards deploying the models of conspiratorial schemes and paranoid mindset to enlighten aspects of the cultural hegemony in the late capitalist American society. Together with *The Names*, which can be classified as a mixture of political thriller and exotic conspiracy narrative, the other two novels, *Mao II* and *Underworld*, are also commensurate with the spectrum of criticism used in this dissertation. More clearly, DeLillo's purer conspiracy narratives like *Players*, *Running Dog* or *Libra* have been excluded from the scope of this dissertation because this study does not aim to merely schematize conspiracies but to provide a conspiratorial reading of the dominant cultural and social practices in contemporary America.

The first chapter of this dissertation is a general account of the evolution of Marxist social and cultural criticism. It summarizes the historical development of the models of materialist social criticism related to the advanced capitalist societies. Basically in this chapter, the changing conceptions of power and their shifting paradigms within the Marxist canon will be examined. This chapter aims at displaying the shifting notions of the nature of power and power struggles within the Marxist social thought throughout the twentieth century. Specifically, it will be shown that the notion of a mechanical and one-way operation of power is gradually substituted with a strategical understanding of power. The different trajectories of power and the critical perspectives over the proliferation of the sites of struggle are figured out within the Marxist theory, consulting the preeminent social theoreticians from the early Marxism of 1930s to the post-Marxism of the 1990s. With additional references to a small number of post-structuralist thinkers to complement the late Marxist thought on power relations, this chapter seeks an appropriate model for evaluating Don DeLillo's fictional representation of power and resistance in the late twentieth century America.

Western Marxism, under the names neo-Marxism and post-Marxism, has a long history beginning from the 1930s until present day. Their terminologies have



been shaped in response to the changing conditions of capitalism in adaptation to new economic relations and political realities. Furthermore, Marxist terminologies were extended so as to cover each new mode of cultural relations and emergent cultural forms under capitalist economy. Especially, 1980s and 1990s brought a new momentum for Marxist social and cultural criticism because these decades required new perspectives to enlighten the political and cultural consequences of post-Fordist mode of production, economies of transnational corporations, and mass consumption. In addition, new Marxist perspectives aimed at reducing the orthodoxy within the theory so as to save the theory from the rigid approaches of economic determinism and class struggle. Furthermore, inasmuch as the American and the European cultural spheres sailed into the realm of postmodernity, the path of the Marxist critiques has undergone new paradigm shifts. Western Marxism considered the post-structuralist approaches towards the social and cultural aspects of the epoch of global capitalism. The result is a considerable modification in Marxist terminology, the relevant social theories and the emergence of various new Marxist critical practices.

New Marxist theories are no longer restricted only to the terms of class struggle for the postmodern age of cultural and economic transactions have proliferated the sites of power struggle. Gender, subculture and ethnicity were rethought within the Marxist theory as sources for novel historical subjects other than a monolithic proletariat. Along with these, new identities shaped by popular culture and contemporary consumer society also began to appear as alternative subjects within the Marxist theory. That is to say, the power struggles within the postmodern era, the 1980s onwards, as can be observed in Don DeLillo's novels, take place in micro-scales in proliferated sites.

Therefore, it seems that in the above mentioned three works of Don DeLillo, the moments of wielding power and resistance may not be fully unfolded within the classical Marxist schema. DeLillo's novels investigate the sites of power struggle and acts of resistance as more heterogeneous practices and instances. DeLillo inserts these struggles within the economic, social and cultural spheres; and thus draws a multi-faceted picture about the nature of political or symbolic struggle for and

against power. In this chapter, the sites of power struggle will be explored with the help of new Marxist terminology, taking into consideration both DeLillo's depiction of a post-industrial society and an account of post-structuralist extensions to the Marxist theory.

The second chapter seeks to combine the neo-Marxist and post-Marxist conceptualizations of ideological power and cultural hegemony in capitalist societies with conspiracy theory. Conspiracy theory and paranoid thinking in fiction help illuminate the representation of power struggles and power dissemination in capitalist societies in parallel to the explanatory theories of Marxist criticism. Moreover, conspiracy theory and paranoia overlap with leftist social theory in terms of highlighting such conflictual issues as loss of individual agency, insecurity, ambiguity of social forces, industrial/political risks, and terrorism. Therefore it will be asserted, with references to examples in DeLillo's fiction, that conspiracy theories and paranoia are fictional devices and tools that can disclose the paths of power in late capitalism.

Conspiratorial reading helps to reveal how power seeps into most surfaces and how it weaves its own networks. It is basically argued that late capitalism itself is depicted as a mechanism of conspiracy, as also seen in DeLillo's novels. Like conspiracies, globalization and late capitalism run in networks as well. They are conspiratorial insofar as their ideological tools of co-optation and sustaining power operate in illegitimate and clandestine ways. Significantly, resistance appears just from within the networks of power. To put it that way, resistance networks, as counter-conspiracies, spring up from the power networks. Resistance is as ever-present as power. In the age of late twentieth century capitalism, resistance imitates forms of power since it is polymorphous and heterogeneous as the ways of power are. Thus, this dissertation, in trying to disclose the power struggles inherent under the dynamics of conspiracy and paranoia, will look into the ways in which capitalist power and resistance are almost inseparably entangled; and it will try to map the terrains of this connection in DeLillo's three novels.

In the third main chapter, *The Names* will be examined through the lens of corporate capitalism, in order to reveal the relationship between the practices of

power and schemes of conspiracy. With reference to the permeating force of the American finance capital and the entanglements of its complex dispersal, the conspiratorial features of corporate capitalism will be evaluated according to DeLillo's fictional portrayal of multinational business. The impacts of multinational business also bring into mind the romantic imperial narratives of colonization and exploitation of the third world, which is also present in *The Names* in the form of conspiratorial corporate finance capitalism. Furthermore, it will be contended that the tone of exoticism and mystery, peculiar to the romantic narratives, also functions to depict the resistant forces in DeLillo's novel. The resistant practices against the hegemony of global capitalism are sought in the murder plots of the cult called The Names and in their tactical use of spatiality. Moreover, the romantic and metaphysical traditions, seen in the novel within a tone of pastoral impulse, tend to posit a counter-narrative against the dominant narratives of business and corporate capitalism. Eventually, it will be argued that DeLillo sets in motion a metaphysical discourse of language and transcendentalism as a device of counter-balancing the discourses of capitalist conspiracy.

The fourth chapter mainly dwells on the concept of cultural hegemony in the American cultural sphere, as depicted in *Mao II*. The main premise of this chapter is that cultural hegemony is a type of capitalist conspiracy plotted against the democratic public sphere. Image politics and the culture of spectacle are going to be examined as the major tools of capitalist cultural hegemony. In the novel, media narratives and the culture industry appear as the basic power apparatus that conjure a mass society and forge a hegemonic block over civil society. The novelist and the terrorist are the two politically-aware resistant figures in DeLillo's fiction. The potentials of these two figures in raising the dissent against the dominant practices of power are the essential questions the novel raises. And in consequence, the novel's final claim is that the terrorist as well as the novelist is co-opted by the tools of capitalist apparatus.

The final chapter is a relatively long one since *Underworld* is a narrative that thematizes the whole Cold War era and displays both the transformations of Cold War sensibilities and their continuity in the post-Cold War times in America. This

fifth chapter mainly focuses on paranoia and conspiracy as an essential part of the American political and cultural climate, valid through the postwar years and continuing well into the early 1990s. Secrecy, then, is a major category in the novel that defines the operation of power. Firstly, the shifts and continuities DeLillo portrays between the power balances of Cold War and post-Cold War periods are going to be assessed in this chapter. In *Underworld*, it is posited that the nature of the paranoid atmosphere, the ways of forging popular and mass identities, and the dominant strategies of political-economy under the Cold War government matches similar patterns in the aftermath of the Cold War when global capitalism prevails. Secondly, the logic and the power politics of corporate culture, and the technological paranoia are handled in parallel with waste management and weapon industries. In the next step, this chapter is concerned with the networks of resistance within the everyday practices where the impacts of corporate power and cultural hegemony are dramatically felt. The novel pictures a vast scale of resistant practices. The post-1960s New Social Movements, the quotidian forms of resistance and the political avant-garde art are represented as types of dissent against the late capitalist cultural and political hegemony. Therefore, it will be finally asserted that disseminated practices of power are confronted with dispersed moments of resistance, both of which are represented within widespread networks in the novel.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**WESTERN MARXISM, AND CONCEPTIONS OF**  
**POWER AND RESISTANCE**

**1.1. ASPECTS OF POWER**

Although power is a much contested concept due to its nature, it can be roughly defined as A's exercise of force upon B contrary to B's interests. In other words, power occurs when A makes B do things which B would not otherwise prefer to do. As Stewart R. Clegg puts it in his *Frameworks of Power*, the classical theories conceive of power as zero-sum i.e., power as negation of the power of others (4). From this classical perspective, power is, as Johan Fornäs explains in *Cultural Theory and Late Modernity*, "associated with social, intersubjective dominance," and in that context "subordination is the relation of the dominated to the dominating, in being placed under their rule. Power, then implies coercion and oppression" (Fornäs 59). Power is a relation taking place between actors and agents, "who may be individuals, groups, roles, offices, governments, nation-states or other human aggregates" (quoted in Clegg 51).

This sense of power as A's coercion on B is absolutely mechanistic and causal. In consequence, this mechanistic schematization requires the emergence of resistance as a reaction or opposition to power. Resistance simply means rising up against coercion and exercising of practices to break dominance. According to Fornäs, "Power breeds critique and a hope for resistance, needed to make those transforming actions [to subvert practices of power] possible which make humans into true subjects;" thus resistance is "also connected to the creation of positive utopias" (59). More definitely, resistance "can be defined as all forms of actions that challenge some established force or power structure and is thus potentially transformative rather than just reproductive of dominating positions or structures" (Fornäs 126). However, how this positive comprehension of the concept of resistance shifts when the conception of power changes into more flexible forms raises further questions. Furthermore, the emancipatory potential of resistant acts and their utopian

designations will also be discussed in the following pages, considering the changes in the conceptions of power.

Conceptualizing power as a one-dimensional flow from A to B is rather vulgarly a mechanistic practice. In the field of social sciences many questions have been raised challenging this conception of power, such as: “Is power distributed ‘plurally’ or held by an ‘elite’? Is power intentional or not intentional? Is power confined to decision making or is it evident in non-decision making? Is power a capacity for action or the exercise of action?” (Clegg 37). Furthermore, the discussions around the locus of power within society blur the relation between structure and agency. The arguments that regard power as “power over” see it as something exercised over other individuals, groups or classes whereas the theorists defending “power to” think of it as the capacity to enhance people’s lives and see it necessary for political and social life (MacKenzie, “Power” 78). Put it this way, whether power lies in the intentions of subjects or is a consequence of the determination of social structures is a long-lasting debate (Clegg 20). While the traditional theory and the vulgar Marxist conception of power fits into the former definition, another group of sociologists and post-structuralist thinkers such as Michel Foucault can be grouped around the latter one.

Another extension of this debate revolves around the issue whether power is a repressive or a productive force. The classical notion of power as restrictive and constraining the interests of the subordinated group is opposed to the notion of power as facilitative and mobilizing social forces for collective good and achieving social goals (Clegg 2). As the variation of the questions concerning the nature of power abounds, so do the approaches to resistance. Basically, power and resistance are distinct but interdependent concepts. However, the movement from power to resistance cannot be modeled as a single straight line. According to Fornäs, “Power/resistance is an asymmetrical relation, associated with tensions between centers and peripheries in spatial and social spaces, where places, territories and borders are crossed by various flows and movements. In the complex global network of such centre/periphery relations, various centers exert dominance across distance over multiple peripheries” (61).

To summarize, these questions lead us to the distinction between a monolithic, centralized, one-way and determinate concept of power and a more contingent, dispersed schematization of the networks of power. Modernity has been inclined to conceive of power more mechanically (Clegg 34). In its essence Marxism should be treated as a modernist movement in its project of revolutionizing the capitalist modes of production and thus it assesses power as a centralized force. Marxism regards power struggle only in a determined duality between the capitalist class and the proletariat. In order to draw a conclusive map, Clegg determines two models of power as two poles, between which a variety of power conceptions lie. While the first pole is the ‘sovereign power’ as modeled by Thomas Hobbes in his eminent work *Leviathan* (1651), the other model is Niccolò Machiavelli’s ‘power as strategy’ in *The Prince* (1513).

Sovereign power in Hobbes, *Leviathan* in other terms, is the absolute authority. Hobbes’s thesis is that “people without a source of authority to bind them together will dissolve into a chaotic, warring mass of individuals all striving for a power that none can hold absolutely” (MacKenzie, “Power” 71) According to Hobbes, this absolute authority keeps the masses from returning to the state of nature. Hobbes’s model articulates the experience of the world as a mechanism depending on causality. His concept of power is a key in his framework for keeping the community intact and securing moral order, which in fact refers to the discursive framework of “modernity” (Clegg 23, 24, 31). Clegg further accuses some factions of Western Marxism of remaining within limited and inadequate conceptions of power as Hobbes does in his theorization of Sovereign power:

Contemporary Western Marxism, with its search for sovereign expressions of Capitalism in the cultural and ideological sphere, and its theoretical gravitation in the orbit of hegemony, produces a social order which is equally as fictive as Hobbes’s contractual view. In the latter each body was conceptualized potentially as a part of the sovereign order. In Western Marxism each mind was to be conceptualized potentially as a part of the hegemonic order. (28-29)

On the other hand, Clegg summarizes Machiavelli’s conception of power as “pure expediency and strategy” rather than a pure instrumentality or a mechanical causality (31). The reification of power, that is when power is regarded as thing-like

and possessed by an agent, is its most concrete mode. Yet, power should also be taken as relational rather than situated within a single agent or locality (Clegg 207). Thus, in contrast to Hobbes's conception of power, Machievelli sees it not as belonging to someone or some place. Power is not the Leviathan, but lies within the efficiency of the calculated strategies of the Prince. In short, "Machievelli's insights are important in that they alert us to a conception of power altogether less mythical and more realistic in its appreciation of strategy, alliances and networks in the analysis of power" (Clegg 38). This paves way for a more pluralistic reading of power.

The conception of the power politics within the Western Marxism, thus, basically oscillates between these two poles, namely a more monistic regard of power in a top-down relation, and a strategical view of power networks and alliances lacking a certain locus. This is a significant line to be traced from vulgar Marxism to post-structuralist and post-Marxist theories. In this chapter, how the evolving concepts of power and domination within Marxist theories necessitate a reading of power and resistance is reflected. Moreover, where and in which domains of social and political life the relations of power and resistance are located is the concern of this chapter. Briefly, the apparatus to work out the power relations within the social structures, the cultural and political spheres Don DeLillo represents in his works after the 1980s may be found in the following theories.

## **1.2. NEO-MARXISM: ANTONIO GRAMSCI, FRANKFURT SCHOOL, AND THE FRENCH MARXISTS**

By consent, Antonio Gramsci is regarded as the hinge between vulgar Marxism and the new forms of Marxist social critique. He brought forth and helped develop the idea of socialism not only as an economic program but as cultural critique (Munck 17). In other words, rather than economic determinism, Gramsci focused on the cultural and ideological aspects of power struggle. As an ardent revolutionary, he theorized on the ideological aspects of the revolutionary process in advanced capitalism (McLellan 175). According to Gramsci, the dominance of the capitalist ruling class is not only the consequence of holding the means of production, but also an outcome of some ideological tools to perpetuate this



dominance. He argues that this dominance is always more complicated than a straightforward influence of the ruling classes (Fornäs 119). Gramsci was curious about the mechanisms that stole the vigor from the proletariat for revolution. Consequently, he was after new explanations to “provide a more thorough analysis of the ideological mechanisms that cajole masses into thinking that their own oppression is legitimate” (MacKenzie, “Social,” 31). Thus, he devised the concept of ‘hegemony’ to define the cultural and ideological power struggles and hegemonic processes.

According to Gramsci, hegemony can be simply defined as “intellectual and moral leadership” (Finlayson 141). By making use of this term, Gramsci points at winning the consent of the society by ideology rather than using brute force. That is, the rule of the capitalist class is not based on coercion but on the false justification of the dominating ideas to create consent. Gramsci was opposed to the mechanistic and teleological ideas in Marxist thought which anticipated a proletarian revolution in highly advanced capitalist societies as a terminal historical necessity and a consequence of the contradictory nature of capitalism. McLellan, in *Marxism after Marx*, explains Gramsci’s ideas on the relation between the persistence of the capitalistic rule and the need for the term ‘hegemony’ as follows:

Whilst the bourgeoisie continued to exercise such a cultural hegemony, a proletarian revolution was impossible. . . . As long as capitalist hegemony persisted, the proletariat remained unaware of the contradictory nature of capitalist society and of the possibility of transforming it. For a necessary part of the ideological hegemony of the capitalists was their ability to represent their own interests as those of society as a whole. Gramsci thus had the great merit of being the first Marxist theorist seriously to analyze how the bourgeoisie managed to perpetuate its domination through consent rather than coercion. (186)

As it is observed, the efficiency of hegemony lies in its reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups. And this necessitates organic relations between the political apparatus and civil society (Clegg 160). The dominant class makes use of cultural hegemony in the civil society in order to disseminate their ideology and to make the masses falsely assume that they have control over their own lives. As McLellan puts it, “civil society denoted for Gramsci all the organizations and technical means which diffuse the ideological justification of the ruling class in all

domains of culture” (188). Civil society is the sphere of private life that remains outside the political life. Civil society comprises namely, “on the one hand, economic life, private enterprise, the press and so forth, and on the other hand, social institutions such as the family, the church and all other forms of collective activity not directly regulated by the state” (Finlayson 142). Hence, the interests and the world view of the ruling class become the norm in these domains of culture and they act as ‘common sense’ for the whole society. For Gramsci, it is when the dominant class manages to invade these areas of civil society that political hegemony is complemented with cultural hegemony.

As deduced from Gramsci’s selection of such new terms as hegemony and civil society, the nature of power struggle has changed. Cultural hegemony is a prerequisite for the attainment of power. In competition for power, the classes should build what Gramsci calls a ‘historic bloc.’ Historic bloc is a homogenous whole, without internal contradictions, where economic, social and ideological forces are combined in a temporary unity to change society (McLellan 185). For Gramsci, forming a historic bloc becomes the core for the proletariat’s revolutionary project to form counter-hegemony. This is the new mode of conceiving power and according to this new mode revolutionary strategies should be reconsidered. As Clegg clarifies, the revolutionary strategy should seek ways to

engage in a protracted attack on political and ideological structures rather than to attempt to capture state power *per se*. This implies a concern with the hegemonic apparatus of state power and the role of intellectuals in organizing the hegemony of the dominant class and in forming a historical bloc. (160)

As it is has been noted so far, Gramsci highlights the complicated interrelations among the political, ideological and cultural domains. Hence, the focus of Gramscian revolutionary project, along with his conception of power, is quite a strategic one. Gramsci’s notion of politics does not only concern itself with modes of production but also carries a social agenda. As Juan asserts,

Gramsci reconceived politics as a strategic mapping of historic possibilities. . . . Politics, thus is no longer a mechanical, positivist reflection of changes in the mode of production, the economic base, but rather a mode of articulating the various levels toward the hegemony –

the intellectual, moral, and philosophical ascendancy – of a social bloc with a specific agenda of social reconstruction. (61)

Civil society remains to be the site of this power struggle, yet it is a space of indeterminacy, difference and multiple inscriptions of subjectivity. And due to this heterogeneous and complex nature of the cultural sphere and civil society, hegemony can only be achieved temporarily and is open to oppositional challenges (Juan 61-62).

To set a more concrete model for power struggle against the hegemony of the ruling classes, Gramsci uses the terms ‘war of movement (maneuver)’ and ‘war of position,’ borrowing them from the military lexicon. War of movement is a frontal attack on the enemy to create and then penetrate the loops in the defense line. War of position, on the contrary, is trench warfare, requiring a long period of settlement and balance. According to Gramsci, since the war of movement is too costly as a revolutionary practice, the war of position has been considered more suitable for the proletariat for revolution in the advanced industrial societies (McLellan 189). Regarding power as a long-term strategic action within the mechanisms of capitalistic production of ideology, Gramsci locates the power struggle in the field of cultural sphere. In addition, Gramsci’s affinities with Machiavelli’s strategic notion of power relations and his conflation of Marxist theory with Machiavelli’s models of political power in his *Prison Notebooks* under the title “Modern Prince” are highly suggestive. In this sense, Gramsci’s theories have paved the way for more pluralistic readings of power struggles and resistance forms in the following decades of political and cultural criticism. Simons and Billig, in their introduction to *After Postmodernism: Reconstructing Ideology Critique*, sympathize with a more pluralistic reading of Gramsci’s theories and see them as the harbinger of post-Marxism. They emphasize the indeterminate nature of hegemonic bloc and the opposing forces within it:

In Gramsci’s hands, the model of ideological processes becomes more complex. The dominant ideas of a culture are not simply the inevitable end-product of what Marx saw as the material base of ideas. . . . Just as ruling class ideas are not fully determined, so also they are not fully determinative. In place of a single ruling class within any given society, there are multiple and competing factions. Moreover, ruling-class

hegemony is never complete; there is always the opportunity for oppositional readings. (3)

The exertion of hegemonic power and ideological manipulation appears in the cultural sphere through the rationalization, industrialization and the commodification of the cultural sphere. Renate Holub, in *Antonio Gramsci: Beyond Marxism and Postmodernism*, sees hegemonic struggle inherent in the political and the civil society “with its institutions ranging from education, religion and the family to the microstructures of the practices of everyday life, [and how and where they] contribute to the production of meaning and values which in turn produce, direct and maintain the ‘spontaneous’ consent of the various strata of society to that same status quo” (6). The consent for hegemony is maintained through common sense assumptions, popular myths, clichés, proverbs, traditions and etc. Furthermore, turning the sphere of culture into an industry by means of mass production of popular consumption forms and popular art also sustains this hegemonizing process.

Gramsci’s analyses over the commodification of the cultural sphere in the 1930s gave way to the concept of ‘culture industry,’ which was voiced by the critical theorists of the Frankfurt School in the 1940s and the 1950s. Gramsci’s notes related to the theater industry of Italy became the foundation of theories that would flourish regarding the culture industry. Gramsci delves into the common nature underlying the forms of industrial and artistic production in the times of monopoly capitalism. As Holub states, “With his notes on the ‘theater industry’ Gramsci intuits a relation between the modes of rationalization or ‘Taylorization’ applied in industry and those applied in theater. In industry as well as in the theater, the basic structure of the commodity exerts a pervasive influence” (84). Thus, how cultural hegemony is provided and how ideological hegemony is produced within the commodification of cultural forms for consuming subjects is illuminated.

Gramsci’s insights into the hegemonic processes of the cultural sphere enabled critical theorists like Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse to analyze the hidden hegemonic roles of dominant cultural forms. Especially in the 1960s, Gramsci’s insights helped Marcuse’s attempts to disclose the ideological elements underlying the technical apparatuses and his concept of hegemony further influenced

Althusser's conception of hegemony described as Ideological State Apparatuses. Finally in the 1980s, Laclau and Mouffe, renovated the concept with their focus on the aspects of discursive formation, considering the poststructuralist ramifications of the issue in political economy.

In line with Gramsci, the critical theorists of Frankfurt School have pondered on the superstructural relations of power rather than the economic struggles between classes in the infrastructure. More specifically, their interests were cumulated around the analysis of cultural modernity. The production of hegemony in the cultural sphere in the late modern societies is their major issue, and they seek to understand the rules of power not only in the material realm but also in the symbolic realm. Moreover, their focus on the cultural aspects of modern domination does not totally exclude the economic realm. The theorists of the Frankfurt School aimed at unmasking the illusion of the autonomy of culture by a critical theory that reconstructs the ties between the economic and the ideological (Agger 4). The production of cultural hegemony within modernity through capitalist apparatus, such as the Fordist mass production of cultural goods, incorporates the masses ideologically in several ways. In order to explicate the dominant ways of capitalistic hegemony formation and the ideology production in modern societies, the critical theorists trace the totalitarian dynamics of the Enlightenment thought. In other words, Horkheimer and Adorno analyze how the idea of material progress *per se* generated hegemonic ideologies. As Tom Bottomore classifies, Horkheimer and Adorno generate their criticism in three different streams of thought, all causally interlinked to one another: a critique of positivism and scientism in social sciences, an analysis of the ideological role of modern science and technology in the formation of a modern technocratic-beauraucratic hegemony, and an interest in the cultural dimension of hegemony through the dominant culture industry (Bottomore 61).

Firstly, in their collaborative work *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno begin their criticism of the modern forms of domination and hegemony from the concept of Reason in the Enlightenment tradition. The Enlightenment regarded reason as the sole concept that could emancipate humankind from irrationality, superstition and philosophical speculation. Only reason could construct

a universalistic framework for philosophical thought. However, though reason aimed at saving the individual from the domination of irrationality, it immanently bore a new kind of domination itself. In that, people are forced to think and act in accordance with the criteria of the Enlightenment rationality and its universal standards, which took efficiency and controllability as its mere measures. Horkheimer and Adorno assert, in the “Concept of Enlightenment” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “For Enlightenment, anything which does not conform to the standard of calculability and utility must be viewed with suspicion. . . . Enlightenment is totalitarian” (3-4). Controllability and instrumental efficiency consequently appeared as the new measures for every thought and behavior of man, almost condemning him to an abstract universality (Reijen 50).

Though Enlightenment tended to discard myth, it slipped into myth itself inasmuch as it forced unquestioned domination of reason. Horkheimer and Adorno explain this mythic origin of the Enlightenment motive as follows:

The more completely the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it. Enlightenment thereby regresses to the mythology it has never been able to escape. For mythology had reflected in its forms the essence of the existing order—cyclical motion, fate, domination of the world as truth—and had renounced hope. (20)

Under the hegemony of reason, mankind subdues nature and takes it under the control of rational use. This hegemonic aspect of reason is explained in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as follows: “Reason serves as a universal tool for the fabrication of all other tools, rigidly purpose-directed and as calamitous as the precisely calculated operations of material production. . . . Reason’s old ambition to be purely an instrument of purposes has finally been fulfilled” (23).

The totalitarian use of reason, in the long run, turns into a mode of behavior that controls other people and masses. Jürgen Habermas, in his lectures on modernity, states that the self-destruction of Enlightenment lies in man’s losing the bliss in archaic union with internal and external nature since external nature is dominated at the cost of internal nature in Enlightenment (*Philosophical Discourse* 106-09). The destructive nature of excessive rationalism in scientific discourses is

the Enlightenment's heritage. The project of the critical theorists', therefore, is to reveal how irrationally the productive apparatuses of modernity and capitalism work under the guise of reason and to reveal the hidden self-reproducing ideology of the market. As Frederic Jameson, in his *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, the Persistence of the Dialectic*, suggests, "what has often been described as the Frankfurt School's 'critique of Reason' is in fact a systematic exploration of a standardization of the world imposed fully as much by the economic system as by 'Western science' " (15).

In regard to the totalitarian aspect of reason, Horkheimer and Adorno go into a serious criticism of positivism since positivism perpetuates the domination of reason in industry, market and culture. Enlightenment's obsession for rational control of phenomena appears as positivistic domination on the social spheres in modernity. "For the Enlightenment," they argue, "anything which cannot be resolved into numbers, and ultimately into one, is illusion; modern positivism consigns it to poetry" (Horkheimer and Adorno 4-5). Positivism, as the motor of material progress, becomes the source of reification under capitalism (McLellan 261). In his critical work *The Eclipse of Reason* (1947), Max Horkheimer gets deeply involved in an assessment of different types of reason and an evaluation of positivist philosophy in the modern period. According to him, means replaced the ends under capitalism. Positivism, in the context of modern industrial society, transforms the sphere of all existent things into a sphere of means through the historical evolution of the methods of material production (Horkheimer 69-70). When means gain autonomy, they cease to be regarded as means any longer. This suggests the elimination of the subject who would use these means for his ends because the subject, too, is reified. In the same fashion, Habermas confirms Horkheimer and Adorno's concerns over positivism and adds: "Behind positivism's ideals of objectivity and claims to truth . . . lurk imperatives of self-preservation and domination" (*Philosophical Discourse* 122). Thus, by its immanent ideology, positivism becomes a norm in advanced industrial capitalism.

The hidden ideology within positivistic technical processes is reifying. The purpose-directed actions and instrumental reason that the critical theorists focus on in modernity attribute a thing-like quality to everything. According to Horkheimer, the

economic technocracy depends on the scientific development of the means of production by the support of positivism. Hence, positivism, for Horkheimer, is “philosophical technocracy” (41). Positivism, as an ideology, not only serves for the self-preservation of advanced capitalistic production processes but also produces the technocratic elite to exert power by the use of technological rationality. The scientific processes that organize, classify and increase the efficiency within the industry and the market gain a momentum of technical control and absolute authority over the whole society.

The success of the Frankfurt School theorists lies in their analysis of late capitalism’s ideological formation. They associate economic power closely with political power (Touraine 178). For Horkheimer and Adorno, reason “has become merely an aid to the all encompassing economic apparatus” in modern capitalism (23). According to Jameson’s view, in the critical theorists’ depiction of modernity, there appears “a simultaneous leap forward both mass-culturally and technologically, in which for the first time the two developments were also consciously interlinked” (*Late Marxism* 141). Horkheimer and Adorno’s most quoted essay in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” uses the term ‘culture industry’ to indicate this close link between economy and ideology. The essay intends to schematize the ties between the mass production of cultural material and their atomizing and reifying power over individuals. Also, the way technological means transform the aesthetic matter and entertainment so as to create a mass culture and maintain hegemony is also underlined.

The concept of manipulation of the masses by the ‘culture industry’ is a continuation of Gramsci’s idea of acquiring hegemony by ‘consent.’ Horkheimer and Adorno also imply this when they state that the culture industry tends to embody authoritative pronouncements and “to adopt the tone of factual report” by which the culture industry “makes itself the irrefutable prophet of the prevailing order” (118). Under private culture monopoly, the hegemony over people is obtained by mass-produced products of varying quality. In this way, everyone is included into the system without exception as a result of their tastes and preferences. Furthermore, false needs are created and pumped to individuals so that an internal tie of



dependency between them and the system can be created. Thus, the culture industry determines each individual as a type, which is reproduced in every mass-produced product (Horkheimer and Adorno 97). People's choice and consumption of the cultural forms result in their identification with the power that subjugates them.

Culture industry shares processes of schematizing, cataloguing and classifying with other industries and sciences. It makes culture a powerful force of administration. Therefore, critical theorists have often highlighted the fact that technological rationale is actually the rationale of domination (Horkheimer and Adorno 95). In fact, the Gramscian association of the industrial and artistic production within the theater industry is closely associated with the authoritative and reifying potential within the cinema industry. In Gramscian terms, films, advertisements and media are all after creating a 'common sense' for the masses; and, thus, they all pose a 'unity of style.' By this way, art and entertainment no longer belong to separate spheres, causing and intensifying "the impoverishment of aesthetic material" (Horkheimer and Adorno 97). This principle of uniformity in the culture industry co-opts every kind of resistant energy back into the system through the mass-consumption of mass-produced forms. Under the uniformity principle, the dissenting voices are reconciled:

What is decisive today is . . . the necessity, inherent in the system, of never releasing its grip on the customer, of not for a moment allowing him or her to suspect that resistance is possible. The principle requires that while all needs should be presented to individuals as capable of fulfillment by the culture industry, they should be so set up in advance that individuals experience themselves through their needs only as eternal customers, as the culture industry's object. (Horkheimer and Adorno 113)

Orthodox Marxists criticized Frankfurt School mainly for dismissing the proletariat from the Marxist project and for ignoring Marxism's basic principle of the determination of the superstructure by the base. However, Ben Agger claims in his essay "Marxism or the Frankfurt School?" that critical theory affirmatively re-evaluates the relations between the base and the superstructure rather than totally ignoring this principle. By tracing the economic dynamics and the imperatives of the mass-production industry within the sphere of culture, critical theory appears to be

more in pursuit of economic determination than orthodox Marxism (Agger 4). Critical theorists therefore seek the source of power in the economic roots of everyday culture. In the same fashion, Fredric Jameson rejects the criticisms against the Frankfurt School and gives critical theory its share for preserving the mentality of economic determination:

Thus, 'Culture Industry' is not a theory of culture but the theory of an industry, of a branch of the interlocking monopolies of late capitalism that makes money out of what used to be called culture. The topic here is the commercialization of life, and the co-authors are closer to having a theory of 'daily life' than they are having one of 'culture' itself in any contemporary sense. (*Late Marxism* 144)

The critical theory underlines the hegemonization processes of the 'civil society.' The trick in late modernity is that it evokes a sense of free choice while exerting power through dominant consumption habits. The critical theorists argue: "Formal freedom is guaranteed for everyone. . . . However, all find themselves enclosed from early on within a system of churches, clubs, professional associations and other relationships which amount to the most sensitive instrument of social control" (Horkheimer and Adorno 120). The all-comprehensive uniformity and abstract coercion of the culture industry is actually a projection of the severe ways of political power. In summary, the critical theory reflects upon the ways the capital holders wield power in league with the modern technocratic state by means of mass-production in an age of monopoly capitalism. Thus, relations of power are searched within the operations of technological rationale as well as within the clandestine ideology of the mass-consumption of cultural goods.

Herbert Marcuse, another thinker of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research, furthers Horkheimer and Adorno's remarks about the administrative practices of industrial society, new forms of social control and the repressive sides of modernity. He aims to bring forth alternatives for emancipation through analysis of the modes of repression on individuals. He challenges classical Marxist theories of class contradictions and revolutionary practices in order to confront the new faces of capitalism. Marcuse has noticed that the subordinated and the anti-capitalist class is not only the working class but also the middle-class (Sim 83). The consumers of mass culture have replaced a homogenous proletariat as the exploited majority.

Marcuse's main deductions indicate the disappearance of two historical classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat, as the historical subjects for change; and capitalist hegemony is gradually owned by the impersonal power of scientific and technological rationality (Bottomore 45). The loss of mass movements in reaction to capitalist hegemony and the ways of incorporating dissent against capitalism become the primary issues for Marcuse. His anticipation for a more liberated society have supplied a remarkable support for many counter-cultural movements and responded the theoretical needs in the formation of subcultural dissent in the 1960s in the United States. In brief, his analysis finally points at the new society which capitalism renders one-dimensional.

His *One-Dimensional Man* is a study that concentrates on the ills technological-rationality generates. In the one-dimensional society, the social controls are internalized through the use of technology, and the critique of the system is devalued (Sim 84). Although, on the surface, the new society foregrounds democracy, liberty and free choice; in fact, it kills critical thought and public discourse against repression. This diffusion of technology as control and surveillance in the new society creates domination which appears in every cultural form. Under the chapter titled "From Negative to Positive Thinking: Technological Rationality and the Logic of Domination" in *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse summarizes the formula of domination by technological rationality:

Theoretical reason, remaining pure and neutral, entered into the service of practical reason. The merger proved beneficial to both. Today, domination perpetuates and extends itself not only through technology but as technology, and the latter provides the great legitimation of the expanding political power, which absorbs all spheres of culture. (130)

By the quantification of nature, nature is reduced to mere instrumentality and mathematics. In this sense, as Herbert Marcuse puts it forward, "The technological *a priori* is a political *a priori* inasmuch as the transformation of nature involves that of man;" thus, industrialization techniques are political techniques in that they determine and delimit the possibilities of Reason and Freedom (28, 126). In the advanced industrial civilization, the productive apparatus and the machine are the most effective political instruments of power for they are determinant upon the

autonomy and the privacy of the individuals. This private space is invaded by the technical organization of the productive apparatus by constant creation of needs in individuals and the conditioning of the individuals towards new needs. Thus, Marcuse asserts that “technology provides the great rationalization of the unfreedom of man and demonstrates the ‘technical’ impossibility of being autonomous, of determining one’s own life” (130).

In the sense that Horkheimer and Adorno underline it, Marcuse focuses on the creation of false needs that manipulates the autonomy of the individuals, which he calls “repressive productivity” (Marcuse 189). Repressive productivity creates one-dimensionality. The false needs generated by mass production and mass communication necessitate a universe of discourse which operates through repeated definitions and even hypnotic dictations (Marcuse 25-26). Under such a totalitarian administration of the masses by advanced industrialism, Marcuse speaks of the ‘introjection’ of the external social control by the individual. Yet, whereas the term introjection suggested an autonomous inner side for the individual in the preceding stages of capitalism, the notion of inner freedom it implies is devalued in the contemporary industrial society. As the inner autonomy is invaded by the external controls, the individual is not merely cast into an adjustment to the social controls, but more extensively he is cast into a sheer *mimesis*, by which he completely identifies himself with the whole of the society (Marcuse 22-23).

As a general portrait, the world Marcuse portrays by the terms of the advanced industrial society and monopoly capitalism suggests a closing of the political universe. One-dimensionality is everywhere in all forms and sustains a substantive control on every aspect of life. This is a ‘new society’ for Marcuse, and the apparatus of economic and technical growth strike back in overwhelming control in this society. He summarizes the economic dynamics generating such a totalitarian world of total administration in this new society with the following words:

. . . concentration of the national economy on the needs of the big corporations, with the government as a stimulating, supporting, and sometimes even controlling force; hitching of this economy to a world-wide system of military alliances, monetary arrangements, technical assistance and development schemes; gradual assimilation of blue-collar

and white-collar population, of leadership types in business and labor, of leisure activities and aspirations in different social classes; fostering of a pre-established harmony between scholarship and the national purpose; invasion of the private household by the togetherness of public opinion; opening of the bedroom to the media of mass communication. (Marcuse 29)

As Marcuse depicts the contemporary situation in advanced industrial societies, he draws alternative ways of resisting and reacting against the society of total administration in several ways. In his thought, resistance is originated in the political margins, social alternatives and artistic avant-gardes (Holub 174). Marcuse goes into generating models of resistance against the mass production of culture industry, technical surveillance and total administration. Thus, he begins reformulating the basic concepts within the industrial civilizations, which are utilized for the administration of the society.

The major achievement of technological rationality, for Marcuse, is the translation and the transformation of values into technical tasks. This is a redefinition of the values through technological processes. Such materialization of values, in Marcuse's terms is to be evaded in his emancipatory project so that the transformation of scientific rationality into political power can be avoided (Marcuse 182). Scientific rationality should promote what he calls "art of life," rather than acting as an administrative principle *per se* (Marcuse 181). In addition, nature should not be reduced to be only an object of science. Nature is not only a legitimate object of "Reason as power" but also of "Reason as freedom" (Marcuse 186).

According to Marcuse, Reason can only fulfill a more liberating practice as a post-technological rationality. Such transformation of technological rationality foregrounds what Marcuse calls 'the pacification of existence.' The term refers to liberation of energy from the practices that sustain repressive prosperity (Marcuse 190). The aim is to get rid of the above stated dictations of the affluent society by the reversal of the notion of power. Thus, the repressed dimensions of experience in the affluent society should be vivified, and the high standard of servitude is to be lessened.

“Pacification of existence” does not suggest an accumulation of power but rather the opposite. Peace and power, freedom and power, Eros and power may well be contraries! I shall presently try to show that the reconstruction of the material base of society with a view to pacification may involve a qualitative as well as quantitative *reduction* of power, in order to create the space and time for the development of productivity under self-determined incentives. The notion of such a reversal of power is a strong motive in dialectical theory. (Marcuse 185)

The operation of technological rationality in contemporary industrial societies replaces true needs with false ones; hence, “the intensity, the satisfaction and even the character of human needs, beyond the biological level, have always been preconditioned” (Marcuse 18). If technological rationality is freed from its exploitative features it will leave more room for the self-determination of individuals. It will not create false needs for the masses in the role of productive apparatus. Eventually, individuals’ true needs are liberated from the repressive productivity of the technical apparatus and the market. The true needs of individuals shall be reformulated and thus complemented by the transformation in the technological rationality.

According to Marcuse, technological rationality should be substituted or controlled by the imagination and sensibility of arts. The aesthetic realm is a different domain than the instrumental reason of technology. Artistic universe, in contrast to the technical universe, is a marginal domain of illusions which has the power to create a new grasp of reality. By the introduction of this new grasp of reality, reason’s liberation from its obsession of control can be achieved. By this way, reason can go beyond mere cataloguing and quantifying natural and social phenomena. Artistic practice suggests a reformed instrumentality different from that of the technological rationality (Feenberg, “Marcuse or Habermas,” par. 11). Thus, technical practice follows the guidelines of artistic experience and the transformed notion of instrumentality to reach the Marcusean ‘pacifying existence.’ In short, as Marcuse puts it, the more the technological and industrial civilization grows in its irrationality for its greed to control and invade, the greater the rationality of the artistic universe becomes. “Rather than being the handmaiden of the established apparatus, beautifying its business and its misery,” Marcuse adds, “art would become a technique for destroying this business and this misery” (Marcuse 187-88).

In addition, Marcuse also considers the potential for mass movements. However, his origin of revolt is different from that of the classical Marxism. For him a stable and historical working class is abolished. Proletariat is no more the revolutionary subject of history. The proletariat of the former stages of capitalism is replaced by the organized worker of the technological society. While the former was experiencing a severe degree of labor usurpation, the latter experiences it much less conspicuously because of the increasing automation processes. Furthermore, as the white-collar workers increase in relation to blue-collar workers in the contemporary technological community, the productive workers turn into non-productive workers. This latter class appears as more atomized, and it becomes incorporated into the technological community and into the administered population (Marcuse 34-35). For this reason, Marcuse's justifications of more heterogeneous resistant acts gain importance in the face of a decline of proletariat as a 'historic bloc.' Marcuse regards every type of marginalized communities, such as the youth subcultures, blacks, gays etc., responsible as subjects of revolution:

However, underneath the conservative popular base is the substratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of the other races and other colors, the unemployed and the unemployable. They exist outside the democratic process; their life is the immediate and most real need for ending intolerable conditions and institutions. Thus their opposition is more revolutionary even if their consciousness is not. (199-200)

However, according to some critics Marcuse's suggestions for conceptual shifts in the technological community and his focus on new class responsibilities in the industrial society are not well articulated. That is his definitions of the new subjects and the shifts in technological rationality are too abstract, and they do not offer a definite plan for revolutionary action (Feenberg, "Can Technology," par. 48). His writings lack exemplary models for the new kind of technology devoid of administrative power and they lack concrete suggestions about how art should transform the fundamentals of technological rationality. Marcuse's utopian visions seem to be abstract, yet his critical insights about the nature of technology, the repressive productive apparatus and technocratic administration paved the way for the course of the critiques of culture and ideology in the following decades. He

contributed much to Horkheimer and Adorno's cultural analysis of modern operations of power and he was among the major critical thinkers to set the standards for the explication of the political aspects of technological and cultural power.

Theories of the French Marxists and the Situationists in the 1960s and 1970s have paralleled Marcuse's concerns about the everyday practices of power and the artistic transformation of the instruments and sites of power. Frankfurt School's emphasis on the cultural forms of administrative power and the need for an analysis of the sites of power within everyday practices are reverberated in the critiques of postmodern condition in the 1980s and 1990s under new formulations. Thus, Marcuse's thoughts act like a stepping stone to edge into the post-Marxist territory (Sim 85). This shift towards quotidian and the everyday for a critical analysis of power relations is of great help for the scope of this study concerning Don DeLillo's urban novels and his perspectives of the cultural apparatus in contemporary America.

The appearance of the everyday life as a new site of struggle in late modernity has been analyzed in depth by Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord. Frankfurt School's tendency to see the commodification of culture as the driving force of the capitalist economy of consumerism is elaborated in terms of power and resistance by the thinkers of the Situationist International, which was an avant-gardist political and artistic movement to revolutionize the everyday life in France in the 1960s. Lefebvre and Debord have made considerable contributions to the analysis of the capitalist planning and rationalization of the urban spaces and practical experiences. In fact, they aimed at working out the utopian and the dystopian moments of the organization and administration of the daily practices of living. Lefebvre's critique of everyday life and Debord's analysis of the concept of 'spectacle' in late capitalism help diagnose the economy of consumption, its generation of repressive habits and practices. Furthermore, how consumer capitalism exerts power through the social relations via consumption remains their vital concern. The potentials in the everyday life to resist the administrative practices of capitalist planning are also another dimension for these thinkers. How repression and emancipation are rooted in the everyday life within a dialectic relationship is inquired by them, in continuity with Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse.



Henri Lefebvre commences his theories from the analysis of everyday life because it is the site of direct confrontation with the modified social relations under late capitalism. In his work *Critiques of Everyday Life*, Michael E. Gardiner states that according to Lefebvre everyday represents the site where human desires, powers and potentialities are realized and turned into conscious human praxis (76). Furthermore, it is the site where also these desires and potentialities are manipulated and turned into administrative tools that are unconsciously internalized by masses. Therefore, Lefebvre turns towards the site of the actual lived experience and the quotidian, both to analyze and to criticize the administrative aspects of modernity and reified social relations under late capitalism.

Lefebvre's main focus is on the commodification of culture and the increasing commodity fetishism, which highlight the fundamental principles of social relations in modern capitalism. Only through the mediation of commodities and commodified signification practices can the social exchange of relations take place. Also, the substitution of the use-value by exchange-value transforms the creative human energies and activities into routinized cultural forms (Gardiner 77). Individuals experience alienation to their own existence through the mediation of the modes of behavior generated by reification and commodification. In an overall effect, the alienation created by the technocratic rationality and bureaucratic apparatuses in late modernity are reproduced and restructured within the everyday life through the exchange relations of cultural forms. For Lefebvre, functionalism and utilitarian rationality become the imperatives of marketplace and eventually they represent the externalizations of technocratic imperatives within everyday life (Gardiner 76). Leisure is an inevitable component of this cycle. Capitalism utilizes leisure to integrate everyday life into the cycles of production and consumption. As the effect of the rationalization of leisure and cultural commodities, everyday life becomes a site of general display (Gardiner 90).

Guy Debord regards this general display under the concept 'spectacle,' and directs his critical gaze on the 'society of spectacle' to disclose the administrative practices of capitalist power. He notes the nature and function of the spectacle by asserting that it "is not a collection of images; it is a social relation between people

that is mediated by images;” and furthermore, it is both the result and the project of the dominant mode of production under late capitalism (Debord 12-13). In contrast to the traditional forms of social control, the new managerial power rules by utilizing the influential role of the production and distribution of cultural commodities over people’s opinions and modes of behavior. The industries of cultural production become central to gain the control of everyday domain. As David Roberts explains in his article “From the Culture Industry to the Aesthetic Economy,” the ideology of consumption pictured in Debord’s society of spectacle utilizes the capitalist aesthetic economy as a tool (5-6). In other words, the aesthetic value of commodities is used as a tool of transition from an economy of needs to an economy of desires, which can be described by the term “imaginary investment” (quoted in Roberts 88). According to Debord, spectacle is the turn of the real capital into imaginary capital: “The spectacle is *capital* accumulated to the point where it becomes image” (Debord 24).

Likewise, Lefebvre distinguishes ‘needs’ and ‘desires;’ and thus, emphasizes production of desires by the imaginary capital in parallel with Debord. Lefebvre asserts that needs are precise and spontaneous, as are the ways and goods to satisfy them, and needs appear as a “need for this or for that” (*Critique* 6). Yet, in the consumer society, imaginary investment functions to create desires, which do not correspond to genuine needs. To be in desire means to be in constant need rather than looking for ways to satisfy a certain need; and for Lefebvre, desire also means to submit to the behavior patterns motivated by mass consumption. Eventually, Lefebvre directly quotes a term from Debord and argues that “everyday life has literally been ‘colonized’ ” under consumer society (*Critique* 11).

Colonization takes place where spectacle enters the everyday life by its administrative apparatuses such as aesthetic economy of the commodity, rationalization of the market, and the utilization of the media. Individuals are removed from the realm of lived experience in social life that is colonized by the imperatives of the spectacle. The human is pushed from the concrete life to the abstract image, from real social relations to the mediated ones, and subsumed by the ‘utilitarian functionalism of the technicist ethos’ (Gardiner 110). There is a consequently decreased level of intersubjectivity in everyday life. In the context of

capitalism, the private life becomes impoverished and it is incorporated within a concrete totality via a saturation of information and communication by the media (Lefebvre, *Critique* 70, 76). The human energies are pacified under the dictates of the spectacle, and action is replaced with a frozen gaze towards the spectacle. For Debord, spectacle is against dialogue and blocks it by the abstract representations of social relations:

Since the spectacle's job is to cause a world that is no longer directly perceptible to be *seen* via different specialized mediations, it is inevitable that it should elevate the human sense of sight to the special place once occupied by touch. . . . This is not to say, however, that the spectacle itself is perceptible to the naked eye – even if that eye is assisted by the ear. The spectacle is by definition immune from human activity, inaccessible to any projected review or correction. It is the opposite of dialogue. Wherever *representation* takes on an independent existence, the spectacle reestablishes its rule. (Debord 17)

For Debord, these representations in late modernity should be compared to pre-modern festivals. The pre-modern festivals function to discharge and liberate creative energies and utopian desires (Gardiner 114). In modern neo-capitalism, the festive modes of thought and behavior in the society of spectacle have substituted festivals for pseudo-festivals, which incorporate and usurp creative energies rather than liberate them. Debord notes:

Our epoch, which presents its time to itself as essentially made up of many frequently recurring festivities, is actually an epoch without festival. . . . Mass pseudo-festivals, with their travesty of dialogue and their parody of the gift, may incite people to excessive spending, but they produce only a disillusion – which is invariably in turn offset by further false promises. (113)

Lefebvre similarly claims that everyday life is invaded by practices atomizing the individuals and imprisoning them to individual consciousness. In addition, the capitalist festivities and the commodification of leisure implies, firstly, the penetration of the bureaucratic agencies into social life to mediate communication practices via media and make people less engaged to dialogue. Secondly, the bureaucratic powers cancel historical time through leisure, mediated communication, and the modern image politics. They reconstruct urban spaces by fragmenting them into homogenous parcels eliminating local particularities and differences (Gardiner

83, 90). Thus, there are timeless spaces of entertainment and consumption, which atomize and pacify people to withdraw them from active participation to the social and political life.

Another function of the developed productive forces in the consumer society is to mystify the class conflicts. It conceals the class struggles by a unification of society via the utilization of needs. That is class antagonisms disappear on the surface because the needs of the working class and bourgeoisie are getting homogenized. Even though class conflicts exist in a society, they are masked by the illusory wholeness of the consumer society. Lefebvre criticizes the vulgar class perspective picturing working class as a mass united by poverty, ignorance and lack of basic needs and absence of pleasure. As he obviously states:

In a specific society, at a certain state of development of the productive forces, at a certain level of civilization, do the needs of the working class differ absolutely from the needs of the bourgeoisie? . . . Indeed these needs are similar, and as we have already said, this is the reality of the otherwise mystifying idea of “consumer society.” (*Critique* 32)

Debord shares a similar point as to the mystified unity of the society of spectacle, masking the relations of production and class conflicts. He asserts that “The unreal unity the spectacle proclaims masks the class division on which the real unity of the capitalist mode of production is based” (46). Under the global economy and globalized spectacle, this illusory unity diffuses more comprehensively. Pointing at this transnationalization of material and imaginary capital, Debord puts forward the inner contradiction of the global spectacle by concluding as follows: “What brings together men liberated from local and national limitations is also what keeps them apart” (46).

However, no matter how alienated, fragmented and administered the everyday life has become, it still has the utopian impulse to evade total control. Lefebvre and the Situationists believe that everyday life has the seeds to regenerate new codes for the relationship of the humans to humans and to urban spaces. In its polidimensional and multifaceted outlook, everyday life cannot be totally robbed off of its emancipatory potential to resist the bureaucratic powers. Everyday life has been penetrated and modified by culture industries, bureaucratic control and

technology. But it cannot be totally absorbed and exhausted by them. According to Lefebvre these powers are unable to eliminate the most trivial aspects of the everyday. By the “extraordinary within the ordinary” and the “significance of the insignificant” can the lived experience be elevated in the modern society (*Critique* 4). Thus begins the attempts to revolutionize the domain of the everyday and save it from the repression of social control.

As stated so far, everyday life is a site of power struggles. Although repressive forces tend to hegemonize the everyday life, it is also counterhegemonic due to contingency, complexity and interpersonal relationships. The resistant potential is always simultaneous with the dominating forces in the everyday life. Therefore, the dis-alienation and humanization of social life should begin from the everyday life (Gardiner 17). The power structures of neo-capitalism are not monolithic. In late modern societies, technological rationality and bureaucratic domination always go under legitimation crises. They always experience a crisis of justification for they mostly leave a spiritual unrest that it cannot satisfy with goods and commodities (Gardiner 95-96). Everyday, then, becomes the domain of popular resistance and the zone of the revolutionization of cultural sphere.

Similar to Marcuse’s avant-garde artistic practices and much like the Surrealists in early modernism, the Situationist intellectuals and artists aimed at the transformation of the everyday life through avant-garde art. They developed a theory of Cultural Revolution via theory of situations. Put it that way, by creating non-alienated spatio-temporal “constructed situations” through art, they aim at subverting the dominant power relations (Trebitsch xxiii). Urban spaces become the places of experimentation for the utopia of the Situationist International. Yet, these avant-garde resistant acts and revolutionary moments are part of a symbolic resistance against the symbolic power of the society of the spectacle and culture industries, rather than a revolutionary uprising to grasp the state power and productive forces. The avant-garde practices of art as resistance also subvert the act of consumption and transform it into a new productive practice. The act of consumption is attributed a more subversive power and is integrated into the symbolic resistance against the

power of culture industries. This surplus function of consumption as resistance becomes an inevitable part of the analysis of popular resistance and resentment.

As a final touch, everyday social life is hegemonized by power not strictly by imposition from above, but through dissemination of social practices based on consumption. There is an overall diffusion of power into social spheres including private life and everyday domain (Gardiner 119). This anonymous power is extended over every space of social existence as a network, stemming from bureaucracy and the capitalist production of social relations. The functionalist and reifying relations are perpetuated and internalized by people due to the operations of culture industries. Thus, Lefebvre concludes that capitalist economy employs “pleasure economy,” which works by producing “organized waste;” and in turn, the pleasure economy is so mystifying that it veils the real “economy of power” underneath it (*Critique* 38). Yet, at the same time, everyday social life cannot be totally colonized due to the complexity of its creative energies and indeterminable resistant potentials. The everyday resists standardization and a strict controlling logic because it can

subvert that total commodification and homogenization of experience through myriad expressions of passion, non-logicality and the imaginary. These emancipatory moments are endemic in the everyday, and remain opposed to the utilitarian greyness of official society, overshadowed as it is by the logic of commodity form and an ethos of productivism. (Gardiner 15)

Louis Althusser’s structuralist Marxism follows a rather different path of analysis compared to the Marxist thinkers explained heretofore. His reconstruction of certain historical and economic Marxist conceptions and principles is his post-mark in the Marxist literature. Unlike Lefebvre and Debord, he establishes his system of criticism departing from the idea of structure instead of analyzing distinct social practices on their own. His approach, based on Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic model, aims to analyze the social formations and to comprehend the structural dynamics of society that were ignored by previous Marxisms. He sees social unity as a complex structure of different instances rather than a one-way base-superstructure determination (Barker 73). Althusser tries to construct a science of forces and relations of production, of social formations and a scientific analysis of history in his structuralist formulations of Marxism. Althusser’s scientific Marxism is modernist in

that firstly it starts by positing the abstract structures of society; and secondly it reaffirms the modernist critique of positivist, idealist and historicist tendencies (Resch 19). Thus, Althusser formulates his scientific Marxism on the concept of structure, which transforms the notions of history, subject, class conflict and power in the classical theory.

The object of analysis in Althusser's structuralist Marxism is the social formations. A social formation is a totality of 'instances.' Instances comprise social relations and 'practices,' which possess a functional unity and are composed of distinct structural levels (Resch 37). There are four main practices: economic, political, ideological and theoretical practices. Each practice is differentiated from the other by their distinct realms and they act in a substantial autonomy. These distinct levels of different practices cannot be reduced to a single principle or a basic level (Kelly 192). Yet, in order to make a proper analysis of a social formation, these different levels and practices within the social formations should be related to each other. In their multiplicity and heterogeneity, different levels and practices in social formations should be gathered under a constitutive notion of structure. Hence, social formations are modeled as "structures of structures" integrated into an organic whole, while each individual structure has an existence on its own (Resch 36).

Althusser's analysis of the social structures requires a shift of methodology. He goes into a construction of a novel understanding of causality and dialectics. He replaces the Hegelian idea of 'absolute totality' with his notion of structure as 'organic whole.' His criticism of both Hegel's dialectic and Hegelian-Marxists' understanding of social formations makes him devise the concept of 'structural causality.' Before developing this concept, he criticizes the inadequacy of two other notions of causality: 'linear/transitive causality,' and 'expressive causality.'

As explained in *Reading Capital*, transitive causality is mechanistic and it reduces causality to "the effectivity of a whole on its elements" (Althusser and Balibar, 186). This notion sees causality as billiards balls simply in effect to each other; in addition, the whole is reduced to the results and the sum of its parts. In this model "atomized elements bounce off each other in a linear and unique sequence lacking any general structure beyond the cumulative effects of the series of

individual collisions” (Resch 48). Therefore it lacks an organizing principle of the structure that explains the interrelationship between elements. On the other hand, Althusser criticizes the notion of an expressive causality, which is dominant in Hegel’s thought and dialectics. Expressive causality “presupposes in principle that the whole in question be reducible to an *inner essence*, of which the elements of the whole are then no more than the phenomenal forms of expression, the inner principle of the essence being present at each point in the whole” (Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital* 186). To put it this way, within the notion of expressive causality the phenomena of a social formation in a period are the externalizations of a single inner principle. This model of causality is dogmatic because it operates on essences and absolute principles. This metaphysical dogmatism can also be present in the social sciences under the names of economism or positivism, which seek for such essences or immanent causes so as to reduce social processes to economic or natural processes respectively (Resch 49).

As an alternative to these two models, structural causality is devised as a new concept, referring to the whole as a structured unity in determination of its elements (Althusser and Balibar, 186-87). For him, the structured whole is always present in the interrelations of its different levels and sub-structures. Althusser calls the whole an ‘absent cause’ because it is outside its elements. The absence of the structure is the very form of the interiority of the structure in its effects (Althusser and Balibar 188). The whole and its parts are inseparable; and structural causality poses the relational aspect of causality in its complexity, far from being reductionistic. In structural causality, the whole describes the reciprocal effectivities of its elements, which are also simultaneously determined by the whole (Resch 51).

Althusser’s structural theory of society and causality develops into a theory of history. Having in mind that he criticizes linear and mechanistic explanations of social structures, his attack against historicism and linear flow of history can be better appreciated. He rejects seeing history as a teleological procedure towards an ultimate goal and as a linear continuity. For him each level and each element of the social formation has a temporality on its own, which can neither be equated to the temporality of another level or element nor to any single linear time continuum.



Thus, any cross section from a moment of history can never be contemporaneous or homogenous (Kelly 194). Briefly, Althusser replaces historical continuity with discontinuity. As explained in *Reading Capital*, social formation is composed of different temporalities produced by the different levels of the structure; and these different temporalities cannot be related to a single identical time (Althusser and Balibar 104-06). Thus, history comprises discontinuities for Althusser. History cannot be grasped in its totality, but only the segments and fragments of social processes can be understood. Thus, “the history of society can be reduced to a discontinuous succession of modes of production” (Althusser and Balibar 204).

Social formations are composed of distinct social structures which affect one another through determinations. In Althusser’s science of social formations, uneven developments occur between the multiple levels of the social structures, which stem from seeing the social formation as a unity of differences. Shortly, these uneven developments are called “contradictions” (Resch 62). It is significant that the multiple contradictions within the social formation are not in random flux but they form a unity; in fact, contradictions are the essential parts of the social structures. The accumulation of contradictions in the structure as a whole has also effects on each individual contradiction, and Althusser terms this situation as ‘overdetermination’ (*For Marx* 102).

The concept of overdetermination secures Althusser’s theory from lapsing into radical indeterminacy (Kelly 193). The notion of complex interrelations among the elements of a structured whole, which would otherwise seem to be operating randomly, keeps his theory away from vulgar pluralism. The uneven developments and contradictory moments are overdetermined by the structure. The entire structure of the social whole is reflected in each social level, though they act and function independently. The various elements of the social formation, their contradictions, and their relations of dominance and subordination are present within the structure at the same time. Thus, within the overdetermination of the contradictions, no social element or development is single or isolated on its own. Through the interrelatedness of distinct elements, contradictions are determined by the complexity of the whole (Kelly 193). Yet, in the social formation, economy is the determinant factor ‘in the

last instance' among these complexity of relations. Althusser puts two ends in the relationship of determination between the base and the superstructure: "on the one hand, *determination in the last instance by the (economic) mode of production*; on the other, *the relative autonomy of the superstructures and their specific effectivity*" (*For Marx* 111). This means that the co-existence of the relative autonomy of the superstructure and the determination of the economic mode of production over the superstructure reflects a more multi-layered picture of the problem.

In Althusser's structuralist Marxism, economic determination of the mode of production on the superstructure is not a direct one. Rather, this determination is indirect within a hierarchy of heterogeneous, unequal, but interrelated structures. The mode of production poses the deep structure beneath the social structure. But according to the principle of the overdetermination, the economic determination has a role of establishing the "limits of variation" for the political and ideological instances in the social formation as a structure (Resch 40-41). That is, although economic determination is the deep structure of the base, it is not a strict determinant of the superstructure to which everything can be reduced. But it is a manipulator of the relations by determining the limits of variation in the ideology and politics.

Deduced from the principles of Structuralist Marxism put so far, structure precedes all forms of power and the dynamics that create power. Power, whose operations can be causally investigated, emerges within the structured whole. For this reason, power should be looked for in the hierarchies of structures within the social formation. Power, therefore, has a relational and differential nature for it is generated within the interrelations of social structures. In addition, these social structures are overdetermined by the mode of production in the last instance (Resch 257). That's why the relational nature of power in Structural Marxism can't be reduced to subjective relations between individuals:

This adjustment is crucial: the social relations of production are on no account reducible to mere relations between men, to relations which only involve men . . . to inter-subjectivity. . . . For Marx, the social relations of production do not bring men alone onto the stage, but the agents of the production process and the material conditions of the production process, in specific 'combinations.' (Althusser and Balibar 174)

According to Structuralist Marxism, power has a material basis in the social formation. Power is generated through social struggles and contradictions overdetermined by the economic forces. Social struggles are embedded in economic, political and ideological contradictions, which are finally based on class conflicts. Nicos Poulantzas, another eminent structuralist Marxist along with Althusser, asserts in his *Political Power & Social Classes* (1976) that power relations are class relations: “Power relations, which have social relations as their field, are class relations; and class relations are power relations, to the extent that the concept of social class shows the effects of the structure on *the relations of the practices of the classes in ‘conflict’* ” (103). To sum up, structure precedes power in the social formation; hence, power is not tied to any preceding timeless essence in Structuralist Marxism. Poulantzas posits the differential nature of power by saying that “power relations do not constitute a simple expressive totality, any more than structures or practices do; but they are complex and dislocated relations, determined in the last instance by economic power” (113).

Institutions or apparatuses do not have power on their own apart from class relations. That is, power cannot be seen as belonging to any institutions and is not essential to them. Instead, institutions, including the state, are related to power only when the social classes that have power are in control of them. These institutions are, therefore, related to power relations by the mediation of class struggles. And state becomes a centre of political power as long as it is possessed by the dominant class, and serves as an instrument for its interests (Poulantzas 115). Therefore, the relative autonomy of institutions, as mentioned above, do not depend on the fact that they have power on their own apart from class power; on the contrary, they derive their power from class relations. Poulantzas calls these institutions “power centers;” and speaks of a “plurality of power centers (institutions at a given moment)” and of their relations: for example companies, the state, cultural institutions, etc. (116). These institutions characterize and concretize various fields of power as to the levels of class struggle. Therefore, these institutions are ideological apparatuses in that they operate to perpetuate the hegemony of the ruling class. Althusser, likewise, devised the term ‘ideological state apparatuses’ to examine the institutions as the organs of the ruling class at a given moment to propagate its ideology.

In his famous long essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” Althusser examines the institutions acting as power centers. For him every social formation must constantly reproduce the existing forces and relations of production to protect the status quo. This reproduction of the conditions of the base is essential for the ruling classes. Ideology functions to maintain such a reproduction in the superstructure through ideological apparatuses. Althusser defines ideology as follows: “Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence” (“Ideology,” 162). Religious, political, legal ideologies and etc. create ‘world outlooks’ and distort the reality to sustain the ways of domination for the sake of ruling classes. It is the function of the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs for short) to secure and reproduce these ways of ideological hegemony. Althusser roughly enumerates them as the religious, the educational, the familial, the legal, the political, the communicative and the cultural ISAs.

In devising ISAs, Althusser differentiates the repressive administration of the state from ideological administration via distinct specialized institutions. For Althusser, Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) rules by ‘violence’ whereas ISAs function by ‘ideology’ (“Ideology,” 145). This distinction resembles the one Gramsci makes between domination by ‘coercion’ and ‘consent.’ Furthermore for Althusser, while there is only one RSA, we can speak of a plurality of ISAs. Since ISAs have a wide network of diffusion, they further reflect the relational nature of power in the social formations. Another thing Althusser emphasizes about the ISAs is that “the various institutions of the ideological hegemony belong not to the public domain, but to the private domain” (“Ideology,” 144). At this point, Althusser himself refers to Gramsci’s analysis of the private domain, and he ardently argues, “Private institutions can perfectly well ‘function’ as Ideological State Apparatuses” (“Ideology,” 144). By taking the private domain as the bed of the institutionalized practices of ideology, Althusser pays homage to Gramsci’s analysis of the spread of ideological power in the civil society, which is explained earlier above. To sum up, though through more complex procedures of analysis and different conceptualizations, Althusser reaches the private domain of ideological significations and symbolic realms for the analysis of ideological diffusion of power, as Gramsci and Frankfurt School thinkers have done.

The notion of power as a structural effect also requires a redefinition of the subject in Althusser's theory. Though ideology and power are results of structural and class relations and cannot be reduced to individual subjects in Althusser's theory, ideological practices necessitate subjects. In other words, subjects constitute ideology. Althusser formulates the case and posits that "the category of the subject is only constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects" ("Ideology," 171). In other words, the category of the subject is necessary for ideology not because subjects generate ideology, but rather ideologies create subjects. Ideology hails or 'interpellates' subjects in Althusser's terms. The subject recognizes itself in response to ideology's call. Through this act of interpellation ideology "recruits" subjects; and transforms individuals into subjects ("Ideology," 173-74). In other words, Althusser's investigation of the way subjects are interpellated by the practical rituals of everyday life and the way they are administered by various institutions adds a more systematical dimension onto Horkheimer's, Marcuse's and Lefebvre's diagnosis of the capitalist ideology.

In an overall evaluation, Althusser's Marxism and its scientific nature poses a more systematic outlook to the social analysis than do the post-structuralism and late Marxism in the 1970s and onwards. Althusser and other Structuralists have a much more concentrated notion of power in their theories, and they differ from post-Marxists in many respects. However, Althusser's devising of a more relational and differential concept of power will find echoes in the thinkers of the following decades, within different paradigmatic resolutions. More specifically, Althusser's focus on the distinct ideological practices of different institutions is taken by Michel Foucault's poststructuralist and non-Marxist historical diagnosis of social institutions and their ways of exerting power, in *Discipline and Punish*. More than that, Althusser integrates 'contingency' within the systemacity of the social formations by the help of such concepts as overdetermination or the relative autonomy of structural levels and institutions. These concepts push him on the brink of post-Marxism, regardless of the gap between Althusser's science of social formations and the post-Marxist theories (Sim 16, 95).

### 1.3. BASIC PREMISES OF POST-STRUCTURALISM

Post-structuralism, the engine of both postmodernism and post-Marxism, is a set of attempts to escape the totalizing impulses in the social and critical theories and to devise new perspectives so as to understand the transformation of the Western societies from the postwar times onwards. Postmodern theories, on the other hand, were essentially originated after the 1968 revolts in France and through their theoretical upbringings (Wood 3). The classical social and Marxist theories failed to portray late capitalism in its essential forms of operation and needed revision. As Ellens Meiksins Wood asserts: “Although they acknowledge various influences – from early philosophers like Nietzsche to more recent thinkers like Lacan, Lyotard, Foucault, and Derrida - today’s postmodernism belongs above all to the sixties generation and their students;” and this postmodernism is a product of the golden age of late-capitalism with its flexible, disorganized and post-industrial formations in the late twentieth century (3).

The fractured, fragmented and multilateral outlooks of the subject, social classes, power and history required more flexible critical perspectives apart from the former theoretical rigidity. The notion of a determinate sense of structure seemed to be delimiting the pluralities and indeterminacies of all kinds of social formations. Hence, post-structuralism flourished with the emphasis on the unsystematized, heterogeneous, and contradictory and the micro rather than grand and totalized systems. Especially by the 1970s onwards, the post-structuralist critiques of social formations and the changing aspects of late capitalism have gained a momentum by the attempts of various thinkers.

Very basically, post-structuralist theories and the consequent doctrines under the portmanteau word postmodernism can be cumulated around a series of propositions. First of all, they can be characterized by the obsolescence of the legitimacy of grand narratives, and François Lyotard defines postmodern as “incredulity towards metanarratives” (330). Epistemological skepticism against all kinds of universal values and pervasive forms of knowledge and the incredibility towards grand theoretical systems are the markers of the postmodern perspective. For Lyotard there appears an internal erosion of the legitimacy principle of knowledge,

and each specific field of knowledge have begun to be apprehended as 'language games' rather than claimers of the overall truth.

Secondly, post-structuralism claims that language itself is not a continuum of stable and fixed meanings directly representing the world out there. Instead, meaning depends on the arbitrary link between the signifier, the sound or the mark, and the signified, the image or the concept that is referred to. And post-structuralists posit that this seemingly natural link between the signifier and the signified is broken; and hence, for Jacques Derrida, there is a constant dissemination of meaning in texts.

Furthermore, Derrida, in his *Writing and Difference* (1978), attacks structural determination of systems. He deconstructs the idea of the fixation of meaning in language and the idea of centre in structures in the same parallel. He both denies a transcendental signified to language by which language gains legitimacy for representation and signification and denies the metaphysics of origin or validity of centre to the idea of structure. He suggests that the notions of transcendental signified or structural origin are not essences in themselves and are nowhere beyond the differential relations of the elements in the system. In attacking the structurality of structures, he finally puts forward that as the absence of a transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely, everything turns into a discourse in the absence of a centre (Derrida 280).

Thirdly, post-structuralists do not see the category of subject as a fixed entity. Subject is no longer a self-legitimized rational and autonomous category. Rather, it is fragmented, dehumanized and discursively-constructed. The demise of the subject stems from the post-structuralist denial of the essences on the one hand. On the other hand, the atomization and fragmentation of the subject can be related to the multiplied faces of capitalism in identifying, encoding, using and categorizing the identities. There is no fixed subject, but subject positions under the complex administrative practices and capitalist political economy.

Thus fourthly, social order cannot be taken in strict coherence. There remains no monistic working class or singular categories of identities such as black, white or woman. In terms of identity politics, social agents and identities are formed through

differences and differentiability as in the play of signifiers (Barker 225). Apart from singular social blocs possessing power in society, there appear networks of alliances, intersections and antagonisms among a plurality of various social groups.

To summarize, post-structuralism has done with essentialism, binary oppositions, grand narratives, totalizing forms of knowledge, universal ethics, singular identities, fixed subjects and meaning, monistic social formations, sovereign power and etc. It is a move away from the positivism and normativity of modernist and structuralist theories. Postmodern, deriving from the background of post-structuralist philosophy, is the label of the late twentieth century in Western societies. By this way, it is an indicator of “unfoundationality of the belief systems, of the incapacity of rationality to grasp the whole, of the contingency of scientific data, of the positionality and indeterminacy of knowledge, and of the power inscribed in the arbitrariness of authority” (Holub 171-72).

#### **1.4. MICHEL FOUCAULT: DISCIPLINARY POWER AND THE MICROPHYSICS OF POWER**

Michel Foucault’s theories have both continuities and discontinuities with the neo-Marxist theories put so far. As the former theorists did, Foucault mainly dwells on the modernization process in the Western societies since the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In his works, Foucault, more specifically, thematizes the power relations and how they constitute subjects. The subjection of the individuals by modern institutions and discursive practices become his ultimate concerns. In his analyses of power relations in modern societies, power turns out to be the ultimate principle of social reality, controlling and disciplining people (Sarup 73). Foucault has brought up new conceptualizations on the operation of power relations and the nature of power. His understanding of power and power relations is quite different from the Marxist camp.

Power, for Foucault, is not an entity owned by subjects or classes, but an outcome of a network of relations. He poses modern hegemony as the plurality of fluid relations of micro-powers. In other words, power in modernity is a composite of decentered and polymorphous networks of micro-powers for Foucault (Best and



Kellner 72). Thus, he tends to take power as relational rather than stable. He leaves the conception of sovereign power to a more strategic comprehension of it. In his model, instead of taking power as a monolithic entity, which are owned by the state or a central authority, Foucault sees decentered and dispersed micropowers that are asymmetrically related through intersubjective relations (Fornäs 65). By this way, he devises a post-structuralist understanding of power, and paves way for a post-Marxist approach to power.

Foucault defines power and power relations, in his essay “The Subject and Power”, as certain actions structuring the field of other possible actions. Power is “a mode of action on actions,” which means that Foucault sees exercise of power as a “conduct of conducts” and a management of possibilities (341-42). He develops his peculiar methodology in the diagnosis of power and power relations. In the same essay, he offers to analyze power not from the viewpoint of its internal rationality but through ‘the antagonism of strategies.’ By this he diverts the attention on the forms of resistance to ‘dissociate power relations;’ thus, he sees resistance as a chemical catalyst to locate the power relations. From this perspective, the power relations related to sanity, for instance, can be disclosed by what happens in relation to insanity; or legality by happens in illegality (“Subject,” 329).

Moreover, Foucault is in agreement with the thinkers of the Frankfurt School in that the domination of rationality and control in the modern societies originated in the Enlightenment. However, different from others, Foucault analyzes the link between rationalization and power not taking the rationalization of society or of culture as a whole, but the distinct processes in different fields of experience such as illness, crime, and sexuality etc. (“Subject,” 329). His investigations of these fields of knowledge and experience gains him a critical perspective about the rise of disciplines and disciplinary aspects of human sciences to control the sick, the mad, and the guilty in modern societies from the eighteenth century onwards.

For Foucault, modern societies employ a new mode of power different from the feudal societies, and for this he uses the term ‘disciplinary power.’ On the contrary to a more directly exercised and coercive use of sovereign power of the feudal societies, disciplinary power in modern societies operate by the techniques of

surveillance. Disciplinary power works through surveillance methods in the state institutions, and the disciplinary practices are disseminated through schools, prisons, asylums, hospitals and the army. This shift into disciplinary power is a shift from physical torture to a regulatory apparatus of power (Clegg 167). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault handles the history of penal law, the punitive practices and methods of containment, which showed paradigm shifts in the control mechanisms by the turn of modernity. He poses leprosy and plague as two symbols referring to two different rationalities and practices of control and power, that of the confinement and discipline respectively:

If it is true that the leper gave rise to rituals of exclusion, which to a certain extent provided the model for and general form of the great Confinement, the plague gave rise to disciplinary projects. Rather than the massive, binary division between one set of people and another, it called for multiple separations, individualizing distributions, an organization in depth of surveillance and control, an intensification and a ramification of power. The leper was caught up in a practice of rejection, of exile-enclosure . . . those sick of the plague were caught up in a meticulous tactical partitioning. . . . The leper and his separation; the plague and its segmentations. (*Discipline* 198)

According to Foucault, disciplinary power and surveillance methods have a new political economy of power and operate by various techniques. The essential point in disciplinary power is the internalization of power, which makes each person his own overseer, and is more profitable and cost-effective than sovereign power (Sarup 67). Borrowing the term from Jeremy Bentham, Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, speaks of Panopticon, a central tower of surveillance in penitentiaries, surrounded by prison cells at the periphery. In this system, each individual is confined to a cell where he is easily observed by the supervisor in the Panopticon, but cannot see outside. Panopticism, for Foucault, is a metaphor or a generalizable model of functioning for disciplinary power, and it is a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men (*Discipline* 205). By making use of Panopticism, Foucault draws attention to discipline, which can be defined as “the internal subdivision and subjugation of the body” as opposed to external physical punishment on the body (Resch 248). Thereby, within the disciplinary rationale of

Panopticon, power can be regularized and routinized as a constant surveillance creating disciplines of norms and behavior patterns (Clegg 173-74).

Disciplines become the modes and formulas of domination. They act in a “political economy” of the body, disciplining, observing and cataloguing the body and its forces for utility and docility (Foucault, *Discipline* 25). However, the disciplinary technologies on the human body can be extended beyond punishment and prison systems and included in other corporal fields such as hospitals, schools and asylums as well. Besides, the increase of the knowledge and mastery over the body through sciences and scientific disciplines bring forth what Foucault calls “political technology of the body” (*Discipline* 26). In other words, the increase of the knowledge on the body is inseparable from the power exercised on the body. That’s why Foucault does not take power and knowledge separately while analyzing the “political anatomy” or the political investment of the body. Instead of power, he speaks of power/knowledge, which means that the forms of knowledge and forms of power are correlative and they imply one another (*Discipline* 26-27). His conflation of ‘power/knowledge’ hints at the fact that knowledge is an organic part of the power regimes, producing power (Best and Kellner 71).

This political anatomy of the body and the control of the populations via power/knowledge are called ‘bio-power’ by Foucault. By the modern period, the rise of the disciplines was the time of the birth of the art of the body, which not only aimed at an extension of its skills, but on the contrary at the subjection and at a policy of coercion on the body to make it obedient and more useful (Foucault, *Discipline* 138). Hence, discipline and bio-power created subjected and ‘docile bodies’ in the modern epoch for Foucault.

Disciplinary power and bio-power, as principally mentioned above, are not monolithic entities possessed by agencies, but should be conceived of as strategies to be exercised. Instead of hierarchical and centralized systems of power, he poses disciplinary techniques of power as diffused over all the social practices. Foucault refers to a ‘micro-physics’ of power to define and decipher power as a relational network constantly in tension and activity. Moreover, this conception of micro-physics of power runs through dispositions, maneuvers, tactics, techniques, strategies

(Foucault, *Discipline* 26). In this conception, power never belongs to a privileged or dominant class but it is the total effect of strategic positions; this means that the relations of power seep into the very depths of society instead of being polarized between the state and the citizens, or between classes. For Foucault, this relational understanding of power as a network hinders taking it in the form of enclosed institutions, but it enables to regard disciplinary procedures as centers of observation disseminated all over the society (*Discipline* 212).

Power is basic for all forms of social mobility and hence precedes structure for Foucault whereas structure precedes power and other social determinants for Althusser (Resch 252). Behind every social activity and determination in principle, Foucauldian power is in constant dissemination and dispersal within the society. All social relations are relations of power for him. Each particular relationship of power has a specific operation and it should be understood in its own terms. Thus, they should not be reduced to an instance of greater logic such as class contradiction or state authority (MacKenzie, "Power" 83). Power is everywhere through this dispersal for Foucault, and a related study of it can be fulfilled as micro-politics.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault remarks that where there is power, there is resistance (95). In other words, power relations give birth to moments of resistance. For Foucault, resistance is not in a relationship of exteriority to power, but it is inside power. Resistance is inscribed in power "as an irreducible opposite" (Foucault, *History* 95). Nathan Widder explains in his essay "Foucault and Power Revisited" that since the Foucauldian power is always a relation of discontinuity and disequilibrium, resistance resides within power relations (423). That is to say, resistance is essential to the decentred and asymmetrical relations of micropowers in Foucault's theory.

As power is distributed heterogeneously within a dense network of relations, so are the resistances in an irregular way. Stewart Clegg remarks that "Power will be a more or less stable or shifting network of alliances extended over a shifting terrain of practice and discursively constituted interests. Points of resistance will open up at many points in the network" (154). For Foucault, knots and focuses of resistance are spread over time and space at various densities. These resistances are mostly

transitory and mobile for Foucault, and they have the potential to mobilize individuals and groups, to affect the body and the behavior patterns, to produce cleavages in society and to fracture unities (Foucault, *History* 96). He argues:

Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities. (*History* 96)

Foucault's modeling of modern power and resistance is different than the former ones. From his perspective, modern power operates through new capacities and modes of activity. He replaces the negative and judicial concept of power with a technical one. Foucault abandons seeing power in negative terms such as obstructing, limiting, restricting etc. (Sarup 73). He reformulates this notion of power. He has introduced the idea that power is not only repressive, but mobilizing and enabling production. It not only prohibits, but also pushes people for creative actions (Fornäs, 64). Foucauldian power is not necessarily linked to domination though domination is a primary manifestation of power. This is the gist of the Foucauldian shift from a centralized, top-down and repressive judicial power to a dissemination of micropowers.

Power relations invade everyday life, and power politics become the politics of everyday life. In the everyday, power relations construct identities. Subjects are the results of the power politics and are constructed by power struggles within the power networks. In their constant dispersion, power relations are constructive of subjects. Widder underlines that "power relations operate in a dispersive manner and power is nothing but the power of dispersion. . . . Identities, in other words, are optical illusions of power relations that are interspersed with resistances" (414). Thus, power both creates subjection and the subjectivity of individuals and groups in the everyday life. Disciplinary practices, stated so far, have the discursive power to construct subjectivities. Penal, medical, judiciary discourses and practices of power/knowledge apply discursive strategies to articulate identities and subjectivities. Discursive practices and practices of power/knowledge create identities through techniques of power, which are not only determinant within the history of above stated institutions but also in the capitalist economic system.

For Foucault, capitalism rules by techniques of power. These techniques of power are 'hailing' in Althusser's terms in that they constitute individuals so as to make them essential parts of the economic system as workers. For instance, in "Truth and Juridical Forms," Foucault tries to explain how these techniques operate and directs the focus on how the subjects of capitalism are produced. He rejects the traditional Marxist proposition that labor is man's concrete essence and that capitalist system transforms this labor into hyper-profit or surplus-value. Rather, he posits that capitalism penetrates into the very essence of people through elaborate techniques of power. These techniques synthetically bind people to labor. In order to achieve this link and create hyperprofit, "there had to be an infrapower. A web of microscopic, capillary political power had to be established at the level of man's very existence, attaching men to the production apparatus, while making them into agents of production, into workers" (Foucault, "Truth," 86). In order to explicate those infrapowers and to situate the depth of his analysis of power in capitalist systems, he refers to a "set of little powers, of little institutions situated at the lowest level" ("Truth," 87). Foucault, therefore, does not seek for the locus of power within any single part of capitalist society and the state, but observes the dynamic flow of energies within the power networks through a focus on the micro-politics of power.

There are some points of intersection between Foucault and Marxist critics. On the other hand, he differs in certain aspects from Marxism in terms of the conceptions of power. First of all, Foucault's historical analysis of the disciplinary institutions resembles Gramsci's analysis of the institutions of the state to decipher how they generate ideology and provide hegemony. Gramsci's 'common sense' and Foucault's 'disciplinary power' refer to, more or less, similar methods of domination and control. What is more, neither Gramsci nor Foucault appreciates a monolithic view of power. In Foucault's analysis of power, the focus, as Clegg points out, "is much closer to Machievelli's strategic concerns or Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a 'war of maneuver', in which points of resistance and fissure are at the forefront" (155-56).

However, Foucault differs from Gramsci in the level of his analysis and about the nature of power. Though Foucault handles the role and techniques of the

institutions in terms of power, he does not localize power in any single institution, the state or in a dominant class. As accounted above, power is the basic principle and it is primary to any institution or social structure. Furthermore, while Gramsci speaks of 'historical blocs' for the construction of hegemony in a society, Foucault evades such concretely built blocs of power. Rather, he points at a network of micropowers at dissemination over all the society.

Foucault's approach to power has also got affinities to Althusser's propositions. First of all, both Foucault and Althusser have got a relational and differential notion of power. Althusser asserts that power is an outcome of the relation of social structures and should be looked for in the relation between the hierarchies of the social formation. Likewise, Foucault sees power as networks of strategies. Just for this reason, secondly, both thinkers' theories have an anti-humanist outlook in the matter of power (Sarup 76). In Althusser's analysis, power does not reside in the subjects, but is the overall effect of impersonal mechanisms of social structures. Subjects are not the agents to produce power, but are the results of structures as well. For Foucault, it is not the subject that possesses or produces power, but subjects are the outcome of power struggles. Subjectivities are constituted by relations, strategies and struggles of power.

Resembling Gramsci's approach to state institutions, Foucault's historical analysis of disciplinary institutions is also close to Althusser's diagnosis of Ideological State Apparatuses. In fact, "Foucault's historical analyses of various ideological apparatuses are of great significance, and they have always been taken seriously by the Structural Marxists" (Resch 256). Moreover, Althusser makes a distinction between coercion and ideological subjection by differing between the Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), respectively. Foucault has the same point of reference by emphasizing the shift from Great Confinement to the ever presence of Panopticon, that creates self-policing and self-monitoring subjects. In that respect, discursive strategies, disciplinary techniques of subjection and bio-power function for the same thing as Althusser's 'interpellation' does.

Nevertheless, Foucault's analysis of power has quite divergent paths from both Althusser and other Marxist critics. Basically, Marxist critics regard Foucault as a relativist, lacking a concrete vision of political struggle. For them, Foucault's failure lies in an absence of concrete relations of determinations in his theories. Since Foucault does not situate power within a structured whole, as Althusser does, and ignores causal explanation of structural powers, his understanding of power falls short of real political content (Resch 253). In addition, Foucault does not take power within a class-based context. Foucault does not find the locus of power struggles just between the dominant class in control of the state and the class in subjection. His stress is on the specific, local struggles. Thus, for Foucault, power is not merely located in the state apparatus, but seeps through much finer and microscopic channels. For Foucault, that's why power does not only aim at the reproduction of the relations of production, as Marxists argue (Sarup 78-79).

A major line of criticism against Foucault comes at his notion of resistance and lack of emancipatory motives. Since Foucault does not designate a historical subject of revolutionary change possessing power, he empties the Marxist project off of its task. Instead, by modeling the resistant acts in heterogeneity, he negates a probability of an overall change in the power mechanisms. In a way, he levels the general transformatory task of revolution to the minor projects of resistant moments. Besides, emancipation and resistance are not the same thing in Foucault. Emancipation is a state of being liberated from the effects of power. However, since power is everywhere for Foucault and all social relations are relations of power, he privileges resistance, which can be defined as the shifts in the existing power relations (MacKenzie, "Power" 84). Hence, Foucault is mainly criticized for ignoring a revolutionary change in the mechanisms of dominant power relations and for remaining constrained within micro-politics.

All in all, Foucault's notion of decentred and disseminated power has articulated the post-structuralist politics and it has required consideration by many Marxists. Post-Marxist criticism, then, is highly influenced by Foucault's notion of the diffusion of centreless power relations, which cannot be localized merely in the state or in class contradictions. Basically, "Foucault, (not necessarily a



postmodernist) had already advocated very strongly a move away from grand, totalizing, contestatory politics to a micro-politics more appropriate to the way capitalism works today” (Munck 145). A more pluralist reading of power politics is rather fruitful under the myriad ways of late capitalism to create power relations and emergent tactics of resistance. The theories approaching late capitalism have to be aware of the fact that capitalism does not any longer incorporate individuals by hailing or identifying them as workers and profiting from the surplus value they create as the early Marxist theories argued. It must also be considered that the new political economy under late capitalism that binds people as consumers. At that point, Foucault’s ideas on strategic and discursive power will be of use for the post-Marxists to explicate the practices of power and resistance.

In the framework of this study, an eclectic mode of criticism will be followed. That is, both the neo-Marxist heritage and Foucault’s insights about power remain our concern in analyzing the power relations in Don DeLillo’s novels. The neo-Marxist inquiries of the administrative logic and the domination of capitalist relations in the cultural sphere in Western societies appear at various levels in DeLillo’s novels, especially in *Mao II*. Besides, Foucault’s idea of strategic diffusion of power is the key proposition in this thesis to be applied on DeLillo’s novels, accompanying neo-Marxist critical perspective from Gramsci onwards. Furthermore, Foucault’s theses on power politics are also to be traced in their influences on the post-Marxist thinkers. Hence, the shift in the aura of the capitalist political economy in the 1980s and 1990s and relevant (post-Marxist) critical approaches should be defined before portraying the specific post-Marxisms and power-politics in the theories of Fredric Jameson, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

### **1.5. JÜRGEN HABERMAS: PURPOSIVE-RATIONAL ACTION AND THE COLONIZATION OF THE LIFEWORLD**

If Foucault is at one end of the pole about the political theories on modernity and analysis of power, Jürgen Habermas, the last philosopher of the Frankfurt School, is at the other. While Foucault refrains from totalizing theories of social formations and modernity, Habermas has a more totalizing tendency in figuring out the complex power mechanisms of modern state and society. Foucault’s micro-

politics have got a more cynical approach due to its local and microscopic theories of power and resistance while Habermas, on the contrary, necessitates a universal ethic and emancipatory projects in his evaluation of modernity.

Habermas focuses his analysis on the administrative logic and the growing complexity of the modern systemic apparatuses. Rationalization and the consequent instrumentalization of the spheres of life are the postmarks of modernity for Habermas. In line with Horkheimer and Adorno, Habermas focuses on the binding of individuals to the technical and administrative apparatuses. Habermas, in his two-volume study *The Theory of Communicative Action*, uses the term 'purposive-rational action' to define the operation of the capitalist economy and the modern state. What is meant by purposive-rationality is the instrumental reason that aims at controlling and using the potentials of nature as efficiently as possible, which in turn comes back as a transformed way of colonizing people under the systemic strategies of the capitalist economy and the modern state. Habermas speaks of "the purposive-rationality of entrepreneurial activity" while considering capitalist economy and talks about "the institutionalization of purposive-rational action" speaking about modern state administration (Habermas 1: 217-18). Hence, economic and administrative operations function by a purposive-rationality which has a reifying power on the human.

Bureaucracy and technology are different aspects of purposive-rational action. Further than that, technical apparatus is also efficiently utilized by bureaucracy so as to create an atomization in the society. Habermas formulizes a correlation between the growing autonomy of the subsystems of purposive-rational action and self-alienation of the individuals, who have to construct themselves in relation to the technical apparatus (Habermas 1: 353).

On the contrary to instrumental or purposive-rational action, Habermas introduces the term 'communicative action' as a new rationale. By this term he means a set of actions coordinated "not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding" (Habermas 1: 286). The communicative action aims at reaching agreement and mutual assent between competent speakers and acting subjects. A rational agreement achieved through communicative action

excludes force and coercion. Communicative action corresponds to a symbolic interaction between subjects to realize the social purposes and the social norms in an intersubjective medium. In contrast to the action patterns that the system imposes on the individuals, “there are communicative actions characterized by other relations to the world and connected with validity claims *different* from truth and effectiveness” (Habermas 1: 16).

For modern societies, Habermas speaks of a rationalization of everyday communication and a blockage of the communicative action by purposive-rationality due to the growing complexity of subsystems of goal-directed action. Habermas makes use of the terms ‘system’ and ‘lifeworld (Lebenswelt),’ firstly to clarify the tension between purposive and communicative rationalities. Secondly, he uses these terms to identify where the communicative action works and how it is blocked. Andrew Feenberg, in his “Marcuse or Habermas: Two Critiques of Technology,” summarizes these concepts and comments on their position to each other in modern societies:

[This is] the basis for the contrast that runs through *The Theory of Communicative Action* between *system*, media regulated institutions, and *lifeworld*, the sphere of everyday communicative interactions. The central pathology of the modern societies is the colonization of lifeworld by system. The lifeworld contracts as the system expands into it and delinguistifies dimensions of social life which should be linguistically mediated. (Feenberg par. 44)

Lifeworld is “a culturally transmitted and symbolically organized stock of interpretive patterns, constituted by language and culture” (Fornäs 66). According to Habermas, the lifeworld is a complementary concept to communicative action and it is the horizon within which the communicative actions are at play (Habermas 2: 119). Thus, the main challenge between the system and the lifeworld are cumulated around the communicative action. The system tends to decompose the lifeworld to block the communicative action. In his study, Habermas tries to portray the dimensions of the colonization of the lifeworld by the system. Lifeworld is progressively rationalized, and the system aims at transforming the contexts of actions in the lifeworld. In modern societies, lifeworld is penetrated by formally organized domains of action, like the economy and the state administration.

Habermas focuses on these two factors and points at the “*mediatization of the lifeworld* by system imperatives,” which takes the pathological form of “*internal colonization*” of the lifeworld (Habermas 2: 305). For him, money and power, as two dominant types of medium, mark the lifeworld by the institutionalization of purposive-rational economic and administrative actions in modern societies.

The growth of the systemic complexity and the blockage of communicative actions by other kinds of media create an effect called ‘delinguistification.’ The system imperatives replace the intersubjective medium of linguistic communication. Habermas puts it forward as in the following: “Delinguistified media of communication such as money and power, connects up interactions in space and time into more and complex networks that no one has to comprehend or be responsible for” (Habermas 2: 184). This misconduct of the communicative sphere by the system is the generator of instrumentalization, atomization, and even de-personalization of individuals. Under these circumstances, there appears the “*cultural impoverishment*” and colonization of the public sphere (Habermas 2: 327). By the effect of the reification on the public sphere, the commodity form becomes the measure of the relations between individuals and becomes the ruling rationale in the action types in daily conduct of life.

As it can be observed, many points of criticism by Habermas, concerning the modern state administration and modern capitalism, share the concerns of Henri Lefebvre and Guy Debord. Specifically, Habermas’ theses about the colonization of the lifeworld and the impoverishment of culture have a familial link to those of the French Marxists. The decrease in the communicative capacity and the consequent fall in democratic capacity are a result of the growing tendencies of commercialization and bureaucratization in the modern societies. And the gradual loss of intersubjectivity in Lefebvre and Debord corresponds to the colonization of the lifeworld and the relevant weakening of communicative action in Habermas. Furthermore, their ideas about the dominant logic of commodity forms that rule through imaginary capital in the everyday life have resonance in Habermas’ notions on the transformations in the public sphere through the systemic impositions on action patterns, culture, and language. Elaborating Horkheimer and Adorno’s theses

on the cultural aspects of modern administration and modern capitalism, Habermas sketches out an in depth picture of the contradictions and problematics of modernity.

However, an important point should not be ignored in Habermas's criticism of economic and administrative power in late modernity. No matter how ardently he manages to underline the problems of capitalist structures in late modernity, Habermas is still a defender of modernism and keeps modernity as his frame of reference. That is, he strictly rejects post-structuralist approaches for the analysis of social movements and postmodernist attempts of resistance formations. For him, the colonization and impoverishment of the lifeworld by systemic forces are authoritarian and dystopian; however, modernity for Habermas also has an emancipatory side, which promises an extension and growth in the communicative capacities and rationality. Commercialization and bureaucratization always give rise to counterpowers for the defense of the lifeworld. By way of new social movements, such as feminism, ecologism and youth cultures, alternative cultural practices are created within cultural interaction as counter-discourses. Thus, the strength of communicative rationality is re-formulated and manifested through these cultural counter-practices in modernity (Fornäs 70-71).

Habermas is critical of Foucault, and his post-structuralist modeling of power relations. He dedicates two chapters to Foucault in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, and one of these chapters is completely about Foucault's conceptualization and analysis of power. In his study, Habermas mainly criticizes Foucault for leaving no sound justification for resistances. Power is everywhere and omnipresent within various levels of social formations for Foucault. At this very point, Habermas objects to Foucault and argues that Foucault's concept of resistance or counterpower is not different from the powers they struggle against. He concludes, "Every counterpower already moves within the horizon of the power that it fights; and it is transformed, as soon as it is victorious, into a power complex that provokes a new counterpower;" and significantly posits that "the validity claims of counter-discourses count no more and no less than those of the discourses in power" (*Philosophical Discourse* 281).

Habermas focuses on the ambiguity in Foucault's theories on power as to why there is a need for resistance and how it is possible to raise clearly-defined counterpower against the all-pervasive power in the social body. According to him, Foucault thinks through a value-free analysis of power and consequently he lacks normativity in his theory (Habermas, *Philosophical Discourse* 284). On the contrary to a more definite and clear-cut model of power and the resistant capacities in late modernity drawn by Habermas, Foucault conceives of power and resistance in more flexible forms, strategies and moves. Bo Isenberg, in "Habermas on Foucault: Critical Remarks," argues that Foucault's notion that power is everywhere is actually a 'polymorphism,' without given demarcations and positions. In this respect, Habermas' communicative action and speech community, as counterpowers, require a political and moral universalism whereas Foucault moves towards the local dimensions due to his micropolitics of power (Isenberg 301). Essentially, the type of tension between Foucault and Habermas also indicates the agenda of post-Marxist theories concerning power and resistance.

## **1.6. POST-MARXISM**

Generally, post-Marxism is used to refer to the survival attempts of the Marxist theory facing off the postmodernist challenges from the 1960s onwards. More specifically, it refers to the post-structuralist influences on the Marxist theories, initiated by the postmodernist approaches to social theories and ideology critique. Stuart Sim, in his *Post-Marxism: An Intellectual History*, tends to see post-Marxist thinkers as comprising two main divisions: "*post-Marxism* (those thinkers who, however regretfully, have rejected their Marxist past) and *post-Marxism* (those who, like Laclau and Mouffe, have set out to reformulate Marxist theory to encompass new movements such as poststructuralism, postmodernism, and second-wave feminism)" (1). Thus, post-Marxism is taken here as in the double sense of the term, as explained by Sim above. Because both attitudes endeavor to reconstruct the conceptions of ideology and power struggle from within the Marxist terminology, either to modify or to pass beyond classical Marxism. So, both of these two approaches are necessary for our theoretical frame to conceptualize the dominant hegemonic practices in the cultural and social spheres under late capitalism.

While postmodernism is taken as a form of neo-conservatism or idealism for some Marxist thinkers, it provides the necessary resources to grasp the nature of social phenomena in contemporary capitalism for others. Postmodernism and the postmodernist paradigms, on the other hand, are the inevitable consequences of the changing faces of capitalism in its shifting relations of production, methods of exerting power and ways of social organization. In this respect, postmodernism, and the relevant post-structuralist theoretical devices as summarized above, provide a retouch for Marxist orthodoxy. In fact, from the 1980s onwards, this penetration of the post-structuralist sensibilities into Marxist criticism has been a consequence of the attempts of the neo-Marxist thinkers. In this era of epochal change, issues like the nature of historical development, causality, knowledge, power and subjectivity have been reconsidered by Marxism, especially with the momentum Althusser and Foucault gave to the discussion of these subjects. To summarize, the decline of the class-based politics, the stress on the cultural sphere for the analysis of power relations, the rise of local resistances instead of revolutionary projects, the multiplicity in identity formations have been among the most blatant of the late Marxist arguments. These critical perspectives are present in the post-Marxist theories, appropriated to the post-structuralist evaluation of the late capitalist cultural issues in the late twentieth century.

Post-Marxism have peaked by the 1980s as a product of the emergent political, economic and cultural forms; and this portrait of late modernity is reflected in the forms of power relations and various practices of resistance. In Western societies, according to Talcott Parsons, “The old grievances of tyranny, privilege, and class in the Marxian sense are less central than they once were;” and he adds that “In terms of power and authority, society has become more decentralized and associational rather than more concentrated” (300). Centralized control and direct manipulation of social elements are not the realities of the new epoch. Instead of a central authority of the state or a monolithic power of the dominant class, the postmodern and late capitalist sense of epochal novelty poses many different kinds of power and oppression; and in consequence, there appear many kinds of identities and resistances (Wood 8).

By the 1980s, the neo-liberal policies were on the rise by Thatcher and Reagan regimes in England and the United States (Kellner, “Western Marxism” 18). The conservatism of the period along with the high speed globalization of industries all over the world required critical focus. And post-Marxism acted a role of appropriation for the critical social theories of the time. The shift from high capitalism of the mid-twentieth century to the late capitalism of the late-twentieth century has necessitated a change in the critical apparatus. Briefly, the shift took place from monopoly capitalism to consumer capitalism, from Fordist relations of production to post-Fordism, and in short from industrial society to post-industrial society. In addition, the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union brought forth serious criticisms and attacks on Marxist orthodoxy. The new versions of Marxist critique flourished regarding the poststructuralist paradigm shifts, multicultural approaches, identity politics, and discursive practices as the new criteria for ideology critique (Kellner, “Western Marxism,” 18). Under these circumstances, post-Marxist critics were in the effort of dismissing totalizing theories, scientific orthodoxy, teleological visions and the sacrifice of the individual for the whole; instead, they favored pluralism, difference, skepticism towards authority, political spontaneity and the cause of new social movements (Sim 3).

The appreciation of power struggles by post-Marxism is post-structuralist in nature, in doing away with the rigid antagonisms and determinisms of the classical theory. Class is not the only predominant element in all kinds of social struggles. On the contrary, Marxist thinkers have tended to appreciate the vitality of the non-class struggles like environmental activism, feminism, civil rights movements etc. In other words, Marxism has been rethought in “non-deterministic directions,” expanding the scope of social struggles or even appreciating “the class effects of what has been regarded as non-class struggles” (Callari and Cullenberg 7). In the same sense, Etienne Balibar, in his article “Has ‘the World’ Changed?” assures us that class struggle has degenerated, but this does not mean that it was not real. It didn’t simply vanish out of a sudden for him, but it takes new forms. For him, “since this ‘historical’ class struggle has come to an end – which is *not* a return to the ‘starting point’ – we have irreversibly entered the era in which problems of emancipation in ‘the world’ are multilateral” (Balibar 410).



Since the decline of the stress on the class politics is the mark of power politics in the late twentieth century, the sites of struggles have to be remapped to illuminate power relations. Actually, some major re-locations can be identified as to the sites of power struggles. By the influence of post-structuralist thinkers such as Foucault, the political realm ceases to be the site of power struggles, and the “theoretical focus shifts to discourse (the symbolic articulation of the social relationships)” (Cloud 226). Especially, Foucault’s notions on the relation between power and knowledge have a say on the nature of this shift. Furthermore, Foucault’s historical analysis of the production of meaning and truth through discursive formations in institutions such as medicine, legal systems and education is also very significant. Thus, truth, justice, ethics and other forms of conduct are relocated in the act of symbolic construction and discursive practices in the postmodern era (Brown 24-25). In conclusion, power is also constructed discursively and exercised in symbolic practices. Power is implicated in the attempts to “fix or uncouple and change particular representational relation of meanings” because “some representations achieve greater power than others” (Clegg 152-53).

Moreover, the centrality of the state, its institutions and bureaucracy in the analysis of power becomes slightly outmoded as the shift takes place from strict rationalism of modernity to the multiplied forms of domination in post-modernity. In fact, of the trinity of “the modern state, organization and market” in modernism, “it is the market which has emerged the dominant term of the trinity;” and consequently market has become “the privileged pathway through which all traffic increasingly must pass” (Clegg 273-74). In the minor scale, consumer society is the locus of power relations. The level of consumption and mass culture are some of the new dominant realms, apart from the political realm, where power and subordination is exercised (Cloud 226). On the major scale, the power diffusion follows the diffusion of capital in international level. Especially through the global economy of the transnational flow of capital, power gains a diversity of forms and fluidity of dissemination.

### **1.6.1. The New Times Project: Globalization, Post-Fordism, and the Proliferation of the Sites of Social Antagonism**

“The New Times” project, initiated by Stuart Hall and his colleagues in the periodical *Marxism Today* in 1988, touches on the vital points of the epochal change of capitalism and the changing dynamics in the critical perspectives. The project is inclined to analyze the crisis of the Left in a period of rise in the right wing politics and conservatism, in the Thatcherite and Reaganite times of the late 1980s. The project initially aims at a diagnosis of the qualitative change of capitalism in advanced capitalist societies like Britain and the USA. They argue that the new age of capitalism is characterized by diversity, differentiation and fragmentation. Stuart Hall and the New Times thinkers have some basic propositions to sketch out the present condition of capitalism and changing power politics. The change in new times is, firstly, the outcome of the decline of Fordist production and a shift towards post-Fordism with its cultural and political consequences. Secondly, the other major feature of New Times is that the changes in the course of capitalist production and emergent power relations transcend the nation state and they are global in their consequences. Finally, the utmost stress is on the proliferation of the sites of antagonism and struggles due to the formation of new subjects, new social movements and collective identities, enlarging the sphere of politics (Hall and Jacques 17). In short, New Times refers to the post-Marxist sensibilities in figuring out the dynamics of late capitalism and the relevant power relations in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Instead of mass production of standardized goods, protected national markets, strictly hierarchical bureaucracies and workplace discipline of Fordism, post-Fordism introduces a series of new conditions (Murray 38-40). As Hall summarizes, post-Fordism refers to flexibility in the older forms of production and labor, and is another name for post-industrialist societies. More specifically, in post-Fordism, the shift is to the increase in production of information technologies. In terms of the conditions of production, there are more flexible specialized and decentralized forms of labor process and work organization, and more flexible organization of work time and part-time working in the domain of the paid work. Finally, the globalization of the financial markets and the substitution of individual money holders with the

multinational corporations define the face of the change in New Times (Hall 118). By this expansion of global capital, there is a parallel expansion of the subordinating force of monetary power through commodification of social relationships in the world picture.

Capitalism in the late twentieth century, thus, has gone into a number of structural changes. As New Times thinkers suggest, global capitalism has entered a period of “disorganization and dispersion, instead of remaining concentrated and consolidated in discrete sites of production” (Cloud 230). As mentioned above, employment of labor and its organization has changed as well. That’s why Marxist critical perspectives have needed to re-structure their propositions as to the capitalist economy and the power relations it generates, given the momentum by post-Fordist transformations in the economy and the related post-modern shifts in culture. Callari and Ruccio argue that the ontology of labor and the “essentialist construction of the economy as a homogenous space” in classical Marxism is outdated (Callari and Ruccio 12). In this sense, post-Marxism tends to discard the conceptualization of the space of economy as merely an expression of the internal principle of the division of labor. Yet, the space of economy is defined as a space of heterogeneity and as a space of diverse communities. The cultural ramifications of this proposition in the economy go together with the creation of heterogeneous social spaces within which resistance to capitalism takes place “in the myriad of crevices and fissures that (as postmodernism presumes) dot the social landscape” (Callari and Ruccio 8, 21).

That is to say, the transformation in the relations of production in post-Fordism is reflected in the pluralization of the sites of power within the social and cultural landscape. Especially, power relations have penetrated into the cultural sphere; and this means not a de-politicization but a politicization of culture. The sphere of symbolic production has become of great importance for the relations of power since the dissemination of consumption practices and the distribution of commodity relations take place in there. With the rise of information technologies, electronic communication and the media, power runs through images; and material practices of subordination operate by the symbolic and the imaginary. As Hall suggests, “Through marketing, layout and style, the ‘image’ provides the mode of

representation and fictional narrativization of the body on which so much of modern consumption depends” (128). Thanks to the modern communication and density of televised images, as Alvin Gouldner emphasized previously in 1976, there is intensification in the nonlinguistic and iconic component in communication. This increase in the “iconic imagery” is “a technologically implanted paleosymbolism” and it has gradually replaced the conventional printed objects central to ideologies (Gouldner 307). Therefore, televised imagery and the iconic component in culture pose a new modality for the diffusion of ideologies in society. On one hand, the ideological power of capitalism is produced and disseminated by the culture industry; and on the other, this image culture can be reutilized for resistant visions in the consumer society. Frank Mort concludes: “Commodities and their images are multi-accented, they can be pushed and pulled into the service of resistant demands” (166).

Due to a number of reasons mentioned above, the prevailing point of the Marxist approaches in the late twentieth century is the proliferation and the multiplication of the points of power and conflict in the late modern or post-modern societies. Therefore, Hall’s argument is a valid statement for the post-Marxist credo. There isn’t only “one ‘power game’ at all, more a network of strategies and powers and their articulations – and thus, a politics which is always positional” (Hall 130). The spheres that have been regarded apolitical by the classical theory are loaded with politics of power and conflict due to an expansion of points of power and a multiplication of identity groups. Post-Marxist politics in this sense highlights “the multidimensionality and openness of the social space characteristic of a reformulated Marxism,” and “the notion of a surplus of identities;” that makes possible “a radically democratic class politics” (Callari and Ruccio 3-4). Writing and theorizing within this aura of paradigmatic changes in culture and theory, Frederic Jameson, and Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe go into reformulations of the Marxist criticism of the material conditions of the society. While Jameson is involved in a criticism of the postmodern social and cultural environments with the Marxist terminology, Laclau and Mouffe insert postmodern critical perspectives into Marxism to pursue a project of radical democracy (Best and Kellner 49).

### **1.6.2. Fredric Jameson: Postmodernism as the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism**

Fredric Jameson goes into an inquiry of postmodernism, through the Marxist perspective, within the American context. His works posit postmodernism as a new mode of cultural production and network of economic relationships. The term postmodern implies something more than merely aesthetic. It is both a result of a certain paradigm change in economy and has political consequences. Jameson, in his most-debated article “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,” originally published in 1984 in *New Left Review* and later extended into a complete volume in 1991, takes postmodernism as “a cultural dominant,” meaning that it is the dominant cultural logic of late capitalism (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 4). By taking postmodernism as a cultural dominant, Jameson goes beyond diagnosing it only as a style in aesthetic production and he tries to situate this cultural logic within the historical evolution of capitalism. Through this analysis of postmodernism as the latest moment of capitalism, Jameson has the effort to map the emergent terrains of power relations in this new context. In doing so, as Homer states, Jameson

has consistently argued for an open, pluralistic, Marxist political and cultural discourse. . . . Thus Jameson can appropriate and incorporate the insights of alternative and non-Marxist theory while retaining Marxism’s overarching historical narrative. Jameson effectively ascribes local or contingent validity to many of the postmodern or post-structuralist critiques of Marxism while in turn foregrounding the limitations and historical constraints of their positions. In short, Jameson has rigorously sought to produce a sophisticated, non-reductionist, non-mechanistic form of Marxism able to meet the challenge of providing an understanding and critique of contemporary society and culture, of addressing the critique of post-Marxist theory and, finally of reasserting Marxism’s traditional emancipatory narrative. (Homer 5)

Postmodernism, as the new context of cultural, social and political relations, is rather different than the logic of the previous stages of capitalism. Hence, along with capitalism, Marxism has had to go under a transformation in assessing the cultural and economic logic of the period it deals with. Jameson argues about this in his article titled “Five theses on Actually Existing Marxism” as follows: “ ‘Post-Marxisms’ regularly emerge at those moments in which capitalism itself undergoes a structural metamorphosis” (175). Therefore, Jameson examines the forms of power

relations, their cultural and aesthetic appearances, and the new economic context of late capitalism under the title postmodernism, as Horkheimer and Adorno did once for the cultural production of capitalism under modernism in the 1940s. As Homer concludes: “For Jameson, it is not a question of Marxism and/or postmodernism, for example, but rather the analysis and critique of contemporary culture and theory through a Marxian understanding of history and society” (174).

Jameson’s definition of postmodernism as the cultural logic of late capitalism basically requires a periodization of capitalism, shifting relations of production and distribution. He refers to Ernest Mandel’s work *Late Capitalism* (1972) a couple of times in his book on postmodernism, making use of the epochal segmentations of capitalism and its evolution. According to Jameson and to Mandel as well, the three fundamental stages of capitalism in chronological order are the market capitalism, the monopoly stage (imperialism), and the contemporary stage of multinational capital. It is the organization of this third stage that Jameson depends in his analysis of the postmodern, and he asserts that “every position on postmodernism in culture . . . [is necessarily] an implicitly or explicitly political stance on the nature of multinational capitalism today” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 3).

This third stage of capitalism, namely multinational or consumer capitalism, is global in character. It refers to the post-Fordist production and distribution of goods, multinational corporations and the transnational flow of financial and cultural capital. The late capitalist societies are also represented by almost interchangeable adjectives and synonymous titles such as post-industrial society, consumer society, media society, information society and etc. All these headings derive from the transforming power of the global economy in its disseminating, seeping and manipulating practices concerning the cultural and political. Therefore, the power relations and resistant acts against power should be grasped via the new structure of the market system and through the perspective of the dissemination of the transnational capital.

Economy and the market have become the generator of ideologies, cultural forms and politics under late capitalism. In addition, it is also the generator of power struggles and the forms of these struggles. For Jameson, the market is the terrain of

ideological struggle, and “ ‘politics’ now means simply the care and feeding of the economic apparatus” (*Postmodernism* 265). Therefore, the term postmodern points at a series of cultural and social practices, aesthetic production and mental habits, which primarily derive from the new relations of production under late capitalism. Postmodern, then, seeps into the quotidian dimensions of everyday life in the society by way of cultural forms and consumption. And furthermore, as Jameson asserts in the introduction to his book, the ideological task of postmodernism is to coordinate the new forms of social and cultural practice with the new forms of economic production and organization, namely the new global division of labor (*Postmodernism* xiv). In the post-industrial society, the shifting relations of production, as summarized above, have shaken the primacy of industrial production and the binary class struggle. The new flexible forms and organization of production and labor, along with the globalizing transnational business, have become the contemporary paradigms and the underlying patterns for the power relations.

As it is seen, Jameson privileges the articulating power of economy on ideology and culture as the classical Marxist thinkers did. However, he does not portray this relation in a one-dimensional way. On the contrary, he sees economy as the generator of webs of power operating through cultural production. Jameson remodels the antagonistic conceptions of power that have been put so far. Contrary to the sovereign power of Hobbes’s absolute state, namely Leviathan, Jameson posits Adam Smith’s explanations about the market economy as the alternative model of power in the contemporary era. He states: “Hobbes needs state power to tame and control the violence of human nature and competition; in Adam Smith the competitive system, the market, does the taming and controlling all by itself, no longer needing the absolute state. . . . The market is thus the Leviathan in sheep’s clothing” (*Postmodernism* 273). In this sense, Jameson resonates with Foucault’s replacement of monarchic power with a strategic one; in that Jameson’s model, too, depends on the strategic accumulations, flows and networks of global capital as the source of power. Likewise for Jameson, resembling Foucault’s theories of power networks, the widely dispersed network of capital and its global character in late capitalism puts forth the same notion of the dissemination of power covering all spaces.

The sphere of culture has an expanding area in late capitalism. Jameson talks about an expansion of the cultural sphere in parallel with the expansion of the sphere of commodities. The sphere of culture in postmodernism, as an expression of the logic of late capitalism, is characterized by commodification, reification and consumerism, which yields the relation of the cultural to the economic. Late capitalism is present in the quotidian through cultural production, which means that “the cultural and the economic, thereby collapse back into one another and say the same thing” (Jameson, *Postmodernism* xxi). Culture, in the contemporary stage of capitalism, has become a business for Jameson, as it was an industry for the Frankfurt School. Yet, Jameson distinguishes the modernist and postmodernist understandings of the sphere of culture: “modernism was still minimally and tendentially the critique of the commodity and the effort to make it transcend itself. Postmodernism is the consumption of sheer commodification as a process” (*Postmodernism* x). The economic and the commercial have become cultural, compatible with the characterization of the contemporary society as consumer society. The sphere of culture has roots in the economic and ramifications in the political for both economic and political are rather consequences “of the more universal saturation and penetration of commodification itself” (Jameson, “Five Theses,” 181).

Jameson sketches out some specific characteristics of the postmodern cultural dominant about the sphere of culture and politics, which have direct influences on the aesthetic and theoretical production. The outstanding feature of this late stage of capitalism is the sense of depthlessness it evokes. In consequence, Jameson points at two major terrains that are under the impact of the effacement of the depths. These two terrains are historical and political representation. Briefly, the dynamics of the cultural sphere in the postmodern era, in the final analysis, rob off the essentials of a sense of history and political struggle.

Jameson defines the concept of the postmodern as an age “that has forgotten how to think historically” (*Postmodernism* ix). The image culture and infinite textual production in postmodernism is the great engine of the effacement of historicity. In visual arts and literature, the production of works in various styles, which belong to



several different periods but co-exist at the same time, efface the sense of historical flow. In fact, these stylistics point at a “random cannibalization of all the styles of the past” (*Postmodernism* 18). Jameson refers to Guy Debord’s society of spectacle and claims that the past as a referent is bracketed in the contemporary society of image saturation. Furthermore, as Jameson asserts, the past is turned into “a vast collection of images, multitudinous photographic simulacrum,” and the spatial expansion of this image culture creates a spatial logic that in turn modifies historical time (*Postmodernism* 18).

Media seems to give the greatest push in image addiction and the consequent weakening in the sense of historicity. The products in the market are the very content of the media image for Jameson; and in this sense, he talks about a “symbiosis between the market and the media” because the commodities in the market are identified with their media images (*Postmodernism* 275). The cultural logic of late capitalism, manifest in the aesthetics and media, implies a blockage for a sense of historical understanding together with the possibilities of political action or resistance. Jameson very clearly posits that this postmodern culture of image addiction, “[by] transforming the past into visual mirages, stereotypes, or texts, effectively abolishes any practical sense of the future and of the collective project” (*Postmodernism* 46).

In literary texts, the same principle of different yet co-existing styles as in the visual-culture creates a de-differentiation of the stylistic differences. In fact, the distinct private styles in modern literature are abolished due to postmodern pastiche. In postmodern cultural practices, for Jameson, “Modernist styles thereby become postmodernist codes,” which, necessarily, have recourse in the political realm (*Postmodernism* 17). Ideological or theoretical models are replaced by discourses and textual play (*Postmodernism* 12). Jameson directs his critical gaze on the impossibility of a collective project in a degree of social fragmentation and claims that “the advanced capitalist countries are now a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm” (*Postmodernism* 17). He means that the proliferation of professional and disciplinary jargons, replication of social codes and flourishing of

micro-political groups, such as ethnic and gender and etc are the consequences of a postmodern era.

Therefore, in the cultural logic of late capitalism ideologies turn into discourses as the theories turn into textual play. This gives way to what Jameson calls 'ideological delegitimation.' Theories no longer compete among themselves to acquire legitimacy. Instead, an ideology is a code or a discourse among others. Jameson refers to a warfare of various discourses and borrows the term "discursive struggle" from Stuart Hall to point out the "delegitimation of opposing ideologies" (*Postmodernism* 397). According to him, no theories of cultural politics have been able to break away from the gravity of capital. He refers to the idea that cultural theories have lost the 'critical distance' to cultural acts because both culture and the critical discourses remain in the zone of the capital. This is late capitalism's "language of co-optation;" and thus, local, countercultural and political resistances are absorbed by the system since they cannot situate themselves in a distance from it (*Postmodernism* 48).

The rise in the non-class political practices is a mark of the postmodern era. There emerge new social movements and small groups in accordance with the restructuration of the global economy and the global division of labor. However, as these new social groups are composed of too distinct voices that are unable to form a unity and achieve a collective project. This multiplicity of emergent social groups and movements are like the endless variety of goods in the market. As with a proliferation of critical discourses and textual play, which have lost the critical distance from the capitalist system, this multiplicity of new social groups indicate a similar pacification. In fact, Jameson thinks that pluralism has become the ideology of social groups and the political representations of these social movements are cast into "an excess of representational consumption" as that of the goods in the market (*Postmodernism* 320).

Resulting from the excess of new political identities and heterogeneous social formations, autonomy of resistant movements is abolished. In like manner Terry Eagleton asserts that difference, hybridity and heterogeneity "are native to the capitalist mode of production" and adds: "So if these ways of thinking put the skids

under the system at one level, they reproduce its logic at another” (21). Thus, the resistant political or countercultural acts are too much enclosed by the multinational networks of capital and cannot be thought distinct from this network. According to Jameson, these new networks create a loss of autonomy of any local or national dissent for they cannot “uncouple or delink themselves from the world market” (Jameson, “Five Theses,” 182).

### **1.6.3. Postmodern Spatiality and Power Relations: Fredric Jameson, Henry Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau**

Late capitalism has a new logic of spatiality as its cultural hallmark. Fredric Jameson stresses the dominance of spatiality over time in postmodernism. The new spatiality is omnipresent in the cultural logic of late capitalism through various levels such as postmodern architecture, urban planning and global space of multinational capital. And this logic of spatiality is imposed with levels of power relations. In his book on postmodernism, he refers to Henri Lefebvre’s seminal work, *The Production of Space*, to emphasize the dominance of space in the postmodern era. In this work, Lefebvre basically proposes that space is not a given neutral entity but that “(Social) space is a (social) product” (*Production* 26). Secondly, for him, every society creates spaces peculiar to its mode of production. Each society, more specifically each mode of production, produces and organizes spaces due to its own dynamics. Social space, determined by the mode and relations of production, thus organizes and assigns places to a number of groups and practices. It engenders and disciplines a number of practices from the relations of age and gender groups to familial relations, from the reproduction of the labor power to the consumers, generally the reproduction of all kinds of social relations (Lefebvre, *Production* 32).

Hence, the production of space is closely connected to production of power. In other words, Lefebvre sees the role of space as knowledge and action defined by the existing mode of production, which means generating power on behalf of the dominant relations of production. At this point, Lefebvre goes back to Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to show how spaces are loaded with power relations. Hegemony refers to the rule of a social class and mode of production over the society via a set of social components, such as culture, knowledge, policies, leaders,

intellectuals (Lefebvre, *Production* 10). Lefebvre, this time, employs the term hegemony for the rule of a bourgeoisie and for multinational corporations in the present context. He claims that spaces are not passive loci of social relations but they are modified by the hegemony of the late capitalist cultural logic to reproduce the system. Therefore, it is possible to speak of urban and global capitalist spaces. Jameson posits that Lefebvre's focus on space functions to "acknowledge the increasing share, in our life experience fully as much as in late capitalism itself, of the urban and the new globality of the system" (Jameson, *Postmodernism* 364). Jameson further asserts that the present modes of production in late capitalism are distinctively spatial compared to previous ones in the earlier stages of capitalism and adds that "postmodern reality here is somehow more spatial than everything else" (*Postmodernism*, 365).

Jameson sees postmodern space in a relentless saturation that leaves no unpenetrated and empty places. In its depthless quality, postmodern spatiality locates individuals in a set of discontinuous realities and fragmented experiences, whose frame ranges from the sphere of private life to the decentering of global capital (*Postmodernism* 413). Jameson makes a high level of abstraction and employs cartographic models to map the relations of power within postmodern spatiality, which he calls 'cognitive mapping.' Cognitive mapping is a form of 'political aesthetic' for Jameson, which aims at locating the individual subjects within the network of global capital. Apart from local and national scales, Jameson points at a need to cognitively map the class relations on a global and international scale. For Jameson, cognitive mapping is essential for the renewal of socialist politics in a postmodern age (Homer 139). Jameson puts the definition and the use of cognitive mapping as follows:

An aesthetic of cognitive mapping – a pedagogical political culture which seeks to endow the individual subject with some new heightened sense of its place in the global system – . . . [has to] invent radically new forms in order to do it [the dialectic of political representation] justice. . . . the new political art (if it is possible at all) will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say, to its fundamental object – the world space of multinational capital . . . in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial

as well as our social confusion. The political form of postmodernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as a spatial scale. (*Postmodernism* 54)

As it is seen in Jameson's sentences, the possibility of political resistance and dissenting action against global capitalism is rather remote. Because the global networks of multinational capital are too overwhelming to let any autonomous or local zones of resistance against the system. Consequently, "Political resistance to postmodernism would appear, for Jameson, to reside in a space outside of late capitalism itself, a space which late capitalism, by its very nature, has abolished" (Homer 145). However, Michel de Certeau, in his *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), speaks about the possibility of more practical popular procedures of resistance against the system, flourishing from the domain of everyday life. In line with Lefebvre and the Situationist intellectuals, de Certeau is involved in the analysis of the social and spatial relations produced by the late capitalist mode of production. The focus of his analysis is the tension between the capitalist system and the dominated element, namely the consumers. His inquiry consists of the popular practices of resistance, which transforms the everyday practices into a political domain. His account of popular resistance contains a set of practices like consumption, language use, games and folklore; yet, in general, his analyses of various kinds of practices are tangent to the politics of space.

De Certeau steps ahead for his theories of popular resistance by referring to Foucault's microphysics of power and its technologies which are extensively disseminated over the society. The vast expansion of discipline through minuscule operations in the realm of the quotidian creates networks of power. De Certeau's main task is to sketch out how the dominated, especially the consumers, compose "a network of antidisziplin" via a re-appropriation of dominant administrative structures (de Certeau xv). His focus is on the manipulation and the re-use of the components of the dominant culture by the practices of 'making do' (bricolage). The users (bricolent) reappropriate the spaces of socio-cultural production through "innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy" (de Certeau xiv). The point is that the popular procedures of resistance

operate by clandestine forms and are dispersed as extensively as the networks of power and discipline are.

De Certau makes a differentiation between strategical and tactical actions to point at the administrative and the resistant practices, respectively. These two terms of military terminology explicate two contrasting types of logic in the use of space. De Certau explains:

I call a 'strategy' the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power can be isolated from an 'environment.' A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper (propre)* and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it. Political, economic, and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model. (xix)

On the contrary, a tactic operates in a different logic: "I call a 'tactic,' on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a 'proper' (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place" (de Certau xix). That is to say tactics lack a certain locus of action whereas strategies require a defined space of action. The tactical subversion of the spaces of strategic action is the core in de Certau's inquiry of the popular procedures of resistance in the everyday.

Strategies produce spaces and impose disciplines and a set of practices on them whereas tactics function by trespassing the limits of space by manipulating and diverting the power relations. The strategies of power are mimicked by tactics and subverted into forms of resistance. According to De Certau, "Innumerable ways of playing and foiling the other's game, that is, the space instituted by others, characterize the subtle, stubborn, resistant activity of groups which, since they lack their own space, have to get along in a network of already established forces and representations" (18). Thus, tactics are transformatory in nature, and introduce resistant forces into the power relations from the very tracks the strategies follow.

The tactical reversal of the strategies of power relations mostly takes place in the domain of consumption. In fact, De Certau re-defines consumption as a creative

activity, rather than a sheer passivity. Consumption is a subversive practice for it invents new ways of using the products imposed by the dominant economic order.

He notes:

In reality, a rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called “consumption” and characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation (the result of the circumstances), its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in short its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products but in an art of using those imposed on it. (de Certau 31)

The tactics of consumption employs ways of tricking and outwitting the dominant cultural practices. It is the way how the weak makes use of the imposed systems of the strong. According to de Certau, in the contemporary system, consumers have become immigrants because “[t]he system in which they move about is too vast to be able to fix them in one place” (40). They wander and move about between the limits of defined spaces of strategies. Their tactical and unfixable moves seem like introducing mobility and heterogeneity into the global spaces of cultural economy which gradually grows more homogenous. Yet, to what extent do these tactical reversals create spaces out of the dominant cultural logic and economic order remains a problem.

De Certau is involved in more practical forms of resistance rather than a political one. Hence he looks for an emancipatory politics within the practices of everyday life. Yet, it is argued that practices of resistance in the domain of consumption or tactical games of outwitting are not absolutely “oppositional” or “progressive” (Highmore 153). Since the tactics only designed for subverting the dominant, but not for abolishing it completely, they are dependent on the strategies. They cannot escape the *proper*, “they are inside but the other” (Highmore 159).

Both Jameson and de Certau consider the multiplicity of social antagonisms and the ideology of difference dominant in late capitalism and in the rationality of postmodernism. Jameson is rather cynical about the transformatory role of the new social movements and the multiplicity of antagonisms. According to Jameson, “since the transitional nature of the new global economy has not yet allowed its classes to

form in any stable way,” the pluralism of the new social groups is insufficient to fill the structural role of the class and lack the functionality to constitute a subject or an agency (*Postmodernism* 348). Similarly, de Certeau dwells on the popular procedures of resistance and games of outwitting the dominant, which, in fact, point at the proliferation of the sites of antagonism. Though de Certeau’s study of tactics and strategies are functional in working out the distinct roles of subversive practices in the power game of late capitalism, they need to be handled under a theory that justifies the pluralism of social antagonisms of power in the late capitalism. This justification takes place in the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe.

#### **1.6.4. Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe: Hegemony and Diversity of Struggles**

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe share the basic anti-capitalist stance of Marxist social theory and search for the ways to realize the project of a pluralist and a radical democracy. While they tend to keep the critical difference with postmodernism in order to evade radical relativism or nihilism, they also tend to reconstruct and reformulate the radical critique within the post-structuralist discourse. They are content with postmodernism’s focus on difference and heterogeneity. Laclau and Mouffe are suspicious about the fixed subject positions; and therefore, they reject the fixed class positions. As this objection against a rigid categorization of social stratification is acknowledged, the emergence of new social movements can be apprehended easier (Sim 15). In the fashion of Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe push the sphere of the political towards the ‘discourse.’ They reflect the discursive constructions of political identities; and they attempt to clarify the “contingent yet legitimating function of the discursive structures that operate throughout the social and political world” (MacKenzie, “Social,” 31). In short, Laclau and Mouffe’s pluralist conceptions of the social forces and power structures at play in society enable to portray the contemporary forms of power around the late twentieth century.

In their most debated work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe stress a need for radical democracy and emphasize the significance of the ideology of difference. They point at the power politics in



contemporary capitalism by referring to the pluralism of social antagonisms and the emergence of various new social movements. They make a re-reading of Marxism and modify some critical concepts in the Marxist canon under the impression of post-structuralist perspective. Their major focus is on the multiplicity of the points of power and resistance; moreover, they are simply against any simplification of the dynamics of antagonisms and reject any theoretical totalization of the social. Hence, they deny the binary model of social antagonism – proletariat vs. bourgeoisie – along with fixed subjects and the notion of social formation as a closed system.

Laclau and Mouffe point at the decreasing necessity of identifying subjects in relation to the relations of production. Social agents cannot be absolutely identified by social classes for social classes are cut across by a number of different subject positions. Thus, the identity of the social agents becomes “a precarious articulation among a number of subject positions” (Laclau and Mouffe 58). The homogeneity of the class subjects is split into randomly integrated subject positions by which the unfixity of every social identity is manifest. Rather than being essential or foundational, social identities are relational for Laclau and Mouffe.

Having in mind the improbability of fixing a class to a single subject, Laclau and Mouffe need to return to Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. Gramsci observed the diverse social elements and dynamics which are ignored by the essentialist approaches of the classical theory; however, Gramsci’s concept of hegemony necessitated a working class as a fundamental unifying principle. The working class, for Gramsci, unifies the relational identities and diverse elements in the hegemonic struggle. Laclau and Mouffe remodel Gramsci’s concept of hegemony. For them, in contrast to Gramsci, class hegemony and “the era of ‘privileged subjects’ of the anticapitalist struggle has been definitively superseded” (Laclau and Mouffe 87). Instead of a theory of hegemony essentially constituted around a social class, they posit the theory of ‘hegemonic articulation.’

Not taking social identity as an essential totality bound with a sense of origin, Laclau and Mouffe see social identities as discursive positions in a society of differences. Identities cannot be fixed in a system of differences. For them, hegemony is an articulatory practice to organize the social and power relations.

Departing from the unfixity of the system of discursive differences, Laclau and Mouffe argue that each social movement or social identity depends on a hegemonic articulation rather than being a pre-given entity. Hegemonic articulation is a discursive practice of partial fixation of a system of differences (Laclau and Mouffe 109). Each struggle or identity is formed through a hegemonic articulation with other struggles or identities. Within the flow of relational identities and differences, Laclau and Mouffe use the term 'nodal points,' borrowing it from Jacques Lacan, to point at the partial fixation of identities. Nodal points refer to the attempt to arrest the flow of differences to construct a center for a social identity (112). Laclau and Mouffe explain the process as in the following:

The practice of articulation, therefore, consists in the construction of nodal points which partially fix meaning; and the partial character of this fixation proceeds from the openness of the social, a result, in its turn of the constant overflowing of every discourse by the infinitude of the field of discursivity. (113)

Inasmuch as the nodal points multiply so do the social identities and struggles. Hence politics, especially in the age of late capitalism, cannot be thought of outside the hegemonic articulations. As Laclau and Mouffe put it: "Hegemony is, quite simply, a political *type of relation, a form*, if one so wishes, of politics; but not a determinable location within a topography of the social. In a given social formation, there can be a variety of nodal points" (139). As the probability of a pure fixation of differences in discourse and in society is abolished, there appears a multiplicity of articulatory practices, which are antagonistic. This ends in an irreducible plurality of the forms of struggle and antagonisms. Since Laclau and Mouffe's concept of hegemony, different from that of Gramsci's, supposes an open character of the social, it privileges the plurality of social antagonisms and the emergence of new social movements due to the multiplied articulatory practices. In other words, Laclau and Mouffe praise the logic of difference, which posits better alternatives to comprehend the logic of power games in the contemporary capitalism in its complexity. As they put it: "We, thus, see that the logic of equivalence is a logic of the simplification of political space, while the logic of difference is a logic of its expansion and increasing complexity" (130).

This complexity of the social formations and plurality of hegemonic articulations is fundamental for the understanding of the late capitalist societies because it produces a multiplicity of political spaces. Laclau and Mouffe put forth that “the proliferation of these political spaces, and the complexity and difficulty of their articulation, are a central characteristic of the advanced capitalist social formations” (137). Diverse forms of resistance and a variety of social antagonisms share a stance against capitalist social relations. A series of numerous diverse struggles, which cannot be reduced to class struggles, is the product of late capitalist era. In short, what Laclau and Mouffe focus on about the new social movements is “the *novel* role they play in articulating that rapid diffusion of social conflictuality to more and more numerous relations which is characteristic today of advanced industrial societies” (159).

In the portrait drawn so far concerning the multiplicity of social antagonisms, the clear-cut model of frontiers is abandoned. Laclau and Mouffe borrow Gramsci’s concept of ‘war of position’ to utilize it for the proliferation of the political spaces in advanced capitalist societies. Within the war of position, it is exposed that there is impossibility for the closure of the social due to a multiplicity of antagonisms, and an ambiguity is introduced into the social instead of a binary model of conflict. Moreover, this multiplicity of the points of rupture in the social leads to a blurring of the frontiers. As they conclude, “insofar as that frontier varies with the fluctuations in the ‘war of position,’ the identity of the actors in confrontation also changes” (Laclau and Mouffe 137).

The rise of new social movements and antagonisms are forms of resistance against the consumer society, commodification and bureaucratization. According to Laclau and Mouffe, the multiformity of these antagonisms and resistances are “not necessarily a negative moment of fragmentation or the reflection of an artificial division resulting from the logic of capitalism” on the contrary to Fredric Jameson’s thought, but “the very terrain which made *possible* a deepening of the democratic revolution” (166). They argue that it is only possible to speak of the deepening of a democratic process after the rejection of the universal working class and the fixed subjects. In fact, they are looking for the possibility of a radical and plural

democracy. This pluralism of antagonisms and identities are radical to the extent that each term of this plurality is not reducible to a unitary or foundational principle, such as working class consciousness (Laclau and Mouffe 167). Moreover, this pluralism is democratic in the sense that the interests of different groups and movements are egalitarian. That is, the defense of the interests of workers cannot be posited at the expense of the rights of women, immigrants or consumers.

The emphasis on the indeterminacy and the openness of the social helps construct a radical political imaginary for Laclau and Mouffe. The multiplicity of political spaces transcends the limited sense of political struggle in classical Marxism. The novelty is in the challenge of the diffuse and distinct struggles against the forms of subordination consequent to the extensions of capitalist relations (Sim 25). These distinct struggles and resistances seek their objectives, yet in the last analysis they share a link of opposing the repressive system altogether. Each struggle signifies not only a concrete aim but also a common opposition to the system of capitalist subordination. Ernesto Laclau explains the nature of these distinct struggles:

In a climate of extreme repression any mobilization for a partial objective will be perceived not only as related to the concrete demand or objectives of that struggle, but also as an act of opposition against the system. This last fact is what establishes the link between a variety of concrete or partial struggles and mobilizations – all of them are seen as related to each other, not because their concrete objectives are intrinsically related but because they are all seen as equivalent in confrontation with the repressive regime. (*Emancipations* 40)

With a major emphasis on difference and diversity in the social, Laclau and Mouffe expand the network of the social (Sim 21). In fact, they posit an expansion in the topography of power and resistance in society. In this expansion of a network, power is never foundational, but relational. Power cannot be comprehended either in a strict binarism or in an extreme diffusion, but it can be conceived through partial articulations of nodal points (Laclau and Mouffe 142). Thus, there is no definite center for power in the social structure. In this respect, Laclau and Mouffe pay heed to Michel Foucault's notion that where there is power, there is resistance (Laclau and Mouffe 152). Thereby, they affirm the centerless diffusion of micropowers and they

perceive that the forms of resistance may be extremely varied in the parallel of the diffusion of power networks.

As emphasized so far, power cannot be pictured in strict causality and as sovereign power. It has penetrated deeply in the sphere of culture, everyday life and quotidian practices. Joanne P. Sharp and her colleagues speak of 'entanglements' while handling this diffuse network of power and resistance. More specifically, power operates through entanglements and knots, which weave networks via entangled geographies and spaces of power: "The argument is hence that the operations of power, domination and resistance must be seen as integrally rolled up in these many articulations of society and space" (Sharp et al. 25). Space is constitutive of power, and various power relations are spatialized in various localities. Power is produced and can be comprehended in processes of extension and associations. As Hinchliffe emphasizes, "Power is now distributed across the dividing lines that characterized the causal account. Indeed, the neat lines have started to dissolve. The threads and strings evoke a much more entangled geography of power" (223).

Furthermore, dominating power and resisting power should not be seen as absolutely separate modes of action. They are embedded within one another and they have the potential to turn into each other: "No moment of domination, in whatever form, is completely free of relations of resistance, and likewise no moment of resistance, in whatever form, is entirely segregated from relations of domination: the one is always present in the constitution of the other" (Sharp et al. 20). If, in the Foucauldian sense, power is everywhere and where there is power there is resistance, Tim Cresswell in his article rightfully asks whether resistance is futile or not. To put it this way, if resistance is the shadow of power, then how does it oppose power? Cresswell claims that resistance should not be regarded as the absence of power, but instead it should be seen as the indicator of the presence of power in certain contexts. He offers to utilize resistance as "diagnostic of power" to delineate various modes and forms of power under inquiry: "By recognizing processes of resistance in particular contexts, we can point to the existence of power and develop strategies for its study and perhaps for its transformation" (Cresswell 265).

This notion of resistance as diagnostic of power is of use to our study to map the power networks in Don DeLillo's novels. In fact, resistance as diagnostic facilitates a critical gaze as to the growing complexity and interwoven knots of the power/resistance networks, similar to Fredric Jameson's notion of cognitive mapping. What should certainly be taken into consideration while thinking about the networks of power is the New World Order that globalization brings about. Globalization is the engine for the ramifications of powers networks in the economic and cultural sphere. In this sense, Roland Robertson, in his essay "Mapping the Global Condition," asserts that there is a much greater global complexity in the contemporary period of late capitalism, especially after the end of the Cold War in 1990. This phase Robertson calls "global uncertainty," which is meant to correspond to paranoia and insecurity (16). The atmosphere of insecurity aroused by paranoia and conspiracy theories, in fact, is also of vital use for this thesis to work out the power networks. It is argued in this thesis that paranoia and conspiracy function as the indicators of power networks, which gain a momentum by the push of globalization.

Just as resistance as diagnostic of power helps a mapping of the complex diffusion of power and resistance, so do paranoia and conspiracy networks to indicate a similar dissemination. The growing complexity that DeLillo's novels put forth in the depiction of paranoia and conspiracy networks imply the equivalent complexity of power diffusion, exempt from definite concentration points and centers. Therefore, the next chapter will look for ways to link the models of the dissemination of power and resistance to the ramifying diffusion of insecurity spawned by paranoia and conspiracy networks in the age of globalization and late capitalism. The way paranoia is used as a means of domination by the strong and it is re-utilized as a tool for resistant impulse will also be scrutinized. The Marxist lexicon of social and cultural criticism put down so far in this chapter will be matched to and re-thought together with the outcomes of conspiracy theorizing. Thus, the intersecting point between these two lines of thought will be dissemination, and network the keyword.

To summarize what have been stated so far about the Marxist accounts of power in this chapter, the notions of strict causality, definite social agents, clear-cut class conflicts, and a unidirectional flow of power are gradually abandoned throughout the evolution of the Marxist thought. What is posed as the substitute for the diagnosis of power and resistance in the social and cultural arenas is the idea of pluralism, fluid frontiers of conflict, and the expansion of power and resistance through networks. The exercise of power generates resistance, and resistance stems from the very heart of the exercise of power; so power and resistance cannot absolutely be disentangled. Furthermore, there appears to be multiple forms of resistance and various modes of conflicts and antagonisms in the context of late capitalism. This plurality and dissemination of power is reflected by and manifest in the conspiracy thinking and paranoia in Don DeLillo's novels.

Finally, the neo-Marxist and the post-Marxist perspectives are going to be employed in this study to sketch out the relations of domination and resistance in its social, cultural and political aspects in DeLillo's novels. The way power seeps into the layers of the social and the way the forms of resistance emerge, modifying the monistic models, will be held out with paramount emphasis in the context of this study and be traced down within DeLillo's works in the following chapters.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**CONSPIRACY THEORY AND PARANOIA**  
**IN RELATION TO POST-MARXISM**

Conspiracy theory basically refers to a set of theoretical attempts to explain what is at work behind some solid historical, political and social events. And therefore, it aims to disclose clandestine plots and hidden conspiratorial practices secretly implemented by a group of plotters. Essentially, conspiracy theory presupposes intentionality and connection between the surfacing incidents that are seemingly disconnected. It aims to construct a narrative of reasons and explanations of political, social or economic nature that lie under some apparent events of national, international or global scale. In this case, the reason for the popularity of conspiracy theories when compared to other disciplines of social sciences is quite significant. Whereas the social sciences mostly focus on the official explanations of events, conspiracy theories, being more of a method of margins, try to penetrate into the hidden domains of the historical, political or economic. In other words, as the sources of conspiracy theory is related to the dark zones of a dominant order, it is expressive of hidden relationships of political, social and economic power. This potential of monitoring what remains secret to the public eye is one of the primary tools this chapter is going to utilize in tracing down the relations of power in Don DeLillo's set of novels.

Conspiracy theory can be considered as emerging under specific conditions as a consequence of peculiar historical, political and economic factors in a definite time and geography. Or alternatively, it can be taken as a timeless model or metaphor for delineating and defining networks of power in a society. In this chapter, both options are evaluated. Firstly, a brief account of the rising importance of conspiracy theorizing in the political and popular imagination of contemporary American society is going to be given. Secondly, the dynamics of conspiracy theory are going to be explicated in order to provide critical perspectives concerning power networks in the political, cultural and social domains of contemporary American life. In fact,



conspiracy theories are highly embedded in political, social and cultural analysis. However, conspiracy theories are not necessarily of a leftist imagination. Yet, it is claimed here that the critical vision that conspiracy theories suggest closely match the agenda of post-Marxist social and cultural criticism summarized in the previous chapter. Especially, in the context of late capitalism and globalizing networks of power relations, post-Marxist criticism and the perspectives of conspiracy theory overlap acutely.

Paranoia, as it is widely accepted in its general sense of the term, is a mental disorder that is manifest in relative or absolute skepticism against the genuineness of phenomena and the authenticity of rational explanations. The paranoid mind always needs to verify the explanations of external phenomena in reference to a fear of being monitored, an anxiety of being deceived or a sensitivity of being victimized by a more general and indefinable task. The paranoid mind is eager to track the interconnections among things to remain alert in order to fend off any impending evil. It is also inclined towards making up incredible portraits of situations while looking for the hidden causes veiled by some secret hand. Thus, apart from its exact clinical diagnosis or its psychotic roots, paranoia is a supplement of conspiracy theorizing. Conspiracy theories, so to speak, are devised by a paranoid drive. At least, the motive behind the paranoid perspective is, more or less, equivalent to the motive behind conspiracy theorizing. A conflation of paranoia and conspiracy theories can be justified in reference to a shared motivation. In other words, both of them supply similar frameworks of interpretation. Just in this sense, paranoia and the use of conspiracy theories should be assessed in their value of supplying power and resistance. These tools of interpretation are clad in different fashion depending on whether they are employed by the dominant forces or the dominated. Thus, paranoia and conspiracy theory can be utilized either as tools of power or resistance; and how they are employed for different aims in a society are also considered in this chapter.

## **2.1. CONSPIRACY THEORIZING IN AMERICAN HISTORY**

American history is rich in evident conspiracies, in secret schemes or scandals that are purported to be conspiratorial when examined in detail. Especially, the second-half of the twentieth century, namely the cold-war period onwards, poses

abundant incidents of intrigue and deception, most of which have political reasons or consequences in character. Atmospheres of economic crisis, political conflict and tension in domestic or foreign affairs bear in themselves the probability of spawning conspiratorial thinking. Several affairs from different periods, like the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, Watergate Scandal in 1972, Iran-Contra Affair in 1987, and Oklahoma City Bombing in 1995 and 9/11 in 2001, have invoked a sense of insecurity and brought waves of paranoid speculation for the whole population at the time.

Beside any individual events, moreover, there are also certain periods when paranoia and conspiratorial fears become the dominating motive of thought and shape people's worldview. In general, the Cold War period in the US was fully infested with events that provoke conspiracy threats creating either minor or major unease. In a narrower sense, for example, the anti-communist witch hunts and trials in Senator Joseph McCarthy's period set the uncanny atmosphere for almost the whole 1950s. Furthermore, 1960s witnessed a series of incidents that justified the conspiratorial fears and paranoia overwhelming the whole decade. Along with the JFK assassination, the period saw the failed attempts of CIA to assassinate Cuban President Fidel Castro. The race of nuclear armament between the Soviet Union and the United States, which was the most overwhelming anxiety during the whole Cold War period, led to the Cuban missile Crisis in 1962. In addition, the Vietnam War reached catastrophic dimensions throughout the 1960s. When the youth uprisings, the widely pronounced revolutionary ideas, the Civil rights movements and mass protests in the late sixties peaked, all the necessary variants were there in the decade to ignite thoughts of conspiracy.

Along with assassinations, wars, mass movements and rumors of communist conspiracies, terrorism is also another significant factor that provokes psychological unrest in American thought. Especially in the 1990s and 2000s, after the fall of the Soviet Union, the fear of terrorism replaced that of communism in the US. Therefore, different sensibilities and fears of conspiracy developed according to the status quo in the various periods of the American history. Don DeLillo is seen to have thematized a number of these incidents and fears in his novels. For instance, he picks

up the JFK assassination and the whole atmosphere of conspiracy in 1960s in *Libra*, and takes up the issue of terrorism in his political thriller *The Players*.

Communities of conspiratorial acts also abound in far or recent past of the US, ranging from groups having relatively limited aims to societies executing grand projects. The targets of these groups may vary from subduing and suppressing a rival group or an 'Other' to taking over the control of a whole political or an economic system. They may range from local, to national and international fields of activity. Ku Klux Klan, John Birch Society, right wing militias, Trilateralists, Bilderbergers and the Illuminati are some of the few among many. On the other hand, intelligence services and national security institutions themselves may be involved in conspiracies instead of some secret organizations. They may be the ones behind the veil to conspire, which was, to some extent, believed to be the case in the JFK assassination. While CIA's exact links with the JFK incident could not be proven, CIA was believed to be the leading actor in the assassination attempts for Castro. In brief, conspiracy theories and paranoid fears about conspiracy surface at the times of political and social crisis. They are closely related to the dynamics of status quo and they either produce or result from ideology. Hence, almost every decade of the late twentieth century in American history is fully loaded with rumors, theories and communities of conspiracy, exceeding the above given examples in number.

Conspiracy theories are roughly about the power structures in a society. As for what it represents, conspiracy theory is about the distribution of power in a society. Thus, it is political by nature. According to Timothy Melley, conspiracy theory is useful to "both the disempowered and the powerful;" for "it is a refusal to accept a universal social good or an officially sanctioned truth" (11-13). It is a general skepticism of the official and seemingly rational explanations. At the expense of slipping into the irrational, conspiracy theory tends to show what is not shown. It introduces or drops certain rings of the officially approved chain of historical causality. It aims at clarifying the relations within the network of events in the society that end in the empowerment or disempowerment of individuals and groups. Hence, in that sense, conspiracy theory aims at theorizing dispersed forms of

social power while it seems to look for hidden causes and unexplained facts (Melley 142).

Richard Hofstadter, one of the most eminent Cold War historians in the U.S., dwells on producing conspiratorial thoughts in his most renowned 1964 essay “The Paranoid Style in American Politics,” and takes conspiracy theory as sheer fantasy. As understood by the title of his essay, conspiracy theory is a paranoid style of speculation, and referred to as a demeaning way of thinking on society. Acknowledging the place of the paranoid style of approaching the social issues and politics in the American population, Hofstadter regards it as a defect:

I call it the paranoid style simply because no other word adequately evokes the sense of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness, and conspiratorial fantasy that I have in mind. In using the expression “paranoid style” I am not speaking in a clinical sense, but borrowing a clinical term for other purposes. . . . It is the use of paranoid modes of expression by more or less normal people that makes the phenomenon significant.

Of course this term is pejorative, and it is meant to be; the paranoid style has a greater affinity for bad causes than good. . . Style has more to do with the way in which ideas are believed than with the truth or falsity of their content. I am interested here in getting at our political psychology through our political rhetoric. The paranoid style is an old and recurrent phenomenon in our public life which has been frequently linked with movements of suspicious discontent. (Hofstadter)

As deduced from this long quotation, Hofstadter evaluates conspiracy theory as a popular but an unsound way of producing social and political thought. In his thought, the paranoid is entangled within his own fantasies and closed against counter arguments in producing theories of conspiracy. “The paranoid,” he claims, “seems to have little expectation of actually convincing a hostile world, but he can accumulate evidence in order to protect his cherished convictions from it” (Hofstadter). In this way, Hofstadter turns the dynamic mechanism of suspicion, which is immanent in paranoia, into a blockage for the critical and rational train of thought. In fact, although he claims to distinguish paranoia as an interpretative frame from paranoia as a clinical case, he still sees paranoid style of thinking as delusional and sterile. He argues that the paranoid “has a special resistance of his own, of course, to developing such awareness [of how things do not happen], but

circumstances often deprive him of exposure to events that might enlighten him – and in any case he resists enlightenment” (Hofstadter).

However, Hofstadter’s attitude of condemning political resentment and pushing it to the margins has been criticized many times, and his approach has been blamed for being one-sided and prejudiced. By attributing pathology to the history of social movements and protests with the rhetoric of the paranoid style, Hofstadter presupposes the dominant order as normal and degrades any resenting voice as an abnormal Other. Thus, in Hofstadter’s thought lies the risk of labeling every kind of political skepticism as pathological. Mark Fenster, in his work *Conspiracy Theories*, argues against Hofstadter and claims that conspiracy theories and paranoid style serve as political protests. Applying the theory of pathology to social phenomena, Hofstadter’s criticism misses the resistance value of the paranoid style and falls short of apprehending the populist view of political dissent (Fenster 21).

Mainly, the conspiring side and the paranoid side are the two determinants in conspiracy theory. As Robins and Post put it briefly in their work *Political Paranoia*, “The conspirators are absolutely evil, and so, as the opponents of this evil power, members of the paranoid group see themselves as the force for good” (37). The paranoid group or individuals produce conspiracy theories to reveal the ongoing conspiratorial process and to prevent any ill to their well-being. In fact, either the defenders of the status quo or the political dissenters may claim to be conspired against. Hence, the use of paranoid conspiracy theories for claiming to be the right side determines the political value of the situation.

To put it more clearly, conspiracy theory may justify the fears of a dominant power elite in the face of evil at work against their authority or against the official power. In such a case, it is the right of this dominant power to take every strict precaution and to suppress the opposing ideas in the society. On the contrary, conspiracy theory may also be applied to the present political or economical system at work or to the ones in power. In this case, conspiracy theory becomes the voice of resistance against the corrupt dominant order which works in secrecy at the expense of the unease of the whole society. In his work *Conspiracy and Paranoia in Contemporary American Fiction*, Steffen Hantke speaks of two variants of

conspiracy in conspiracy fiction, which should also be held true for actual conspiracy narratives. “In one of these variants,” he explains, “conspiracy is identified as the illicit, secretive collective working against the official, institutionalized power [such as Richard Condon’s *The Manchurian Candidate* or Herman Melville’s *Benito Cereno*]” (12). The opposite alternative strengthens the idea to disclose the secret mechanisms of official power. “In the other variant,” says Hantke “conspiracy is associated with the collectives that constitute official power itself [such as the labyrinthine bureaucratic apparatus in Joseph Heller’s *Catch 22*]” (12). Hence, conspiracy theory is either a tool of power in the hands of a power elite or a tool of popular resistance of the disempowered. It is mainly the latter approach this study is going to employ. Thus, a bottom-up criticism of the system will be executed by this latter approach.

## **2.2. (SOCIAL) CONFLICTS IN LATE CAPITALISM AND LATE MODERNITY**

Conspiracy theory, taken by its political or ideological ramifications, provides a penetration into the complex social and power structures. In fact, the dynamics of conspiracy theory serve as a secondary and supporting perspective for the late Marxist theory in delineating or tracing the power networks and relations. The dynamics of conspiratorial thought, used as a method, illuminate diffusion of power over the society in the Foucauldian sense. Moreover, it is especially the late capitalist relations of power that conspiracy theory enlightens. The motive behind the disclosure and prevention of an alleged conspiracy is, thus, a model of analyzing a whole political or economic system. Talking about a possible conspiracy and conspiracy theories, in fact, manifests some structural problems and inequities in society concerning the distribution of power. The rumors and beliefs in an ongoing conspiracy are expressive of social conflicts.

### **2.2.1. Conspiracy Against Individuality**

Conspiracies and conspiracy theory also indicate a threat to individuality. The liberty and authenticity of the individual is subsumed under bigger systems of administration. As Hantke puts it, “conspiracy is established as inimical to individuality” (*Conspiracy* 8). Conspiracy, in a way, shows the struggle of the

individual to survive against a collectivity or a mass system. In fiction, conspiracies situate individuals in the face of larger social institutions or networks and portray the capabilities or incapacities of the individuals in a complicated world of intense powers. As for the world of the capitalist system, the repression of the individual by monetary systems, market trends and corporate bodies correspond to the same kind of repression of the individual by secret organizations of the state or bureaucracy. The contemporary conspiracy theories imply “how ‘postindustrial’ economy has made Americans more generic and less autonomous” (Melley 12). The loss of individual autonomy is what lies under the conspiratorial fiction. Referring to the diminishing of human agency, Melley calls the case “agency panic,” which means a growing anxiety about the loss of self control, and puts it as one of the basic principles in conspiracy narratives (12). That’s why he affiliates conspiracy with massive economic systems. This can also be a hint about why conspiracy fictions should be read as projections of the repression of the individual in capitalist societies. In the same manner, Jodi Dean notes: “Now explanations that emphasize pregnant or hanging chads, economies, markets, systems, population flow, or traffic patterns are more likely to be convincing. We don’t attribute so much to individual agency. We know that ‘it’s the system’ ” (70).

The identity and the empowerment of the individual are, thus, at stake in the world represented by conspiracy theories and conspiracy fiction. This is an apparent dilemma in Don DeLillo’s conspiracy fictions. Large social bodies and conspiratorial relations are portrayed as grinding the human agency. In DeLillo’s *Libra*, how Lee Harvey Oswald’s individuality is suppressed before he turns out to be an assassin in the atmosphere of the Cold War period is one of the main axes of the story. In fact, while half of the novel tells the story of the JFK assassination and related investigations, the other half recounts the identity crisis Oswald experiences. Due to a spiritual delusion and a loss of individual autonomy, Oswald falls prey to the plans of CIA inner circles and becomes a scapegoat for an intricate conspiracy. Rather than accounting for a mental disorder or a simple personality crisis as the motive for Oswald’s criminal act, *Libra* explicates the nature of conspiracy theory in relation to the diminishing of human agency.

### **2.2.2. Causality and Ambiguity**

Conspiracy theory can be alleged to portray the diffuse incidents and powers of late modern society in a more totalizing frame. In other words, it is an attempt to arrange the randomness of events and build a chain of causality to give better explanations about larger systems. The idea of conspiracy offers a relief in an uncertain age to account for the complexity of events. Conspiracy theories are popular for they suggest a hope “to re-conjure a lost totality, and cope with randomness which now seems to propel the world” (Spark 57). This idea helps one construct a sense of wholeness and a belief in causality, which offers to restore the hope for understanding the contemporary age in its complexity. A typical approach to a suspected conspiracy necessitates an idea of intentionality behind the apparent events. Conspiracy theory comprehends a set of seemingly unconnected events towards a definite end in an eschatological way.

However, modern day conspiracy theories and fiction do not posit simple explanations of causality. Unlike early forms of detective fiction or classical spy novels, modern conspiracy fiction is not a mere pursuit of agents or individuals behind secret operations. The investigative process in modern conspiracy narratives is so vastly scattered that the excess of information and the saturation of indirect peripheral details break a strict causality. That is to say, modern conspiracies or systems associated with conspiracy are so vastly disseminated that linear causality or expressive causality in the Althusserian sense does lead to certain answers. Contingency appears to be the dominant paradigm in modern conspiracy theories. Jane Parish points at this feature of modern conspiracy theories: “If it was once an attempt at totalizing knowledge, spun by a select band of powerful people, today, by its very nature, it also proliferates because there appears to be no real explanation, only more interpretation which involves us all practicing some type of conspiracy theorizing” (10). Therefore, the loss of strict narrative causality in modern conspiracy fiction hinders us blaming definite persons as responsible for conspiratorial processes. But, on the contrary, this leads us to think upon general political, social and economic systems as the true sources for an understanding of conspiracy.



The peculiarity in the case of Kennedy assassination lies in its endless production of theories and explanations. The case defies closure with myriads of details, witnesses and documents, and still remains a mystery. Various strands of conspiratorial lines can be drawn out of these details. Actually, Don DeLillo frequently notes in his interviews that before writing *Libra*, he had read *The Warren Commission Report*, which is a 26-volume official inquiry of the case. It can be seen as an encyclopedia of details, most of which either have indirect reference or no link at all to the case in question. In a 1991 interview with Passaro, DeLillo comments on the loss of coherence and ambiguity in modern times, especially with conspiracy theories after the Kennedy assassination in 1963: “I don’t think my books could have been written in the world that existed before the Kennedy assassination. And I think that some of the darkness in my work is a direct result of the confusion and psychic chaos and the sense of randomness that ensued from the moment in Dallas” (“Dangerous,” 77-78).

Therefore, individual agency, put forth in the person of the Oswald the triggerman in *Libra*, is abolished along with the block of linear causality in the simple sense. The abundance of theories stemming from never-ending details brings an end to the ‘lone gun man’ theories. Therefore, the point in modern conspiracy fiction like those of DeLillo’s is the “relentless willingness to use the crime to imagine the causal power of large social systems and organizations” (Melley 134). The focus on the systemic forces is more dominant than the focus on the individual. As individual agency diminishes in the representation of modern conspiracies, so does the idea of center in a relationship of interrelated events. The source of plots and counterplots in most of the DeLillo novels is the CIA, and CIA is present in conspiratorial tasks with a function of diffusing and ramifying power relationships rather than concentrating them. Ironically, “there is no center to DeLillo’s Central Intelligence” (Melley 157). This idea of diffused and displaced powers disseminated all over the social whole creates a critical vision of the late capitalism in DeLillo’s novels.

The model of the diffusion of conspiratorial plots within centerless networks is an analogy for the analysis of power produced in the capitalistic relations. Modern

conspiracy narratives, thus, pose “a utopian desire to understand and confront the contradictions and conflicts of contemporary capitalism” (Fenster 116). The monetary power in the late capitalist construction of the world system is rather fluid. It has the ability both to connect international headquarters and to seep within local zones. Like the Foucauldian microphysics of power, it is everywhere. It both creates global connections or local concentrations of power. In this sense, the centerless model of the modern day conspiracy theories should be evaluated as a projection of “the social nervousness generated by the massive restructuring of late capitalism” (Parish 6).

### **2.2.3. Intelligence Agents and Corporate Agents**

The apparent emphasis on the intelligence networks is a cover up for the expansion of the corporate networks in conspiracy narratives. In the late capitalist era, the shift is from the individual power and money holders to international corporations and multinational capital. The multinational corporate networks have replaced individual power in today’s capitalism in the same sense that the intelligence and conspiracy networks have replaced the individual plotters in modern conspiracy fiction. To put it another way, “modern conspiracy has translated Descartes’ ‘evil demon’ into a demonology of the Machiavellian organization” (Parker 197). The other name for this Machiavellian organization in the global moment of capitalism is the New World Order. Conspiracy theory is, thus, a utopian attempt to represent the density and complexity of global capitalism, which in fact, seems improbable to achieve: “In effect it attempts to make the convoluted, decentred processes of contemporary global capitalism more rational and more dramatic – in short, to put a name and a face to otherwise unrepresentable an impenetrable systems” (Knight, “ILOVEYOU,” 21).

Many post-Marxist critics’ emphasis on an endless displacement of power finds recourse in conspiracy theories. In post-industrial societies, the role of the market in relations of power, as pointed out by Fredric Jameson and the *New Times* theorists, is partly present in contemporary conspiracy narratives. The complex and transnational systems of capital flow demonstrate the decentred and ever-moving nature of contemporary capital and power. According to Mark Featherstone,

conspiracy theories “mark the vicious mechanics of the state of postmodern second nature/capital” (31). With reference to the highly fluid nature of the postmodern capital, the impact zone of distributed power of capital is rather vast. Therefore, Parker rightfully concludes that “the real cause of conspiracy events are insecure labor markets, global capitalism, the collapse of the local and so on” (198). The secret hands of corporate bodies resemble the secret hands of intelligence agencies; hence, Parker adds that “our economic decisions are not ‘ours’ but caused by the hidden hand of the markets” (198).

Insofar as transnational corporations and firms of finance guard their interests by erasing national frontiers, they become subjects for conspiracy theory because they have the power necessary to penetrate and manipulate the general economy and politics in a country. The connection between the financial New World Order and conspiracy theory shows “the relationship between contemporary corporate culture and recent attempts to criticize its expansionary and increasingly pervasive influence;” and hence, an “engagement with capitalist institutions is, and has always been, a prime site for conspiracy theory” (Smith 153). Globalization is the momentum of the intersection between conspiracy theory and the corporate culture. Consequently, monetary relation in late corporate capitalism is an inevitable determinant in the foreign policies in the U.S as well as in the domestic affairs. As Fenster puts it forward,

. . . the fact that “bankers” are perceived by some conspiracy theorists to be a secret, omnipotent group should not lead one to ignore the historically important role that finance capital, based in financial institutions and investment banks, has played in state and corporate structures, thus having great significance locally, nationally, and globally . . . [and the same fact] should not lead one to ignore such agencies’ covert, and at times overt, role in repressing individual rights and political dissent in favor of corporate and imperialist interests in the United States and abroad. (62-63)

#### **2.2.4. Difference and Heterogeneity**

Another aspect in relating conspiracy theory and paranoid fear with power relations is the idea of difference and heterogeneity it evokes. Conspiracy theory may be the expression of an anxiety of a loss of the homogenization in a society or it may

be the expression of a resistance against a planned homogenization: “In a culture that is trying to replace a multitude of cultural narratives with one authoritative national ideology (the melting pot, manifest destiny etc.) conspiracy expresses the lingering unease about the barely concealed heterogeneity underneath the willed unity” (Hantke, *Conspiracy* 21). This picture of heterogeneity, obtained by conspiracy theory, is against any totalization of society and totalizing politics. The ideology of difference in conspiracy theory, therefore, parallels to Fredric Jameson’s focus on the ideology of difference in postmodernism as the logic of late capitalism. Multiplicity of social groups and movements, either after distinct interests or following a common goal, is the mark of conspiracy theory as well as of late capitalist societies.

Multiplicity of the sites of power and emerging pluralism of social antagonisms, put forth by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, is inherent in the ideology of difference posited by conspiracy theory. According to Hantke, “conspiracy fiction requires a model that can deal with a greater degree of heterogeneity in the facing off between antagonistic forces” (*Conspiracy* 22). This heterogeneity refers to an abandonment of a binary logic in the apprehension of social antagonisms under late capitalism. On the contrary, there is an appearance of multitudinous social groups in a variety of interests, yet against capitalism, as suggested by the ideology of difference in conspiracy theory.

In order to exemplify the proliferation of social movements and types of struggle against power within the contemporary discourse of conspiracy, Peter Knight applies the analogy of immune system to national politics of power. He sets a correlation between a germ attack against the individual barriers and resentment against a complete national economic or political system. According to him, “the frontline of the battle against a disease has shifted from the surfaces of the body (the skin as a protective barrier and personal hygiene as one’s best defense) to the complex mechanisms of the immune system as regulatory process at work within the body in the blood and lymph systems” (“ILOVEYOU,” 19). The analogy refers to the shifting barriers of antagonism between the capitalist system and the dissenters. More specifically, it refers to the fluid frontiers that Laclau and Mouffe speak of while evaluating Gramsci’s ‘war of position’ as the most suitable tactic against the

capitalist hegemony. When a dissemination of power over the society takes place in late capitalist societies, there emerges a similar dissemination of struggle tactics, which also demonstrates the proliferation of non-class actions.

## **2.3. NETWORKS AND STRATEGIES OF POWER AND RESISTANCE**

### **2.3.1. Paranoid Fear**

Paranoia, as a special form of fear and a perpetual anxiety, is a structural device both in conspiracy theory and conspiracy fiction. As Jerry Flieger puts it, paranoid thinking includes “fantasies of persecution, construction of elaborate systems, linguistic and otherwise, projection of internal reality outward, and grandiose schemes overseen by the floating eye” (93). These dynamics of paranoia make it a multilayered element in operating narratives of conspiracy and anxiety. Furthermore, paranoia leads to an availability of providing reflections on political issues with its effervescent structural patterns. According to Hantke, paranoia is both “a cultural phenomena” and “an aesthetic strategy,” enabling a transfer from “individual to collective, psychological to political” and from existential angst to “political powerlessness” (*Conspiracy* 19).

Paranoia has got an indeterminate relationship to conspiracy because thinking in a conspiratorial manner does not directly refer to a paranoid way of thought. However, it is also wrong to think of conspiracy as totally separate from paranoia. Indeed, “conspiracism straddles a blurred and shifting boundary between pathology and normalcy” (Barkun 8). The touch of reality within the paranoid vision is suspicious, and it is absolutely difficult to define the degree that paranoid thinking bears an access to real conditions. To clarify the blurred nature of paranoia to reality, Douglas Kellner discriminates between ‘clinical paranoia’ and ‘critical paranoia.’ For Kellner, while clinical paranoia is the subject of pathology, “critical paranoia helps to map the forces that structure the world and turn the subject against oppressive forces. . . . It doesn’t dissociate itself from a reality principle” (*Media* 140). Conspiracy theories are engaged with critical paranoia no matter how soundly they are justified; and the critical paranoia in conspiracy fiction is expressive of a

critical look at the hegemonic power networks and systems of subordination portrayed in contemporary narratives.

Just like conspiracy theory, paranoid fear has dual operation as a device of power. Depending on who acts as the paranoid speculator, it either serves to be an instrument of dominant power or functions as a tactic of resistance. Paranoia of the ruling elite or the capital holders is essentially different from that of lower social classes and masses. Therefore, as an inevitable element of conspiracy thinking, paranoia refers to a similar set of problems as conspiracy theory does. Stemming from the social and political imbalance between the powerful and the powerless, “the unequal power relationship support the propensity for paranoid thinking” (Robins and Post 59).

Parallel to the rationality of conspiracy theory, paranoia is used by the power elite or the state as an ideology to create a collectivity. This use of paranoia fuses shared ideals and a common identity pointing at an external or an internal enemy. In Stalinism, Nazism or in McCarthyism, political paranoia is directed against capitalists, Jews or communists respectively, with the support of a rigid collective identity ideologically created in the masses of people. Robins and Post treat paranoia as an ideological motive and claim that it offers “direction, understanding, and moral authority” in community (181). In effect, the fusion of a society into a single collectivity by paranoia perpetuates the hegemony of the ruling class or power elites over the society. So it is like creating a ‘historic bloc’ by winning the consent of the masses, in Gramsci’s terminology. Especially in the Cold War America, people gathered around a collective fear of Soviet Union and internal communist agents. Corey Robin, in his *Fear: The History of a Political Idea*, simultaneously underlines the identity forming and the subduing role of fear used by the ones in power, and calls it “galvanizing fear” (13). This use of fear in the Cold War gave a sense of solidarity and security to people at the expense of suppressing individual liberties. Robin, in his concluding statement “Fear didn’t destroy Cold War America: it tamed it,” indicates how fear is used as an ideological device that can delimit freedom (49).

Political paranoia, therefore, operates as a mechanism on behalf of the powerful to suppress the ruled. Yet, a secondary use of paranoia blocks this very

instrument of the powerful and re-directs it to the use of the suppressed to counter-act. So paranoia may be taken as a rejection of “the normalizing ideology of the powerful” (Melley 18). The paranoid is in an epistemological opposition to the way he is supposed to see the world and the way he is required to appreciate the phenomena. Paranoia, then, can be used as a motor of counter-knowledge against the information cartels and mass media. It may serve as a pseudo-theory to uncover the unanticipated interconnectivity between events and to enlighten the subterranean roots of the officially accepted facts.

Metaphorically, paranoia may be regarded as a defense mechanism or a way of self-protection in an age of complex social, financial and political structures. It should be deemed as a reaction of the human organism to an ever-expanding universe of dangers and connections. “Paranoid desire” as Fenster argues “is a ‘normal’ desire within the highly structured economic and cultural regime of capitalism” (94). Seemingly, it deploys the force of the irrational against the rational yet repressive systems of the world. Paranoid fear thwarts the paranoid mind to grasp the incomprehensible connections that appear irrational at first sight, but which possess truth value. Where the neutral eye sees non-connectivity, the paranoid looks for explanations. “Paranoia captures,” as Emily Apter claims, “the systematicity of world systems—its *folie raisonnée* or rationalism of systematized delusion” (371). In its quasi-systematic outlook, paranoid thinking points at the gaps in a totality or caveats in political or economic structures: “Now, as then, paranoia assumes the guise of a delusional democracy buoyed by cascading national cataclysms: the Bay of Pigs, the Kennedy and King assassinations, Kent State, the FBI hunt for Black Panthers, Symbionese Liberation Army and Weather Underground radicals, Watergate . . .” (Apter 368).

The Foucauldian notion that where there is power there is resistance is a valid thought to appreciate the mind of the paranoid. According to Robbins and Post, the paranoid projects and solidifies his own fears into the image of an enemy and reacts against this enemy. In other words: “The paranoid sees his actions as reactions required by the enemy. If the enemy is seen as deceiving through writings, the paranoid will make use of the most detailed and elaborate pseudo-scholarship.

Conspiracy will have to be fought with conspiracy, organization with organization” (Robins and Post 93). Thereby, heterogeneously distributed power within networks shall create networks of reaction. Resistance resides within power, and thereby an alleged conspiracy is reacted against with a counter-conspiracy by the paranoid.

In so far as knowledge and power are deeply linked in Foucault’s thought, paranoia about a conspiracy is related to power. More specifically, it is a kind of resistance since it denies the official discourses of politics. Apart from being regarded as pathological by the dominant power elites and official powers, conspiracy theory serves for a “conspiratorial defamiliarization of official power” (Hantke, *Conspiracy* 12). The problematization of how knowledge is produced requires a questioning of how power is produced by the manipulation of knowledge by the official discourses. Conspiracy theory under-writes the politics of power, and questions its operation on knowledge production and decision-making processes (Featherstone 40-41). In that sense, conspiracy theory functions “as a strategy of delegitimation in political discourse” (Fenster xii). It is the way that the anxious masses penetrate into mechanisms of power, and insert their own unofficial tools of knowledge. It is a way of populist resistance to a general conspiratorial control in politics, economy and culture against the well-being of the people. As conspiracy theory feeds “a populist imagination, a sort of populist political unconscious,” then conspiracy theory is “necessary for an evocative, emancipatory politics to understand the noise of popular politics” (Fenster xiv). Imagination of an overwhelming and pervasive control on the cultural, social and political life is nothing other than a conspiratorial plot, and it must be reacted against with a counter-mechanism of knowledge and an alternative rationality.

Fear, more specifically paranoid fear, follows the traces of power. The notion of widely distributed and diffused power shall require correlatively dispersed and floating fears. Zygmunt Bauman, in his *Liquid Modernity*, makes use of military terms to portray the spread of diffuse power in an age of globalization and late capitalism. For him, the rising paradigm is “not the conquest of a new territory, but crushing the walls which stopped the flow of new, fluid global powers” (12). In liquid modernity, the fluidity of powers gives birth to the fluidity of fear and



paranoia. The types of fear bred in late or liquid modernity are ubiquitous, scattered and unanchored for Bauman, as he claims in *Liquid Fear*: “Globally generated grievances float in global space as easily as finance and the latest fashion in music or clothes” (124).

The liquid-like fears and dangers that lead to paranoia in contemporary capitalism stem from a high inter-connectivity of events, facts and agents in globalized late modernity, either individual or institutional. This diffuse and scattered paranoia causes, in Bauman’s words, “planetary uncertainty” thanks to webs of international interest groups and dense networks of interdependence (*Liquid Fear* 99). In this network of power dissemination, an evil of any kind can immediately penetrate within any other part of the system. Therefore, seemingly unconnected events do not provide the sense of security in a time of global networks. In the parallel of Bauman’s planetary uncertainty, Apter refers to Immanuel Wallerstein’s term ‘planetary paranoia’ to name this case of insecurity and explains it as formed and “marked by cyber-surveillance, cartographies of cartels and webs of international relationality within and outside the nation, and on the edges of legality” (Apter 365). The globalization of financial powers is the engine of a wide diffusion of fears. According to Bauman, underneath the planetary paranoia and planetary uncertainty lies “negative globalization” which is “the highly selective globalization of trade and capital, surveillance and information, coercion, and weapons, crime and terrorism, all now disdaining territorial sovereignty and respecting no state boundary” (*Liquid Fear* 96).

Therefore, the networks of interdependence, international interests of finance, secret groups and global flow of power are the materials for the paranoid reflection. These relations of global complexity and network density are much of an impenetrable nature. Hence seemingly “cause and effect sequences fall apart,” which finds recourse in the fact that “The incomprehensible has become the routine” (Bauman, *Liquid Fear* 13-14). The paranoid mind is obsessed with comprehending the incomprehensible, and consequently it projects fantasies of the world, which is a main constituent of the conspiracy theories. At this point, Apter defines “one-worldness” as a term envisaging

the planet as an extension of paranoid subjectivity vulnerable to persecutory fantasy, catastrophism, and monomania. Like globalization, oneworldedness traduces territorial sovereignty and often masks its identity as another name for “America.” . . . *oneworldedness*, as I am defining it, refers more narrowly to a delirious aesthetics of systematicity; to the match between cognition and globalism that is held in place by the paranoid premise that “everything is connected.” (366)

These dense network structures, as referred to by the metaphor of oneworldedness and as projected within the paranoid mind, point at actual relations and subsequent evils. A growing lawlessness in the pursuit of global interests, cross-purposes, illegal transactions of many kinds are among the consequences of negative globalization. Therefore, the paranoid obsession with dangers and fears of global scale should be seen as having a solid ground with reference to the diffusing power structures through globalizing finance and political interests. According to Apter, “the contemporary world system resembles a one-size, supranational entity that recognizes the dominance of superstates, while training its eye on the hidden relationalism among corporate conglomerates, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), underground economies, and clandestine insurgent groups” (365). Therefore, secrecy and clandestine organizations are not only aesthetic devices for fiction; they also seem to be the norm in networks of such deeply intertwined interest groups. Lee Basham, in his “Malevolent Global Conspiracy,” supports the truth-value of paranoid conspiracy theories, departing from the hierarchical nature of contemporary civilization:

There’s no denying that we live in a remarkably secretive, hierarchically organized civilization. The major bases of power – national governments and global corporate empires – combine enormous institutional, financial and technological resources with extensive mechanisms of secrecy, both preventative and punitive. Financial gain, political power and maniacal ego amplification have always proved strong temptations for unaccountable authorities. Such a civilization is ripe for allegations of organized, society-wide manipulations and deceptions affecting most everyone’s life. It’s no surprise that such allegations are exceedingly common. On the face of things there is a serious *prior probability* of global conspiracy. With the emergence of a truly global political-economic system, this possibility has never been more sobering. (92)

The US is at the center of the pervasive cartels, financial organizations and secret groups. Bauman highlights the role of the American-centered organizations in

producing global fears and theories of conspiracy. Quoting from Arundhati Roy, he asserts that “It was the actions of the United States together with its various satellites, like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, ‘that prompted subsidiary developments, dangerous sub-products such as nationalism, religious fanaticism, fascism, and of course terrorism.’ The globalization of harm and damage rebounds in the globalization of resentment and vengeance” (*Liquid Fear* 97). Clandestine contracts between governmental institutions, financial organizations and intelligence services are an inevitable part of the grand picture. Both in American history and in American fiction, these mergers come onto the surface as paranoid speculations; but they come with no less truth-value in actuality.

The nature of fear that late capitalism evokes can be linked to the nature of anxiety in the paranoid atmosphere of the Cold War years. When the dually constructed relationship between the self and the Other collapses, the nature of fear and anxiety of conspiracy tend to change. Following the abolishment of such a strict binary after 1960s’ postwar psychology, fear appears as disseminated everywhere in the track of Foucauldian notion of power and capitalist relations. Peter Knight defines this new kind of fear as “insecure paranoia”:

The secure paranoia of the tense yet, clear geopolitical division between self and other has given way to the troubling confusions that have emerged since the late 1960s, with uncertainty about the distinction between friend and foe, from American military intervention in Vietnam to peace-keeping missions in Africa. After the revival of Cold War demonology during the Reagan Years, the ‘New World Order’ of the 1990s has introduced an insecure paranoia in which there is no longer a single recognizable enemy or indeed a clear sense of national identity. (“ILOVEYOU,” 18-19)

Similarly, Brian Massumi, in *The Politics of Everyday Fear*, characterizes the Cold War years with the deterrence against “an enemy without qualities” (11). The enemy, being an unspecified one, is believed to be all pervasive and ubiquitous. It could rise up anytime and anywhere. This insecure paranoia valid for the Cold War years can be stretched to encompass the fears in the time of late capitalism. The fear in contemporary age stems from the pervasiveness of capitalist relations. Shedding the emphasis on the feeling of insecurity under late capitalism and the New World

Order, Massumi argues: “Fear is not fundamentally an emotion. It is the objectivity of the subjective under late capitalism” (11). By this, he means that power is the shadow of the capital, which devises ways to discipline bodies and subdue the masses through corporate actions and through consumerism. For this reason, capitalism works as the unspecified enemy that creates a sense of insecure paranoia. In Massumi’s words, “Power under late capitalism is a state of continual warfare against an enemy that is everywhere ‘we’ are” (23).

In fiction, these paranoid speculations about political-economic networks of power are frequently used in Don DeLillo’s novels for the analysis of power in the contemporary American civilization. At times, DeLillo voices these speculations from within the vision of information-obsessed characters or intelligence officers, such as Gary Harkness in the *End Zone* or as Nicholas Branch in *Libra*. And at other times, he directly sets the authorial vision just in the middle of the intersection of secret organizations and financial organizations. *Running Dog* is among the second type, in which intelligence services, senators and corporate companies are intermingled. In a 1988 interview with Kevin Connolly, DeLillo responds a question about the deep relation between terrorism, intelligence and capital, referring to the *Running Dog*. He clarifies the structures of power and interest groups in the novel, and claims that it can be found in the actual events in the American history: “. . . a CIA proprietary becomes a way to generate vast personal profits. A fake company set up as a conduit for espionage [Radial Matrix] becomes a vast profit-making apparatus on its own, which may have been what happened in Iran-Contra” (“Interview,” 28).

Radial Matrix, in *Running Dog*, is an ex-division of the CIA. Still operating as an intelligence division, it covertly works for finance companies and corporate firms for securing their capital and interests in various other countries. In fact, Radial Matrix represents the illegitimate and vile face of global monetary power of capitalist expansion. Glen Selvy, the protagonist, speaks of his former training as an agent under the Radial Matrix:

A great deal of time was spent studying and discussing the paramilitary structure of rebel groups elsewhere in the world.

They analyzed the setup the Vietcong had used. The part-time village guerilla. . . . Suicide squads. . . . Assassination teams. They studied the Algerian *moussebelines*, or death commandos, groups undertaking extremely hazardous operations independent of local army control. (RD 153)

In the novel, an emphasis on guerilla tactics for securing the ways of monetary power is mind-grabbing. The references to military jargon in the quotation above are used to uncover the similarity between the tactics of terrorists and the intelligence agents in the service of capital. This similarity takes place on the axis of illegality. DeLillo depicts the case through Glen Selvy's reflections, and sets up a final comment: "Selvy thought it curious that intelligence officers of a huge industrial power were ready to adopt the techniques of ill-equipped revolutionaries whose actions, directly or indirectly, were contrary to U.S. interests. The enemy. This curious fact was not discussed or studied" (153). Thus, an absolute closeness surfaces between capital networks and the networks of terror and intelligence in *Running Dog*.

The rhetoric of conspiracy theory and paranoia gives way to two discursive extensions: the discourse of terrorism and risk. These two discourses follow similar patterns in relation to the conspiracy and paranoia rhetorics in the claim of rightfulness in attaining or resisting power. Moreover, terrorism and risk exhibit complex structures and operate in networks in connection with the operation of global capitalism. Both terrorism and risk discourses, therefore, can be analyzed according to their dissemination patterns and the power relations they result from. Finally, they can be both related to the paranoid fears they foster and can also be evaluated in conspiratorial terms.

### **2.3.2. Terrorism: Political Violence**

Terrorism, roughly speaking, is an act of violence that is directed to a system, an establishment or a society to subvert the course of power relations and to perpetrate a fundamental change. There are several patterns of terrorist violence and countless types of terrorist action. Terrorist actions can be run by individuals or by groups. In addition, since terrorism is a pejorative term, when and how to call a dissenting force as 'terrorist' brings up ethical questions. Briefly, there is an

inevitable difficulty to define terrorism and delineate terrorist actions with exactitude. However, there are certain characteristics of terrorist violence that are commonly accepted, and specific clues to separate it from any other type of criminal violent action.

Basically every act of violence cannot be labeled as terrorism since terrorism exceeds the limits of individual acts of violence and serves greater causes. Unlike ordinary criminal actions, terrorist violence goes far beyond private causes and aim at a greater transformation of the system in question. They are not merely related to isolated individuals but pertain to the interests of larger groups, namely related to a political front, an ethnicity, or a nation. As Bruce Hoffman defines, classifies and evaluates the evolution of the concept in its historical course in his work *Inside Terrorism*, terrorism is “fundamentally and inherently political,” and it is also “ineluctably about power: the pursuit of power, the acquisition of power, and the use of power to achieve political change”(14-15).

The aim of employing violent acts for political aims target inflicting terror and absolute fear on people either to secure a dominant political order or to raise the voice of dissent against a corrupt order. The former one can be termed as state-supported or dictatorial terrorism to maintain the absolute rule of political elite, as in the cases of Stalin’s communist terror or Hitler’s national socialist terror. The latter type of action is taken by non-state forces or anti-establishment groups with a cause to end the violence, inequities or the repression caused by the dominant order and the established system. Aside from the dictatorial terror, the latter type of dissenting terrorist actions, widely accepted as terrorism in the general sense of the term, is our focus. In this sense of the term, Hoffman defines terrorism and points at its relation to power as follows:

We may therefore now attempt to define terrorism as the deliberate creation and exploitation of fear through violence or the threat of violence in the pursuit of political change. . . . It is meant to instill fear within, and thereby intimidate, a wider ‘target audience’ that might include a rival ethnic or religious group, an entire country, a national government or political party, or public opinion in general. Terrorism is designed to create power where there is none or to consolidate power where there is very little. (43-44)

The terrorists are the ones who show obligatory violent reaction against an opponent group allegedly to defend their well-being. As summarized in the quotation above, the rivals that the terrorist group takes action against may vary from ethnic groups to grand political-economic systems. Yet, what makes terrorism an object of attention in political analysis, rather than merely a target of condemnation? Specifically, it is the claims of rightfulness by the terrorist groups that causes a violent action to be apprehended as a political dissent. More clearly, when the terrorists claim to be suppressed under a subjugating force, they tend to be seen as defending their values and looking for their rights instead of just perpetrating acts of violence. Hoffman says: “The terrorist will always argue that it is society or the government or the socio-economic ‘system’ and its laws that are the *real* ‘terrorists’ ” (30).

Terrorism is an act of violence against power that is claimed to have lost its lawfulness and legitimacy. The state of the paranoid person alleging the presence of a conspiracy against himself matches that of the claimant terrorist. The paranoid speculates about an ongoing evil conspiracy that will deprive him of his power and security. Similarly, the terrorist perceives the present system and governmental institutions as depriving him of his rights. Thus, he acts against the dominant political power and the socio-economic system. The paranoid feels he must uncover the secret power relations and connections and make the realm of the subterranean power visible. The terrorist, similarly, does not accept that he is employing violence, but counter-violence. It means that the terrorist’s action is a reaction directed against the primary-violence of a state or the dominant order. Thereby, the terrorist act, or counter-violence in other terms, renders visible the invisible power of the economic system and the invisible violence of the state (Öztürk 124). In that sense, the terrorist is the dissenter figure against the interpellation of the hegemonic forces of the state or a governmental system through violence. Terrorist resists to be interpellated by the political or the economic system.

Apart from judging the ethical problems and political-correctness of terrorism, its function in fiction is revelatory for the representation of power relations. Thanks to the structural similarities between the discourse of terrorism and

the rhetorics of conspiracy and paranoia, the dynamics in the flow of power can be delineated. As Margaret Scanlan notes in *Plotting Terror*, novelists find the fictional themes of terrorist plots “congenial for exploring the influence of fiction on history and politics, the relation between language and violence, the nature of power, and the impetus to resist” (13). Considering the present context, the elements of terrorist acts can be traced so as to trail the acts of resistance against imbalanced power relations among the late capitalist system, the state and the subjugated. Associating conspiracy with the nature of late capitalism *per se* portrays the spread and use of power. In return, terrorism in fiction is highly functional to figure out the ways of power and how it is reacted against.

Terrorism in literature can be originated back to the romantic revolt that seeks to abolish the economical, political and cultural tyranny of the Western World since the times of the Industrial Revolution. Put in this way, terrorism in fiction should be comprehended in relation to the romantic radical spirit against types of inequities. It expresses a vengeance against the holders of industrial and monetary power (Lentricchia and McAuliffe 15). Terrorist networks, in a general schema, are used to project the capital and finance networks. Terrorist networks either overlap with capital networks or, on the contrary, they are after resistant ways to invalidate the financial flow. Briefly, terrorist acts and terror networks enable the monitoring of the relations of power in fiction. In fictional representation, its intersections with conspiracy networks and capital networks provide perspectives so as to diagnose the complexities of power networks in contemporary civilization.

In Don DeLillo’s fiction, terrorist action can be seen as a political device with a dual function. Especially, it sets connections with capitalism and the New World Order. Firstly, terrorist action is posed as a fundamental reaction or resistance against the corrupt and allegedly illegitimate political-economic order. Terrorism in this case is a direct ultimatum or threat against cartels, finance centers or the system at all. In that case, Hantke describes the role of the terrorist as follows:

. . . the terrorist’s lack of accountability and refusal to submit to a procedural legitimization of power can therefore be read two ways. It is either an inability to participate properly in society’s institutionalized rules of exchange, in which case the terrorist appears as an incompetent



amateur or dangerous, maladjusted loner. Or it is a deliberate refusal to play these rules altogether, which would then make him into a self-serving opportunist or, last but not least, into a figure of legitimate political dissent. (*Conspiracy* 137)

Secondly, terrorism appears in an alliance with conspiracy, cartels, corporations and the state through intersecting networks. In this case, terrorism is a device of power in the hands of the state institutions and corporate powers. Secrecy, illegality and illegitimacy, by which both terrorism and the New World Order operate, become the hallmark of the power relations in DeLillo's novels. In fact, in DeLillo's world, terrorism is a way of penetration into complex structures of the contemporary world. In his interview with Adam Begley, DeLillo assesses the role of terrorism as follows: "Terrorism is built on structure. . . . What we call the shadow life of terrorists or gun runners or double agents is in fact the place where a certain clarity takes effect, where definitions matter, and both sides tend to follow the same set of rules" ("Art of Fiction," 96). Therefore, enmeshed within mechanisms of secrecy and illegitimacy, terrorism brings about a certain degree of elucidation on the nature of power structures in the New World Order.

In DeLillo's *Players*, a terrorist attack to the Stock Exchange is one of the main events of the plot. This act of violence is quite symbolic and blatantly political in nature, targeting one of the symbolic centers of the American monetary system. This act of terrorism presupposes that the main repression stems from the financial networks and the world order which are roots of all evil. J. Kinnear, the double agent, blatantly expresses the resistant nature of this terrorist act to another novel character: "Terror is purification. When you set out to rid a society of repressive elements, you immediately become a target yourself, for all sorts of people" (*P* 102).

However, terrorist networks and techniques are intermingled with those of the state powers' and the banking cartels' in *Players*. The affinity between the governmental institutions and secret organizations is thought-provoking. Just as in the case of *Running Dog*, there are deep rooted links between the state apparatuses and the terrorist networks. Or at least, the governmental offices and intelligence are no less evil than the terrorist networks. Such an association between the two

defamiliarizes the legitimacy of state power, and consequently, calls its ways of conduct into question:

It's everywhere, isn't it? Mazes, you're correct. Intricate techniques. Our big problem in the past, as a nation, was that we didn't give our government credit for being the totally entangling force that it was. They were even more evil than we'd imagined. . . . Assassination, blackmail, torture, enormous improbable intrigues. . . . We thought they bombed villages, killed children for the sake of technology. . . . We didn't give them credit for the rest of it. Behind every stark fact we encounter layers of ambiguity. . . . This haze of conspiracies and multiple interpretations. So much for the great instructing vision of the federal government. (*P* 104)

The other question *Players* invokes is the connection between finance cartels and the secret operations of the government. The ways the corporations benefit from the governmental powers and their clandestine ways remain the focus of the novel. Or what use the terrorist links would be to the finance cartels arouses a curiosity as to their relationships. Kinnear asks: "How deeply are the corporations involved in this or that mystery, this or that crime, these murders, these programs of systematic torture?" (*P* 104-05). Therefore, it can be concluded that secrecy and illegitimacy, as forms of power, are fundamental for multinational corporations as well as for state apparatuses and terrorist networks. That they become entangled under the interests of monetary power in the New World Order is highly suggestive.

### **2.3.3 The Risk Discourse**

Risk discourse can be related to panic and fear concerning several domains such as industry, economy, politics and everyday life. Therefore, as well as terrorism, risk is directly related to the paranoia and conspiracy rhetoric. Risk is especially comprehended as a product of late modernity. From very peculiar industrial or political practices to the very core of daily life, it has a pervasive presence in late capitalism. With its dynamics, risk discourse resembles the political dynamics of conspiratorial and paranoid thinking.

Ulrich Beck, in his prominent study called *Risk Society* (1986), points at late modernity as 'risk society.' This term is a designation of the new phase of capitalism. Just as Fredric Jameson has used a periodization of capitalism and called the present

times late capitalism, Beck follows a similar historical periodization in defining contemporary capitalism. According to Beck, “Just as modernization dissolved the structure of feudal society in the nineteenth century and produced the industrial society, modernization today is dissolving industrial society and another modernity is coming into being” which is the risk society (10). The late modernity, that underlies the risk society, is different from the classical industrial modernity. Late modernity posits a “reflexive modernization” (Beck 12). It suggests that modernization has become its own theme. So, the hazards in the industrial society are no longer conceptualized as unwanted side effects but as essential elements of the system. Modernity becomes growingly aware of the risk production. For him, “social production of wealth is accompanied by the social production of risks” (Beck 19).

Thanks to the unlimited technological-progress and excessive industrial production, there is a growing rate of risk production and increasing number of risk types. Risks in late modernity range from risk of poverty or risk of disease to ecological, industrial or nuclear risks. One of the points that push risk to paranoia in late capitalism is that it has incalculable and unpredictable consequences. Beck argues that “in the risk society the unknown and unintended consequences come to be a dominant force in history and society” (22). The complex network formation in the world of globalization triggers the spread of risks across boundaries. The more widespread the risk factors become, the harder it is to pinpoint them. Since they are difficult to pursue and pinpoint, Beck regards them as invisible and portrays them as exceeding the logical chains of causality.

In an age of financial and industrial networks, risks are formed by the combination or aggregation of various distinct sources. A linear understanding of causality would yield tentative results to diagnose risk factors. Therefore, instead of linear causality, new paradigms of evaluating risk factors are needed, such as “co-causality (multi-factor analysis)” (Massumi 31). It is this characteristic of risks in late capitalism that creates paranoia-like anxiety. Multiplicity of risk sources and the multiplicity of its effects make the contemporary sense of risk a variant of paranoia. Paranoid outlook can be associated with risk in that paranoia is “an occasional human response to an ambiguous stimulus” (Robins and Post 3). The ambiguity in

the causes of risks transforms everyday life into an arena of fear. Inevitably, this everyday fear of risks pertains to power. Beck puts forth the relation between the risk and power as follows:

What is at stake in the public dispute over the definition of risks is revealed here in an exemplary fashion: not just secondary health problems for nature and mankind, but the *social, economic and political consequences of these side effects* – collapsing markets, devaluation of capital, bureaucratic checks on plant decisions, . . . what thus emerges in risk society is the *political potential of catastrophes*. Averting and managing these can include a *reorganization of power and authority*. Risk society is a *catastrophic society*. In it the exceptional condition threatens to become the norm. (24)

Beck perceives everyday as composed of mini-catastrophes. This kind of quotidian fear bears repression, and thereby risk acts as a tool of power. Resembling to the paranoid's fear of unspecified enemies in the everyday, risk produces an ever-present sense of emergency. Massumi's term "low-level fear" - referring to a naturalized fear and an ineradicable fright as the trademark of the late twentieth century America - adequately defines the nature of risk (viii). Risk, creating everyday fear, is an oppressive tool of power. Especially under capitalism, everyday fear is reinforced, and "capitalist power actualizes itself in a basically uninhabitable space of fear" (Massumi 23). The liquid powers in late capitalism give birth to liquid fears; hence, the fluid fears of late modernity are clearly portrayed in the risk discourse.

With the ambiguity and the pluralization of the causes of risk, various connections can be set among blatant or latent phenomenon. Especially in a time of globalized powers, far-fetched conclusions can be drawn by the paranoid mind to categorize risks. This discourse of risk, thus, finds recourse in Bauman's term 'planetary uncertainty.' Hence, risks in late modernity are global and international.

There is a certain sense of correlation between the groups under risk and their social and wealth status. However, in late modernity, risk positions do not necessarily correspond to class positions (Beck 39). Risk creates heterogeneous groups of people from different social strata. Therefore, the victimized groups that are under risk of any kind are not merely the proletariat. According to Beck, people

under risk positions gather around groups of solidarity, and solidarity becomes a political force in late modern risk society (49). This heterogeneity of solidarity groups and new social movements match the post-Marxist comprehension of a multiplicity of resistant political groups under late capitalism. Moreover, new social antagonisms have emerged due to the heterogeneity of risks:

In this sense, the risk society produces new antagonisms of interest and a new type of community of the endangered whose political carrying capacity remains, however, an open question. To the extent to which modernization hazards generalize and thus abolish the remaining zones of non-involvement, the risk society (in contrast to class society) develops a tendency to unify the victims in global risk positions. (Beck 47)

In DeLillo's fiction, the focus on risk production is, in fact, a reference to the growing business, military and information networks. The more networks get far-reaching in consequences, the starker the rates of risk become. Gary Harkness's fantasies about nuclear wars and atomic warheads in the *End Zone* are not merely day-dreaming materials. On the contrary, these fantasies of risk are the projections of a nation-wide a consciousness haunted by the risks of a nuclear war. DeLillo speaks through his characters and ironically states in the novel that wars seem inevitable. And he, ironically, speaks about more "humane wars" that can lower the chance of unwanted risks and their consequences (EZ 81).

*White Noise* displays the industrial risks in late modern America and the fear of death they spawn. The fear of catastrophe is a dominant theme in the novel. It is carved into the mind of a whole nation through media. In fact, the industrial toxic spill, named 'airborne toxic event,' concretely exhibits the dimensions of destruction and the fear it evokes. The protagonist, Jack Gladney, is poisoned by this toxic spill and develops cancer. After realizing his situation, Gladney contemplates incessantly about death in modern times: "I've got death inside me. It's just a question of whether or not I can outlive it. It has a life span of its own. Thirty years" (WN 150). Fear of death, namely the anxiety of being under risk, haunts the mind of people. The slow death that Gladney experiences due to the cancer refers to Massumi's term 'low level fear,' and it stands for an everyday fear of risk. Murray Siskind, Gladney's colleague in the novel, formulizes the everyday fear as follows:

“This is the nature of modern death,” Murray said. “It has a life independent of us. It is growing in prestige and dimension. It has a sweep it never had before. . . . Death adapts, like a viral agent. Is it a law of nature? Or some private superstition of mine?” (WN 150)

Siskind’s questions about the nature of death are highly suggestive. The fact that death adapts to its surrounding is not a law of nature or a private superstition, on the contrary, it can be associated to the socially produced risks in late capitalism and late modernity. Apart from nuclear wars or catastrophic explosions, fear of death also presents everyday fear in minor forms. Anxiety of risk is perpetuated even in the domestic environments of people. Electronic waves, signals and radiation of tools in everyday use are no less risk factors than great disasters. In the novel, Gladney’s son Heinrich speaks about it: “Forget spills, fallouts, leakages. It’s the things right around you in your own house that’ll get you sooner or later. It’s the electrical or magnetic fields” (WN 175). Gladney’s definition of fear in this respect is very meaningful: “Fear is self-awareness raised to a higher level” (WN 229). Such a definition reflects Ulrich Beck’s notion of ‘reflexive modernity.’ In line with Beck’s notion of late modernity, the characters in *White Noise* are highly aware of risk factors and are afraid of them, which is also true for the rest of the other characters. Also, in Gladney’s words, ‘fear as self-awareness’ is immanent in the risk discourse, which means that human agency only goes through a self-experience in extreme times of danger or catastrophe. Fear as self-awareness also corresponds to Timothy Melley’s term ‘agency panic’ in conspiracy theory, since both point out a tragic decline of the human agency in contemporary civilization.

To sum up, from political inconsistency to massive catastrophic dangers and to everyday anxieties, many elements of insecurity are involved in risk discourse. Risk discourse presents a projection of power diffusion. Similar to conspiracy theory, risk discourse helps to cognitively map national or global distribution of power. Risk is a producer of anxiety and everyday fear. In that it is also a perpetrator of capitalist power. Its way passes through paranoia. In a time of global uncertainty, risks are globalized, and every social strata or group is no less open to risks than any other. And finally, the ultimate growth in industrial, military, information and financial

networks reinforce growing risk networks. The fluid powers of late capitalism produce a fluidity of risks and consequent paranoid perspectives.

All in all, conspiracy theory and paranoia, along with discourses of terrorism and risk, are functional in political readings of power diffusion and in setting a hermeneutics for cultural criticism in fiction. Especially, conspiratorial reading enables a political and cultural analysis of post-industrial societies. The urge to pinpoint the intersections of various conspiratorial network formations inevitably project correlative network formations in finance circles, corporations and transnational business. Therefore, exceeding the limits that define society as a simple totality, conspiracy theory is an adequate tool to go into overlapping networks of power and societal structures that produce paranoia (White 24). Finally, conspiracy theory indirectly voices the inequities of late capitalism while dwelling on the anxieties of evil and fears of insecurity. Conspiracy also serves as an interpreting frame to designate the resistant impulse in the system against the diffusion of dominant powers. Conspiracy rhetoric enables the reader to see the dissemination of resistances in Don DeLillo's fiction, which resembles the dissemination of liquid powers in late modernity.

Classical detective narratives or conspiracy novels can be linked to plain Marxism, in that they both seek for teleology out of a multiplicity of facts and data. Classical conspiracy theory privileges eschatological readings of social and cultural phenomena since they relate every single detail to the plot in question so as to reach a unifying explanation. Similarly, plain Marxism operates the dialectical process to reach an ahistorical classless social unity. On the contrary, contemporary conspiracy theory and post-Marxist social criticism emphasize the heterogeneity of social structures and power networks in late modernity. Moreover, they pass beyond predicting political resistances from a single class or resistant groups of proletarian nature. Hence, recent conspiracy theory has a say on the operation of late modern cultural sphere while post-Marxist theories re-evaluate the changing politics of power and resistance in the world of late capitalism. Although there still is the class component in a conspiratorial reading of business cartels and corporations within the conspiracy fiction, this does not follow the grounds of vulgar Marxism's duality

between the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Rather, heterogeneity of social forces comes into question through a scrutiny of overlapping power networks and the multiplicity of resistant social groups.

Contemporary conspiracy narratives, especially Don DeLillo's fiction, defy unifying answers and definite resolutions in paranoid states and cases of conspiracy. Instead, they are open ended. In that sense, they do not solely seek to point at certain names or blame specific persons for criminal acts and conspiracies. The open-ended structure of conspiracy fiction, which strategically forgo going after definite suspects, implies a secondary reading of social, cultural and political inadequacies in the society. In fact, the peculiarity of conspiracy theories is that they are neither totally acceptable nor totally rejectable (Basham 99). With regards to this notion of uncertainty and indefiniteness, conspiracy theories, together with conspiracy fiction, act as complementary theories for a systematic analysis of power. Fenster likewise claims: "My assertion is that conspiracy must be recognized as a cultural practice that attempts to map, in narrative form the trajectories and effects of power; yet, it not only does so in a simplistic, limited way, but also continually threatens to unravel and leave unsettled the resolution to the question of power that it attempts to address" (108).

Briefly, conspiracy fiction enjoys the critical vision that conspiracy theories posit. Though at times conspiracy fiction may perpetrate far-fetched fantasies of apocalypse, they reflect the anxieties of their age and point at the economic and political handicaps in the conduct of power. Due to this fact, it can be asked: "might not the very excesses of conspiracy theory click on the surpluses, the libidinal supports, of political and economic power?" (Dean 50). In this sense, the excesses of conspiracy narratives should not be spared as sheer mishmash, but they should be seen as having a certain critical value within literature. Conspiracy fiction is not a "bourgeois adventure," since novels of conspiracy "are capable of serving as strategic disturbances at a time when newly emerging economies of power are starting to settle in on a global scale" (Hantke, " 'God Save,' " 239).

Don DeLillo's fiction foregrounds dense networks of interests, which refer to the relations of power set up in the form of networks. These power networks appear



in the form of conspiracies and plots and are manifest by the paranoid atmosphere in the narratives. To trace the entanglements of power relations opens up an opportunity of telescoping relations of domination and resistance. Thus, power relations can offer a critical insight to the world of late modern cultural and social relations. Furthermore, in DeLillo's novels, the functioning of the cultural apparatus in subduing the population on the axis of capitalist social relations can also be read in conspiratorial terms. The capitalist set of social, economic and political conduct is ubiquitous in DeLillo's fiction. The conspiracy outlook of power relations in DeLillo's fiction enables a late Marxist criticism of the late century in American environments. Finally, in a master-plan of unveiling the hidden, DeLillo figures out the secret power structures through the discourse of conspiracy. According to McCann and Szalay, DeLillo's use of the subterranean, the secret and the mysterious in handling the issue of power pushes him closer to a counter-cultural literary program, as it was in 1960s. As they conclude, reason functions as "the language of clandestine state domination and Western imperialism" in DeLillo's countercultural writing; hence consequently, "mystery might prove to be a higher form of politics" (449-51).

**CHAPTER 3**  
***THE NAMES: CORPORATE CAPITALISM***  
**AND THE CULTURE OF CONSPIRACY**

*The Names* (1982), one of the most loose-structured works of DeLillo, uses the travel motif in wide scale to depict the corporate world and conspiratorial patterns at play. The locus of the novel is the international travel and transnational web of money flow. James Axton is a risk analyst that provides service for multinational companies and informs them about the security risks of the countries where capital can be invested. America is the absent center of the novel for Axton is not at home, but always on the run in different countries, such as Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, India etc., to fix some business interests. *The Names* is regarded as an example of American expatriate novel, in the fashion of Henry James' novels (Weinstein 290). The maturation process of the protagonist, which is very peculiar to this type of travel narratives, is present in Axton's experience. He not only develops skills in his business as a risk analyst, passing through myriads of business contacts, but also gradually develops a critical vision against the nature of multinational capitalism and its machinery. This dual sided maturation is also followed by his anxiety to track down a mysterious language cult called 'The Names,' which is responsible for unexplained murders. The cult's consequent chase of Axton pushes him into deeper dimensions of recognition of his place within the corporatist interests of multinational business life.

At the center of the novel there's a number of businessmen and executives of multinational corporations chasing their companies' interests. The setting is Greece at the beginning of the novel. It later shifts to Asia Minor and the Middle-East as the characters relentlessly take business trips. James Axton, the protagonist and the narrator, is a businessman and a risk analyst. Together with his boss, George Rowser, James works for the Northeast Group, informally known as 'the Parent,' stationed in the USA. Axton makes risk assessments of the countries where various corporations intend to make investments; moreover, he sells political insurance policies to

American businessmen against any kind of criminal events and political risk situations. For a period of time, Axton is together with his wife Kathryn and his nine-year-old son Tap in Greece. Kathryn is volunteering for an archeological excavation in Kouros Island, and Tap is writing a novel in a code-language called Ob.

The people in Axton's circle - American banker David Keller and his wife Lindsay, the British diplomat Charles Maitland and his wife Ann - are the other actors in the novel that help set connections in multinational business and clarify the ongoing conspiratorial events. More specifically, the connections they set up are never simply business contracts, but they have political consequences in different countries, which make the case compatible with a conspiratorial perspective. For instance, Charles is involved in the security of the overseas branches of American and British corporations, such as Shell and British Petroleum. Along with Charles, David is on the watch for credit flows and cash movements among banks and he is an actor of financial networks. Other business people - the German named Stahl, the Greek Andreas Eliades and Roy Hardeman who sells refrigeration systems - are all there setting business connections and they add up to the economic relations central to the theme of the novel. To do business transactions, they constantly go to Anatolia and Middle-Eastern cities - Istanbul, Ankara, Jeddah, Kabul, Amman to name a few - and stay for short-term periods and then return to Greece. They weave the region with corporate business and articulate the regional politics on the financial basis. Their profit-seeking motivation and corporate aims on vast geographies provide major conflicts and the basic thematic patterns in the novel.

Owen Brademas, the leader of the dig in Kouros, finds out a mysterious cult perpetrating ritual killings for no apparent reason. He is determined to reveal the identity of the cult and to disclose the pattern of their murders. Consequently, he becomes the questing figure in the novel and pursues the cult in a vast topography. Of Axton's circle, Frank Volterra, the filmmaker, wants to take the cult murders into film and joins the search. Axton cannot remain neutral to the issue to the extent that he takes the quest as a priority over his profession. In addition, the cult also remains within his interest since it bears the probability of being a risk situation for his task of selling political insurances. Moreover, he also feels the threat of being

victimized. The search for the cult goes on in a variety of regions between Asia Minor and India where also the business relations of the executives and diplomats are operative. Thanks to Owen Brademas, a contact has been set with the cult, and why and how they kill are raised as the issues of utmost concern. The motives of the group, though highly ambiguous, are inquired as a consequence of Owen's close connection with cult members like Avtar Singh, Emmerich and Andahl. Eventually, it can be deduced that the topographies of multinational business and cult murders indirectly overlap. The cult killings thematically form the opposite pole of the corporate businesses and emerge as an antagonistic force against the conspiracy based business pacts.

Global finance capitalism, with its political and cultural upbringings, is the major theme in *The Names*, depicting the contemporary experience of a corporate culture. DeLillo achieves an exact portrait of the political and cultural conditions in the age of globalization by juxtaposing various systems in his novel. In his effort to reflect the nature of contemporary capitalism and its institutions, he employs a number of fields of knowledge as tools enlightening each other to exhibit deeper segments of power in society. In other words, DeLillo benefits from the metaphoric and pragmatic use of different systems to display the dissemination of power and complex power networks weaved in the time of late capitalism. In *The Names* (1982), DeLillo makes an inquiry of the ubiquity of power in the contemporary corporate culture by consulting to the binaries of systems such as language and politics, business and politics, archeology and ideology. Briefly, DeLillo entangles, as Weinstein notes, "esoterica and realpolitik" (294) in his novel for a better sight of the pervasive nature of contemporary power relationships.

Tom LeClair, in that sense, categorizes DeLillo's novels as 'systems novel' or 'novels of mastery,' by which he refers to the novels of information and power systems. For him, systems novels are the ones that "represent and intellectually master the power systems they exist within and are about" (6). Necessarily, systems novels have an excessive load of information that revel on different networks of relations from history to politics, from commerce to ecosystems and war to communication. By this way, DeLillo's *The Names*, if taken as a systems novel, aims

to “provide the means to analyze and criticize master ideologies of American and multinational cultures” (LeClair 15). Thus, DeLillo’s task is of creating interactive systems in *The Names*, namely language, archeology, finance, politics and conspiracy, which commonly have a say about the dominant paradigm of power in the world of the novel.

Implied by the title of the novel to a certain extent, DeLillo’s fiction is also about language. More specifically, it is about ancient inscriptions, epigraphy, cryptic writings, dead alphabets and it is highly indulged in epiphanies on the nature of language. DeLillo shows not only a bright awareness of his process of using language and the concreteness of words as things, but also displays a ludic moment in the utterance of words just for their own sake. Michael Oriard, henceforward, matches Don DeLillo’s writing with those of the metafictionists such as William Gass, Robert Coover and John Barth (9). For that very reason, Keesey groups DeLillo’s novels with the contemporary Menippean satire such as Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* and William Gaddis’ *Recognitions* and *JR* (5).

Though language bears gravity in the novel as a theme on its own, it would be inadequate to ignore its value as a mirroring system for the issues of power politics. The language of inscriptions, the language of diplomacy, the language of corporate business and risk analysis become DeLillo’s medium through which he reflects the contemporary world of power politics. How language produces meaning, how changing cultural forms are reflected in language, or how language orders cultural practices stand out among the main concerns of the novel. To put it more precisely, use of diverse language segments is appropriated in DeLillo’s novel so as to function as devices to explicate power relations. Analogically, for instance, the task of decoding ancient alphabets and reading tombstones in a vast region is correlative to the task of disclosing the dominant ideological or political motives in the age of late capitalism. Henceforward, the financial power of the first world disseminating over the terrains of the third world corresponds to the inquiry by the Americans and the British of historical relics and inscriptions in the third world.

Conspiracy, as the dominant mode, functions significantly to underline the power networks in *The Names*. Firstly, it is a narrative tool to illuminate the network

formations in the novel. In this sense, it forms correlative binaries that have critical value such as archeology and conspiracy, business and conspiracy, or conspiracy and politics. Therefore, secondly, conspiracy is represented as a political tool in the novel both to sustain power regimes by the elites and to resist suppressing regimes by the suppressed. Conspiracy discourse, including other rhetorical devices such as paranoia and risk, enables a diagnosis of power games in the world of the novel, which can be characterized as dispersive and permeating. With reference to its dissemination over vast regions and spaces, conspiracy shows equivalence to the archeological relics and ancient inscriptions in the novel. They both cover a variety of sites. Thus, conspiratorial acts, in the form of capitalist power and resistances, take shape in and give shape to spaces. The basic use of spatiality in the novel bears the trade-mark of power relations peculiar to the expansionist politics in global corporate capitalism. Together with the above mentioned intersecting systems, conspiracy and spatiality yield a map of diffuse powers and topography of networks in *The Names*.

As a variation of the conspiracy sub-genre, DeLillo's novel bears the themes of the encounter with the unfamiliar, and familiarizing the other. It is a conquest of the new land through business. This provides a close sight of the conqueror permeating the culture of the conquered. At this point, LeClair's remark on the nature of the systems novels clarifies the close association of DeLillo's novel to those of Henry James. In the systems novels, LeClair argues, there is an apparent polydisciplinarity and intertextuality among various systems (15). Not limited to referring to a number of co-existing knowledge systems in DeLillo's novel, this idea also leads us to seek intertexts between the world of *The Names* and that of Henry James. More specifically, the intertext or rather the subtext in DeLillo's novel is the nineteenth century imperialism (Keeseey 118). This is denotative of the global capitalism in late twentieth century world of the novel. Hence, this intertextual association helps set the tone of the power relations in the world of finance and business. Late capitalism and global corporate bodies are determined as the agenda exerting institutional and ideological power over the people and institutions of developing countries.

Moreover, the setting of the Middle East also yields a fascination with the romance tradition in *The Names*. The interplay of mysterious forces, magical settings and the unpredictable dangers of the exotic land are refashioned in the contemporary context of the novel. The emotional as well as the material encounters between the host and the guest cultures are inquired so as to portray suggestive pictures of the capitalist exploiters. McClure sees DeLillo's use of romance as a protean mode that adapts to the historical and political conditions of the late twentieth century. He posits that DeLillo returns to "historical moment for the 'raw materials' - the human models and settings and ideologies" of the romantic narrative and depicts "the penetration of capitalism into all the enclaves once available for imaginative exploitation in romance" (100). Therefore, the conspiratorial atmosphere, substituting the mythic and the mysterious elements in the romantic narrative, supplies the contemporary frame for the capitalist quest for profit in the foreign land. In this new mode, the magical and the eerie correspond to the uncanny play of business contracts and finance politics over the Third World.

At the beginning of the novel, while spending his time in Athens, Axton ironically refers to the old times: "Americans used to come to places like this to write and paint and study, to find deeper textures. Now we do business" (6). In fact, as Axton and his colleagues discover deeper textures of art and culture of the land, they also impose deeper textures of politics and set new networks. Likewise, Owen is ardently interested in the native heritage of the land: "The stones spoke. It was a form of conversation with ancient people. It was also a riddle-solving to a certain degree. To decipher, to uncover the secrets, to trace the geography of language in a sense" (35). As they indulge in uncovering the archeological secrets, new riddles are in progress in business and politics. Considering the density of the diplomatic and business relations set in the novel, the act of deciphering turns into an act of ideological decoding.

Therefore, firstly, this chapter is going to sketch out network formations of global capitalism through conspiracy rhetoric. The dispersal of capitalist power will be constantly under focus. It will also be contended that power dissemination in vast topographies is the inevitable output of the corporate culture of late capitalism.

Hence, multinational corporations and their executives seem as the main conspirers against the powerless. In effect, the consequent production of a culture of risk and paranoia in the age of late capitalism will be dealt with. As a matter of fact, the larger the power networks grow, the more vulnerable they become and this feeds the atmosphere of insecurity in the novel. Consequently, resistance against capitalist networks of power appears in the form of counter-conspiracy in the novel. In other words, it will be asserted that resistance formation goes through similar processes of dissemination like the practices of power. Finally, the main practices of resistance in the novel will be evaluated with regards to acts of violence, the use of spatiality and metaphysical romanticism.

### **3.1. POWER DISSEMINATION AND CORPORATE BODIES**

Basically, power is seen as diffused and widely disseminated following the spread of global capital. Far from being concentrated in a centre, capitalist power is everywhere permeating every site. In accordance with the nature of the capital in the late century, which can be termed as 'liquid' in Zygmunt Bauman's words, power relations are liquid and are extended in the forms of networks. It is the finance and corporate administrations that determine politics. As to their nature, global corporate bodies are expansive over vast areas in the novel. The web weaved among state administratives, company executives and intelligence agents is so strong that it suggests how politics is articulated and manipulated in several countries. Below is a typical DeLillo passage in the novel manifesting an entanglement of relations and interests:

In the Istanbul Hilton I ran into a man named Lane, a lawyer who did work for the Mainland Bank. The day before he'd run into Walid Hassan, one of David Keller's credit officers, at the Inter-Con in Amman. I'd last seen Hassan in Lahore, the Hilton, where we'd run into each other at the front desk, each of us signing a document allowing us a drink in the bar. . . . In the bar we ran into a man named Case, who was Lane's boss. (94)

These should not be taken as coincidences, yet they are the norm, bearing in mind the density of business networks. On the other hand, they do not merely take place on the personal level. There are also many official and unofficial relations among OPEC, IMF, CIA etc. Therefore, politics of power materialize on very



diverse fields, all cutting through money and financial profit. Andreas Eliades, the Greek character in the novel, summarizes almost all the dominant types of politics accessible through the connections of different bodies as follows: “The politics of occupation, the politics of dispersal, the politics of resettlement, the politics of military bases” (57). These power relations are so widely dispersed that there cannot be a center to hold them concentrated. Axton confesses that “[i]t seemed we’d lost our capacity to select, to ferret out particularity and trace it to some center which our minds could relocate in knowable surroundings. There was no equivalent core” (94). This is not only a manifestation of a loss of a sense of belonging for the multinational executive officer, but indicative of the centerless diffusion and ubiquity of power in the late twentieth century capitalism.

Dramatically, this wide spread of politics of power that pursue profit in different lands reduce the geographies into simplified abstractions and “one sentence stories” (94). The subtext of imperialist vision keeps on enhancing the vision of global capitalism. Kathryn argues, during a talk with Axton, that imperialism “subdue[s] and codif[ies]” which for Axton is “the scientific face of imperialism” (80). Codifying and naming are the tools of subduing both in the times of imperialism and global capitalism. Charles Maitland complains to Axton about the change of the names of countries that claim independence:

“I was saying to Ann. They keep changing the names.”

“What names?”

“The names we grew up with. The countries, the images. Persia for one. We grew up with Persia. What a vast picture that name evoked. . . . All the names. A dozen or more and now Rhodesia of course Rhodesia said something. . . . What do they offer in its place? Linguistic arrogance, I suggested to her.” (239-40)

According to Keeseey, the older names of the independent eastern countries helped these people enjoy an exotic fantasy and oriental romanticism. In return, they could “avoid seeing the reality” (119) and the havoc they had wrought on these exploited lands. Very similarly, Eliades criticizes the exploitative nature of American business affairs in foreign lands, which is manifest again in the act of naming and codifying. It is when they exploit and destroy the sources of a country that

Americans learn the names, the people and the conduct of that land. Eliades makes this clear when he complains:

I think it's only in a crisis that Americans see other people. It has to be an American crisis, of course. If two countries fight that do not supply the Americans with some precious commodity, then the education of the public does not take place. But when the dictator falls, when the oil is threatened, then you turn on the television and they tell you where the country is, what the language is, how to pronounce the names of the leaders, what the religion is all about, and may be you can cut out recipes in the newspaper of Persian dishes. I will tell you. The whole world takes an interest in this curious way Americans educate themselves. TV. Look, this is Iran, this is Iraq. Let us pronounce the word correctly. E-ron.E-ronians. This is a Sunni, this is a Shi'ite. Very good. Next year we do the Philippine Islands, okay? (58)

Consequently, the late modern corporate culture has an articulating role on the domain of politics, both in domestic and foreign affairs. The corporate bodies are manipulative over a wide range of decision-making processes. The multinationals in *The Names* are both blatantly and covertly decisive through their intervention into the economic and political agendas in the Middle-Eastern and Asian countries. These corporations are almost naturally the constitutive elements of political decision-making. Deetz argues:

The modern private corporation is central to public decision-making today. In modern societies, corporations make crucial decisions for the public regarding the use of resources, development of technologies, product availability and working relations among people. While state political processes are significant, the shaping of these central decisions through regulation and incentives is considerably less important than the central decision-making processes within corporations themselves. (172)

Basically, it is the power of the multinationals in *The Names* that gives the business relations an appearance of conspiracy. In other words, the corporate networks provide the undercurrent of conspiratorial connections to take over the utmost control of economy and political stability in the region for profit-making. In that sense, imperialistic vision of domination and manipulation of a land via financial interests complement the tasks of the affairs of the bodies in the region. In DeLillo's quasi-romantic conspiracy narrative, "the public institutions of a rationalizing age have metastasized into sinister but alluring webs of mystery" (McClure 104).

Therefore, principally in the novel, global capitalism is the true source of conspiracy in its organizational patterns of networks. It produces diffuse power networks and sustenance of power through clandestine operations and covert unofficial connections.

Ironically, the secret connections that intervene and manipulate the internal affairs of various countries of the region are too overtly negotiated among the executives and diplomats. Their profit pursuit in their target countries set the real tone of their conversations. David Keller and James Axton converse about their ways of keeping up with their regions of investment:

“Per capita GNP is the fifth largest in Africa. We love them. We want to throw some money at them.”  
I gestured around us.  
“Have you decided to let them live? The Turks? Or will you shut them down for ten or twenty years?” (193)

David is overspeaking about his eagerness as a banker for such kind of intervention into the economy and diplomacy of his countries as if he is experimenting in a laboratory. His manners are highly suggestive of conspiratorial manipulation. In a conversation with his wife Lindsay and Axton, he speaks of ‘his’ countries: “My countries are either terrorist playpens or they’re viciously anti-American or they’re huge tracts of economic and social and political wreckage” (232). What is dramatic is that it is most probably the policies of David Keller and the gang of executives of his type that these countries owe their instability. David adds, “A hundred percent inflation, twenty percent unemployment. I love deficit countries;” (232) and he explains how they utilize this instability of their countries to tie them to American directives as follows:

“When they allow you to monitor their economic policies in return for a loan. When you reschedule a debt and it amounts to an aid program.”  
...  
“These things help, they genuinely help stabilize the region . . .” (232-33)

American policies on Greek and Turkish soil are executed with this conspiratorial motive and display both the roles of the American business and the role of capital flow as political power. The fate of these two strategically located

lands seems to be determined in the secret headquarters of diplomatic and economic negotiations. Especially, Greece is portrayed as heavily penetrated by American credit and intelligence agencies. Andreas Eliades, in his conversation with Axton, comes to complain about the American intervention in Greece as follows: “Take the Americans’ money, do what the Americans tell us to do,” and adds that “Humiliation is the theme of Greek affairs. Foreign interference is taken for granted” (235). Andreas, furthermore, points at the idea of political correctness during these diplomatic cover-ups while plotting. His narration of how American cash flows from a bank in Athens to a bank in Turkey without raising the tension between two historical rivals is truly conspiratorial in nature:

This is interesting, how a U.S. bank based in Athens can lend money to Turkey. I like this very much. Okay, they are the southeast flank and there are U.S. bases there and the Americans want to spy on the Russians, okay. Lift the embargo, give them enormous foreign aid. This is Washington. . . . You approve loans from your headquarters in the middle of Athens. But the documentation is done in New York and London. Why is this, because of sensitivity to the feelings of Greeks? No, it is because the Turks will be insulted if the agreements are signed on the Greek soil. How much face could a Turk bring to such meeting? This considerate, I think. This is very understanding. (59)

Andreas is absolutely restless about the foreign interference in Greece. He condemns American support to the Turkish profits in Greece. He also refers to the American hand in the issues about Cyprus between Greece and Turkey. Furthermore, he points at the American support to the military coup of the colonels in Greece between 1967 and 1974. Andreas claims that there was a connection between the Greek intelligence and the American intelligence agencies at the time and that Greek government is not aware of the fact, which is historically verifiable. Briefly, a bundle of American policies are determining the history of the domestic and foreign affairs of the two countries. Andreas persistently criticizes the indecency of ‘American strategy’ on Greece:

American Strategy. This is interesting, how the Americans choose strategy over principle every time and yet keep believing in their own innocence. Strategy in Cyprus, strategy in the matter of dictatorship. The Americans learned to live with the colonels very well. Investments flourished under the dictatorship. The bases stayed open small arms shipments continued. *Crowd control*, you know? (236; emphasis added)

As it can be deduced from the portrait above, strategic action of the American intelligence and diplomacy works on conspiratorial basis in that they plot to maintain power and gain economic strength. Andreas' notion of strategy as 'crowd control' is highly suggestive in this case. Firstly, it denotes the task of 'ideology.' Principally, ideology aims to control and maintain people by creating a worldview. Crowd control, then, can be taken as referring to the ideology and power structures of late capitalism throughout the novel. Secondly, crowd control *de facto* refers to conspiracy in the novel. The secret business contracts and diplomatic negotiations victimize the people of the target countries. They are like guinea pigs which are experimented upon. Therefore, conspiratorial thinking reveals that American conspiratorial strategy is both interested in the domestic affairs of its target countries and their market potentials. That is to say, diplomatic conspiracy, or in other words conspiratorial diplomacy, and business networks overlap in *The Names*. Actually, conspiracy appears as the ideological tool of late capitalism.

The issues raised in the novel are suggestive of Fredric Jameson's remarks on the nature of ideological struggles in the age of late capitalism. As to him, market is the place for political struggle. The global market is the sole continuum for the executives and diplomats to produce politics. Oil prices, company assets and cash are the main determinants of political struggle, which sums up the ideological nature of late capitalist relations in *The Names*. In the novel, the dominance on the market is the objective of the entrepreneurs, and this is to be achieved through the diplomatic, political and secret affairs which aim to exploit the countries in the Mid-Eastern region.

The portrait of these relations by DeLillo exhibits the nature of politics and power in the late twentieth century. Specifically, the novel reveals the production of what Jameson calls the 'global space of postmodern capital.' The decentred capital in its unhindered flow creates power networks in diffuse nature. Jameson's cognitive mapping, hence, is the true task of DeLillo in *The Names*. In other words, DeLillo's endeavor is to map the global system of multinational capitalism. Homer refers to a 1984 review of *The Names* by Frederic Jameson where Jameson considers DeLillo's novel a major postmodern work (117). This remark of Jameson's is not because of

the stylistics or postmodern textual politics of DeLillo in his novel, but most probably due to his endeavor to draw a critical portrait of the postmodern cultural dominant and the networks of postmodern global capital.

Fredric Jameson notes a re-structuring of the class content of the capitalist social structure of late modernity. He refers to “the yuppies” as “a new petit bourgeoisie, a professional-managerial class” (*Postmodernism* 407). However, taking this management class as the dominant class against proletariat in the strict Marxist binary understanding of the society is inadequate. Hence, Jameson clarifies what he means by the appearance of this managerial class as follows:

This identification of the class content of postmodern culture does not at all imply that yuppies have become something like a new ruling class, merely that their cultural practices and values, their local ideologies have articulated a useful dominant ideological and cultural paradigm for this stage of capital. (*Postmodernism* 407)

DeLillo draws a satisfactory account of this managerial class in his narrative from the perspective of Axton, portraying their ideological context and attributing them a kind of unity:

We were a subculture, business people in transit, growing old in planes and airports. We were versed in percentages, safety records, in the humor of flaming death. We knew which airline’s food would double you up, which routes connected well. . . . We advised each other on which remote cities were well maintained, which were notable for wild dogs running in packs at night, snipers in the business district at high noon. . . . We knew where martial law was in force where body searches were made, where they engaged in systematic torture, or fired assault rifles into the air at weddings, or abducted and ransomed executives. (6-7)

These businessmen, yuppies or the managerial class, represent the ideology of the market. Their function is required and appropriated by the agency of the multinational capital. Thus, they can be regarded as the voice of “ ‘nonhuman’ logic of capital,” in Jameson’s words (*Postmodernism* 408). They are the ideologues of the new age. Just as it can be witnessed in the novel, these people invent tactics, make arrangements or take precautions for the capital flow to take place in an anticipated way and they organize the expansion of their interests. DeLillo’s executives are well aware of their status and function. Axton’s insights as to their mission and place in

the world manifest the nature of this class: “All of us. We’re important suddenly. Isn’t it something you feel? We’re right in the middle. We’re the handlers of huge sums of delicate money. Recyclers of petrodollars. Builders of refineries. Analysts of risk” (98).

Fredric Jameson’s yuppies are paralleled by Zygmunt Bauman’s neo-liberals as a “global overclass” (*Liquid Fear* 146). The settlement of the executives into various lands in DeLillo’s novel brings forward the localization of great political and financial crises. In Bauman’s words, “Wherever they [managers of global capital] land, global problems settle down as local, quickly striking roots and becoming ‘domesticated’ ” (*Liquid Fear* 124). The local politics and finance become dependent upon the determinations of the transnational capital and its policy makers. Countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran or Arab Emirates are all at the focus of this grand scheme. For instance, DeLillo defines Iran with definitions like “collapsed presence, collapsed business” (233). And the localization of global problems can be figured out in Iran in Axton’s words:

This was the period after the President ordered a freeze of Iranian assets held in U.S. banks. Desert One was still to come, the commando raid that ended two hundred and fifty miles from Tehran. It was the winter Rowser learned that the Shi’ite underground movement, Dawa, was stockpiling weapons in the gulf. It was the winter before the car bombings in Nablus and Ramallah, before the military took power in Turkey, tanks in the streets, soldiers painting over wall slogans. It was before Iraqi ground troops moved into Iran at four points along the border, before the oilfields burned and the sirens sounded through Baghdad. (233)

Shortly, as Bauman argues, “The injuries inflicted by the powers veering out of control on the negatively globalized planet are countless, ubiquitous – and above all scattered and diffused” (*Liquid Fear* 124). In this sense, in the context of *The Names*, Bauman’s vision finds a match with Jameson’s notion of the global networks of capital and Michel Foucault’s notion of power diffused in networks.

### **3.2. PARANOIA AND RISK**

It is an inevitable consequence of the free flow of the multinational finance capital that the notion ‘everything is connected’ is used as a dominant paradigm in *The Names*. It is blatantly seen that a strand of paranoid thought stems from the

global motion of capital in the novel. As Charles notes the idea in this age of multinational business, the grand picture is composed of “Complex systems, endless connections” (313). Such a picture suggests that the capitalist networks are at the same time the producers of insecurity and paranoia. These networks tie the fate of the countries in the same region to each other, which causes the appearance of more complex personal and institutional sub-networks.

Within the context of *The Names*, paranoia, then, has to be considered as a manifestation of contemporary American ideology. The novel presents a culture of paranoia, which mainly refers to the business relationships inflicted with fear and anxiety of terror. Patrick O’Donnell defines ‘cultural paranoia’ as “an intersection of contiguous lines of force – political, economic, epistemological, ethical – that make up a dominant reality empowered by virtue of the connections to be made between materiality, as such, and the fictional representations and transformations of that materiality.” Moreover, he sees it as “a way of seeing the multiple stratifications of reality, virtual and material, as interconnected and networked” (O’Donnell 182). Paranoia is apprehended in DeLillo’s novel as a way of discerning the business and finance networks that are heavily inflicted on the countries where business is executed. The relation between paranoia and the contemporary capitalist ideology is deep, which is also truly represented in DeLillo’s fiction:

Since paranoia has so much to do with the mystified, hegemonic enactments of power, the representation of paranoia in the artificial plots of fiction can, indeed, be seen as a site where epistemology and ideology meet. . . . It can be conflated with – is the mirror image of – the more blatant and incorporative aspects of “late capitalism,” defined by Fredric Jameson as a “world system” whose features include the emergence of “transnational business [,] . . . the new international division of labor, a vertiginous new dynamic in international banking and the stock exchanges (including enormous Second and Third World debt), new forms of media interrelationship (very much including transportation systems such as containerization), computers and automation, the flight of production to Third World areas.” (O’Donnell 182-83; 2<sup>nd</sup> ellipsis in orig.)

Axton voices the deep rooted fears both in him and in his group as a consequence of their mostly clandestine business pacts. This fear seems to stem from being located in foreign lands as a businessman; it is the fear of encountering the



unknown. Axton's codifying of the target countries with a single outstanding aspect reveal the fear of this encounter. He says, "All these countries were one-sentence stories to us. Someone would turn up, utter a sentence about foot-long lizards in his hotel room in Niamey, and this became the solid matter of the place, the means we used to fix it in our minds. The sentence was effective, overshadowing deeper fears, hesitations, a rife disquiet" (94). It is, thus, something more than the unknown that they fear. In fact, the net of business associations they set up are countered by reactions in these lands, mostly by armed violence. This threat of terror is the actual reason for their paranoia. Axton adds, "Truth was different, the spoken universe, and men with guns were everywhere. . . . This was the humor of hidden fear" (94).

The establishment of corporate chains all over the Second and Third World countries bears something uncanny in it. It is the harbinger of fear and death because murders, acts of terror, assassinations or public uprisings are some of the possible native reactions to the domination of multinational finance capital over the land. The networks require their anti-forces, which are the acts of violence. Therefore, this is the source of paranoia, the dominant cultural paradigm in the novel, created by the complex relations of money and power. Owen Brademas, the archeologist, inquires about the nature of this fear or paranoia in the region with reference to ancient traditions as follows:

Bank loans, arms credits, goods, technology. Technicians are the infiltrators of ancient societies. They speak a secret language. They bring new kinds of death with them. New uses for death. New ways to think about death. All the banking and technology and oil money create an uneasy flow through the region, a complex set of dependencies and fears. (114)

The significant issue in the excerpt above about the formation of a paranoid culture is Brademas' paralleling technicians with businessmen, and consequently, conflating technology with business. Recalling Herbert Marcuse's remarks on technology in *One Dimensional Man*, the ideological roots of associating technology with business can be inquired. According to him, technological a priori is itself a political a priori. It means that technology is an ideology in itself in highly industrialized societies. The utilization of technology as control and surveillance provides the ideological domination of the ruling elite. DeLillo's world represents

the later decades of Marcuse. The world in DeLillo's *The Names* is a post-industrial one. The dominant technical apparatus is not the machine but information services or media. Yet, these two worlds match with each other. The multinational business has an ideology of its own. This ideology is equivalent to the rationality of the multinational capital. The fear of death and the paranoia of surveillance, brought forward by the ideology of technology, are similar to the paranoia of conspiracy in the world of business. DeLillo considers a close affinity between the functions of an upper class of technicians and that of businessmen, each with a jargon and private language of their own. "Language of business," in Axton's words, "is hard-edged and aggressive, drawing some of its technical cant from the weapons pool of the south and southwest, a rural nurturing in a way, a bleeding of the gray-suited, the pale, the corporate man. It's all the same game, these cross-argots suggest" (47). Matching with the ideological burden of the technician, the corporate man is the basic operator of late capitalist ideology after the 1980s, which is the apparent theme in *The Names*.

Following this association of technology and business, and their imposition on vast lands through widespread networks, one should reach 'the machine-in-the-landscape' metaphor in Leo Marx's 1964 book *The Machine in the Garden*. The dominant theme and era of this work is the nineteenth century ideology of progress in America and its manifestation in industrial capitalism. The machine and the landscape are the two antithetical metaphorical poles that stand for the impulse of industrial progress and the unexploited natural state. The metaphor is devised by Marx to point at the fears and anxiety that has arisen upon the penetration of industrial progress into the pastoral America, abolishing the American pastoral ideal. Here, the issue is of an ideological clash between two worldviews, contesting for the ideological imaginary of America for the following centuries. From the times of Thomas Jefferson's notion of American romantic pastoralism depending on an agrarian economy towards the progressive industrial movements in the first half of the twentieth century, the 'machine-in-the-landscape' metaphor is a vivid one in the imaginary and language of American politics (Marx, *Machine* 126).

To portray the paranoia of the evil to come, as a consequence of the intrusion of the technological rationale into the pastoral landscape, Leo Marx's ideology which rests on the formulation of his pastoral ideal should be unfolded. Marx is familiar with the ancient idyllic traditions, especially Virgilian eclogues and ancient herdsman narratives. The main motive in pastoralism is to provide a distance from the complex social structures of modern society and pose a criticism by projecting a sense of de-familiarization. This is achieved through a reference to the unpenetrated native environment and natural harmony. In a new context, the 'machine-in-the-landscape' metaphor is peculiarly about the new machine technology, namely industrial capitalism, creating fears in the native landscape. It pertains to the historical development of material progress from the second quarter of the nineteenth century onwards and its reflections on the popular and political imagination.

Re-handling his assessments on technological progress and pastoral ideology in a 1991 article, Leo Marx admits that the notion of pastoralism would seem anachronistic in analyzing and resisting the ideology of industrial capitalist progress in the twentieth century ("Pastoralism," 38). However, he sees a sense of universality to the issue and suggests a revival of this mode of thinking under different referents and contexts in different periods. For instance, he refers to the Marxist literature and proletarian novels of the 1930s as "Covert Pastoral" for they thematize 'low' characters distant from the rich and powerful classes of the social structure. Shortly, these novels bear the idea of providing an estrangement from the system and the prevailing mode of domination ("Pastoralism," 64). Similarly, he regards that the radical political practices of the New Left of the 1960s derive from the pastoral impulse. Hence, he brings a generalization over the conflictual constituents of the metaphor, the machine and the landscape, so as to make it a more suggestive formula to define political struggles of a certain type:

[H]owever, the "machine" brings in the larger interlocking bureaucratic network of universities, corporations, and government, in a word, the "system." The enormously effective figure transfers the attributes of modern industrial technology – efficiency, power, impersonality, rationality, productivity, organization, and so on. . . .

To oppose this technocratic mentality – and it is important to notice that the target here is not technology per se, not technology in the

common sense of useful apparatus, but rather as it makes itself felt in that debased form of progressive thought that takes the perfection of means as a sufficient end- to oppose their technocratic adversary. . . . But “nature” here must not be taken too literally, as a thing or place, for it is primarily a set of antitechnocratic principles. (“Pastoralism,” 64)

Principally, *The Names* offers a similar portrait through the paradigms of the late twentieth century. There are contextual correspondences between Leo Marx’s and DeLillo’s world pictures; however, they belong to different stages of capitalism. The rationale of multinational capital in *The Names*, corresponding to the technological rationale in Leo Marx’s work, is expansive over non-American lands. The weaving of finance webs in the Mid-Eastern region is the prevailing mode of domination. Apart from the industrial capitalism in Marx’s analysis, the dominant mode of production is the post-Fordist economy in DeLillo’s world. Besides, the exploitation of capitalist and progressivist power relations do not take place in the native landscape of America, yet they exploit the lands beyond the borders. This is because of the nature of the transnational capital. Basically, domination and exploitation are the fundamental elements of the mode of capitalist relations in *The Names*, which are the common elements with Leo Marx’s pattern of analysis. These relations spoil the land and subdue people, but the sense of estrangement and escape into the primitive and the elemental is always present in the novel, as suggested by pastoralism. Keeping in mind that the novel is divided into subtitles such as ‘The Island’, ‘The Mountain’, ‘The Desert’ and ‘The Prairie’, the mode of pastoral estrangement from the dominant modes of capitalist relations can be traced. Furthermore, the challenge to the established system is also present in the plot by the violent acts of the mythic cult, *Ta Onomata* (The Names), which posits the main resistance of political nature. The function of the cult and its political value are going to be handled in the following phases of this chapter.

Going back to the use of paranoia in the novel, the reader comes to face two basic reasons. Firstly, it stems from the anxiety of the executives to provide the security of their investments. Their business networks are so vast that as it becomes larger it becomes more vulnerable. This need to be vigilant brings forth a deep rooted fear about the security and stability of their assets. Secondly, paranoid thinking is caused by their situation as open targets to any indigenous reactions, namely terrorist

violence. A disseminated notion of power should require resistance of a compatibly diffused manner. Therefore, the ubiquity of power in the novel creates an equivalent type of ever-present reaction to appear anywhere. Briefly, the main line of paranoia arises out of the impulse of the powerful to sustain their power and to secure the networks. In return, this vigilance of theirs breeds the risk discourse in the novel, which is one of the dominant themes to diagnose the relation between paranoia, power and resistance.

George Rowser and James Axton are the risk analysts who work for the Northeast group selling political insurance policies. They assess the risk factors of the lands where their clients intend to do business. They have strict inquiry methods. They make analyses in accord with some criteria to evaluate the risk situations and attribute a degree of credibility. Axton notes:

We have a complex grading system. Prison statistics weighed against the number of foreign workers. How many young males unemployed. . . . Payments made to the clergy. We have people we call control points. The control is always a national of the country in question. Together we analyze the figures in the light of the recent events. What seems likely? Collapse, overthrow, nationalization? . . . Whatever dangers an investment. (33-34)

The risk literature in the novel poses a multitude of points about the production, evaluation and utilization of risk and its closeness to paranoia. Rowser, the risk analyst, has a really uncanny outlook, compatible to his profession. Because “Rowser traveled under a false name. He had a total of three identities and owned the relevant paper;” and furthermore “His life itself was full of the ornaments of paranoia and deception” (44). As regards to these features, he seems to be more of a conspirator. In fact, this is one of the main ideas about risk discourse in the novel. The risk analysts themselves tend to be apprehended as conspirators in so far as their major task is to serve for the global capital and provide its prevailing mode of relations. In other words, while they secure the capital as risk analysts, they metaphorically conspire against the Third World countries. And that is posed to be the proper ideological tool in the age of late capitalism by DeLillo.

The risk analyst is the co-conspirator or the comrade of the corporate man in the novel. As previously mentioned, they diagnose a variety of criteria to secure business relations. As for Rowser, “Data on the stability of the countries he’d been visiting. Facts on the infrastructure. Probabilities, statistics. These were the music of Rowser’s life, the only coherence he needed” (45). The major task of the risk analysts is to seek coherence and patterns to depend on. This motive is also shared by the corporate managers as well. Therefore, the super-class of managers, executives and the risk analysts basically determine the power structures. In a way, they aim at fixing secure positions in a dissemination of powers. DeLillo sees in them a function of the clergy of the ancient clans in a contemporary context. This time they should be apprehended as the clergy of the postmodern religion of late capitalism. Charles Maitland tells Axton about the function and power of the risk analysts and corporate managers: “It’s Rosicrucianism, druids in hoods. The formal balances, that’s what counts. The patterns, the structures. It’s the inner consistencies we have to search for. The symmetries, the harmonies, the mysteries, the whisperies” (164). The task of seeking reliable patterns for risk analysis is also perpetrated by informal and unofficial deductions, which more or less yield the same results. These informal assessments also reveal the imperialist gaze on the underdeveloped regions. After talking awhile on carpet weaving, Charles Maitland and James Axton speak about its relation to political instability, along with other minor markers of risk:

“Weaving districts are becoming inaccessible. Whole countries in fact. . . . They seem to go together, carpet-weaving and political instability.”  
We thought about this.  
“Or martial law and pregnant women,” I said.  
“Yes,” he said slowly, looking at me. “Or gooey deserts and queues for petrol.”  
“Or plastic sandals and public beheadings.” (176)

Rowser and Axton insure executives against ransom or kidnapping. Risk insurance is a protection against terrorist violence. The terrorist stands for the counter-force to the wild and unlimited power of global business. And that’s why they take action mainly against business circles in the novel. It is obviously put down in the novel that “U.S. executives led the world, being targeted with particular frequency in the Middle East and Latin America” (46). Terror is a destructive

uprising against the dominant system and is a political act. It is conceptualized by DeLillo as the major act of resentment against the American business and multinational capital in the Middle East: “In Europe they attack their own institutions, their police, journalists, industrialists, judges, academics, legislators. In the Middle East they attack Americans. What does it mean?” (114). Far beyond being a justification of terrorism against global power holders and American corporations, this remark firstly posits the way Americans see themselves from the perspectives of the third-world countries. They see how they are viewed as capitalist invaders in their regions of business. And secondly, apart from being a matter of perspective, this remark suggests the material roots of different structural and economic problems in the West and Third World countries. Put it that way, DeLillo critically inserts American capital and American intervention as a structural determinant for the problems of the countries in the near eastern region.

However, besides merely being a political reaction, terrorism very ironically becomes a sub-market under the grand capitalist market. This sub-market of risk evaluations on terrorism is a zone for negotiations and business between executives and terrorists with its own rules: “In this decade a quarter of a billion dollars in ransom money had been paid to terrorists” (46). Corporate bodies, risk insurance and terrorist acts become an extension of business networks. Terrorism essentially breeds the hidden fears and paranoia among the executives on the one hand; and on the other, it gives birth and justification to the risk market and risk discourse. In another example, this association is given by DeLillo in the novel as follows: “If a terrorist group knew that a certain corporation insured its executives against kidnap and ransom, they’d want to consider an action” (46). This sounds like a win-win game. Indirectly, terrorist groups are involved within the risk market and are incorporated by the system. Ulrich Beck clearly handles the market value of risks. His remarks on risk in the late industrial society are essentially applicable to the relations between business, terrorism and risk in *The Names*. According to him:

Risks are no longer the dark side of opportunities, they are also *market opportunities*. As the risk society develops, so does the antagonism between those *inflicted* by risks and those who *profit* from them. The social and economic importance of *knowledge* grows similarly, and with

it the power over the media to structure knowledge (science and research) and disseminate it (mass media). The risk society is in this sense also the *science, media, and information* society. Thus new antagonisms open up between those who *produce* risk definitions and those who *consume* them. (46)

The idea in Beck's words is that risk is a profitable item. The relations between business, terrorism and risk discourse in the novel can be adjusted to Beck's explanation above. Business relations and capitalist invasion across the borders brings forth terrorist resistance. In other words, the victimized target countries create risk positions for the business executives through terror. The risk situations created by terrorism gives birth to risk detection, insurance policies and a risk market. Namely, risks are defined by risk analysts and in return, consumed by corporate executives in *The Names*. The portrait of relations in the novel is not directly that of late-industrialism, as Beck refers to in his passage above about risk discourse. The risks are not industrial risks but political risks in *The Names*. Yet, commodity nature of risk and the new associations it creates have a ground in DeLillo's world. Furthermore, although the novel does not directly include mass media, the risk assessment company, namely Northeast Group (the Parent), serves for the same end. As its code name suggests, it is a metaphorical annotation to mass media cartels that profits by the information on risks. The principles of Rowser and his group is an example for the nature of the Northeast Group working as a media cartel:

Rowser and his groups were writing political risk insurance in impressive amounts. They sold portions of the original policies to syndicates in order to spread risk and generate whatever cash flow the parent didn't supply. He broadened his data collection network and installed a few key people called risk analysts, the title he'd felt unworthy of in the days when he gathered facts for the end of the world. (48)

As a constituent of paranoia and conspiracy discourses, risk is solid like concrete in late modernity. This is blatantly noted down in *The Names*: "Risk had become a physical thing" (47). Thinking about risk factors and an awareness of potential dangers becomes one of the major tasks in late modernity and late capitalism. As mentioned earlier in Beck's words, this awareness of risks is a consequence of the increasing self-reflexivity of late modernity. Late capitalism, in this sense, is risk-conscious; it operates on the awareness of economic and political



risks. This risk-consciousness, then, should be taken as an equivalent of paranoia. Avtar Singh, the leader of the cult, agrees with the premise, and focuses on this self-reflexivity of the age in his talk to Owen:

The world has become self-referring. You know this. This thing has seeped into the texture of the world. The world for thousands of years was our escape, was our refuge. . . . The world was where we lived, the self was where we went mad and died. But now the world has made a self of its own. . . . This is my vision, a self-referring world, a world in which there is no escape. (297)

Paranoia, specifically the multiplicity of risk factors, is a political issue. As explained above, the capability to define and manage risks becomes tools for power. “In smaller or larger increments – a smog alarm, a toxic spill, etc. – what thus emerges in risk society,” Beck notes, “is the *political potential of catastrophes*. Averting and managing these can include a *reorganization of power and authority*. Risk society is a *catastrophic* society. In it the exceptional condition threatens to become the norm” (24). A number of types of risk peculiar to the social and economic structure of the late twentieth century America is exposed in DeLillo’s several novels. For instance, industrial and military dangers are among the major issues in *White Noise* and *End Zone*. *The Names* thematizes political risks. And in return, the management of risks appears to provide political power in the novel. DeLillo too, in line with Beck, treats these risks as catastrophes. In return for Andreas’ complaints to Axton about American intervention into Greek affairs, Axton replies by stating the own failures of Greek policies: “And your mistakes. All your mistakes are discussed in terms of acts of nature. The catastrophe in Asia Minor. The disastrous events in Cyprus. This is the language of earthquakes and floods. But Greeks caused these things to happen” (237-38).

The notion of risk in the novel is posed as bearing catastrophic dimensions and having a multiplicity of causes and effects. This is what evokes an extreme sense of vigilance and paranoia in the novel. The global motions of cash appear as endemic problems in each different country. Yet, each local problem is a globally produced risk position by multinational business and global diplomacy of finance. Below is Axton’s small account of different offices of the Northeast Group in different lands.

It should be noted in his remarks that the potential risk factors are represented as multiple, disseminated and even impliedly interrelated:

Our Iranian control was dead, shot by two men in the street. Our associate for Syria-Iraq was sending cryptic telexes from Cyprus. Kabul was tense. Ankara lacked home heating, families were moving to hotels. Throughout Turkey people could not vote unless they had their finger dyed. This was to keep them from voting more than once. Our associate for the Emirates woke up to find a corpse in his garden. The Emirates were overbanked. Egypt has religious tensions. (143)

To assert the main premise in *The Names* once again, it is when the risk analysts commence to manipulate the affairs of the lands whose risk factors they are monitoring that they turn into conspirators. This theme is enhanced in the novel through a surprising discovery that James Axton's insurance company is, in fact, making analyses for the CIA. What has been regarded as a capitalist conspiracy is strengthened by the U.S. intelligence service, which strongly supports our main premise. While reading *The Middle East Security Survey*, Charles Maitland finds out about this secret connection, of which even Axton himself hasn't been aware until very recently. Axton asks Charles about how it was covered in the survey:

“What did it say exactly?”

He smiled. “Only that the Northeast Group, an American firm selling political risk insurance, has maintained a connection with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency since its inception. Diplomatic sources et cetera.” (315)

The common nature of capitalist financial interests and intelligence agencies meet in the axis of conspiring. This is one of the major foci of the novel. The set of shared features between the two can also be found in Axton's words on CIA: “If America is the world's living myth, then the CIA is America's myth. All the themes are there, in tiers of silence, whole bureaucracies of silence, in conspiracies and doublings and brilliant betrayals” (317).

### 3.3. TYPES OF RESISTANCE

#### 3.3.1. The Cult

From the early stages of the narrative, the mysterious cult covers the sub-plot. Owen is interested in the murders of the cult from the first time they appear in the hills of Greece and he is determined to pursue them till the end of the narrative. In fact, all the figures, including Axton, Charles, Volterra and Rowser, are so enthusiastically involved in discovering the patterns of the cult murders that they quit their professional tasks and monitor the cult's deeds. Irrelevant to all risk analysis-statistics and unexplained by the literature of criminal acts, the cult is posed as an undefined source of risk for them. That's why the pursuit of the cult becomes a desire to name, categorize and locate. In a sense, it is the sinister challenge and the perilous force that the Westerner happens to face in the exotic land. The cult brings forth mysterious network of crimes as resistance in the face of the power networks imposed on the Third World regions. It acts as if they are putting forth a counter-conspiracy against the capitalist and imperialist conspiracy. For that reason, the cult's manners, maneuvers and the ritual killings they perpetrate should be taken in a political context. Their mysterious exertion of violence is, thus, a resistance of a political type, considering the system of powers they retaliate. They add up to the paranoid tension in the networks of relations and also hint about the type of resistance in a time of global powers of capital. O'Donnell inquires the new generation of resistant activities in the age of postmodern paranoia: "Yes, everything is connected; yes we are part of plots and systems of capital and informational exchange over which we have no control; no, there is nothing we can do about it, at least not in the usual senses of political engagement or resistance" (193). The cultic violence exemplifies this unusual sense of political engagement in *The Names*.

The cult, whose name is later on discovered to be The Names, seems to be committing murders on no rational basis or not depending on a master plan. What they are committed to looks like senseless killing. However, Axton reveals that they have a pattern. The initials of the victim and of the place where the victim is killed do match. For instance, M.K. are the initials for the victim Michaelis Kalimbetsos and the small Greek village where he is killed, Mikro Kamini. Likewise, H.M. stands

for Hamir Mazmurdar and the place of murder, Hawa Mandir. The cultists, also known as Abecedarians, are “zealots of the alphabet” (75). Yet, their motives are still not apparent. Furthermore, they are more of a disorganized group rather than having a unity. Andahl, one of the cultists, admits: “In one sense we barely exist. There are many setbacks. People die, they go out one day and disappear. Differences arise. For months nothing happens. The cells lose touch with each other” (212). Under a fog of such indefiniteness, the resistant value of the cult is under question.

The cult’s choice of victims does not look like a threat directed to a system or an opposing party. They are the common men of the local people, like shepherds or villagers, mostly the old and the poor. The victims do not occupy important posts so as to attribute a political category to the cult’s acts of violence: “And what a remarkable use for their humane impulses these cultists have found. Dispatching the feeble minded outcast, the soon-to-die-anyway. Or is their choice of victims meant to be a statement that these acts are committed outside the accepted social structure[?] . . .” (171). Therefore, instead of what the cult is, what it is not becomes more important for the characters in the novel so as to discover the design of their murders. These murders do not fit into the folkloric patterns or the literature of crime in the region. And “they weren’t repeating ancient customs, they weren’t influenced by the symbolism of holy books or barren places, they weren’t making a plea to Egyptian or Minoan gods, or a sacrifice, or a gesture to prevent catastrophe” (170). Even though David Keller and Axton manage to have direct contact with the cult together with Owen in the further stages of events, they never make sure about their motives of action. After conversing with the cultists like Andahl and Avtar Singh, they only achieve an elimination of a broader range of probabilities about the aims of the group: “The cult’s power, its psychic grip, was based on an absence of such things. No sense, no content, no historic bond, no ritual significance” (216).

Acts of violence directed to not any definite end or a definite party evokes a sense of reaction or resistance directed against a whole system or the systemacity of a complete mechanism to mirror it. In other words, the cult murders have the necessary ground to be regarded as a mockery of the correspondent aspects of the power relations in the novel. The cultic killings introduce a reverse angle into the

paranoid culture of global capitalism and conspiracy. In DeLillo's fiction, the paranoid vision is inserted into the epistemological and political systems in order to create forms of resistance against grand systems of totalization; and hence, these resistance forms are "homologous to the formation of the repressive orders in the first place" (O'Donnell 195). Briefly, the paranoia that the cult provides brings out a homology to the ways and relations of power. In mirroring the late capitalist global power networks, the cult's routes of action and its killings pose a parodical representation of the power networks of finance capital in *The Names*.

The cult murders are a homologous resistance to the managers', executives' and risk analysts' dependence on patterns, symmetries and designs. For one thing, they mock the need to structure systems of power. The designs and symmetries the analysts needed, as accounted above, are reflected back with a mock-symmetry of the matching initials of the victims and the places they are preyed. Rather than being taken as a direct political action directed to a subject, this production of a fake systematic of initials bothers and parodies the patterns of capital flow and risk analyses. Secondly, the task of hunting people just for the sake of matching initials is a parody of capitalist victimization of the local people from various regions for the sake of a blind system of profit making. This is the kind of "A death by system, by machine intellect" (175). Eventually, Owen comes to grab an awareness of the cult's project. The insight he tells Axton about the issue reveals the true political nature of the cult's acts:

"... These killings mock us. They mock our need to structure and classify, to build a system against the terror in our souls. They make the system equal to the terror. The means to contend with death has become death. . . ."

"Is this what the cult intended all the time, this mockery?"

"Of course not. They intended nothing, they meant nothing. They only matched the letters . . ." (308)

There's no apparent class-content to the acts of the cult. The cult is not based on class-formation or on the interests of a clearly identified social group. However, the political content or the role of their acts should be deduced from the mission of their target group, the yuppies and executives. The interests and overt acts of conspiracy by the executives determine the nature of the cult as a resistant group.

Therefore, although no class content is obviously attributed to the cult in the novel, their position as a resistance group requires the global over-class of the yuppies as the addressee. Hence, not an overt but a latent class-content can be attributed to the cult. It must be kept in mind that every struggle is a consequence of contradictions, either economic or ideological (Resch 258). The Marxist premise that all power is determined by the existing modes of production should be considered in analyzing the struggle between the cult and the representatives of neo-liberalism in the novel. In that sense, the mode of production that determines relations of power also determines the types of resistance as well. That is, the dispersal of power in the forms networks and the relational notion of power in post-Fordist mode of production breeds more diffuse nature of resistance networks. Resistance forms are not uniform and homogenous, and neither are those of power. To sum up, there is a certain, yet latent, class content in the acts of the cult in terms of who they oppose to and in terms of the social-economic structure they are situated in. Also, their disorganized and heterogeneous structure emerges out of the same conditions that give birth to them, namely late (disorganized) capitalism.

### **3.3.2. Spatiality, Postmodern Placelessness and Pastoral Mediation**

Therefore, the cult's counter-conspiracy brings forth a vision about the operation of power and emergence of resistance in *The Names*. The cult's unintentional yet suggestive mockery of late capitalist relations in global scale also takes place on different dimensions as well. Fenster notes: "The fictional conspiracy narrative maps the protagonist's trajectory across the political, spatial and social order of conspiracy" (122). Spatiality appears as one of the major dimensions in the novel over which the power of global capitalism is produced and exerted, and through which tactics of resistance are devised. The cult's utilization of spaces and its spatial re-locations are ultimately a mirror-effect of the global spaces of capital.

Almost from the beginning of the novel, the cult resides in the hills and caves, places which refer to an outside or a sub-zone. They live the life of a recluse. Their life of isolation and terrorist manners of escape into an underworld of caves make a contrast to the overwhelming economic networks and domination of the super-rich American class of executives in the Middle-East. In other words, the cult is counter-

located to the ruling powers in terms of geography and spaces. Apparently, the cult aims to remain uncontained by the power relations in the region and they reflect this with their choice of spaces to inhabit. This is a form of resistance against power, and spaces are the loci of their practices in the novel. According to Steve Pile, resistance ‘takes place’ against power through specific geographies, as in riots in urban places, revolts by peasants, attacking government websites on the internet; or around geographical entities such as a nation or a local zone. The important thing in this, Pile notes, is “the sense that resistance might happen *under* authority’s nose or *outside* tightly controlled places implies that resistance might have its own distinct spatialities” (2).

Therefore, the primary resistant tactics of the cult as to the spatial relations involves that of keeping outside the geography of domination. Considering the invasion of Asia Minor and Middle-East as geographies of free-flowing capital, they take refuge in the outside. This is consistent with the main premises of resistance for Pile since “resistance seeks to occupy, deploy and create alternative spatialities” (Pile 3). The cult’s primary move is from the urban to the rural. In fact, this gives an idea about their motivation and program. They endeavor to keep out of the civilized and stay within the elemental, which implies their discontent with the existing power relations. They reject to be imposed with power. Andahl tells Axton about their spatial relocation, preferences in the Greek Mani peninsula, and about their main motive:

We walked through these mountains from north to south. When we came into the Mani we knew we would stay. . . . This is the strength of the Mani. It does not suggest things to us. No gods, no history. The rest of Peloponnese is full of associations. The Deep Mani, no. Only what is there. The rocks, the towers. A dead silence. A place where it is possible for men to stop making history. We are inventing a way out. (209)

The caves, the hills or other natural spaces are not basically the headquarters of the terrorist gang for their violent crimes in *The Names*. Deeper than that, these spaces point at the mythic dimensions of the region, which holds a contrast to the power-imposed strata of civilized urban relations under the domination of globalization. In a way, the archeological stratification, the cryptic writings, epigrams and other mythic-historical relics in the geography are projected against the

stratification of power relations, which is the domain of the unnatural and the exploitative. Mythic places in the plain of Greece such as temples, ancient ruins and natural formations such as caves have a natural counter balance against the market and densely weaved economic geography. In a way, the domain of the natural is represented as the ideological opposite of global finance and its institutions in the novel.

Thus, the secondary dimension of the cult's resistant tactics pertains to the principles of spatial dissemination of capitalist relations across the borders. The random dispersal of the sites of cultic murders and their ever-present appearance in many lands, regardless of a certain topographical design, is a reflection of the ubiquity of capitalist power seeping into the land through networks. Unpredictable and uncategorized, the cult's actions and their murders on random geographies represent the power-strategy of the corporate finance networks. Andahl states that "We are no longer *in* a place. We are a little disorganized" (207). In fact, the blatant lack of motive in their coverage of space, ironically a non-strategy, is an absolute correspondent to the unlimited and uninhibited diffusion of finance networks and risk analysts over the region. Here is a speculative account of where the cult has shown appearance, by Owen and Axton:

"One is in Greece."

"You're supposing," he said.

"One is in Jordan. One was in Syria – I don't know how long ago. Vosdanik mentioned Syria, he mentioned Jordan, he also told us about a cult murder in northern Iran." (174)

In fact, this is an act of outwitting the powerful. In de Certeau's words, the cult plays the game of the corporate heads and outdoes their strategy with tactical reversals. They deny being imposed on by the strategies of power and reply by setting up a new power game which is for the most part similar to the power game of the corporate executives. Therefore, the cult deploys and appropriates the strategy of the powerful as its own tactic. By this way, the cult's conspiratorial killings, though apparently irrelevant to the finance networks, manage to divert the attention and plans of Axton, Rowser and other risk analysts. Steve Pile's remark makes implications about the nature of the cult's resistance, which is based on the re-



appropriation of the spatial dissemination of global finance: “Thus, resistance does not just act on topographies imposed through the spatial technologies of domination, it moves across them under the noses of the enemy, seeking to create new meanings out of imposed meanings, to rework and divert space to other ends” (16). The cult achieves producing its own meanings by creating its counter-networks, confronting the already established networks of globalization.

Paul Smethurst argues that “In *The Names*, power is so stretched across space and time that there is no rational system underlying its mysterious dispersal, and the fog of unreason that occasionally connects characters never clears to reveal who or what controls society” (39). The two opposing conspiracy networks, one by the capitalists and the other by the cult, materialize this stretching of power over space. Furthermore, the leitmotiv of epigrammatic inscriptions that are dominant throughout the novel illuminates the process of inscribing power over space in the novel.

As discovered in *The Names*, power has the potential to become vulnerable to the attacks of counter-networks in so far as it is diffused into networks in the Foucauldian sense. That is, “It matters that power seems to be everywhere, but wherever we look, power is open to gaps, tears, inconsistencies, ambivalences, possibilities for inversion, mimicry, parody, and so on . . .” (Pile 27). In parodying and subverting the power networks in *The Names*, resistance networks follow the same discontinuous model that the power of global finance exerts. Resistance is not monolithic, but dispersed over a range of spaces and time segments in DeLillo’s work, in accord with Pile’s remark: “Resistances may be interpreted as fluid processes whose emergence and dissolution cannot be fixed as points in time,” and in addition, “they create unexpected networks, connections and possibilities” (69). For that reason the type of resistance that the cult perpetrates is the mimicry of the power networks of postmodernity. The discontinuity and heterogeneity of resistance are portrayed by the design in cult’s murders and the indefinite number of the members of their group. The cult’s resistant acts fit in Laclau and Mouffe’s understanding of the Gramscian ‘war of position’ through ‘fluid frontiers.’ In this sense, resistance functions as diagnostic of power because the paths of power are enlightened via the dispersive model of resistance in *The Names*. Therefore, conspiracies of power and

counter-conspiracies of resistance in DeLillo's novel project a cognitive mapping of local resistances in the face of globalization.

Placelessness is an outstanding trope in *The Names*, representing the postmodern rationale of spatiality, and it is expressive of the organization of power structures and resistance. The fluidity of the financial power in the novel is paralleled by the spatial disorganization of the cult, as mentioned earlier. The spatial disorganization, which is taken as the trope of placelessness, is an outcome of the disorganized capitalism. "Placelessness," as a postmodern paradigm, "is used as the mode of questioning modern faith in, and dependence on, systems" (Smethurst 293). This is manifest in DeLillo's effort to create a multiplicity of information systems in his novel, which creates a sense of a lack of clarity, as an overall effect, as for the dependability on systems in the postmodern age. The characteristics of a systems novel in *The Names* helps undermine a belief in the proper working of monolithic and unique systems. Furthermore, according to Smethurst, the cult feeds on the trope of placelessness for its resistance against the power structures and for survival (303). While placelessness appears as the principle of power structures, it is also the principle of resistance. Pile asserts that placelessness as a trope of resistance is more subversive and progressive than locally delimited reactions. For him, "effective resistance would come about only as the result of thinking global and acting local" (Pile 13). This is what the cult does by copying the disorganized design of the dominant power structures and acting in various localities, exempt from being predicted in advance.

This use of placelessness is inevitably associated with a re-appropriation of pastoralism. The constant motion of the risk analysts between both national borders and their regional motion between the urban and the rural provides the main theme valid for the pastoral impulse. In the classical pastoral, according to Leo Marx, the shepherd is "the efficacious mediator between the realm of organized society and the realm of nature" ("Pastoralism," 43). He is the liminal figure by whose wandering vision among borders one can get critical sight of both the urban setting and the wilderness. Therefore, the shepherd as the liminal figure provides a double vision for the pastoral literature, which in fact, points at pastoral's "dialectical mode of

perception” (“Pastoralism,” 44). Marx explains this double perception of the mediator figure as follows:

Seen against the background of the wilderness, he appears to be a representative of a complex, hierarchical, urban society. His job is to protect his flock from such menaces of nature as storms, drought and predatory animals. Seen from the opposite vantage, however, against the background of the settled community with its ordered, sophisticated ways and its power, he appears to epitomize the virtues of a simple unworldly life disengaged from civilization and lived, as we now might say, “close to nature.” . . . In his character and behavior this liminal figure combines traits that result from having lived as both a part of, and apart from, nature; from his having lived a part of, and apart from society. (“Pastoralism,” 43)

It can be asserted that *The Names* posits an inverted or a postmodern procedure of pastoral conventions. The two poles of spatial distinction are not directly the civilization and wilderness in the novel, but the capitalist society and the regions it invades. The diplomatic and financial networks are contrasted to a barely mythic and natural experience of life. However, they fulfill the mission of the two terms of the classical pastoral. Moreover, James Axton, the shepherd figure in DeLillo’s novel, is not an unworldly and virtuous common man of wilderness. On the contrary, he is the utterly down-to-earth figure of the business world. Far away from bearing a shepherdlike view of a simple life, Axton is a conductor of power in the highly complex world of business. From the reverse side, Axton is the postmodern shepherd, the shepherd of executives and the protector of his flock of managers as a risk analyst. He insures his flock against risks and terrorists. His conduct of life, yet, analogically serves for the pastoral vision of a double life since he is always on the move among borders. He mentions Frank Volterra about his travels: “I told him I was a traveler only in the sense that I covered distances. I traveled between places, never in them” (143).

Axton’s travels depend on the trope of placelessness, an effect of the late capitalist trajectory of power. He is a spatially fluid figure as he is the spokesman of the global finance. Primarily, his travels are set on the background of a social complexity and hierarchy of powers. From this viewpoint, on the horizontal axis, he moves among business capitals, which makes him conform to the late capitalist

paradigm of placelessness and fluidity of borders. Yet, on the vertical axis, he moves from the business capitals to places where the cult has shown appearance. This secondary line of motion attributes him a quality of being a mediator. As Axton proceeds in his go-between, he gradually gains a consciousness of the uncivilized, the zone which is not invaded by power. Put it that way, as he develops awareness about the cult, he also attains a critical distance to his own status in the power system. About the cult's conduct of life in the rural, he finds out that

They are engaged in a painstaking denial. We can see them as people intent on ritualizing a denial of our elemental nature. To eat, to expel waste, to sense things, to survive. To do what is necessary, to satisfy what is animal in us, to be organic, meat-eating, all blood-sense and digestion. (175)

### **3.3.3. Metaphysics and Language**

With reference to this closeness to the primal, the primitive and the sublime in DeLillo's writing, Maltby sees in DeLillo's style a Romantic-metaphysics (61). In fact, Axton's interest in the cult's motives, together with Owen, provides him with the pastoral disengagement, which bears a metaphysical character. This inclination to metaphysical disengagement is among the basic characteristics of the pastoral impulse according to Leo Marx: "The ancient shepherd's liminal position accounts for his superior grasp of metaphysical reality. To move away from the organized community and its mundane concerns is to gain – or regain – access to the mysterious energy and potency presumed to reside in the part of the world that is Not-Man" ("Pastoralism," 44). Therefore, DeLillo's novel highlights this Romantic-metaphysics by counter-locating and contrasting different spatialities. The novel makes references to unpatterned and uncultivated spaces to evoke the sense of their sublime character. Owen says, "The desert is a solution. Simple, inevitable. It's like a mathematical solution applied to the affairs of the planet. Oceans are the subconscious of the world. Deserts are the waking awareness, the simple and clear solution" (294). The contrasting image of the mythic empty land and the capitalist spaces invaded by power networks are thereby mapped in *The Names*. The complex social community of hierarchies and power is constantly negated by the sublimely elemental spaces of barren lands. Texier, the French archeologist in the novel, notes that this idea of asserting a mythical alternative through space cannot only be

attributed to the cult, The Names, but to many of the sects in other monotheistic religions.

Wherever you will find empty land, there are men who try to get closer to God. They will be poor, they will take little food, they will go away from women. They will be Christian monks, they will be Sufis who dress with wool shirts, who repeat the holy words from the Koran, who dance and spin. . . . There were Sufis in Palestine, Greek monks in the Sinai. Always some men go away. (149)

Back in Greece from India, Axton becomes the target of an attempted assassination. He hears two shots while he is jogging in a trail and he recognizes that the third one is on the way for him. Hardly escaped from a fatal injury, Axton sees David Keller in a distance of several yards, covered with dust. David claims to have seen the assassins and adds that he has hardly saved his life as well. Axton speculates about the reasons of this attempted murder and about the people plotting against them. Putting aside the number of explanations made up in Axton's mind, this moment indicates that the atmosphere of paranoia has an embrace on the risk analyst too. It can be deduced that the risk analysts and the corporate managers, who manage the probabilities of risk, become preys themselves. This can be grasped with the help of Ulrich Beck's term 'boomerang effect': "Sooner or later the risks also catch up with those who produce or profit from them. Risks display a social *boomerang effect* in their diffusion. . . . The agents of modernization themselves are emphatically caught in the maelstrom of hazards that they unleash and profit from. This can happen in a multitude of ways" (37).

The subjects that gain power by manipulating the political potential of risks are on the brink of being victimized. Risk strikes back to its profiteers through the atmosphere of political paranoia. This may be taken as the last stage where Axton's psychological transformation and his growing defamiliarization are completed. In his double role as a "colonial adventurer" and as a mediating pastoral figure, Axton, in the end, "discovers that the most dramatic mysteries are *behind* him, in the corporate world he takes for granted, and in Athens, the seat of Western civilization" (McClure 105). The intricate entanglements of power and the complications of economic forces push him towards a psychological becoming through a moment of realization. Briefly, 'the boomerang effect,' put into motion by the attempted assassination

against Axton, complements his spiritual transformation and causes an arousal of self-consciousness in him.

In complicity with the spatial politics of pastoralism, the use of language is a significant issue in DeLillo's narrative related to the metaphysics of contemplation. Throughout the novel, inscriptions and ancient alphabets are solidly present as communicative medium between the past and the present. Yezidi writings, Kharoshthi scripts, Aramaic initials, Kufic letters, Elgin Marble writings and Ashokan rock edicts are few among the many. As accounted earlier above, the inscriptions on rocks and on other topographical sites analogically connote the imposition of power on the land. Besides, language adds up to both the metaphysical dimension of the pastoral experience as well as to the political dimension of power relations in the novel.

The timelessness and the experience of the primeval through language is a theme that DeLillo's narrative dwells on. The ancient languages, together with the relics of ancient times, address not to the materiality of human being but to his psychological depths. It serves as a medium to penetrate the common experience of humanity, exempt from the will to power. A most important occasion of this experience occurs to Axton when he visits Acropolis in Greece towards end of the novel. The scene depicts his willful yearning for the transcendental experience of linguistic salvation within a congregated community after he has deliberately stayed away from there for a long while. His entrance into the temple through Doric columns takes him into a whirlpool of emotions, a human feeling beyond an appreciation of the "art and mathematics embodied in" and the "optical exactitude" of the structure; Axton is appealed to "[the] human feeling . . . [that] remains to the mauled stones in their blue surround, this open cry, this voice we know as our own" (330). This human feeling brings Axton closer to the metaphysical experience of the pastoral. Axton's apprehension of the linguistic congregation in Acropolis is rather suggestive. He is among tourist groups from several nations in the middle of the Parthenon. Right in the middle of the crowd, Axton feels a moment of epiphanic enlightenment as to the religious apprehension of language and the meta-historical heritage of humanity:

People come through the gateway, people in streams and clusters, in mass assemblies. No one seems to be alone. This is a place to enter in crowds, seek company and talk. Everyone is talking. I move past the scaffolding and walk down the steps, hearing one language after another, rich, harsh, mysterious, strong. This is what we bring to the temple, not prayer or chant or slaughtered rams. Our offering is language. (331)

This liberating perception of language in providing access to the humane is contrasted to the language of business employed throughout the narrative. Language as a common experience of humanity is portrayed with its reference to a unifying value for human crowds. Yet, on the other hand, the political use of language in the dimension of power and crowd manipulation weighs on the opposite pole. Language of business is loaded with power. It manages, directs and dictates the human crowds; and furthermore, the jargons of business, finance and risk does not function as a continuum of communication but a continuum of domination. In Habermas' terms, the language of domination refers to the complex networks of 'goal-directed action.' This language draws a universe of over-rationalized patterns of action to dominate and subdue. Basically, it bears purposive rationality in contrast to a communicative rationality. Therefore, the 'lifeworld' of communicative action is blocked and colonized by purposive-rational type of action. Delinguistified media of money and power kill the communicative nature of language through the jargons of economy and management in *The Names*. Hence, Axton's cathartic experience of heteroglossia of various languages in Acropolis exemplifies a "different politics of discourse," and portrays a "language community antithetical in its purposes and principles of exchange to the conspiratorial community he is fleeing" (McClure 111). The emancipatory tone of language use, practiced through the "polyglot profusion" of several tongues in the Acropolis scene, functions as "a mode of communion" and works as "oblation," which produce an alternative language community (Osteen 136). A relief of transcending the materialistic patterns imposed on language is presented by Axton's physical and spiritual merger with the community in the ruins of Acropolis.

The cult's mythic approach to language and their relevant program of violent action also take position against the purposive-rationality and goal-directedness. Their killings, which depend on alphabetical symmetry, seek to cast the initials of the

victim into the landscape as static letters. Moreover, they also carve the initials of the victims on the blade or the handle of the tool of murder. More definitely, they seem to “kill conversation once and for all by replacing speech with dead letters;” in order to impose “a perfectly but dead language upon the chaos of life” (Keesey 128). This program of the cult is a threat and a retaliation to the core of the dominating rationality of language use which is overloaded with power. According to Owen, the cult is looking for a way of “moving toward a static perfection of some kind” (116). The cult perpetrates their program to escape or to un-load the power-stricken character of language and to re-structure it anew in a metaphysical fashion. Emmerich, the cult member, briefly mentions to Owen what they are after: “An alphabet of utter stillness. We track static letters when we read. This is a logical paradox” (292). This task of casting language into stillness and a mythic state of perfection is in fact an act of de-differentiation of sites of power imposition in the contemporary society. It is an attempt through language to create an experience of life where no power rules. No matter how irrational it seems, the way the cult perpetrates its program is much more effective than what they say in terms of achieving the exemption of life from power imposition. Emmerich concludes: “Only a death can complete the program. You know this. It goes deep, this recognition. Beyond words” (293).

DeLillo, then, defies the mode of conspiracy discourse in the novel via the metaphysics of pastoralism and the consequent transcendentalist apprehension of language. A complementary scene about the issue is accounted in the coda of the novel, titled ‘The Prairie.’ This last chapter is a fragment from the novel that Axton’s son is writing and it tells Owen’s memory of a Pentecostal ceremony in a prairie church. Owen’s story is narrated under the surrogate name Orville Benton, who is caught by the awe due to his incomprehension of the tongues spoken within the church by the community. Like Axton’s experience in Acropolis, Orville is surprised about the procedures of the practice in this language community, which has religious motivations: “Everywhere the others were speaking, but he didn’t know what they were saying. The strange language burst out of them, like people out of breath and breathing worst instead of air. But what words, what were they saying?” (335). This practice of speaking in different languages is called “glossylalya, to speak with



tongues” (336). Deliberately misspelled by Tap along with a set of other words, glossolalia is a divine way for these people to reach a heavenly and ritualistic grasp of a higher reality. The preacherman tells Orville that what they are doing is “childs play” in a sense, and he offers him to “get wet” in the shower of glossolalia (336). These people are seeking to speak by the “language of the spirit which was greater than Latin or French” (338). Orville cannot totally “yeeld” (336) himself to the higher state of being and feels the anxiety of not belonging to this linguistic communion. Truly reflecting Owen’s materialistic mode of thinking in his maturity through Orville’s infantile alienation in the church, Tap’s story enhances DeLillo’s task of portraying the contesting uses of language. Briefly, the positioning of a religious experience through language against the language of conspiracy and business lies at the bottom of this very narrative fragment. The linguistic ‘childs play’ in the Pentecostal church provides a recreational and a religious practice that invalidates the discourse of conspiratorial scheming stretched over the entire narrative.

To sum up, Don DeLillo’s *The Names* is a novel on the nature of power politics in the age of global corporate capitalism. Dissemination of power and resistance is manifest in the novel through network formations. Therefore, the same action patterns of power are applicable to resistance as well. Neither of them pose a monolithic practice and a unidirectional movement. In addition, networks of resistance are generated just under the networks of power; or rather, resistant action patterns mimic the patterns of power. This is achieved by situating the resistance networks of the cult against the power networks of the business elite in the novel. The cultic acts of violence and terrorism bear the core of resistance against the dominant order of corporate capitalism. In fact, the cult’s action patterns, the looseness in their organization and their multiple sites of appearance all imply the heterogeneous type of resistance under late capitalism. Use of spatiality, mystery and pastoral impulse are expressive of the proliferation of the sites of struggle. Unique subjects of power and resistance are then replaced by heterogeneous subjects and networks.

Conspiracy is the most compatible model with the diffusion of power and resistance networks in *The Names*. Basically, it is an analogical tool to explicate the power balances in contemporary capitalism. As Hantke points out, “conspiracies play into the fears and fantasies of those holding power, individually and collectively, and who consequently see their power redefined, lessened, and rerouted in the process of political change;” and furthermore, “conspiratorial activities originating in marginal groups aim to restructure power in their own idiosyncratic interests” (*Conspiracy* 121). Therefore, in DeLillo’s novel, conspiracy includes the strategic notion of power and consequently it refers to the substitution of single agents with corporate actors as the subjects of political and historical change.

Finally, the perception of capitalism as conspiracy is recurrently emphasized in Don DeLillo’s novel. With its strategies, ideological tools, indefinite expansion patterns and the atmosphere of insecurity it generates, capitalism resembles a conspiracy to get hold of power. Illegitimacy works as well as legitimacy to justify the ends both in capitalist ideology and conspiratorial plots. In *The Names*, power relations are entangled within a complexity of relations and strategies since the area to be subdued is a vast region, series of Middle-East countries, weaved with networks of diplomacy, business and terrorism. America is the absent center in *The Names*. The plot is set all in foreign surroundings where American capital penetrates, which projects the sites where corporate capitalism permeates. The same conspiratorial aspect of capitalism is present also in the American domestic sites through cultural phenomena under the title of consumer capitalism. DeLillo hints at the conspiracy at home through Axton’s words: “We do the wrong kind of killing in America. It’s a form of consumerism” (115). In the following chapter, Don DeLillo’s *Mao II* is evaluated in terms of the forms of power consumer capitalism exerts and the kind of domination it generates. Shortly, how the culture of consumption conspires against the public and how it incorporates critical thought are raised as outstanding issues in DeLillo’s next novel. As a result, late capitalism is seen to appropriate its ways in gaining the overhand through latent ideological indoctrination and various strategical tools, which pushes capitalism towards conspiratorial thought in DeLillo’s fiction.

## CHAPTER 4

### *MAO II: CULTURAL HEGEMONY*

Don DeLillo's *Mao II* (1991) presents the picture of a densely knitted structure of dominating practices in the social and cultural environments of late capitalist American society. The work touches a number of conflicting issues which enable to reflect upon the social and cultural manipulation via the institutions of late modernity. These conflictual issues pertain to crowd manipulation and mass society, image politics and media, democracy and totalitarianism, culture industry, and terrorism. The success of the novel in building up a critique of the contemporary practices of power, domination and capitalist ideology lies in forging all these issues in a way that each of them illuminates aspects of the power regime in the capitalist society depicted in the novel. The novel is a political contemplation upon the uprooted position of the individual in the face of the mass society, consumer culture and the capitalist ethos. Therefore, it poses a diagnostic look on the tension between practices of domination and resistance potentials and helps map the sites of this tension.

The novel opens with an inter-racial mass-wedding ceremony of the Moon Cult of the Unification Church, which is conducted by the Reverend Moon to unite 6.500 couples of disciples. In this short prologue, titled "At Yankee Stadium," the reader meets Karen, one of the cult members about to marry in the mass-ceremony, and her parents who happen to be watching her in the middle of a sensational mass-event with astonishment and awe. Part One depicts Karen a couple of years after her separation from his Korean husband Kim, who was sent to another part of the world by Master Moon as a missionary. Karen resides in the house of Bill Gray, the recluse-writer and the protagonist, together with Scott Martineau, Gray's assistant. They all live in a suburban area, way distant from the city center. Scott is seen going downtown New York to pick up Brita Nilsson, a photographer and an interviewer, who has arrived to take photographs of Bill Gray to end his long desertion from public appearance. The section exposes a series of insights about Gray's seclusion,

Brita's profession, Karen's post-cult trauma and recovery process and their relation to the social and cultural mechanisms. Later in the section, the novel introduces the story of Jean-Claude Julienne, a Swiss poet working for the UN and making health research in the Palestinian camps, captured and held hostage in Beirut by a Maoist group of terrorists. Bill decides to make his public appearance a grandstanding public event and accepts the offer of his publisher, Charlie Everson, to make a public reading of Julienne's poetry in order to make a stand against hostage-taking.

In Part Two, Bill Gray moves to London for the public reading, yet hindered by bombing threats and an actual detonation at the site of the reading. He meets George Haddad, a political scientist from Athens and an intermediary between the reading organization and the terrorist group in Beirut. After some sessions of conversation with him, Gray makes his mind about an absolute self-sacrifice, which is to surrender himself to the group in Beirut in exchange for the freedom of the Swiss poet. He initiates the plan secretly and disappears altogether from the sight and knowledge of his colleagues and friends. On his way to Lebanon, via Athens and Cyprus, he has a car crash, which causes a liver rupture. And he cannot manage to land on the Lebanese port in Junieh and dies on the ferry. The novel ends with the epilogue titled "In Beirut" where Brita Nilsson finally appears to reach the Maoist group in Beirut to photograph the terrorists and interview them in the name of a German magazine. This last section poses the clash of two different types of worldviews, that of the photographer Brita Nilsson and the terrorist leader Abu Rashid. Hence, it adds up a final critical perspective to the basic political conflicts of the novel instead of providing a resolution to the plot.

#### **4.1. CONSPIRACY THINKING AS IDEOLOGY CRITIQUE**

Thinking in a conspiratorial manner, which means the exposure of the unseen forces at work supplying the dominant cultural forms and social practices of subordination, yields a critical vision of the ideological conduct of late capitalism in this chapter. It can help visualize and discern the techniques of domination and the dissemination of the late capitalist ethos. As Dana Cloud puts it, "conspiracy of social reality" should be understood as "synonym for cultural hegemony" (Cloud 235). Therefore, a conspiratorial vision of evaluating the social and cultural

constructs will reveal the dominant strategies of power and politics of subordination and incorporation. In that sense, forms and practices of a capitalist culture are going to be handled within a frame of conspiracy considering their secret ways of power that indoctrinate people in the interests of liberal capitalism. Hence, although the narrative is not weaved with explicit conspiracies or plots, the conspiracy outlook is going to serve as a tool of ideology critique to figure out the techniques of power in *Mao II*.

#### **4.1.1. Crowds, Power and Control**

One of the basic principles of producing conspiracy-driven thought, as discussed in the previous chapters, is to express the pressure on the individual by the dominant political, cultural and economic system. The insecurity of human agency, the ‘agency panic’ in Timothy Melley’s words, generates political criticism in the evaluation of overwhelming systems in conspiracy narratives. This anxiety of diminishing human agency is overtly present in *Mao II* through the binary of individual/crowd, and it is materialized in the formation of a mass society. Thus, agency panic necessitates the critical frame of conspiratorial criticism in the context of DeLillo’s novel. It exposes the dominant mechanisms of the contemporary American society that subdue modern individuals under capitalism and assimilate them within masses through cultural production apparatuses.

The opening of the narrative with a sensational mass event, the mass wedding ceremony, sets the tone for the loss of individual autonomy and its substitution with crowds, which also underlies the tension for the rest of the novel. The colossal gathering at the Yankee Stadium is indicative of the spirit of the contemporary age, the society reduced to selfless drifting crowds. The individual is seen to transfer its autonomy to the crowd dynamics and is viewed to be an obedient follower of the mass identity. DeLillo’s portrait of the wedding scene is very concrete, manifesting this loss of individual autonomy. The couples-to-marry, the disciples of Master Moon, are “minikin selves,” (10) who are “immunized against the language of the self” (8). Within the dynamics of this obedient crowd action, the individual is cast into a selfless entity. The Moon couples are eager to yield their individuality to the

mass identity and therefore stuck into “a mechanical routine” of the mass wedding, “which unburdens them of free will and independent thought” (7).

The mass, as a category, serves to assimilate the individual and makes him vulnerable to control. In its core, the mass or the crowd is robbed off of a sense of autonomy and lacks a critical distance to events. The mass is the unit by which a society can be brought under subordination, be it by a dictatorship or a dominant economic structure. Gustave Le Bon, in his early work *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (1920) writes about the individual in the crowd: “The conscious personality has entirely vanished; will and discernment are lost. All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction determined by the hypnotizer” (LeBon 35). This is the case for Karen, along with all the other Moonies who are brainwashed and programmed under the command of Master Moon. Karen is just one of the alienated thousands within the “undifferentiated mass” (3) of the wedding crowd. This strategy of undifferentiating is a major exertion of power on the individual mind via the crowd dynamics and an imposition of dominant action codes predetermined for the individual. This strategy of undifferentiating forges a sense of belonging to the mass and promotes the sacrifice of the individual autonomy in the name of the mass identity. The mass gathering at the Yankee Stadium at the beginning of the novel is just one among other instances of crowd formation and control. Scott is critical about the notion of the mass marriage and contemplates the logic of control behind mass identity telling Brita that

Bill doesn't understand how people need to blend in, lose themselves in something larger. The point of mass marriage is to show that we have to survive as a community instead of individuals trying to master every complex force. Mass interracial marriage. . . . Every revolutionary idea involves danger and reversal. I know all the drawbacks of the Moon system but in theory it is brave and visionary. (89)

The mass in the Moon wedding ceremony is revelatory about the reason and procedure of the willful desertion of individuality to the crowd. Why great numbers of individuals willfully abandon their potentiality of agency to a collective initiative appears as a political question as to the conduct of crowds. Actually, the determined nature of individual agents for sheer obedience to a crowd provides the conspiratorial aspect for such incidents of mass assembly around a leader or an ideal. For instance,

the couples at the stadium are the happy disciples of Reverend Moon and they are fervently tied to the holy will of their master. In fact, “They know him at molecular level. He lives in them like chains of matter that determine who they are” (6). This self-generated obedience of people to a mass or a mass-hypnotizer attributes to mass events a sense of conspiratorial mass-manipulation; and thus, it evokes a sense of clandestine ideological conditioning practice. Manipulation of crowds and public behavior through the paralysis of individual will can be, therefore, associated with secret plots or conspiratorial schemes. Ironically, DeLillo implies a conflation of mass manipulation and conspiracy through two symbols in the prologue. Describing the majestic spectacle of the crowd in the Moon wedding, he suggests that “The crowd-eye hangs brightly above them like the triangle eye on a dollar bill” (10). The source and the meaning of the triangle eye on a dollar bill are exactly unidentifiable and most often it is accepted to refer to a secret order like the Illuminati. The point of such a juxtaposition of the symbols of crowd surveillance and secret power is possibly to point at the ideology that make individuals eagerly wish to abandon their agency to controllable crowd dynamics.

Basically, this willful transference of the individual will to the collective movement stems from a fear of the loss of agency. In the contemporary age of late capitalism, industry and corporate culture, individuals feel depersonalized under the mechanisms and strategies of markets and institutions of late modernity. Compelled to secure themselves with a push of the agency panic, individuals run for forming mass identities to forge themselves into secure zones of survival. This fear of insecurity is what haunts the individuals and thwarts them under controllable units of masses, under mills of ideologies and into cultural mechanisms of consumption. According to Chad Lavin, fear, namely agency panic, mobilizes the individual substituting opiates for his pain; and it either encourages him to participate to the cultural mechanisms of consumer capitalism or makes him vulnerable to the ideological practices of domination (257). Both strategies actually manipulate crowds. He notes: “What is virtually uncontested is that we occupy a historical and cultural moment in which we are besieged by reports and ideologies interpellating us as subjects of fear” (Lavin 257). However, this matter of being addressed as manipulated masses spawns a greater agency panic and a loss of autonomy in return.

In a 1993 interview with Nadotti, DeLillo talks about this fear and individuals' panic as a consequence of yielding to the crowd in *Mao II*:

There's something about a crowd which suggests a sort of implicit panic, even when it's a friendly crowd. There's something menacing and violent about a mass of people which makes us think of the end of individuality, whether they are gathered around a military leader or around a holy man. ("Interview," 110)

Therefore, the cultic mass at the stadium is a manifestation of the agency panic in the contemporary age and a foreshadowing to different types of crowds for the rest of the novel. This picture of a mass gathering indicates that the ideological practices of the dominant regime of control are implemented via dominance on crowds. Thus, the novel ardently posits in many cases that individuals yield to masses and that "Future belongs to crowds" (16).

The tension between the individual and the crowd determines a major political perspective in evaluating the contemporary strategies of domination. In fact, the conflict is between keeping a sound sense of individualism and remaining secure among crowds. Both senses of insecurity belong to different poles of agency panic. Richard Hardack takes this tension in the novel as a dialectic, which runs on an oscillation between a dispossessive merger with the mass and an extreme case of individuation (Hardack 377). Actually, in his interview with Passaro, DeLillo admits that two photographs inspired him in designing his narrative and creating the tension between the individual and the mass in *Mao II*. One of them depicted a wedding ceremony in Seoul conducted by Reverend Moon of the Unification Church. DeLillo transferred this mass event of about 13,000 people from Seoul to New York in his novel. The other one was a 1988 picture of J. D. Salinger shot by stalker-photographers, which appeared on The New York Post, showing his face in shock and rage after a long disconnection from the public eye. This famous picture of Salinger's expresses the fury of a high individualist writer against the disturbance directed to his seclusion and an individualist resistance against the public consumption of his image-as-a-writer. Then, DeLillo sums up this dialectic move apparently at work in his narrative as "polar extremes of *Mao II*, the arch individualist and the mass mind" ("Dangerous Don DeLillo" 80-81).



Bill Gray and Karen Janney are parallel to one another in the narrative since both of them oscillate between DeLillo's polar extremes. They are moribund figures in the abyss between extreme individualism and mass-belonging. Bill can be regarded as an equivalent for Salinger in DeLillo's design. He hasn't published anything new for about 23 years and been working and re-working on his latest novel for the same course of time. He assuredly runs away from public attention and carefully abstains from being a public image. On the way to Bill's house for an interview and photographing session, Brita Nilsson makes a remark to Scott mentioning the individualist camp Bill belongs to. Speaking of Bill, she tells Scott that "I feel as if I'm being taken to see some terrorist chief at his secret retreat in the mountains" (27). He resides in the sanctuary of individualism in his suburban house, totally cut off from the environs. In his sanctuary, he keeps off from selling his image to the celebrity culture and from being reified by the book business. He deliberately attempts to avoid "the consumer event" (43), which is in fact a mass event of depreciating the authentic individual writer. In other words, the consumer culture that Bill stands against is essentially a culture of the masses. The mass culture, named as consumer-society, is a medium for capitalist industries to disperse their dictates and modes of action to encourage consumerism. Bill puts a distance between himself as an individual writer and the commodifying practices of mass consumption. However, he is cast into isolation and he pretends to protect himself from the domain of the masses at the expense of remaining in the margins. He admits:

There's a force that's totally independent of my conscious choices. And it's an angry grudging force. Maybe I don't want to feel the things other people feel. I have my own cosmology of pain. Leave me alone with it. Don't stare at me, don't ask me to sign copies of my books. . . . Most of all don't take my picture. I've paid a terrible price for this wretched hiding. And I'm sick of it finally. (45)

Bill's condition as an individualist writer results from an anxiety of degradation by the publishing industry and a fear of being devalued due to being over-publicized. His panic, Hardack asserts, stems from post-Cold War identity politics, and consequently notes that Bill "fears that history and writing, all representation, are becoming the domain of the mass Other and not the individual American writer" (Hardack 378). Late capitalist logic of reifying and commodifying

the authentic by opening it up to masses through strategies of representation, such as advertising and marketing, is essentially what Bill tries to resist. He basically attempts to assert the validity of the liberal individualist. DeLillo, then, employs a dual perspective via Bill focusing on his status in-between individual isolation and mass-consumption. While DeLillo “champions the notion of the individualist white writer” in the face of mass identity and mechanisms of mass-market, he also dismantles the individualist icon in the character of Bill by “situating him as part of a mass cult of individuality” and casting him away as a dysfunctional in retreat (Hardack 378). Therefore, Bill is DeLillo’s voice of justifying the individualist ethos, yet he is at the same time at pains with social mechanisms generating mass-production and mass-identity, unable to react from his individual retreat.

Karen as well dialectically serves for evaluating the place of the individual within the masses. Her case is more tragic than Bill’s despair. Though she faces a similar dilemma of in-betweenness and similar threats to her personality, her character is more complex than Bill’s (Keesey 182). Because Bill seems more or less aware of his own condition and he is able to make decisions as seen in his volunteering in a series of adventure to rescue the Swiss poet held hostage. On the contrary, Karen is not completely at her wits to determine an individual path of life after her experience of the cult. She was forcefully sent to a rehabilitation center by her parents for deprogramming and recovery from her post-cult trauma. In the deprogramming center, “They told her, The trouble with postcult is that you lose your link to the fate of mankind” (82). Cut off from the collective frenzy of the cult, she is stuck into sheer altruism, different from the other characters in the novel, and is stuck into a psychology of loneliness though she resides among Bill’s household. She is almost an alienated figure whose deprogramming process has not succeeded. She is neither a sane individual nor can she set a rational relation with a world view or mass movement. Even years after the cult experience, “She had Master’s total voice ready in her head” (194). She still feels a severe need for an impersonal merger with the mass of the cult and at times recalls the promises of Master Moon with ultimate devotion, which is tantamount to selfless worship: “Karen said ‘We will all be a single family soon. Because the day is coming. Because the total vision is being seen’ ” (193). Hence, whereas Bill’s inclination is towards individualist retreat in a

state of trembling between two poles, Karen's is towards a unity with crowd behavior and collective will.

In this sense, Karen stands for the alienated mass consciousness in America, which seems to reign as a dominant mode of hegemony. She represents the ideological subordination under mass manipulation and the concretization of the mass-mind in her absolute selflessness. Hence, she is an omen for a future mass society; that's why Bill tells her "You come from the future" (85). More specifically, in her willingness for a religious design of a world unified under the control of a single power holder, Karen acts as a marker for a danger of totalitarian control over the masses. DeLillo voices her intimate insights as follows:

Our task is to prepare for the second coming.  
The world will be a universal family.  
...  
We are protected by the total power of our true father.  
We are the total children.  
All doubt will vanish in the arms of total control. (179)

On the one hand, Karen epitomizes the attractions of belonging to a spiritual order and yielding to a total power; and on the other, she is DeLillo's tool to pose a criticism against the authoritarian thinking and totalitarian control (Osteen 204-205).

Karen's deep feeling of void makes her replace this yearning for a total authority of the Master Moon with devotion to other leader figures or to the ideals of other mass orders. Pathologically, she takes Bill at the center of her life and re-arranges her being in adjustment to Bill's life. Yet, when Bill disappears to commence his plan to rescue the Swiss poet from the terrorist group in Beirut, Karen loses the center and meaning in her life. After that her true motives surface in the narrative and her hidden motivation for yielding to a collective ideal is more blatantly disclosed. She kills time watching TV most of the time and she happens to witness crowds and crowd actions most often. For instance, at one time, she witnesses the funeral ceremony of Ayetollah Khomeini in Iran, which conducted by spreading crowds with roars of chants and prayers. She regards this leader cult and mass ceremony interchangeable with the Moon cult and consequently develops empathy with the funeral crowd in Iran. She feels like surrendering to the

homogeneous crowd on TV dressed alike in black, mourning in grief with great mass motivation:

The living forced their way into the burial site, bloodying their heads and tearing at their hair, choking in the thick dust . . . and Karen found she could go into the slums of south Teheran, backwards into people's lives, and hear them saying, We have lost our father. All the dispossessed waking to the morning call. Sorrow, sorrow is this day. (189)

It is not this or that crowd Karen feels allied to, yet it is the notion of being in a crowd itself that conjures up her mentality. Thereby, she stands at the axis of crowds in the narrative and epitomizes the rising spirit of masses in the novel.

Karen goes through pictures of crowds in Omar's - the drug dealer she met at Central Park - loft. They were photographs of "Famine, riot, war," depicting "rebels in hoods, executed men, prisoners with potato sacks," "Africans starving," or "Delirious crowds swirling beneath enormous photographs of holy men" (174). She sees a live history and suffering of masses. She also witnesses a number of crowd spectacles on the screen, news of various mass actions apart from Khomeini's funeral. At different times she sees the film footages of piled masses of bodies in Hillsborough stadium, thousands of Chinese marching at the Tiananmen Square in China and the crowds dispersed by the crowds of soldier troops. She acts like a prism of crowds, reflecting varieties of crowd rationality. In fact, she labels the contemporary age as the age of crowds depending on what she sees on the screen. Her feelings about the public uprising in China and the dispersal of the crowd by armed forces are suggestive of the nature of power game of crowds. DeLillo's insights about the case come through Karen's eyes:

What is the word, dispersed? The crowd dispersed by jogging troops who move into the great space.

One crowd replaced by another.

It is the preachment of history, whoever takes the great space and can hold it longest. The motley crowd against the crowd where everyone dresses alike. (177)

Therefore, crowd is the basic unit of subjection of the public to a dominant worldview or a rationale. Be it for popular habits, consumption, an ideology, or a

religious belief, crowds are mobilized for the imposition of a definite code over society.

Along with watching the footages of crowds on TV, Karen constantly roams around New York as a solitary wanderer; and this time sees the everyday crowds of American society. She comes to see and meet Israelis, Bangladeshis, Sikhs, Egyptians, drug sellers, shoppers, the homeless, garbage collectors and etc. These people stand for the other face of crowds. They are not cumulated around a certain ideal, but are motiveless crowds of contemporary American society, isolated and spit out by the consumer society. They are also the marginalized, the poor and the crowds of random spread:

There are people gathering in clusters everywhere, coming out of mud houses and tin-roof shanties and sprawling camps and meeting in some dusty square to march together to a central point, calling out a name, collecting many others on the way, some are running, some in blood-stained shirts, and they reach a vast open space that they fill with their pressed bodies, a word or name, calling out a name under the chalk sky, millions, chanting. (180-81)

The estranged crowds in American everyday life posit a picture of alienated masses, which are composed of atomized individuals. Karen's urban wanderings is a record of overflowing faces, people pushing shopping carts and ceaseless comings and goings of people belonging to different strata of the social whole: "She saw the *normative* life of the planet, business people crossing the streets beneath the glass towers, the life of sitting on buses that take you logically to destinations, the unnerved surface of rolling plausibly along" (148; emphasis added). These instances of crowds are depictions of the normative, in fact the compelling, side of late modernity in the conduct of the contemporary society. Atomized and isolated individuals act in masses and behave like crowds. In a conversation, Scott exemplifies to Brita this atomized nature of the modern individuals acting in crowds: "This is one of the haunting secrets of our time, that we are willing to eat standing up. . . . Hundreds of thousands of people eating alone. They eat alone, they walk alone, they talk to themselves in the street in profound and troubled monologues like saints in the depths of temptation" (88). This crowd behavior of atomized individuals, "mass consciousness" in other words, is actually "a reification of the

ideology of American individualism” (Hardack 379). Karen, once “quarantined from the ethos of American individualism” (Osteen 195) now sees the American individualism materialized flesh-and-blood in crowds. With the same motive that pushes her to the Moon cult and for the same reason that she empathizes with the mass at Khomeini’s funeral, Karen preaches the individuals of random crowds in New York a holistic view of life under unification with homogenous masses. Making a total recall of altruism, “She talked to certain familiars in the park, telling them how to totalize their lives according to the sayings of a man with the power” (176). Shortly, Karen is the mass incarnate; and helps show the depreciating quality of arbitrary urban crowds at home in association with the more homogenous political or religious crowds in Eastern cultures.

Therefore, the assertion in *Mao II* is that American crowds are essentially not different from the foreign crowds cumulated around Master Moon, Mao Zedong and Khomeini. The crowds of atomized individuals in New York can be regarded as a projection of the tough-built crowds of an ideology in China or Iran. They show a close association in that both types of crowd have a mortal impact on the individual agency. George Haddad, the leftist academic and intermediary, speaks to Bill about Mao Zedong and his followers, addressing him with an accusatory tone about his fear of rising crowds: “Mao said, ‘Our god is none other than the masses of the Chinese people.’ And this is what you fear, that history is passing into the hand of the crowds” (162). Bill the individualist and Haddad the sympathizer of Mao Zedong definitely belong to opposite world views. Whereas Haddad honors the power of the masses, Bill is afraid of uncontrollable power of the masses manipulated by totalitarian leaders. Furthermore, Bill is also critical of the crowds in capitalist America, which happen to imply a peculiar totalitarianism in itself for they derive their momentum from mass manipulation of the capitalist ideology and requirements of the mass-market. Eventually, that both capitalism and communism/fundamentalism have a common share from a totalitarian impulse is posited as the ironic message deduced from the juxtaposition of different types of crowds in the narrative. The assimilated individuals of the crowds under the totalitarian command and the crowds of atomized individuals overlap considering their reference to a diminished sense of agency. Similar to Bill’s sensibilities, Scott

argues the same point. He converses with Karen about China, and his remarks about the masses in China fits full-fledge to the quality of the masses in America. Scott's picture of China remarkably overlaps Karen's picture of New York suburbs in her daily wanderings:

“When I think of China, what do I think of?”

“People,” Karen said.

“Crowds,” Scott said. People trudging along wide streets, pushing carts or riding bikes, crowd after crowd in the long lens of the camera so they seem even closer together than they really are, totally jampacked, and I think of how they merge with the future, how the future makes room for the non-achiever, the non-aggressor, the drudger, the nonindividual. (70)

Very basically in *Mao II*, the grand conspiracy is directed against the public of democratic ideal, which is transformed into mass society. The dominant way of conspiring against the public in late modernity passes through pacification of Gramscian ‘civil society.’ Civil society designates “participant citizenry” and an emancipatory combination of forces to create a new social order unburdened by the dominant mode of subordination (Cox 98-99). When civil society turns from public to an undifferentiated mass, its subversive potentials are vacuumed. C. Wright Mills, in his most renowned work *The Power Elite*, analyzes the evolution of mass society and contends that the community of public in classic democracy is transformed into mass society in America by modernity. He further argues that the idea of the community of public and pluralist democracy is now only “an assertion of a legitimation masquerading as fact” in the modern life of America (Mills 300). What peaks is homogenized masses and mass manipulation instead of the classical public of decision making in democracy.

Mills's assertion is a result of the unhindered rise of neo-liberalism. For him “the autonomous associations between various classes and the state lose their effectiveness as vehicles of reasoned opinion and instruments for the rational exertion of political will;” and thus, “the public of public opinion has become the object of intensive efforts to control, manage, manipulate, and increasingly intimidate” (310). Similarly, Fenster sees within the conspiracy theory a critical perspective of “the subsumption of civil society by the neo-liberal state,” which stripped off the political ability of intermediary institutions between the citizen, the

capital and the state in the social-democratic model – such as unions, political parties and local governments – that used to represent interests of the political subjects (68). Henceforward, this conspiracy against the civil society is an outcome of the neo-liberal policies that turn the public into a mass and render it easier to control and manipulate.

Within the context of conspiracy against civil society, Fenster sees mass society as an Other to pluralist democracy since the “atomized masses” in mass society cannot “channel their needs and discontent into proper political and social behavior, place undue pressure on elites, thus inviting totalitarian rule by a ‘charismatic’ . . . leadership” (5). Therefore, the common axis of gathering around charismatic and totalitarian leaders like Mao, Khomeini and Master Moon is determined over the impoverishment of civil society and conspiring against public. They all refer to the same controlling logic of pacifying political subjects through atomizing them within masses or channeling their interests elsewhere. Being constructed as mass society covers up any dissenting voices and channels mass energy to the zone of consumption instead of politics:

The tendency toward excluding real social antagonisms and debate from the public sphere, and the logic of control that has come to permeate the decaying institutions, structures, and spaces that compose what remains of civil society, leave little opportunity for the “citizen” to effectively and affectively engage with the state. Such engagement is displaced to the privatized realm of consumption, which has emerged as a model for political, social and cultural activity as individual “choice” in the marketplace serves as an increasingly pervasive notion of “freedom.” (Fenster 69-70)

Hence, DeLillo’s repetitive description of crowds pushing shopping carts as a recurrent motif can be appreciated. Pushing carts, namely consumption, appears as the one dominant mode of action, the only deliberate choice exerted by American crowds. Furthermore, images of blind consumerism and devotion to the will of the charismatic cult leader can be transposed in the novel. Osteen regards Master Moon as an author of massive spectacles. He notes that “if in one sense Moon’s followers are united in their resistance to American values [American individualism], in another sense his spectacular authorship exploits the American entrepreneurial spirit;” that is Osteen draws attention to “how Moon diverts his children’s addiction



of consumerism into his own capitalist religion” (195-96). The cultic mass of Moon is essentially in deep alliance with capitalism while on the surface it aims to subvert the dominant ideology of American individualism. Hence, both capitalist consumer society and totalitarian masses of charismatic leaders aim at an erosion of civil society.

Consumption, as an imposed code of action on crowds, derives its strategies from Foucauldian ‘bio-power.’ After a pacification of the civil society, the mobilization of crowds towards consumerism happens through knowledge on bodies/crowds. The control of populations through power/knowledge deploys the political economy of the body in the Foucauldian sense. And in *Mao II*, the disciplinary power via bio-power takes place within the sphere of consumption. The political knowledge on the human responses and on its anatomy is used as strategies by the consumer society to discipline the crowds in the interests of the dominant system or rather make them adaptable to consumerism. Brita tells Scott the strategies of bio-power deployed by the mass-market to articulate them as consumers: “She said ‘In some places where you eat standing up you are forced to look directly into a mirror. This is total control of the person’s responses, like a *consumer prison . . .*’ ” (88; emphasis added). This control of person’s responses to naturalize for him the dominant behavior codes of consumerism reminds Foucault’s prison model of Panopticon. Consumer prison Brita speaks of is the Panopticon, which makes the individual vulnerable to the gaze of the controllers through his image on the mirror, yet, the individual prisoner cannot see who is behind the mirror of surveillance. He is disciplined into seeing his image on the mirror as an isolated individual eating alone. Therefore, the atomization of the individual is routinized, and individuals are turned into disciplined and atomized masses of consumers. Scott agrees with Brita and explains another aspect of the mirrors in the consumer prison, which is to give a fake sense of security for the individual: “The mirror is for safety, for protection. You use it to hide. You’re totally alone in the foreground but you’re also part of the swarm, the shifting jelly of heads looming over your little face” (89). In a false feeling of security within the consumer prison, the individual consumer is part of the crowd, encoded by the will of the system.

To summarize, *Mao II* is composed of varieties of crowds. The novel's concern with the politics of crowds is also manifest in the photographs in the volume of the book, marking the chapter intervals. These photographs respectively depict the Moon wedding at the Yankee Stadium, the disaster at the Sheffield football stadium in 1989, people gathered under a gigantic picture of Ayetollah Khomeini at his funeral, and a couple of armed children of young age in Beirut. These pictures posit general types of crowd formation such as popular, religious, politically oriented, and terrorist/armed crowds. In fact, DeLillo's aim is to make a comparison between democracy and totalitarianism with reference to different types of crowd or group behaviors. In other words, *Mao II* seems to promote bourgeois liberalism and liberal individualism in the face of totalitarian ideologies. Yet, the peculiarity of the novel is its attempt to visualize these crowd types as interchangeable. The crowds under the totalitarian rule of Mao, Khomeini, Abu Rashid and Master Moon match with the shopping crowds in New York and the spectators at the Sheffield stadium. Thus, the narrative, on the one hand, aims at undermining ideological orthodoxies and dogmatism in the cases of Mao's, Khomeini's and Abu Rashid's followers; and on the other, it refers to the impoverishment of public sphere and "the West's increasing uncertainty concerning its own democratic tenets" (Bull 150-51) by pointing at the undermined state of democracy in American mass society. This dual mission of the narrative is made clear from the very beginning of the novel by the image of the wedding crowd at the baseball stadium. Karen is seen on the day of the wedding to introduce her will-be-husband Kim to the stadium and the baseball game:

Karen says to Kim, "This is where Yankees play."

...

"Baseball," she says, using the word to sum up a hundred happy abstractions, themes that flare to life in the crowd shout and diamond symmetry, in the details of a dusty slide. The word has resonance if you're American, a sense of shared heart and untranslatable lore. But she only means to suggest the democratic clamor, a history of sweat and play on sun-dazed afternoons, an openness of form that makes the game a kind of welcome to my country. (9-10)

The juxtaposition of a peculiarly American game of an open form, which is suggestive of democracy, with an impersonal wedding conducted by the totalitarian leadership of a religious figure at the stadium affirms the double mission of the

novel. While DeLillo seems to preach liberal individualism against orthodoxies of totalitarian ideologies, he also affirms that the crowds capitalism creates can be as totalitarian as the ones in regimes of authoritarianism. According to Lavin, both traditional fundamentalisms and liberal individualism promise to cure the agency panic and the fear of impotency in people. Fundamentalisms treat agency panic with evoking a sense of group-belonging. Likewise in liberal individualism, the “ideology of autonomy, authenticity, and responsibility,” materialized in the character of Bill Gray, “seems an entirely logical aid for coping with this agency panic, and indeed, liberalism both creates and assuages the fears of late capitalism” (Lavin 275). Therefore, if both fundamentalism and liberal individualism, or both communism and capitalism, rule over masses, usurp agency panic and conspire against civil society through similar strategies, there arises a dissolution of the binaries.

According to Steffen Hantke, by dissolving binaries such as us/them, inside/outside or familiar/foreign, “conspiracy fiction makes conspiracy theory accessible to cultural critique” (“God Save,” 223). Similarly, the dissolution of the difference between the threat from outside and threat from the inside is underlined in *Mao II*. In the novel, the source of danger to the American society is situated in the totalitarian regimes of Asian countries; thereby the narrative creates a xenophobic perspective against the Chinese, Iranian and Lebanese figures and leaders (Hardack 377). Yet the danger to democracy and civil society in America essentially stems from capitalism in the world of *Mao II*, through the capitalist production of mass society. Therefore, as a convenience of the conspiracy fiction, DeLillo’s novel transfers the conspiratorial threat from the outside to the inside of American culture (Hantke, “God Save,” 221). Hence, an internal conspiracy to achieve the abolishment of political subjects, the termination of a critical civil society and a democratic public sphere can be tracked down by an analysis of the power structures of capitalism and its apparatus.

#### **4.1.2. Image Politics, Media and Spectacle**

Image politics and media are the tools of internal conspiracy for cultural hegemony and the most efficient devices of capitalism to exert its power politics in *Mao II*. They act as the manifest ways of generating mass society. Inherent within

the image culture and mass media is the logic of mass production of both goods and identities. That is, mass culture is produced through the homogenization of the identities of great number of people by mass production of images and mass media. Therefore, the image politics of late capitalist cultural apparatus, both overtly and covertly, reproduce mass society over and over again in accordance with the constant reproduction of images. Hence, public sphere is colonized, in Habermas's terms, and impoverished to block any sense of resistance and to paralyze the civil society conspiratorially.

New image technologies and contemporary image politics aim at furthering the interests of late capitalism, which seeks an overwhelming control of the public, people's choices and identities. Yet, this control is obtained not by a top-to-bottom imposition of power, but rather acquired without coercion through the disseminated practices of power and image politics. According to Kevin Robins, the new image technologies "have been shaped by a logic of rationality and control; and they are informed by a culture that has been both militaristic and imperialistic in its ambitions;" and furthermore, new image politics are "substantively implicated in furthering the objectives of what is now called post-industrial or information capitalism" (38, 154). Basically, constant image reproduction labels the spirit and strategies of post-industrial capitalism in DeLillo's novel. While images are produced and reproduced by the logic of capital, they reproduce the viewers in return. Hence, consumer society is managed and masses are formed within this logic of hegemonization through reproducible images. "Reproducibility," as Mike Wayne underlines, "is a product of and helps facilitate the presence of the masses in cultural consumption in a new historically unique manner" (48). Therefore, mass production of images and the production of mass society are equivalent in DeLillo's world.

Andy Warhol appears in *Mao II* as the figure envisaging the age of mechanical reproduction of images and their consequent mass consumption. Warhol augurs the inseparable link between mass production and mass society. He is present in the narrative with reference to his mechanical reproductions. He is the antithesis of Bill Gray in the novel (Keeseey 180). While Gray represents the authentic individual writer, Warhol stands for the dissolution of individual identities and auras with his

reproduced portraits of Mao Zedong and Gorbachev. Earlier in the novel, Scott is seen in a bookstore looking at Warhol reproductions and contemplating about what they suggest:

He stood before a silk screen called *Crowd*. The image was irregular, deep streaks marking the canvas, and it seemed to him that the crowd itself, the vast mesh of people, was being riven by some fleeting media catastrophe. He moved along and stood finally in a room filled with images of Chairman Mao. Photocopy Mao, silk-screen Mao, wallpaper Mao, synthetic-polymer Mao. A series of silk screens was installed over a broader surface of wallpaper serigraphs . . . *floating freely of its photographic source*. Work that was *unwitting of history* appealed to Scott. He found it *liberating*. Had he ever realized the deeper meaning of Mao before he saw these pictures? (21; emphasis added)

The unwitting of history that Scott finds liberating, in fact ironically, refers to the cultural logic of late capitalism. This cultural logic is manifest in the aesthetic production and media. With the mechanical reproduction of images that belong to the past, the past is bracketed and historicity is effaced. The images, which float freely from their sources, abolish depth models like history. According to Fredric Jameson, constant image production brings forth image saturation and turns the present into a simulacrum of image collections. DeLillo explains Nadotti this process of the loss of depth models through Warhol's late capitalist aesthetic production:

What Warhol succeeded in achieving was to take an image and make it fluctuate freely liberating it from history. . . . In the same way that soup is packaged, Warhol packages his Mao's, his Marilyn Monroe's, his Elvis Presley's. He simply repeats the images. . . .

By that I mean that through repetition the artist obliterates distinctions: when the images are identical to each other consumerism and the mass production of art in their most explicit form take over. ("Interview," 118)

By repetitive mass production of authentic images, namely mechanical reproduction, DeLillo implies that the historical authenticity is erased. Ironically he calls it liberation, yet it is actually an impoverishment. Through this impoverishment of the sense of history, DeLillo sees a conflation of consumerism and the mass production of aesthetic materials. In other words, an image-saturated society and mass society of consumption go hand in hand as a consequence of the image's loss of the capability for historical and political representation.

Another Warhol reproduction is seen in the novel by Brita's visit of an art gallery. She observes a distinct painting called *Gorby I*, in which the image of the Soviet President Gorbachev is superimposed on that of Marilyn Monroe's with remarkable blond hair and makeup. On looking at this portrait of juxtaposed images that Brita "could detect a maximum statement about the dissolvability of the artist and the exaltation of the public figure, about how it is possible to fuse images, Mikhail Gorbachev's and Marilyn Monroe's, and to steal auras . . ." (134). The process of stealing auras in Warhol's works is the basic paradigm of the mechanical reproduction of images. Walter Benjamin, in his most renowned essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical reproduction," argues that the aura of the work of art withers in the age of mechanical reproduction, and hence that the reproduced object is detached from the domain of tradition (1169). The mechanically multiplied image empties off the original object of its uniqueness and historical moment of existence, namely its aura. Furthermore, this logic of reproduction pushes the aesthetic material to the domain of mass produced commodities since the logic of mass production common to both types of materials is equivalent. Thus, with its aura withered, an original figure or object of art is no different than a consumable object in the market. Hence, as Jameson argues, the type of aesthetic production derives from the relations of production under late capitalism; and in *Mao II*, the relations of production inherent in the novel's world is explicitly manifest in the mass image production of Warhol's art. Together with the multiplication of the images of Mao, Warhol also multiplies his own images in various media: "Andy's image on canvas, Masonite, velvet, paper-and-acetate, Andy in metallic paint, silk-screen ink. . . . He was all here now, reprocessed through painted chains of being . . ." (135).

Therefore, the word 'mass,' on which DeLillo's narrative is built, connotes the dominant mode of cultural hegemony in the age of late capitalism in a number of meanings. It comes to signify the crowds and mass society firstly; then secondly, it underlines the mass production and mechanical reproduction of images. And finally, it alludes to the mass production of market goods and consumer society. Shortly, mass is a category inherent in the economical and cultural domain in the novel. The mass of images, therefore, is inseparable from the production of crowds in the mass society in *Mao II*. According to DeLillo, "The photographic image is a kind of crowd

in itself” (Nadotti, “Interview,” 110). Photograph, as the chief form of mechanical multiplication of images, is essentially associated with the nature of crowds in the novel in two aspects. Primarily, the crowd images are reproduced through photographs in the novel, as it can be exemplified in the photographs of the masses at Omar’s loft, in Karen’s parents photographing the spectacular mass wedding at the stadium or in the several shots of mass events in the volume of the novel. Secondly, photographs are infinitely multiplied and reproduced by the image technologies just as crowds are reproduced by the hand of the consumer society, as it can be observed in Karen’s vision of crowds and consumers in New York as victims of consumer society. DeLillo further explains this close connection between image saturation and consumer masses:

Well, I see a relationship between consumerism and the homeless people I describe in *Mao II* who live in Tompkins Square, New York City, who live in refrigerator boxes and television boxes. . . . I’ve written about the power of the image in earlier books. It’s as if fantasies and dreams could become realized with the help of the entire consumer imagination that surrounds us, a form of self-realization through products. (Nadotti, “Interview,” 115)

Crowds and photographs are compatible in their nature. American mechanical reproduction is the code word for both the production of mass consciousness/mass identity and the crowds of reproduced images. In that sense, the mass wedding ceremony, for instance, is essentially linked with the silk-screen Mao series. Both are mechanically reproduced crowds. Osteen notes that “photos both represent crowds and, by inviting the viewer into the picture, generate and incarnate them;” moreover, he adds that “*Mao II* presents itself as a multimedia event, as a text that is also a crowd of photos” (194). It is only after considering this essential link between the mass of people and the mass of images that the cultural economy put forward within the context of late capitalism in *Mao II* can be understood.

The inherent connection of image reproduction to commodity fetishism is also implied in the pictures of Coke II in several instances. When Brita is in Beirut to interview the Maoist group, she notices Coke II signs on cement-block walls and “she has the crazy idea that these advertising placards herald the presence of the Maoist group. Because the lettering is so intensely red;” and she is exhilarated when

she deems that “these are like big character posters of the Cultural Revolution in China” because of a physical resemblance (230). In another case, Omar is seen wearing a sweatshirt with Coke bottles pictured on it. If Mao II, the title of the novel, is the reproduced image of the original figure, then Coke II stands for the serially produced image of the market product. In fact, the novel requires a conflation of these two reproduced images, which are rendered as duplicates. They both refer to the commodified signification practices. On the basis of reproduction, therefore, Mao, a communist leader, is equivalent to a Coca Cola bottle, a most widely consumed image of an American commodity. According to Hardack, every image in *Mao II*, from photos to reproduced art, and every duplicate, from Mao to Coke, is rendered secondary, therefore regarded as mass and a source of anxiety (383); and furthermore, he notes that anything photographed “already exists in duplicate,” “has joined the impersonal mass,” “and is therefore terrorized and even dead” (379).

More important than the implied equivalence between the instances of commodification through image replication, this conflation of coke bottle and Mao indicates the political message of the novel. American liberal capitalism symbolized by the coke bottle consistently matches with the communist ideology of Chairman Mao. Both ideologies rule over the masses with the power of the image. Mao is depicted in the novel as extensively using his own photographs, his image reproductions, during the Cultural Revolution to affirm his ever-presence and to intensify the masses’ devotion to a charismatic leader as the spirit of his people. Therefore, both capitalist ideology of consumerism and a totalitarian regime of the absolute rule of a leader employ similar strategies of subordination.

Within the political frame of the novel, Mao’s regime in China is a foreign source of threat to American culture along with the other counterparts in Eastern countries, like that of Khomeni’s fundamentalism in Iran or Abu Rashid’s terrorist group in Beirut. Yet, in accordance with the theory of conspiracy, the threat is not ultimately foreign. The strategies of totalitarian power mechanisms of foreign regimes are similarly present within the democratic principles of American capitalism. In other words, “the figure of Mao comes to designate not a foreign or alternative social or economic system, but the very mechanics of capitalist



production in DeLillo's America" (Hardack 377). The mass production of identities in these totalitarian regimes is at the core of American mass production of homogenized consumer society. Likewise, Khomeini's authorial presence even after his death is vivified and intensified by his gigantic poster over the crowd at the funeral ceremony. Or similarly, the terrorist leader Abu Rashid follows the same patterns of galvanizing a group identity through the use of images. Brita sees a gang of boys wearing t-shirts on which Rashid's image is pictured and asks him the meaning of it. Rashid replies that "it gives them a vision they will accept and obey. These children need an identity outside the narrow function of who they are and where they come from;" and he asserts, "All man one man. . . . The image of Rashid is their identity" (233). Ironically, Rashid's strategy of identity formation doubles upon the people in New York wearing t-shirts of coke bottles. Therefore, it can be deduced that capitalist mass production and identity politics are inherently totalitarian on the masses.

The power structure in American cultural sphere produces its subordination of the public not by a direct exertion of power but by wielding power in a disseminated manner compatible with the late capitalist ideology in *Mao II*. Power is diffused within the public sphere and it gains control by seeping into the common sense of people, in Gramsci's terms. The rule of commodity fetishism and mass production is naturalized by the aesthetic production and internalized by people as normal. The serialized images of *Mao II* and *Coke II* are significant insofar as they metaphorically correspond to an endless dissemination of the rationality of mass production and refer to equivalence on the basis of being consumed. More specifically, the dissemination of a serialized image of a totalitarian figure metaphorically alludes to the dissemination of the power to subdue, and this hints at the hidden status of power in cultural and artistic practices. In that sense, the ever-presence of power, seeping into every artistic and consuming practice, is a conspiratorial strategy. The dominant strategies of power are ubiquitous both within artistic and industrial production at the same time, and this is internalized as natural by masses. This is the real conspiratorial way of the late capitalist culture in acquiring the consent of people and in enhancing its cultural hegemony.

The practice of taking photographs is also another metaphorical act in *Mao II* that connotes the dominant mode of cultural hegemony. Very basically, Susan Sontag connects the opportunities in picture taking to capitalism's objectives. She argues that a photograph "is part of, an extension of that subject; and a potent means of acquiring it, of gaining control over it;" and deduces from this potential of photograph taking that "we also have a consumer's relation to events" through photographs (155). Taking photographs is a leitmotif in DeLillo's narrative, appearing in several instances. The most significant narrative element that foregrounds this act is Brita's profession as a photographer. She is a photographer of writers. With the help of her role, Bill's attitude towards contemporary image politics and image consumption is revealed. As mentioned above, Bill is highly critical of the image culture and field of vision as control. Bill's deliberate blockage of his photos from circulation on magazines and TV concretely marks his indignation of being rendered as a commodity of the cultural apparatus. Bill comments about the image frenzy in consumer society by saying that "In our world we sleep and eat the image and pray to it and wear it too;" (37) and he justifies his seclusion from the media by arguing that "the image world is corrupt, here is a man who hides his face" (36). Namely, Bill's is an attempt to resist media's abuse of his representation, or to reject submitting to the culture industry's control on his image. Hence, at the same time, Bill's is an escape from being assimilated by the crowds in his refusal of being photographed. He is repulsive about being within the same category of mass production, which is the mechanism that generates crowds of mass identity. Therefore, the reason behind Bill's insistent refusal to be pictured can be put down as follows: "Easily manipulable by official iconography (see Mao's example), addicted to images and indiscriminate consumption, crowds are in actuality exactly what the writer flees" (Moraru 92).

However, how Bill is eventually persuaded to be pictured by Brita evokes a need to judge Bill's decision of its political correctness. It is instantly discovered that Bill's determination to end his seclusion by being photographed is in fact a tactic. Bill's long retreat from public appearance has ironically built a colossal charisma of his own. His deliberate absence has amplified his importance and, contrary to what he supposed, it has turned him into a kind of icon within the peculiar dynamics of

culture industry. That is, withdrawing from the industry is not a preferable alternative to being present within the culture industry. Bill tells Brita: "I think I need these pictures more than you do. To break down the monolith I have built. . . . There are no halfway measures" (44). Bill's tactic is about choosing the lesser evil in the face of the incorporating strategies of the cultural apparatus. And strangely, Bill's choice reverberates that of Mao's during his authority in the times of Cultural Revolution. In fact, DeLillo compares Mao and Bill and sees both as planning "messianic returns" (141) after a long disappearance with the help of the photographic images. Especially, Mao is known to spread out photographs displaying his health and vigor after a couple of times he was announced dead in the press. Similarly, Bill's acceptance of being photographed implies a similar kind of return. However, DeLillo is considerate of the difference between Mao's and Bill's messianic returns by photographs: "Mao used photographs to announce his return and demonstrate his vitality, to reinspire the revolution. Bill's picture was a death notice" (141). In fact, this is just so because the story line that commences by Bill's approval of being pictured ends by his eventual death in the boat to Beirut.

Visual culture and media is the postmodern or late capitalist mode of the logic of control, which works by creating empty identities. The agency panic Melley formulates, inherent in conspiracy narratives, is actually a response for the subordinating social relations generated by visual culture and media in *Mao II*. He notes: "While the earlier tradition imagines the mechanism of control to be a constraining environment, the postwar narrative imagines it as a bodily violation, an *introjection* of the social order into the self" (Melley 33). Although *Mao II* is published two years after the end of postwar period, it can still be regarded as a postwar narrative and it obviously bears the effect of agency panic. The impoverishment of the subject as a consequence of the visually-oriented culture is in parallel with the peak of post-industrial or information capitalism in the postwar years. The introjections of control and debasement of the individual subject is therefore a result of information capitalism and it is realized within the visual culture and media. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in her *Anxiety of Obsolescence*, suggests that the obsolescence of the individual takes place due to the remarkable rise in cultural technologies such as electronic media and image production. *Mao II*, then, is a

narrative of obsolescence since it heralds the diminishing agency and the emptied identity of individuals in the age of electronic capitalism.

What is more, this anxiety is also a reference to a political infirmity of the individual. Douglas Kellner posits that one of the dominant fears in the age of mediatization and techno-capitalism is the “paranoid sense that political power was out of the reach of ordinary citizens and democratic political processes,” which is also compatible with the conspiracy narratives (*Media* 129). Hence, Bill’s response to culture industry, both to the publishing business and to the visual culture, is a political attempt to overcome his infirmity. His wish to substitute himself for the hostage in Beirut is a truly political act to evade the sense of being politically mummified. Bill chooses to take action to evade the sense of being entrenched by the dominant signifying practices.

Ideological encoding is best achieved through media and mobilization of imagery. Visual politics of media and communicative networks create “subjectless subjects,” and this refers to “the way subjects acquire agency and autonomy by internalizing the very logics of the system which has emptied them of authentic autonomy, power, and free will” (Wayne 184). Thus, the dominant visual politics of information capitalism is “conducive to the reproduction of the exploitative social relations” (Wayne 174). In short, visual culture adjusts the individual for the introjections of the dominant practices of control. Consent is the name given to this introjection in Gramscian terminology, which is the basic tool of information capitalism to conspire against the public. The wide spread practices of visuality and electronic image reproduction form a common sense for the public; and thereby, they make the process of ideological encoding easier. Sallie Westwood points at “the notion that visual images are powerful and, in fact, crucial to the construction of the social at a commonsense level. In short, social processes are seen, imagined or real, they are in the mind's eye and part of the cognitive maps with which people plot their paths through the social” (Westwood 125).

Karen is the best example for this kind of encoding by media. She is often seen to be spending her time watching TV. She usually happens to watch news about crowds and mass actions. The irony is that while she is watching the crowds on the

screen, the screen transforms her into one among TV-watching crowds. Thus, her relation to TV and media may be taken as a reciprocal interaction. Interestingly, it is the pictures on the screen that she feels clung to rather than the news itself. Her connection to the screen, watching TV without sound, is almost ritualistic:

Then she picked up the remote control and lowered the volume on the TV, touch touch touch, until it was totally off. . . . She was watching the world news of the day. On any given day it was mainly the film footage she wanted to see and she didn't mind watching without sound. It was interesting how you could make up the news as you went along by sticking to picture only. (32)

TV watching is one of the limited actions Karen is seen doing throughout the novel. Therefore, it can be deduced that she has asserted a new identity for herself watching TV, and this new identity has substituted her former one as a part of the cultic identity. Nevertheless, both the former and the latter types of identities have the mass at its core, and what Karen feels a natural affinity for is the internalization of the ideology of capitalism. It is actually essential within the ideological use of electronic media that the consumers and spectators are made to pretend they are autonomous and free individuals whereas they are mere receivers of images and signals. Therefore: "Where subjects feel that they are indeed agents is often the spot where they have been most hollowed out by value relations and turned into subjectless subjects" (Wayne 218).

Karen's status as a sole receiver of images and signs from the screen can also be seen as a metaphorical instance of hypnosis. This hypnosis by the TV softens Karen's real experience of the world and replaces it with the experience with images of the world. That's why receiving images from the screen is "anesthetic" (Robins 112). It provides a distance from real events and introduces a relation with images which corresponds to a relationship to products. On the level of image saturation, experiences of images do not help differentiate between the consumption of the images of the news and the images of products. This process of anaesthetizing through TV is also what exacerbates Karen's isolation as a stranger in her post-trauma period.

Furthermore, considering the use of visual politics in *Mao II*, an addition to the anesthetic discourse is the prosthetic discourse. Photographic and televisual images serve as perceptual prosthesis for the individual to know himself and the world. Cecilia Lury, in her *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity*, argues that “vision and self-knowledge have become inextricably and productively intertwined in modern Euro-American societies;” and that the visual provides a self-extension for the individual in the culture of prosthesis (2-4). Basically, the visual creates the individual’s self-perception as an image, and manipulates the way that the individual perceives the world and responds to it in image forms. Image becomes a logical pattern behind thoughts and behaviors in the culture of prosthesis. Karen’s formation of herself as an image-receiver is compatible to the logic of perceptual prosthesis. On the other hand, the construction of the self-as-an-image is also a paradigm of this culture. Bill’s despair about the utilization of his image by the industry and his response to give them a proper image of his by the help of Brita reflects this notion of devalued subject-as-image. Karen, Scott and Brita discuss whether Bill should make his eventual appearance on TV or on magazines. Scott supports that they should definitely use Brita’s photos to publicize Bill. However, Scott is ironically aware of the drawbacks of self-construction as an image for the market and says: “We have the pictures, let’s use them to advantage. The book disappears into the image of the writer” (71).

“Image-becoming of the subject” is a new sensibility installed in the individual perception; and in DeLillo’s fiction, “people are spellbound by the rhetoric of their appearance,” “because they live in a culture of spectacular narratives” (Moraru 97). Abu Rashid’s full awareness of being before a camera in his interview with Brita is an instance for the construction of self-image through camera. He has an amplified sense of identity and self-esteem in front of the camera and he takes the correct pose every time he answers Brita. Similarly, Scott recalls and tells Brita seeing Yasir Arafat in Athens among an army of interviewers and cameramen at the stairs of a hotel. Scott’s account of Arafat’s manners can be indirectly linked to Rashid’s manners before the camera, it conveys the spectacularization of the event by the media staff:

Scott realized he was smiling broadly. He could feel the smile stretching across his face and he looked at the people around him and they looked back smiling and it was clearly agreed that they all felt good together. And Arafat smiled again, talking to officials, overgesturing for the camera, pointing toward the entrance and then moving that way. Everyone applauded now. (50-51)

The prosthetic culture in the field of vision compels the individual to have a look at his own image through the lens of the camera. Therefore, the perspective of the camera helps internalize the codes of self-control. It renders the act of seeing a kind of self-discipline. In other words, one dominant effect of “the new camera technology (video, instant movies) has been to turn even more of what is done to narcissistic uses – that is, to self surveillance” (Sontag 177). Televisuality and surveillance feed the power of Foucauldian Panopticism through visual prosthesis. Frank Volterra of *The Names* voices this fact within the film industry:

Film is more than the twentieth-century art. It's another part of the twentieth-century mind. It's the world seen from inside. We've come to a certain point in the history of film. If a thing can be filmed, film is implied in the thing itself. This is where we are. The twentieth century is *on film*. It's the filmed century. You have to ask yourself if there's anything about us more important than the fact that we're constantly on film, constantly watching ourselves. The whole world is on film, all the time. Spy satellites, microscopic scanners, pictures of the uterus, embryos, sex, war, assassinations, everything. (*The Names* 200)

The self-monitoring Volterra talks about implies introjection of self-discipline through the gaze of the camera. Dedicated to watch the televised image, the individual is actually being watched by the logic of television. In league with the idea of Panopticism, the contemporary individual of electronic capitalism is submissive to the codes of self-control. This new way of seeing includes seeing one's self and is inevitably a part of visual prosthesis. Similar to Volterra, Scott has reflections on the same issue in *Mao II*:

We've gone too far into space to insist on our differences. . . . This isn't a story about seeing the planet new. It's about seeing people new. We see them from space, where gender and features don't matter, where names don't matter. We've learned to see ourselves as if from space, as if from satellite cameras, all the time, all the same. As if from moon, even. We're all Moonies, or should learn to be. (89)

The idea that filming and camera-recording is inherently present in the spirit of the contemporary age not only evokes the notion of being an object of surveillance or being encoded by the logic of televisuality. Also this heightened sense of being filmed functions to feed the image industries and consumption. Therefore, the hidden logic of television is like a machine that ceaselessly works to create consumable image-narratives. Late capitalist visual culture operates by “autotelic logic of media narratives” that aims to sell visual stories of the world (Moraru 98). Bill tells it in condemnation to Brita:

Everything around us tends to channel our lives toward some final reality in print or film. Two lovers quarrel in the back of a taxi and a question becomes implicit in the event. Who will write the book and who will play the lovers in the movie? Everything seeks its own heightened version. Or Put it this way. Nothing happens until it's consumed. . . . All the material in every life is channeled into the glow. Here I am I your lens. Already I see myself differently. Twice over or once removed. (43-44).

In *Mao II*, the visual politics dominant in the cultural sphere is oriented towards a consumer culture and reflects the dynamics of what Guy Debord calls ‘the society of spectacle.’ Debord’s society of spectacle denotes the domination of the sphere of culture by the imaginary exchange of commodified cultural forms. These cultural forms abound in DeLillo’s narrative, mainly on the level of the image. Recalling Debord’s words, spectacle is “*capital* accumulated to the point where it becomes image” (24). Therefore, there is a high ‘imaginary investment’ in DeLillo’s late capitalist society of spectacle. The domain of social relations is dominated by images within the rationality of the spectacle. Within this image culture, capitalism “has commodified all aspects of everyday life, including the process of looking itself” (Mirzoeff 27). The imagination becomes a terrain for struggle, and capitalist spectacle aims at a colonization of the terrain of imagination to dominate mass consciousness. Crowds are “only capable of thinking in images,” and images “become motives of action for crowds;” and therefore, this leads to the notion of “popular imagination as the basis of power” (LeBon 76-77). Thus, the domain of spectacle is a domain of hegemonization not through coercion from above but through power dissemination by cultural practices based on the consumption of images and spectacular narratives.



As a complement to Debord's 'society of spectacle,' Douglas Kellner talks about the 'media spectacles' which describes "those phenomena of media culture that embody contemporary society's basic values, [that] serve to initiate individuals into its way of life, and dramatize its controversies and struggles, as well as its modes of conflict resolution," which also help "naturalize and idealize the given social system" (*Media 2*, 28). In this phase of capitalism, domains of life from culture to politics are spectacularized, by which actually the capitalist relations of production, control and the hegemonic configurations of the society infiltrate into the public sphere. Media culture, in short, is a spectacular way of configuring the identities and thoughts of the people in the civil society. Hence, along with the endlessly replicated photographic images described so far, media narratives also appear as a significant element in the post-industrial society of spectacle in *Mao II*.

The spectacular narratives mainly take the form of catastrophes in *Mao II*, and news supply the major media narratives. They are the major channels that charge the individuals with emotional experiences. And the disaster footages satisfy the need for narratives in the society of spectacle. Sensational spectacles and catastrophes seduce the viewers in a mode of entertainment, just as the images of products attract them for consumption. In conversation with Brita, Bill admits: "News of disaster is the only narrative people need. The darker the news, the grander the narrative. News is the last addiction before – what?" (42). In addition, it should not be forgotten that what Karen mostly watches on TV is news of disaster in various parts of the world. The news of catastrophes and disasters in excessive amounts reduces the social and political conflicts into ordinary news and banal materials. In other words, media spectacles are ways of covering on the deep economical or political conflicts in social reality. Kellner puts it:

Political and social life are also shaped more and more by media spectacle. Social and political conflicts are increasingly played out on the screens of media culture, which display spectacles such as sensational murder cases, terrorist bombings, celebrity and political sex scandals, and the explosive violence of everyday life. Media culture not only takes up always-expanding amounts of time and energy, but also provides ever more material for fantasy, dreaming, modeling thought and behavior, and identities. (*Media 1*)

The media narratives, in the forms of disaster news and catastrophes, protect the viewer from the experience of harsh realities. By bombarding the viewer with images and spectacles, the media narratives in fact protect the viewer from the bombardment of actual problems of social reality. As Robins underlines, “television screen presents us with a wealth of information, but equally it functions to screen out the reality of what is seen and to inhibit knowledge,” which he regards as a paradox and formulates it in detail as follows: “With television, this paradoxical relation between what is seen and what is consequently not seen is massively intensified. What is achieved is a condition in which exposure to the world’s events is maximized, whilst, at the same time, exposure to their consequences is minimized” (Robins117). In *Mao II*, this paradoxical situation created by media spectacles, specifically by disaster narratives, is apparently put down through Karen’s experience of media. TV screen brings forth an erasure of moral responsibility by devaluing disasters to mere spectacles. Karen’s experience of the mourning crowd over Khomeini’s funeral on screen is an instance of this. She is under the influence of the concrete grief of the masses at the funeral and she hints in surprise at how morally distant and neutral may the narrativization of this historical event be through the screen: “It was possible to believe that she was the only one seeing this and everyone else tuned to this channel was watching sober-sided news analysis delivered by three men in a studio with makeup and hidden mikes” (190). Furthermore, Karen is overtly critical of this moral paradox of the TV screen and media narratives:

Karen could not imagine who else was watching this. It could not be real if others watched. If other people watched, if millions watched, if these millions matched the number on the Iranian plain, doesn’t it mean we share something with the mourners, know an anguish, feel something pass between us, hear the sigh of some historic grief? . . . If others saw these pictures, why is nothing changed, where are the local crowds, why do we still have names and addresses and car keys? (191)

The role of media in the society of spectacle therefore weakens moral alertness and political responsibility. It is the chief tool of conspiracy against the civil society. Particularly, the footages of catastrophes as media narratives complement the main task of paralyzing the public sphere and regressing the public into a mass.

Because in these narratives, “the public is always elsewhere, a phantom, statistical being, it is only in mass-mediated images of crowds and catastrophes that a representation of the public can be found; yet in such forms of representation the collective is presented ambivalently as something either threatening or imperiled. Nonetheless, spectacles of disaster and violence supply the serialized watchers with a figurative body” (Green 581). Hence, disaster narratives are an extension of the contemporary spirit and the communicative logic of the mass media. Eventually, it is mass media that configures mass society on the most part:

The public and the mass may be most readily distinguished by their dominant modes of communication: in a community of publics, discussion is the ascendant means of communication, and the mass media, if they exist, simply enlarge and animate discussion, linking one *primary public* with the discussions of another. In a mass society, the dominant type of communication is the formal media, and the publics become mere *media markets*: all those exposed to the contents of given mass media. (Mills 304)

In the mass society, the access to social reality is achieved through pictures and images on minds created by media. Mass media has a reshaping impact on people’s perception of external phenomena and moderates their responses to it. Mills argues: “Accordingly, even if the individual has direct, personal experience of events, it is not really direct and primary: it is organized in stereotypes” (Mills 312). Public opinions are formed with the manipulations of media, and the stereotyped responses inflicted by mass media cannot be ultimately undone.

To sum up, the society of spectacle and the sphere of culture in *Mao II* pose a fake portrait of democracy. The culture industry evokes a sense of free choice in the market, which renders people equivalent as consumers. Market as a democratic domain of free choice is in fact a set-up for faking democratic spirit in late capitalism. As Horkheimer and Adorno posit, culture industry designates each individual as a type and makes people identify themselves with the subjugating power. Therefore, culture industry is essentially totalitarian in contrast to the democratic sense it echoes. Similarly, within visual politics and media, there is a so-called harmony in society. This illusory wholeness of consumer society and the mystified unity of the society of spectacle, as also underlined by Lefebvre and

Debord, function as a cover-up for deeper fissures. This wholeness and unity is an anesthetizing device in image culture for they efface social conflicts and antagonisms in the capitalist society. Sontag summarizes:

Our unlimited use of photographic images not only reflects but gives shape to this society, one unified by the denial of conflict. Our very notion of the world – the capitalist twentieth century’s “one world” – is like a photographic overview. The world is “one” not because it is united but because a tour of its diverse contents does not reveal conflict but only an even astounding diversity. This spurious unity of the world is effected by translating its contents into images. Images are always compatible even when the realities they depict are not (Sontag 174).

The seeming diversity Sontag speaks of in the late capitalist society is actually based on the logic of equivalence. In the “democratic consumer culture,” consumers are interpellated as equals; and furthermore, “the dominant discourses in consumer society present it as social progress and the advance of democracy, to the extent that it allows the vast majority of the population access to an ever-increasing range of goods” (Laclau and Mouffe 163-64). As deduced from the interchangeability of the coke and Mao figures in the visual politics of the capitalist society in *Mao II*, the equivalence of things are affirmed on the level of commodity. In like manner, the equivalence of individuals is confirmed within the mass society. As observed within the capitalist cultural politics represented in DeLillo’s fiction, “equivalence is always hegemonic” (Laclau and Mouffe 183). Therefore, the democratic experience in contemporary American society, dignified in comparison to the totalitarian regimes in DeLillo’s novel, actually bears an implicit criticism of the totalizing logic of equivalence within the capitalist cultural sphere. Visual politics always works by this logic of equivalence. Ironically, Jean Claude Julien is a hostage both in the hands of a Maoist group and within the logic of equivalence generated by communication/media networks:

He had tumbled into the new culture, the system of world terror, and they’d given him a second self, an immortality, the spirit of Jean-Claude Julien. He was a digital mosaic in the processing grid, lines of ghostly type on microfilm. They were putting him together, storing his data in starfish satellites, bouncing his image off the moon. He saw himself

floating to the far shores of space, past his own death and back again. But he sensed they'd forgotten his body by now. He was lost in the wavebands, one more code for the computer mesh, for the memory of crimes too pointless to be solved. (112)

The French poet is lost within mediation. He is an ordinary narrative element in the media and an equivalent of other narrative units in the general media spectacle. Hardack concludes: "The physics of waves and chains reflect and determine the politics of identity: these reiterated images of mechanical reproduction promise not egalitarian bliss but constriction, conformity, repetition and homogenization" (382). Hence, media narratives help advance the logic of equivalence as a totalizing force that leads to an anti-democratic society of mass-consumption and mass-identity.

## **4.2. INCORPORATING RESISTANCE**

The conspiratorial logic hidden in the ideology of late capitalism also surfaces in the techniques of co-optation. The late capitalist rationale even determines and codifies the resistant energies, allows a safe area for them in the margins and integrates them back into the system. *Mao II* exposes the techniques of capitalist incorporation of resistance via an interrelation among the novelist, the terrorist and media. The relation of each term to another discloses the practices of resistance and their channeling back into the dominant systemic codes. Therefore, when inquired, binaries such as the novelist and the terrorist, and the terrorist and media reveal the dominant mode of late capitalist conspiracy against potential energies of resistance in *Mao II*.

### **4.2.1. Writers and Terrorists**

Underlining the impacts of media politics on individual agency, DeLillo's novel also opens a path to evaluate what befalls the writer in the consumer society. DeLillo links the fate of the individual in the contemporary age to that of the writer and questions what remains of the function of the writer in the society. The role of the writer as the modern day seer and the responsible intellectual, as it was in the Romantic and modernist traditions, is undermined in *Mao II*. DeLillo's novel portrays the unbridgeable gap between the late twentieth century context and the romantic notion of the novelist, and consequently represents the novelist as always

under the risk of “declining into self-pity and self-indulgence” in late modernity (Scanlan 26-27). The mass media and the publishing industry marginalize the writer, abolishing his influence and condemning him to be a commodity in the service of capitalism. Over this dramatic loss of function and mission, DeLillo draws a comparative picture of the writer and the terrorist in his novel. *Mao II* sets up an equation of resistance and co-optation by using these two figures, and illuminates the relation between the two.

The late capitalist visual politics, as previously mentioned, is a direct threat to the status of the writer in the society. What is to be remembered at first step is the writer’s softened image as a celebrity instead of as an intellectual. This celebrity image strips the writer off of his main task of reflecting and changing the real conditions of the society. He becomes a commodity or an image among others. Scott’s rhetorical question to Brita is quite meaningful in that sense: “I mean what’s the importance of a photograph if you know the writer’s work? I don’t know. But people still want the image, don’t they?” (26). Consequently, this notion of writer as celebrity would “require viewing the novel as just another commodity” (Baker par. 12). Alongside this celebrity culture, the major drawback of the visual culture in opposition to the function of the writer is its power of abolishing the need for a culture based on written material. Image saturation and addiction to visual narratives underrate the writer and his product. Contemporary culture’s visual self-equipment, as Sontag puts forward, provides “possibilities of control that could not even be dreamed of under the earlier system of recording information: writing” (156). Apart from surveillance, this visual control Sontag talks about refers to the total control of people through ideological infiltration into images to be consumed. In that sense, visual power can be taken as a totalitarian hegemony by way of cultural forms (Westwood 132). Moreover, widespread media narratives and image culture assert visuality as the only dominant mode of thought and code of reality. In other words, “the world-as-a-text has been replaced by the world-as-a-picture,” and “the visual disrupts and challenges any attempt to define culture in purely linguistic terms” (Mirzoeff 7).

Visual culture invalidates the novelist's main motive and material to produce written narratives. Novels lose appeal against the filmed material. That's why the visual mass media can be said to accelerate "psychological illiteracy" (Mills 311). Eventually, the representative function of the writer is abolished in correlation to the diminished status of writing as the representative code in contemporary American society. And therefore, the writers as professionals are supposed to yield to the dominant visual culture to maintain their role as celebrity. Veterinarians questions to Bill at the dinner table on the ferry to Beirut hint at the normalization of the novelist's incorporation as merely a script-writer for the screen:

"What sort of thing is it you write?" the second vet said.

"Fiction."

...

"Did they ever make a movie?" the woman said.

"Right. Are any of your books also movies?" the second vet said.

"They're just books, I'm afraid."

...

"But presumably as an author you make appearances," the woman said.

(206)

As mentioned above, media narratives and news of catastrophes are the new narratives of contemporary age. Along with their anesthetizing impact on mass consciousness, these media narratives are also the major actors that diminish the value of the novelist's narrative. Sensational news and narrativization of disasters have far more influence on people than novels do. Scott tells Brita about Bill's insights about the issue:

"Bill has the idea that writers are being consumed by the emergence of the news as an apocalyptic force."

"He told me, more or less."

"The novel used to feed our search for meaning. Quoting Bill. It was the great secular transcendence. . . . But our desperation has led us toward something larger and darker. So we turn to the news, which provides an unremitting mood of catastrophe. This is where we find emotional experience not available elsewhere. We don't need the novel . . ." (72)

Bill voices DeLillo's own notions on the power of news and footages of catastrophes as narratives. DeLillo is critical of their impact and the process they come to replace novels. In an interview, he notes:

In my work, film and television are often linked with disaster. Because this is one of the energies that charges the culture. TV has a sort of panting lust for bad news and calamity as long as it's visual. . . . And they play the tape again and again and again and again. This is the *world narrative*, so they play it until everyone in the world has seen it. ("Art of Fiction," 105; emphasis added)

News as world narratives work on the principle of constant repetition since they aim at being permanently carved into people's mind. They are the contemporary genre that substitutes for other literary genres. And as DeLillo posits in his interview with Remnick, news have "almost replaced the novel, replaced the discourse between the people;" and they make people "consumers of a certain type. We consume acts of violence. It's like buying products that in fact are images and they are produced in a massmarket kind of fashion" ("Exile," 143-44). That is why DeLillo's representation of TV as a device of totalitarian culture is in direct contrast to the culture of reading. TV, as "a representing machine," pushes forward a "technologized political life, in undermining the act of reading" and "creates a precondition necessary for fascism" (Fitzpatrick, Chptr II, par. 6). Therefore, mass media is contrasted to literature in *Mao II*. In this technologized culture, the novelist is displaced from the center of the society. Hence, 'anxiety of obsolescence' comes to mean not only a depersonalization of the individual agent, but it also refers to the displacement of the writer within the culture of electronic images. The following question is too relevant to this problematic in the context of *Mao II*:

[I]s the anxiety of obsolescence, the novelist's represented fears of an encroaching electronic media (and submerged fears of a similarly encroaching otherness)? . . . Or is it a formation common to the entirety of literary culture, all of which is apparently under threat by television and responding in similarly defensive fashion? (Fitzpatrick, Chptr V, par. 2)

Both options that Fitzpatrick asks about are valid conditions in *Mao II*. Indeed, what is foregrounded by DeLillo's portrait of a hegemonic electronic media is the loss of democratic spirit inherent within the novel genre in the face of a rising image-oriented culture of media narratives. The democratic act of reading and writing novels are displaced by one-way act of watching and being confined into the screen. Therefore, it is comprehensible that Bill presents novels as a voice of democracy to Haddad: "Do you know why I believe in the novel? It's a democratic



shout. Anybody can write a great novel, one great novel, almost any amateur off the street. . . . Something so angelic it makes your jaw hang open. The spray of talent, the spray of ideas” (159). It is this openness of the form of the novel to anybody to understand or produce literary texts that Bill advocates as democratic. It is just in the sense that Bill finds baseball democratic that he argues the same for the novel. It is the public participation to the genre with the talent of writing or with the act of reading that makes novel unique in Bill’s gaze. Novel is opposed to totalitarianism Haddad supports in the novel. The writing process supplies the principle of freedom, which is not inherent in the technologized political life of contemporary culture, but in the very act of artistic creation.

Writers are radical democrats that stand for an ideal that is exempt from the notion of dominating and confining; and the push in the writer to create free developing characters are essentially against the totalitarian drive to rule (Lentricchia and McAuliffe 47). Thereby Bill idealizes the writer as a figure of political resistance to the existing codes and powers of domination. The writer seems to him the only and the most effective democratic voice against the threat of totalitarianism. Bill thinks that “a writer creates a character as a way to reveal consciousness, increase the flow of meaning. This is how we reply to power and back our fear” (200).

This intended increase in the flow of meaning by the writer aims at resisting the limitations and manipulations on meaning both by the totalitarian regimes and the capitalist encoding practices. Free flow and limitless production of meaning is regarded as the basic principle of democracy by Bill. However, whether Bill is successful in maintaining the victory of his ideal in contemporary society is debatable. The novel genre’s failure in the face of flourishing media narratives and Bill’s hopelessness as a result of losing the hope of democratic salvation by writing novels is paramount. Haddad has a cynical attitude against Bill’s respectable picture of the writer as a resistant figure. Haddad says: “And when the novelist loses his talent, he dies democratically, there it is for everyone to see, wide open to the world, the shitpile of hopeless prose” (159). The novelist’s loss of talent that Haddad underlines most probably refers to the novel’s loss of value thanks to the repetitive and culturally dominant narratives of media and visual texts. Under their shadow,

novel regresses into futile pieces of writing and piles of hopeless attempts to avow freedom.

The other wave of pressure on the writer in *Mao II* comes from the publishing industry. Literature becomes a business due to mass publishing policies and the concern for high profit rate. Literature is depicted as a “subsystem of the dominant cultural paradigm” (Hantke, “God Save,” 236). Serialized mass production of aesthetic materials by the hand of the industry degrades the writer into serially produced goods. Bill complains Charlie, his publisher, about this hidden logic in the industry. He says: “Always new writers, you see. They sit in their corner offices and never have to worry about surviving the failed books because there’s always a new one coming along, a hot new excitement” (47).

By this remark, Bill mentions that writers are not the producers of culture and cultural superstructure, but are repetitively reproduced by the hidden hand of the relations of production in the late twentieth century. These late capitalist relations of production aim at co-optation of the writers and at neutralizing the mission of writing by fueling it to the point of saturation and thus transforming it into a business. Bill continues with his criticism: “The more books they publish, the weaker we become. The secret that drives the industry is the compulsion to make writers harmless” (47). Writers, the supposedly resistant figures and advocates of democratic spirit, are co-opted by being turned into a mass themselves. The industry’s faking of a democratic public sphere by promoting artistic creation more often, in fact, serves for saturating their production and for making their influence on public ineffective. The late capitalist ideology, in its approach to artistic production, determines the zone of resistant reflexes itself and it has the control on them not by a total blockage but by crediting them extremely as far as they turn into banal elements within the system.

Charlie, whose demands from Bill are the voice of the industry’s requirements and dictates, too daringly insistent in his wish for a last book from Bill: “I want this book, you bastard” (102). But Bill deeply feels himself in the impasse between an effective artistic production and the code of literary mass production. Bill tries to explain Charlie the reasons for his prolonged period of writing his last book and his deliberate postponement to finish it:

Every sentence has a truth waiting at the end of it and the writer learns how to know it when he finally gets there. . . . down deeper it's the integrity of the writer as he matches with the language. . . . *I no longer see myself in the language*. The running picture is gone, the code of being that pushed me on and made me trust the world. . . . This is someone else's book. It feels all forced and wrong. . . . I'm sitting on a book that's dead. (48; emphasis added)

Bill feels reluctant to write in the name of reaching public consciousness since his motive of writing is melt down by the severe conditions created by the industry. His will for artistic production is subdued to the dominant codes of the market. It withers under the impact of the masses of narratives that abound in the cultural sphere. Bill falls out of the language for he is incompatible with the codes of artistic creation within the dominant relations of production. "No one has a unique command over language" in the novel, "though everyone sees the world through a seemingly unique consciousness . . . [which] is determined by the history of endlessly repeating cultural narratives. No one owns language, but everyone is subsumed within language in the postmodern world presented by DeLillo" (Simmons 683). This language is subdued by the dominant cultural paradigm, which co-opts the novelist within the wishes of the industry.

On the point that the writer's status is neutralized, DeLillo employs the terrorist as a new discursive figure of resistance. The terrorist is envisaged as the representation of unbounded resistant force against the dominant culture, which the writer happens to lack. "The writers in terrorist novels," Scanlan argues, "are nearly always guilty: of being radically chic, or of complicity with the repressive state, or, at the very least, of treating people around them selfishly, even violently" (Scanlan 14). Accordingly, in *Mao II*, DeLillo transfers the resistant energies from the writer to the terrorist in unbounded vigor. In a way, both figures share a similar resentment against cultural or political subordination. They are drawn as doubles in their task of addressing mass consciousness. Bill says:

There's a curious knot that binds novelists and terrorists. . . . Years ago I used to think it was possible for a novelist to alter the inner life of a culture. Now bomb-makers and gunmen have taken that territory. They make raids on human consciousness. What writers used to do before we were all incorporated? (41)

Considering the discursive connections between these two figures, Scanlan enumerates “variations on the terrorist as the writer’s rival, double, or secret sharer,” which can be traced “from their origins in the romantic conviction of the writer’s originality and power through a century of political, social, and technological developments that undermine that belief” (Scanlan 15). Within the context of DeLillo’s work, the terrorist unleashes a vulgar power in fever. The terrorist’s function as a double of the resistant writer is so strong that he goes beyond subsuming resistant potentials that once belonged to the writer. The terrorist almost steals the ardor of the writer to stand against any kind of oppression and eventually becomes the rival of the novelist. “Only the terrorist stands outside,” says Bill because “the culture hasn’t figured out to assimilate him;” and in “societies reduced to blur and glut, terror is the only meaningful act” (157).

This image of the terrorist as an honorable figure of freedom is not a glorification of the acts of violence. The terrorist figure is deployed as a marker by DeLillo to point at the degree the capitalist apparatus incorporates resistance. It is only the violent face of terrorism that can protect itself from these mechanisms of power and make a hit at the system. In that sense, the terrorist replaces the writer; and it is argued in the novel “that novelists and terrorists are playing a zero-sum game” since Bill believes that the extent “to which [terrorists] influence mass consciousness is the extent of [writers’] decline as shapers of sensibility and thought” (157). This romantic conception of the terrorist essentially includes a sense of political awakening against the hegemonic and homogenizing forces in the economic and cultural spheres, which dates back to the Industrial Revolution (Lentricchia and McAuliffe 56). This ground shaking role of the romanticized terrorist once belonged to the modernist writer. This is why Bill refers to Samuel Beckett as the last writer to shape thoughts and visions of people. His role as a modernist writer was to shock readers in awe within the world of representation. Yet, the novelist of the postmodern times is unable to capture such awe and awakening since his art remains minor in comparison to dominant sensational narratives in media. Bill yields Beckett the praise and notes down what has replaced the modernist writer: “After him, the major work involves midair explosions and crumbled buildings. This is the new tragic narrative” (157). Modernism’s shocking narratives can only be replaced by the tragic

narrative of terrorism. Bill is in a nostalgic mode of thinking and is yearning for the times the writers had the potential to change history and for the times they were not “persecuted by the power structures” (Salvan par. 53). Charlie seems to show a kind of appreciation for Bill’s idealism, yet he frankly admits that his is an outmoded devotion:

“You have a twisted sense of the writer’s place in the society. You think the writer belongs at the far margin. . . . In Central America, writers carry guns. . . . Every government, every group that holds power should feel so threatened by writers that they hunt them down, everywhere.”

“I’ve done no dangerous things.”

“No. But you’ve lived out the vision anyway.” (97)

Bill wants to reclaim this ideal status of the writer against the terrorists in the zero-sum game. He is well aware that his passive resistance, that of isolation and resentment, won’t succeed and bring the writer’s prestige back. Bill’s acceptance of Charlie’s offer for the public reading of Jean-Claude Julien’s poems is an opportunity for him in the name of taking a stand against the hostage incident in Beirut. However, there still is a great gap between how Bill idealizes himself as a writer and his actual capabilities in the age of obsolescence. Charlie points at this gap produced by Bill’s false self-recognition: “You’re not the hermit, the woodsman-writer, you’re not the crank with a native vision. You’re the hunted man. You don’t write political novels or books steeped in history but you still feel the clamor at your back. This is the conflict Bill” (102). In fact, Charlie’s call to Bill for the public reading aims at a press appeal rather than targeting to make a political action. It is a strategy for Charlie to capture media interest and to appear as deeply concerned with the hostage in Beirut. He tells Bill of this hypocritical plan of public reading as a media event and evaluates the bomb threats of the terrorist group for the day of the event in the same parallel: “Your group [the reading group] gets press, their new group [terrorists] gets press, the young man [the hostage] is sprung up from his basement room, the journalists get a story, so what’s the harm?” (98). Apparently, Charlie is planning a win-win situation for the writer, terrorists, the media and the hostage at the same time. This is not of ingenuity but of sheer profit-oriented strategic action. And that Charlie is the chairman of a committee on free expression is highly ironic. Bill, as the writer of an age when moral agency is diminished, is in

an impasse; and his status as a figure of resistance is invalidated in comparison to that of the terrorist's. *Mao II* puts this question as follows: "how can a writer like Bill Gray . . . living in the elongated shadows of modernism, armed with democratic values and an aesthetic of critical distance and resistance, respond to the challenge of postmodern terrorism?" (Wilcox 95). The problematic is of how Bill should maintain a political action as a writer against terrorism at a time when the aesthetic of resistance is undermined.

Bill's attempt to reclaim the ideal status of the writer as a moral agent is directed against both Charlie's sheer motive of profiteering the situation (profit-oriented rationality) and terrorist totalitarianism. From press attention and celebrity culture he escapes to Beirut for his plan of exchange with the hostage; however, he is partly in despair for the success of his task. Bill's topographical move from New York to Beirut refers to a total transformation from being a celebrity in a culture of iconic imagery to an absolute state of the anonymous individual. In other words, it is a transformation from "iconicity" to "anonymity;" from the publicized individual figure in the West to the collective identity in the East (Green 594). Bill's untimely death on the ferry to Beirut, even much before he could reach Abu Rashid's gang to negotiate, and the removal of his passport and identification from his dead body by the cleaning crew on the ferry symbolically push Bill to perfect anonymity. In fact, by full recognition of the seriousness of what Bill is doing, Karen and Scott justify Bill's determined disappearance for his cause. They think of Bill's intentional escape into anonymity: "Whatever he's done, we have to understand it's something he was preparing for, something he's been carrying all these years" (222). Although his early death is, of course, not a part of his plan, it is a natural consequence or a symbolic complement of his wish to be exempt from the dominant relations of production and power. Hence, his uncared longing for death is what he deeply wished for: "He wanted devoutly to be forgotten" (216).

However, Bill's unsuccessful attempt to rescue the hostage and his longing to be forgotten within anonymity do not point at an escapism. Bill's self-determined move towards death at the end of the novel, or rather his successful failure, is the most concrete thing Bill does in the narrative. Although he isn't and would never be

able to rescue Jean-Claude Julien by himself, this remarkable attempt ending in death enables him to leave behind a definite code of morals and non-individuality back in New York. Therefore, his death affirms a definite move from the cultural paradigms of capitalist cultural sphere and a stand against the terrorist hostage-taking in Beirut at the same time. At this level, Bill's reference to Beckett as the last of his kind is once more justified because Bill at least tries to take action against what he can't resist by merely writing. This reference to the modernist aesthetics through Beckett is also a reaction against "postmodernism's alleged anti-foundationalism" and the "anything goes" ethics (Salván par. 59). In other words, Bill's allegedly modernist ethical stance is the disapproval of the writer's role configured for him in advance by the late capitalist culture industry. His defeat is an exposition of his political commitment against the writer's assumed handicap in comparison to the terrorist in postmodern condition. After Bill's death, Brita appears for the last time in Beirut in the last chapter. "She does not photograph writers anymore;" because it "stopped making sense" (229). To put it more clearly, Bill was the last moral agent/writer she could contact that resisted being numbed by the system. Hence finally, by his eventual attempt of leaving for Beirut, Bill gets one step closer to score against the terrorist in the zero-sum game.

Within the context of *Mao II*, the narrative use of terrorism is not concerned with the actual reasons of terrorist violence. That is to say, the novel does not deeply inquire the causes of the terrorist acts of the Maoist group in the civil war in Beirut. Instead, terrorism and the terrorist are utilized as narrative devices to posit arguments against the dominant political and cultural codes. And in DeLillo's novel, terrorism is cast in parallelism to the mass culture since terrorist acts of violence aim and form a type of mass communication. Terrorism is a "socially encoded public spectacle," and the predominant feature of the terrorist in literature is "his ability to produce discourse" (Hantke, "God Save," 226, 230). The dominant ideological aura and the shifts of political sensibilities between the Cold War and post-Cold War periods in America are inquired via this discourse of terrorism. Considering the fact that *Mao II* is a novel of the first years of post-Cold War America, it can be asserted that the binary opposition of freedom versus communist threat in Cold War period is

“transferred to an equally unquestioned opposition between democracy and terrorism” after the fall of Soviet communism (Baker par. 22).

Terrorist discourse, then, is employed in DeLillo’s novel both as a counterforce and as a tool to control the efficiency of liberal democracy. Baker further argues: “According to this logic, whatever injustices may exist in the liberal democratic system or in the relationship of liberal democracies to the rest of the world, this system represents an undeniable advance over previous and currently existing political systems based on terror, cruelty and coercion” (Baker par. 22). It is the first statement in Baker’s sentence that DeLillo seems to be concerned with in his novel. No matter how wishfully liberal democracy is taken for granted in America, it serves for the late capitalist logic of consumer society and extreme individualism; and the notion of democracy is faked within the sphere of culture to promote market forces and to produce mass society in *Mao II*.

Terrorists’ cause in Beirut is not a central theme in the novel. Nevertheless, it is the power of the terrorist as a source of counter-discourse that amplifies its significance. Through Bill, DeLillo displaces the actual role of the terrorist in the Lebanese civil war, rethinks its potentials and relocates it against the dominant cultural practices in the contemporary American society. Therefore, the contrast between the writer and the terrorist stems from DeLillo’s relocation of terrorism from its actual historical context in Beirut and re-channeling it as cultural resistance in America. Hantke notes down the communicative side and resistant force of terrorist acts in relation to cultural subordination:

Terrorist action synecdochally assaults a symbolic center of power, which itself must remain unassailable because it is “nothing but” an abstraction—the ruling elite, the political system, the repressive ideology, patriotism, Western civ, etc. Of course, it is another question entirely whether this strategy of synecdochal subversion makes much sense when it tries to confront Foucaultian “power relations.” What if there are no centers of power, what if power resided in the swift fluidity and contractual interplay of momentary, insignificant agents? Still, the success of terrorist violence seems to be proof that it participates effectively in social and political rituals to penetrate the “flow and exchange of valorized symbols” that is at the root of all culture practice. (“God Save,” 226)



DeLillo's envisaging the terrorist as a counter-discourse resisting cultural domination can also be explained with reference to the above quoted potentials of terrorism to produce a powerful reaction even against the decentralized power mechanisms. The disseminated practices of power and the Foucauldian power relations in the contemporary capitalist society can also be the target of terrorist discourse. Hence, how Bill idolizes the terrorist against the incorporated writer, co-opted within the disseminated power relations of the culture industry, should be evaluated within this context. Furthermore, the unbounded and irrational violence of the terrorist gives him pure force and makes him the producer of awe. As in *The Names*, terrorist violence is posited as resistance in *Mao II* through its unpredictability and irrationality: "Terrorist violence, through the irrationalism of the despair which is almost always at its root, refers back to the inert violence of the powers which invoke reason" (Bourdieu 20). The terrorist violence in *Mao II*, finally, can be regarded as the antidote to the over-rationalized action patterns of the economic and cultural sphere in contemporary America. In Habermas's terms, the terrorist discourse in DeLillo's narrative is configured as counterforce against the 'colonization of the lifeworld' and 'the cultural impoverishment of the public sphere' by purposive-rational action and systemic strategies.

To sum up, terrorism presents a type of political representation and circulation of meaning in *Mao II*. Terrorist acts generate a cultural economy of signs which is essentially related to the political imaginary of the society. In DeLillo's novel, terrorism, on the one hand, refers to an absolutism which requires a willing effacement of the self for a total devotion to the group. It posits self-determination as unconditional yielding to the collective identity of Abu Rashid's gang. With reference to the totalitarian motives of Abu Rashid, "the polyvalent, continual babble of American narrativizing is answered, shockingly, by the singular plot of terror, which seeks to deaden and silence multiplicity" (Walker 336). However, on the other hand, terrorism appears as the only force to oppose the dominant cultural mechanisms in *Mao II*. Thus, the writer, as an opposite figure to the terrorist, has got a double responsibility. Namely, the writer simultaneously "must resist the universalizing strategies of both American hegemony and terrorist absolutism, seeking instead a middle ground of possibility, openness, alternatives" (Walker 338).

Finally, as a producer of these political representations, terrorist discourse in *Mao II* is a prism which, first of all, reflects the production of mass society in America by showing the mass consciousness in Abu Rashid's Maoist group as a correspondence to it. Then secondly, it also reflects the devices that incorporate the writer and discloses the conspiracy of the cultural apparatus against writers and intellectuals. Media and the market are the perpetrators of this capitalist conspiracy. This may refer to the diminished power of ideological struggles and political resistance due to late capitalist co-optation strategies. To quote Jameson, "the media meets the market and joins hands upon the body of an older kind of intellectual culture" (*Postmodernism* 398). Thanks to the fact that the role of the intellectual resistance is once stripped down, Bill Gray and the Swiss hostage can be associated on the level of victimization and isolation: "To the small degree that he initially allows himself to be implicated in the plots revolving around the hostage, [Bill] himself becomes a victim just like the young Swiss, stripped of the carefully assembled defense of his individuality and exposed to the world of crowds and power" (Hantke, "God Save," 234). They are both victimized by ideological subordination; and while the Swiss poet is persecuted by the terrorists' absolutism, Bill is subdued by the capitalist conspiracy, which ironically does not lead to a different destination other than subjugation.

#### **4.2.2. Terrorists and Media**

In *Mao II*, capitalism's conspiratorial strategies and ideological maneuvers peak when they manage to incorporate terrorism, the only brute force of resistance. The system's strategy that undermines the ideological consistence of the terrorist group finds its way through the use of media in the novel. While the worldviews of terrorists are strictly opposed to Western values, morals and political-economy, they blindly and unconsciously happen to make a tactical contract with media, capitalism's unique tool. In Bill's words, the affinity between terrorists and media points at their "mutual interests" (98). Explaining the terrorist acts and tactics in their relation to media is among the accepted ways of evaluation in studies on terrorism. It also accounts for DeLillo's depiction of the symbiosis between media power and terrorist appeal for publicity:

Possibly the most accurate description of the relationship between the mass media and terrorists is that the media have come to constitute such a major portion of modern culture that most of today's terrorists have factored them into their tactics in one way or another. This incorporation creates the impression of a symbiosis: that terrorism requires the participation of the media, and that the media, in their turn, rely on terrorist acts to provide much of the sensationalism upon which the media thrive. (Biernatzki 21-22)

Terrorism is a subversive way of communication, yet it definitely aims at publicizing its message and depends on narrative. According to Anthony Kubiak, terror requires coherent and transparent narratives and aims to construct "a world that is fearful, uncertain and dangerous" through its narratives; and thereby, it is meant to be understood "by the 'readers' and voyeurs of terror's moment, not by its first-line victims" (Kubiak 298-300). The terrorists' natural inclination to use media in order to publicize their messages and amplify the effect of their narrative ends up in a paradox in *Mao II*. Terrorist acts end up in mimicking the code of symbolic exchange and the logic of equivalence inherent in the media. In other words, the dominant relations of production, determined by late capitalism and determining the postmodern cultural sphere, begin to encode and incorporate terror's narrative as a result of this symbiosis.

The most significant acts of terror in the novel to gain publicity are the bomb detonations and the hostage incident that "terrorize the innocent" (129). It is this imbalanced use of force on the defenseless that promotes the terrorist act as a narrative. Speaking on the bombing incident, Haddad tells Bill that "the more heartless they are, the better we see their rage;" and adds by reminding him a Nazi slogan: " 'The worse the better.' This is also the slogan of the Western media" (129-30). The mediatization of the public reading and the consequent bombings surely work for the advantage of the terrorists as they turn the reading incident into an opportunity for media coverage. "The media coverage of the reading may or may not help to win the poet's release," Keeseey notes, "but it will certainly publicize the terrorist group holding him, which would make Bill complicit along with the media in magnifying the importance of the terrorists and spreading their influence over the globe" (190). When focused on this specific case, the terrorists seem to be taking full advantage of media opportunities to publicize their cause. Yet, in the big picture,

they are already captured by the magic of image circulation and become tied to the logic of attaining the correct image. They are unknowingly haunted by image-oriented action. Jean-Claude hears the sound of the VCR in the room above his cell where the terrorists are watching the video footages of war they shot: “They wanted to see themselves in their scuffed khakis, the vivid streetwise troop, that’s us, firing nervous bursts at the militia down the block” (109-10). Terrorists’ appreciation of themselves and their actions are shaped by the mediatic look that preaches them to care for how they appear on the screen and what effect they will bring.

The shared credentials between media and terrorists verify that terrorists think and act within media scope. DeLillo is critical about their symbiosis and blatantly puts down their contractual relationship: “There were the camera-totters and the gun-wavers and Bill saw barely a glimmer of difference” (197). Both of them are after constructing their own narratives, which do not differ in complying with the necessities of the age to create sensationalism. Terrorism becomes a business in *Mao II* as it was in *The Names*. Furthermore, the motive that pushes Frank Volterra, the film-maker, to shoot a footage of the terrorist cult in *The Names* is correspondingly valid in *Mao II* for Brita when she arrives in Beirut to interview with Abu Rashid for a German magazine. Therefore, it would be meaningful to remember once more that Brita’s new profession is of photographing the terrorists, not the writers anymore. She stands at the intersection of this contract between media and terrorists.

A most significant and compelling moment of terrorist action is staged during the hostage-taking, which absolutely depends on media spectacle (Biernatzki 18). The dramatization of the hostage’s narrative and its media coverage are the sole factors as to how the terrorists utilize this incident as a business opportunity with media. Haddad, as an academic, clearly puts down this common interest between media and terrorists over the hostage and implies that Eastern terrorists mimic Western media: “Certainly they understand that this man’s release depends completely on the coverage. His freedom is tied to the public announcement of his freedom. . . . This is one of many things Beirut has learned from the West” (129). DeLillo’s terrorists are envisaged in “a canny adaptive response to the Western regime of image proliferation, sign exchange, and spectacle,” and the hostage-taking

has been adjusted to “the dehumanized regime of sign value, where the code of general equivalence triumphs” (Wilcox 90, 95). This adaptive response of terrorists’ to the requirements of media becomes an incorporation of terrorists into the dominant system by business contract.

Rashid draws an arrogant picture of himself and poses as a devout opponent of Western ethics. Yet, ironically, the self-esteemed and consistent image he puts on is addressed to the camera of Brita’s crew. He regards hostage-taking as solid reaction against Western values. Rashid tells Brita: “I will tell you why we put westerners in locked room. So we don’t have to look at them. They remind us the way we tried to mimic the West. The way we put up the pretense, the terrible veneer” (235). Rashid’s is a desperate cry to refrain from the capitalist code of general equivalence and sign exchange on media. However, terrorist business is essentially inseparable from media in DeLillo’s world of image saturation, and Rashid’s gang eventually surrenders to the code of general equivalence of images and goods in their treatment of the hostage. When asked by Brita about what they did to the hostage, Rashid’s confession implies this surrender to the code: “Sometimes we do business the old way. You sell this, you trade that. Always there are deals in the works. So with hostages. Like drugs, like weapons, like jewelry, like a Rolex or a BMW. We sold him to the fundamentalists” (235). Thus, the business of terrorism turns the sign-value of the hostage into exchange-value, which discloses the inherent dictates of Western capitalism within the motives of the terrorist group, let alone the free-circulation of the hostage/commodity that changes hands in the terrorist market between Maoists and fundamentalists.

In a similar way, Bill’s offer to Haddad about his substitution for Jean-Claude hints at the same logic of equivalence. Haddad is sure what would happen to Bill if he manages to replace Jean-Claude to free him: “Gain the maximum attention. Then probably kill you ten minutes later. Then photograph your corpse and keep the picture handy for the time when it can be used most effectively” (164). Haddad ominously augurs the circulation of the image of the dead writer as an empty referent in the flow of media narratives. Without an original, the image of Bill, after his

death, would be a part of the media storage of equivalent images. Furthermore, Bill asks Haddad:

“And what happens if I get on a plane right now and go home?”

“They kill the hostage.”

“And photograph *his* corpse.”

“It’s better than nothing,” George said. (164)

In either way, the hostage is cast into the rule of the exchangeability of the empty signifier within the code of general equivalence. Therefore, the terrorists’ taking advantage of Western media is more of a surrendering to the rationality of capitalism rather than a mere utilization of media to construct a narrative. This is the point where true conspiracy happens, and the regime of capitalist ethos haunts the terrorists’ ideological difference and incorporates them.

Within the given context of the free-circulation of images independent from their original source, the use of the terrorist figure in DeLillo’s fiction gives an idea about the nature of political representation and resistance in a time of image-oriented discourses or texts. As previously put, the death of the novel and revolution are the one and the same thing in the mass culture produced by electronic media (Scanlan 156). The terrorist’s discursive politics and the resistant force he represents in the world of fiction fail to evade from the political-economy of the world of simulacra:

While the majority of contemporary conspiracy fiction has successfully avoided the convenient retreat into simply glorifying the terrorist as an icon of transgression and has confronted its readers with the troubling consequences that lie in the direction of making him out to be a modern day Robin Hood or dark Byronic hero, it appears to me that, instead, it has begun to glorify the act of transgression itself. . . . Still, they [postmodern novelists] need to persist in reminding the reader that, in an age of postmodern simulacra, the arena of political conflict is predominantly textual. (Hantke, “God Save,” 239)

The textually conducted politics is, then, absolutely open for the thought of conspiracy because textuality, image-based politics and the world of simulation are totally vulnerable for secret manipulation. They bring political thinking into a play of conspiracy since they breed an overwhelming sense of insecurity. And even the terrorist discourse of political resistance is downplayed or robbed off of its gravity. The following questions Kellner asks about the conflicts of political representation in

an age of simulacra actually evoke the sense of conspiratorial thought, which also incorporates terrorism into the logic of false spectacle:

Is George W. Bush a real president, or is he just acting out the sound bites fed him by his handlers, performing a scripted daily political act that he does not fully understand? Are the frequent warnings of terrorist attacks genuine, or just a ploy to keep the public on edge to accept more reactionary, rightwing law-and-order politics? Is the terrorist threat as dire as the US Department of Homeland Security claims or is it hyping threats to raise its budgets and power? In an era of simulation, it is impossible to answer these questions clearly as we do not have access to the “real.” (*Media 22*)

Essentially, in both cases of hegemonic forces and resistant actors, ideological struggle is persecuted through the rationale of the image-proliferation and media coverage in *Mao II*. The conspiracy of the post-industrial relations of production against the public of civil society is perpetrated via cultural forms, most significantly through image production and media narratives. Along with conspiring against the public by transforming it into crowds, the network culture in DeLillo's fiction also uses strategies to block potential resistant actors in society. The writer figure, Bill Gray, is co-opted within the power mechanisms of publishing industry and cast into infirmity in terms of political resistance. Furthermore, the terrorist figure, who has been known to outlive the writer in its resistant vigor, is seen to be vacuumed within mass media's rationality of general equivalence and the logic of sensationalism. Therefore, finally, the capitalist conspiracy is pictured as victorious by DeLillo, firstly, in determining a marginal space for resistance within the system, and then in normalizing the resistant acts within the system rationality by obliging them to conform to the dominant cultural codes.

**CHAPTER 5**  
***UNDERWORLD: AMERICAN PARANOIA,***  
**TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS AND SECRECY**

A critical analysis of Don DeLillo's representation of power structures in American society in the late twentieth century is impossible without looking into *Underworld* (1997), a masterpiece of 827 pages. As it can be deduced from the volume of the novel, *Underworld* offers a sweeping panorama of American cultural and political history. In its bulky narration of recent history, the reader comes across the official and unofficial accounts of political and cultural atmosphere of the United States between the 1950s and 1990s. DeLillo's novel is then a challenge for the reader who tries to build up a complete picture of the decades of turmoil in American history out of given non-chronological narrative fragments. However, this challenge yields successful results since the novel, in its grandiose task, accomplishes to designate an American perception through local, national and international incidents. Namely, the novel's main theme is Cold War and its contributions to self-apprehension of Americans via both personal and national histories.

The narrative schema of *Underworld* is initiated by the legendary Dodgers-Giants 1951 playoff game. Giants won the game due to the baseball batted out of the pitch and got lost. The ball's secret chain of possession runs through the narrative's fragments of different time segments and keeps the non-chronological sequence of narration intact. The baseball links its previous owners to Nick Shay who is the baseball's current owner and the protagonist. The novel comprises following parts: Prologue: The Triumph of Death, Part 1- Long Tall Sally (Spring-Summer 1992), Manx Martin 1, Part 2- Elegy for the Left Hand Alone (Mid-1980s – Early 1990s), Part 3- The Cloud of Unknowing (Spring 1978), Manx Martin 2, Part 4- Cocksucker Blues (Summer 1974), Part 5- Better Things for Better Living Through Chemistry (Selected Fragments Public and Private in the 1950s and 1960s), Manx Martin 3, Part 6- Arrangement in Gray and Black (Fall 1951 – Summer 1952), Epilogue: Das



Kapital. Thus, except for the prologue and the epilogue, the novel consists of six main parts and three additional sub-chapters titled Manx Martin.

The Prologue of the novel originally appeared in the *Harper's Magazine* as a separate long story in 1992 under the name "Pafko at the Wall." It was later embodied in the novel in 1997 with slight modifications. The Prologue, which actually dates back to 1951, is the story of the unforgettable baseball game at the Polo Grounds and Bobby Thomson's pennant winning home run known as 'the shot heard round the world.' And the Epilogue pertains to a final account of some major characters' stories in the 1990s. The originality of the narrative schemata comes from the fact that all the main parts follow a backwards sequence of about forty years between the prologue and the epilogue. In other words, the novel moves backwards except for the prologue and the epilogue. However, the three Manx Martin chapters, situated between the divisions of major sections, move forward while the other parts move backward. These three chapters are mainly concerned with a black American suburban family, Manx Martin and his son Cotter. After Cotter Martin's grasp of the legendary ball following Thomson's shot at the Polo Grounds is narrated at the prologue, the Manx Martin chapters provide an intermittent but linear stream of accounts of Manx's attempts to convince his son to sell the ball for a good price and his accomplishment to do so.

This story-line, which is related to the ball's chain of possession and the ball's own history of changing hands, is stretched over the entire novel. Therefore, the account of the baseball's historical motion among its different owners creates an organic connection among various characters and subsequently adds up to the big picture of paranoid interrelations in the novel. Put in that way, the pursuit of the baseball has a technical contribution to the chronological narrative construction. Furthermore, it intensifies the lurking sense of paranoia in the novel with reference to various deep rooted connections which is peculiar to the decades of the Cold War. Thus, even developing from the structural schemata, *Underworld* is an overarching narrative of about four decades labeled with cultural and political paranoia, sense of instability and insecurity, and anxieties of nuclear dangers, which are recurrently stressed in various parts of the novel with the phrase 'everything is connected.'

The representation of the American Cold War scene in *Underworld* is essentially an inquiry on the ways of power and the entanglements within power networks. Over the forty-year time span, the evolution and increasing ramifications of power and the consequent anxieties are represented through myriads of sub-plots, over countless characters and minor figures in the novel. In that sense, *Underworld* is comprehensive of and complementary to *The Names* and *Mao II* in the representations of secret machineries of power and ideology with a touch of the hectic postwar years. Furthermore, the use of popular histories, personal accounts of nationally significant incidents, depiction of collective fears and hopes, and the representation of politically central figures together with the infringed ones bring about a peculiar sway and dynamism in the apprehension of political and cultural aura in the novel.

*Underworld's* main premise as to political representation and power lies in its use of Cold War paranoia and conspiratorial thinking as its interpretive framework for social and cultural criticism. Cultural paranoia and conspiratorial thought provide main critical perspectives and display an American type of paranoia for the apprehension of power and resistance in the postwar scene. Conspiratorial maneuvers of thought, paranoia and late capitalist machinations of power are conflated in *Underworld*. The concept of secrecy is dominant in the representation of ideological practices of power and resistance. Secrecy, as a controlling category of thought and practice, works on a number of levels in the narrative, ranging from fear of secret forces to exposing conspiracies, from identity formation to consumption, and from industrial enterprise to art and etc. That is to say, secrecy flourishes within the political culture and the cultural climate of the novel's time span. It thrives as the dominant mode of power conduct and resistance formation within the given context.

In a 1997 interview, DeLillo comments to Eichlin that the title 'underworld' is connotative of a number of 'unders' that refer to different strata of secrecy. As it will also be discussed in the following sections, DeLillo's 'under-grounds' refer to a range of secret domains and practices such as repressed memories, (informal) underhistory of Cold War, underground burial of toxic waste, secret treaties between corporations in weapon industry and subterranean sites of underground resistance

("Baseball," 146). Therefore, all the matters of secrecy and the issues pertaining to various underworlds in DeLillo's work are subjects of power politics and they should be evaluated with reference to the dual context of Cold War paranoia and of late capitalism. Along with a number of examples, the significance of the concept of secrecy is also put forward by Nick Shay's remark on a Latin-rooted word, *dietrology*, which highlights the narrative's strategy of representing Cold War and post-Cold War politics of power and serves as a controlling idea:

"There's a word in Italian. *Dietrologia*. It means the science of what is behind something. A suspicious event. The science of what is behind an event."

...

"The science of dark forces. Evidently they feel this science is legitimate enough to require a name." (280)

Thereby DeLillo's narrative legitimizes his handling of power struggles within secret machinations and with reference to diverse underworlds.

### **5.1. SHIFTING OF POWER BALANCES FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE POST-COLD WAR ERA**

The greatest advantage of DeLillo's peculiar chronological arrangement is that it traces down the continuities and discontinuities of major issues between different time sections. As various developmental phases of the characters are exposed throughout different decades, the personal histories reveal the gradual development of their characteristics, memories and status. For instance, the protagonist Nick Shay and his brother Matt Shay are first revealed through their juvenile experiences in Bronx, and later through their adulthood, in which their family relations and corporate careers come to the fore. Similarly, within the context of American cultural history, some main themes persistently reign throughout the whole Cold War period. For instance, the never-ceasing continuity of nuclear threat from the Soviets is the major concern throughout the whole six parts of the novel. The narrative continuities between both major themes and individual details shed light upon the general relation of continuity between the whole postwar period and the post-Cold War years of the early 1990s. Thus, in general, *Underworld* mainly reflects the historical shift in the characteristics of the age-old political conceptions

and cultural politics, triggered by the fall of the USSR. Therefore, the concept of paranoia, issues of power, and social instabilities represented in *Underworld* should be traced down within relations of continuity and discontinuity between the colossal years of Cold War experience and the nascent conflictual post-Cold War years.

### **5.1.1. From Secure to Insecure Paranoia**

The Cold War paranoia solidly exists in *Underworld* specifically through the fear of a nuclear war with the Soviet Union. The anxiety of a nuclear threat is the determinant feeling throughout the Cold War period and it is a narrative thread which binds almost all the sections of the novel together. The bomb, then, is like the legendary baseball and likewise functions as an objective correlative. As an object of fear, it intersects with the cross-sections of various people's lives and accumulates people's feelings about the Cold War from different social strata. The Cold War paranoia is, therefore, identified and solidified with the nuclear bomb as the subject of catastrophe. Thus, though Red scare or the fear of insurgent communist groups at work is present in the novel for historical verisimilitude, the nuclear threat is remarkably at the center of attention. Hence, the fear of the atomic bomb "organizes cognitive and perceptual structures in people along paranoiac lines" (Mattessich par. 35).

The prologue offers quite an important way to introduce the paranoid tone of the novel and to set up the whole psychological and ideological background of the period. It concerns the Dodgers-Giants playoff, which is a great incident within the history of popular culture. The game on October 3, 1951 ends with the victory of the Giants who won the pennant with a ninth-inning, two-out, three-run home run. This historical baseball game represents something more than just a sports game and the crowd's collective energy for entertainment. Inasmuch as baseball is an American labeled sport, so is the paranoid atmosphere a truly American reality in the postwar years. The date of the game is also significant for the postwar history because it is the same date the Soviets detonated an atomic bomb in a test site in Kazakhstan, which was within the Russian borders at the time. The detonation incident marks a peak in the nuclear armament rivalry between the United States and USSR, and a solid rise in the tension of the psychological war. Thereby, Bobby Thomson's legendary pennant

winning shot to Ralph Branca's home run pitch runs parallel with the Russian shot of the atomic bomb. These historically overlapping incidents provide "a moment of origin" for both the baseball history and the history of the Cold War (Duvall, *Don DeLillo's* 29). The public restlessness and how it is discharged in a time of crisis is of concern for the prologue considering the playoff game. The narrator of the prologue brings recognition to the spectators' escapism and need for the release of postwar tension: "You can't call it cheering or rooting. It's a territorial roar, the claim of the ego that separates the crowd from other entities, from political rallies or prison riots – everything outset the walls" (37).

However, the political tension dominant in the period is not ultimately isolated from the stadium. Most interestingly, DeLillo's insertion of actual historical figures of the fifties within the prologue contributes to the game's originality and helps the reader see it through the eyes of cultural icons from the world of politics, entertainment and comedy. Edgar J. Hoover, Frank Sinatra and Jackie Gleason are pictured as watching the game together with Toots Shor, a famous New York barman. The comic effects created by their daily manners and jokes to each other and their unique coincidental presence at the game vivify the cultural significance of the incident. Yet, in fact, the presence of Hoover, the chief and the first director of FBI, outshines those of Sinatra and Gleason and introduces a paranoid perspective within the occasion. As DeLillo remarks in his interview with Howard, these four figures were actually together at the match, more or less accidentally; and DeLillo admits his utilizing this coincidence as a creative fictional move: "So once I found out that Hoover had been at the game, it struck me with the force of revelation, because it meant that I had someone in the Polo Grounds who was intimately connected to what had happened in Kazakhstan. And I was able to blend these two events naturally and seamlessly" ("American Strangeness," 122).

After the prologue, contrary to Sinatra, Gleason and Shor, Edgar Hoover appears several times in the novel. Hoover is the true voice of state politics and the representative of state authority working to maintain the social unity against the communist threat. In addition, his full awareness of the bomb and his paranoid features of thinking about it grant him to be the undervoice or the unconscious of

both the people at the game and the entire nation. He is mostly seen to be uninterested and distracted in the game due to his obsessive fixation on the bomb after hearing about the Russian detonation in Kazakhstan. As Hoover is at the stands watching the craze of the audience during the game, a left-hand page of a magazine happens to brush his face and capture his attention. It is a reproduction of the painting called *The Triumph of Death* by the sixteenth-century Flemish painter, Pieter Brueghel. It pictures a catastrophic scene from the medieval times and is outstanding for the horror it creates out of the depiction of a hellish gathering of the dead, plagued and corrupted figures enmeshed in perversely positioned details of skeletons, hell hounds, and rotting bodies. The first thing that comes to Hoover's mind is that "The dead have come to take the living," (49) since his mind is already busy with the threat of the Soviet bomb; and the anticipated consequences of a nuclear war would be no different from the scene in Brueghel's painting. Hoover conflates the disastrous painting of the Flemish painter and the catastrophic outcomes of the bomb in his mind. A sudden flash of this horrific image helps associate the baseball crowd in the stadium with Brueghel's apocalyptic depiction of mass death, due to the true paranoia of the bomb. In fact, in Part 5, it is revealed that Hoover is still keeping postcards, posters and other reproductions of Brueghel's painting in storage in 1966, fifteen years after he sees it for the first time, which gives a clue about how the age's anxieties find recourse in his personal obsessions.

It won't be wrong to say that Hoover's anxieties are also shared in a deeper level with the public and the crowds at the stadium. About three decades later than this historical game, in Part 2, Marvin Lundy, who is a famous collector of baseball memorabilia and a very close colleague of Nick Shay, speculates to Brian Glassic about the twenty thousand empty seats at the stands during the game. So many empty seats sound really unusual for the most significant happening of baseball history, and Marvin has an answer to that keeping in mind the Russian explosion of the bomb at that date: "Because certain events have a quality of unconscious fear. I believe in my heart that people sensed some catastrophe in the air. Not who would win or lose the game. Some awful force that would obliterate – what's the word?" (171). Therefore, Hoover's fears and state of mind can be generalized over the public emotions of the time.

Hoover's obsession for hygiene is focused in several occasions in the prologue. Especially his fear of germs and microbes is a marker of his characteristics and a biographically verifiable fact. His fear of "unseeable life-forms," which can also be associated with the fear of hidden insurgents and communists at the period, makes him hold his breath and face away while Jackie Gleason is talking to him at the game (18). Also, his installment of an air-filtrating system to vaporize dust and other life forms sets an analogical association between his personal containment from microbes and the age's ideology of containment from communism. According to Duvall, Hoover, as the actual FBI director of the time, functions like an "auteur of Cold War paranoia, transforming his personal pathology into a feature of American national identity" (*Don DeLillo's* 42). In Part 5, Edgar Hoover and his personal assistant Clyde Tolson appear in Truman Capote's famous *Black and White Ball*. His obsessive portrait in the prologue is complemented by his pathological will for power. His anomaly in obsessively keeping dossiers and files about the photographs, surveillance reports, linked names and transcribed tapes of his enemies-for-life hints about his will to power and the relation of his personal weaknesses to the collective psychology of the period:

In the endless mingling of paranoia and control, the dossier was an essential device. . . . The file was everything, the life nothing. And this was the essence of Edgar's revenge. He arranged the lives of his enemies, their conversations, their relationships, their very memories, and he made these people answerable to the details of his creation. (559)

Especially in Hoover's relation to his personal aide Clyde can be found an opportunity of comparison to reveal his paranoid character. Clyde is a source of balance and check to moderate Edgar's paranoid decision making. Essentially, their relation is mentioned as follows in the novel: "Where the current of one's [Clyde's] need for control met the tide of one's [Hoover's] paranoia, this was where the dossier was reciprocally satisfying. You fed both forces in a single stroke" (559). It can be deduced that the Cold War state politics consists of a mixture of extreme control and unpredictable paranoid ebbs and flows. The state power owes its strength to the oxymoronic unity of these two contrasting concepts, of which Hoover is an essential part. Hoover's paranoia is an indicator of the uncontrollable and suppressive force of the state and it indicates the ideology of containment. Hoover's person is inextricably

merged with the politics of the Federal Bureau via his personal pathology: “Clyde believed this, that Edgar had earned his monocratic power through the days and nights of his self-denial, the rejection of unacceptable impulses. . . . Every official secret in the Bureau had its bloodbirth in Edgar’s own soul” (573). Therefore, Hoover stands for “an apt figure for DeLillo’s consideration of proto-fascist impulses in American culture” (Duvall, *Don DeLillo’s* 34).

After penetrating into the governmental paranoia via Hoover’s administration, *Underworld* depicts various other zones of social imagination where Cold War paranoia thrives. There are two more significant figures in *Underworld* that intensify the paranoid effect. These two novel characters are Lenny Bruce and Sister Edgar. Lenny Bruce is the cynical comedian and the heroin-addicted king of sarcasm in the 1950s and 1960s. He is a figure that feeds popular imagination and the chief reliever of anxieties through comedy. However, his stand-up shows also have a reverse effect of reading the underflow tensions of people; and hence, these comedy shows do not just function as occasions for temporary escape from the nuclear fears but as the medium to express the intense public concern about the conflicts of the Cold War.

One strain of Bruce’s jokes provide comic effect such as making fun of the names of the US leaders, caricaturing Mormons or satirizing middle class manners. Yet, the other strain of his jokes is from the political agenda and directly reflects paranoid manners of the people haunted by postwar insecurity. Cuban Missile crisis, Vietnam or the pending nuclear apocalypse are the main concerns of his political jokes. His sick comic touch on the issues of national urgency not only trigger “the release of underground words and tensions;” (506) but also expose his audience to a deep dread of the postwar realities. His recurrent utterance of the statement “We are all gonna die” in all his performances bear both the comic relieving effect and the actual paranoid sense of irritation in people. To exemplify the tone of expression in his jokes addressing the popular imagination, his comic story on the precautions of the Office of Civil Defense against an immediate nuclear attack is outstanding. Bruce tells:

They’re in a frenzy right now man. Get those shelters built and stocked. Sanitation kits, medical kits. Phenorbital, to sedate you. Penicillin, I don’t



know, for bomb rash. When the radiation makes you too sick to vomit, they hand out rubber vomit, for morale. After the mass destruction of a nuclear exchange . . . they're gonna wanna rebuild. And all this cold war junk is gonna be worth plenty, as quant memorabilia. (593)

Along with what he represents and what he stimulates on the stage, he is also a figure of conflict off the stage as the subject of paranoid speculations considering his death. Bruce dies of morphine intake of a serious amount. But the news and rumors about the cause of death inevitably passes through the paranoid axis of reasoning. The news finds recourse in conspiracy hearsay. People believe that "Lenny's been killed by shadowy forces in the government;" however, Clyde regards as normal the abounding conspiracy talk of his death since he "could smell the decade's paranoid breath" as an anticipated case (575). The important thing is that the state's paranoid attitude for national defense gives birth to people's paranoia of being silenced by the state. No matter how true or false, the popular belief in the assassination of a public figure like Bruce voices public's fear of intolerant power use by the state to back off any attempt against the state's unquestionable authority.

The other figure that portrays the national experience of paranoia is Sister Edgar, the Catholic nun from the South Bronx, specifically from the district known as the Wall. She is notoriously known in the Catholic school for her keenness on discipline and the terror she spread out among the children. She was a former teacher of Matt Shay back in the 1950s and she worked at the same public school with Albert Bronzini, Matt Shay's former chess tutor. Her presence covers a long time span - since 1950s till the current day - and hence she is a peculiar eye-witness for Cold War experience in the novel. She and the other nuns in the convent try to help and take care of the homeless in the early 1990s in the derelicts of Bronx, the real underworld, in cooperation with Ishmael Munoz, aka the Moonman 157, a homosexual underground graffiti artist. Sister Edgar represents the religious nature of paranoia. She voices the essentially sublime core common both in the Catholic surrender to God and in the paranoid dread for an oncoming nuclear apocalypse. In her apparent wish for strictness, control and her compulsions about nuclear paranoia, she is beyond being namesakes with Edgar Hoover. They actually share common characteristic features. At the very end of the novel, the two "fellow celibate figures"

are hyperlinked on the internet as two kindred spirits, the Brother and Sister Edgars, of the Cold War (826).

Sister Edgar's obsession with hygiene, the latex gloves tucked in her belt and the Reynolds Wrap lining the walls of her room against nuclear fallout all resemble Hoover's pathologic fastidiousness. Her fear of viral diseases and germs conflates with postwar attitudes of containment from inner or outer-directed dangers. Her fussy manners in detecting any kind of threat peculiarly push her Catholic creed of alertness against eternal damnation towards alertness against earth-born apocalypse. For instance, she sees no inaccuracy in associating the initials of AIDS with KGB and she is sure that the Soviets are indulged in a biological attack:

Here in the Wall many people believed the government was spreading the virus, our government. Edgar knew better. The KGB was behind this particular piece of disinformation. And the KGB was responsible for the disease itself, a product of germ warfare – making it, spreading it through the networks of paid agents. (243-44)

Sister Edgar represents religious fear, the conservative cynicism against “the array of systems that displaces religious faith with paranoia;” and against the displacement of Catholic awe with secular “fear, distrust and unreason” (241). That is, she is an eye-witness of the shift from the religious faith of ontological security to the mundane faith in the reality of insecurity: “The faith of suspicion and unreality. The faith that replaces God with radioactivity, the power of alpha particles and the all-knowing systems that shape them, the endless fitted links” (251). In fact, both types of fear are taken in the form of religiosity and are intermingled in the person of Sister Edgar, which truly makes her a “cold war nun” (245). Moreover, she is a contributor to this religious postwar fear by her teaching profession. She memorizes and wants to recite the poem “The Raven” by her namesake poet, Edgar Allen Poe, in her classes: “The sixth grade was hers and she wanted to scare the kids a little” (775). Her initial aim in reciting a classical piece by a master of horror and mystery narratives to her students is to introduce the feeling of terror in complicity with the dominant paranoia of the age, whereby she acts as a perpetrator of a culture of fear.

In addition to these three significant figures, there are countless instances of paranoid assumptions and conspiracy thinking that reflects the concerns of people

from various social strata. Everybody has his share of popular signification processes in a time of havoc and chaos. There are various occasions of the internalization of paranoia and plentiful conspiracy theories, changing color and tone depending on who is speculating. The Black street preacher in the Manx Martin 2 section tells Manx Martin that the government is building bomb shelters under the city for twenty-five thousand people. Yet, for him, these shelters are being built just for white people. Or in another instance, the preacher talks about the Masonic codes, secret messages and the meaning of the pyramid on the American dollar bill. Likewise, Eric Deming is another paranoid figure obsessed with connections going around him and with theory of games and patterns of conflict: “He was surrounded by enemies. Not enemies but connections, a network of things and people. Not people exactly but figures – things and figures and levels of knowledge that he was completely helpless to enter” (421). He speaks to Janet, Matt Shay’s girlfriend, of rumors about the telepathists, clairvoyants and psychic commandoes located in a facility in the Mexican border jamming computer networks and doing secret plans to defy the enemy. And inevitably he says that “the Russians were thought to be well ahead of us in this endeavor;” reflecting the paranoia of being swallowed up by the enemy (452).

Matt Shay, an engineer working as a designer of security systems for the weapon industry, is mostly distant to Eric Deming’s rumors on various subjects and finds them mostly illogical. No matter how devoted he is to sound reasoning as a man of numbers, Matt Shay’s military experience as a Vietnam veteran of air force and his current career in the government on nuclear weapon technology are essentially inseparable from the paranoid mechanisms of thought for the time. In Part 4, Matt’s memories reveal that he was deeply entangled within the sweeping wave of paranoia when he was on his mission in Vietnam. His painstaking duty in a hut working the dots on the rolls of films to pinpoint any lost detail and to make out information pushed him hard. In a way, he was on the verge of losing the border between precise knowledge and mere assumptions: “When he found a dot on the film he tried to make a determination. It was a truck or a truck stop or a tunnel entrance or a gun emplacement or a family grilling burgers at a picnic” (463). Moreover, his memories of being exposed to rumors of a series of other secret wars fought in Laos

and Cambodia, due to president Nixon's secret bombings, brought up a peak of confusion and insecurity for him. Shortly, his memories of paranoia falsify his current status as a mentally-sound and discerning man:

He remembered how he'd felt sitting in a chair at the bombhead party, locked in a gravitational field, his head buzzing with suspicion. He thought of the photograph of Nixon and wondered if the state had taken on the paranoia of the individual or was it the other way around. He remembered how he felt cranking the film across the light box and wondering where the dots connected. Because everything connects in the end, or only seems to, or seems to only because it does. (465)

Reconsidering all his Vietnam experiences, Matt Shay at times rearranges his distance to Eric's paranoid set of connections and hearsay. On hearing rumors from Eric about plutonium injected people and radioactive experiments on infants, Matt feels challenged to contemplate about whether they are probable or not: "Matt didn't know how he felt. But he didn't think the story was completely far-fetched. He'd served in Vietnam, after all, where everything he'd ever disbelieved or failed to imagine turned out, in the end, to be true" (418). Thus, a partial justification for people's paranoia and popular rumor mechanisms in postwar times is present in the novel through Matt's personal perspective.

All in all, Nick Shay's connections to his personal past are also inevitably of paranoid nature as a consequence of the psychic aura he has grown up in. Though totally not cut off from the reality principle, Nick is partially self-delusional due to the sudden disappearance of his father, James Costanza, when he was a child. Out for buying a pack of cigarettes, the father never comes back at all, which is not only an occasion to cope with emotionally but also a case of mystery for Nick to search and reveal. He always presumes that something uncanny lies in his father's vanishing, like a kidnap or a secret plot, yet he can only consider it without any solid evidence. Nick's imagination is highly vivid, namely conspiracy-ridden, regarding the possible explanations of the incident. Depending on the cigarette's brand name his father smokes, he conjures up theories. He associates the brand's logo with a target and improvises:

I call the Lucky Strike a target because I believe they were waiting for my father when he went out to buy a pack of cigarettes and they took him and put him in a car and drove him somewhere near the bay . . . and then they gave it to him good, the projectile entering the back of the head and making a pathway to the brain. And, besides, if it's not a target, why did they name the brand Lucky Strike? True, there's a gold-rush connotation. . . . It is also a penetrating hit from a weapon. And isn't there a connection between the name of the brand and the design of concentric circles on the package? This implies they were thinking target all along. (90)

All the above stated examples are related to public postwar anxieties, whether pathological or normal. They help reveal the psycho-political function of paranoia and how it is diffused to form an entire nation's state of being. As it is seen, Cold War paranoia and anxieties function as the great coalescing force for national unity. They interpellate individuals and the masses through an ideology of fear. Corey Robin's term 'galvanizing fear' meets the dynamics of building a national solidarity out of a shared fear, as it is depicted in the novel. Similarly, Peter Knight posits that DeLillo uses paranoia "as a source of stability;" and that he utilizes "characterization of nuclear fear as paradoxically a form of security" and as a "psychic strategy for maintaining a stable sense of identity, whether on the individual or the national level" ("Everything," 817). More specifically, people's paranoia is a catalyst, a tool of power, in the hands of the state for administration and identity building.

However, paranoid thinking is a two-sided concept. Just as it can be used to forge a sense of national identity and as a tool of hegemony in *Underworld*, it is also a source of subversive power for the popular mind. The historical periods inscribed with paranoia breed paranoid conspiracy theories which supply resentment against the hegemonic forces. Paranoid dynamics can be utilized as a political counterforce to subvert the normalizing ideology. In a way, conspiracy theories are "resistant readings," (Fenster 223) or a semiotic resistance against the dominant forces of suppression. However, conspiracy theories' resistance potential "is limited to interpretation and narrative" (Fenster 141). Likewise, in *Underworld*, paranoia and conspiracy theories abound in number and variety. But, their function of resistance can hardly be compared to the actual historical civil rights movements, anti-war demonstrations, rallies or local resistance practices depicted in the novel from the

1960s onwards. Therefore, the resistance functions of conspiracy theories should be separated from socially grounded resistance movements, which will be further concerned in the following sections of this chapter.

Nevertheless, Cold War paranoia and relevant conspiracy theories serve for another significant end. Instead of supplying a sound social resistance formation, they work to express an ‘agency panic’ or the suppression of individual freedom. They are helpful for the diagnosis of the popular apprehension of the shifting power politics throughout the Cold War. Especially, the repression of the individual and the consequent cease of the public reach for political decision making are the true sources for the production of these conspiracy theories. Conspiratorial thinking gets on the postwar stage in *Underworld* as “an effect of the dissolution of social recognition, an attempt to compensate for the repression of sociability” (Featherstone 31). The variety of paranoid thought and its diverse paths of linking incompatible details represent people’s desire to regain the handle of issues in DeLillo’s novel. It is a form of popular ‘cognitive mapping,’ in Jameson’s words, that supplies a comprehension of power structures, and a facility for people to re-situate their individuality in a time of great insecurities bred by international conflicts.

Secrecy, parallel to paranoia, emerges as a complementary category in DeLillo’s novel that also enlightens Cold War issues of cultural logic and power. Secrecy is a concept that embodies both the national and the personal secrets in the novel. The first thing it connotes is the secret postwar history and secret state policies. Directly related to this, secondly, are the secrets and rumors about the nuclear bomb:

What secret history are they writing? There is the secret of the bomb and there are the secrets that the bomb inspires, things even the Director [Hoover] cannot guess – a man whose own sequestered heart holds every festering secret in the Western world – because these plots are only now evolving. This is what he knows, that the genius of the bomb is printed not only in its physics of particles and rays but in the occasion it creates for new secrets. (51)

In fact, the secret danger of the bomb gives the necessary pretext for the government to take the grip of control and legitimize its oppression. And according to Stefan

Mattessich, the presence of the bomb threat supplies “the secret or unnamable principle of social domination” which is constantly stressed by Lenny Bruce’s catchphrase ‘We’re all gonna die’ (par. 43). Briefly, the paranoia spread among people by the assumptions that there are some lingering secrets on air becomes the secret principle of domination itself.

About the representation of the link between power and secrecy in *Underworld*, it can be posited that power is intensified and dispersed when it is silent and hidden. This idea is especially underlined in the chapters where Sister Edgar aspires about the association between the religious appreciation of God’s secret power and the power of postwar secrets. Part 3 is entitled “The Cloud of Unknowing,” named after the book of an anonymous mystic, which Sister Edgar refers to as a piece of significant religious writing. The book muses on God’s power in withholding his being from his creatures and this evokes special reverence in Sister Edgar for the Creator’s power of unpresent omnipresence: “This is what I respected about God. He keeps his secret. . . . *The Cloud* tells us this. And so I learned to respect the power of secrets. We approach God through his unmadness. . . . We don’t know him. We don’t affirm him. Instead we cherish his negation” (295). Edgar’s reverence for God’s withheld presence is the same for *Underworld*’s representation of the overarching power of secrets. In other words, secrecy in *Underworld* has an amplificatory effect on the use of power. “Power hides, or works best when it doesn’t know itself, beneath the thresholds of visibility and legibility;” which proves valid for all hidden systems of power and secrets depicted in the entire novel (Mattessich par. 15).

Secrets are also a part of Nick’s private history. Actually, these secrets have the constant control on his psychology. His personal secrets have a grasp on the process of his maturation and identity formation. Apart from the loss of his father, his accidental killing of a friend, George Manza, haunts him from his youth to his middle-ages. In DeLillo’s long narrative, this incident, which happens in 1950s, is revealed in its detail towards the end sections of the novel since it follows up a reverse chronology. Nick’s desperation and delusion, which originally stems from a loss of the father figure, is doubled by his murder of a friend due to an accidental

explosion of a shotgun. This secret signifies for Nick a memory which is suppressed once and for all.

Moreover, Nick has further secrets as to his past. He had an illegitimate affair with Klara Sax, who was Albert Bronzini's wife at the time. Nick's very years of adolescence are composed of incidents to be kept hidden. Part 6, telling of 1950s, narrates this illicit relationship between them. In this same chapter, it is also seen that Nick has clung on to secrets as a personal game and as a tool of claiming a hold on to the world. Talking about the famous Dodgers-Giants game, Nick tells Klara a personal secret:

"You know why I smoke Old Gods? I wouldn't tell this to just anybody."

"Bullshit. Why?" she said.

"That's the cigarette that used to sponsor the Dodgers on the radio. Old God. We're tobacco men, not medicine men. The Dodgers were my team. Were. Not anymore."

"This is a big privileged secret you're telling me."

"That's right. Now you have to tell me one of your secrets. Could be big, could be small." (751)

Despite Klara's explicit irony in pretending to take Nick's confession as an important secret, this exchange of secrets is significant for Nick who had a problematic boyhood. In the end, the age's breath of paranoia, obsession with hidden meanings and secret principle of power label his adolescence in the form of keeping secrets.

Basically, DeLillo's cogitation on the use of secrecy signifies a function similar to the use of paranoia as a resistant reading. That is, all the postwar secrets refer to a series of drawbacks and they point at different domains such as psychological repression, the cultural logic of domination and the undemocratic procedures throughout the Cold War. Secrecy, as opposed to publicity, is the zone of the ominous; and hence, the urge to expose it means raising voice for democracy. "The secret," according to Jodi Dean, "promises that a democratic public is within reach;" and he adds that "secrecy generates the very sense of a public that it presupposes" (52). Therefore, various characters' indulgence in a collective endeavor to go after some secrets, both on the personal or on the national level, is a positive sign of a leap for a public reasoning during the times of chaos and oppression. The public sphere in *Underworld* abounds in such examples of people yearning for the



exposure of secret systems of power. Thus, in DeLillo's novel, this "belief in exposure marks the fundamental fantasy of publicity as a system of distrust;" and under these circumstances, conspiracy thinking "literalizes the claims of publicity" (Dean 53).

Dedicated to the exposure of secrets, there is another true paranoid figure in *Underworld*, Marvin Lundy, the baseball memorabilist. He has devoted his life to trace the history of the home run ball back to the day of the game. Despite all his pursuit, his quest back in the history of the ball for its first owner leaves a missing chain, and he cannot reach the name Cotter Martin. Marvin is the person that sells the ball to Nick Shay. In addition, he accomplishes further narrative functions as for the use of secrecy. He is doomed in his mind to produce sick theories, which have an expressive power to depict people's desperate situation of loss of explanation for changing power structures. His conspiracy theories function as attempts for cognitive mapping and represent the urge to reveal secret machinations of power. Actually, he is a fictional device, more or less, to summarize and theorize all the popular ways of utilizing conspiracy theories exemplified heretofore. The motive behind his concerns with conspiracy thinking is expressed as follows in the novel: "And what's the point of waking up in the morning if you don't try to match the enormity of the known forces in the world with something powerful in your own life?" (323). The need to penetrate the knowledge of enormous powers pushes the paranoid instincts in him. In Part 2, covering the late 1980s and early 1990s, Marvin speaks out his paranoid anxieties about the last phase of the Cold War period. For instance, according to Marvin, Gorbachev's birthmark on the head is the exact shape of the map of Latvia, which signifies an important consequence in the world politics: "Marvin saw the first sign of the total collapse of the Soviet System. Stamped on the man's head. The map of Latvia" (173). Moreover, he is suspicious that the birthmark keeps changing shapes, which could further signify ongoing evils from the Soviets. Marvin ardently argues:

I think if I had a sensitive government job I would be photographing Gorbachev from outer space every minute of the day that he's not wearing a hat to check the shape of the birthmark if it's changing.

Because it's Latvia right now. But it could be Siberia in the morning, where they're emptying out their jails. (181)

Marvin has got a peculiar hold on reality. He is an ardent collector not merely of things from baseball history, but of infinite information and photographs. His house has become a "booby hatch of looming images" (177). Comparison needed, if Edgar Hoover's obsession for files and dossiers expose the authoritarian use of paranoia for power, security and containment, Marvin Lundy's keeping of memorabilia, endless popular data and photographs is the public counterpart of state paranoia, which presents a popular claim for a right to know the ongoing affairs. His thoughts on the increasing visual technologies and photographs hold a mirror to his conspiratorial perspectives related to revealing out the hidden meanings in life: "This is what technology does. It peels back the shadows and redeems the dazed and rambling past. It makes reality come true" (177). Within the principle of the camera, the image is composed of infinite dots, and photography is the mastery of these dots. Resembling Matt Shay's mission in Vietnam, Marvin is devoted to what lies beneath the surfacing picture: "Reality doesn't happen until you analyze the dots" (182).

Marvin thinks that the biggest secrets are right in front of people's eyes as well as the starkest realities. So, he attempts to see the dots and reshape them within the great photograph of the Cold War in order to reach new information. Marvin has great suspicions about Greenland this time. In 1978, he is seen to figure out that Greenland changes location and size when compared in any two different maps. Moreover, it is possible for him that Greenland is a great cover for any kind of nuclear secrets or tests. He goes on his course of reasoning:

First, does it exist? Second, why does it keep changing its size and its location? Third, why can't we find anyone who's personally been there? Fourth, didn't a B-52 crash about ten years ago that the fact were so hush-hush we still don't know for sure if there were nuclear weapons aboard? (316)

Finally, his leaps between associations, various syntheses of uncountable details within his systematic thought are an attempt to inscribe the paranoid underhistory of Cold War, which is meant to serve as a compensation for the missing official explanations with unofficial ones. In short, Marvin and the other paranoid characters'

wish to expose various secrets allude to the “fissures between the official policies and hidden agendas,” which declares that “the postwar experience was characterized by an awareness of America's political unconscious appearing in disorienting proximity with its official policies” (Nel 731).

Within the postwar conditions, Marvin’s strain of assumptions, like any other conspiracy theory, “desperately attempts to stop the sign’s semiosis, and fetishizes individual signs” (Fenster 80). Thus, at first sight, his pseudo-theories do not seem significant except for being another jumble of thoughts in the heap of conspiracy theories. Erroneous though they may seem, his speculations and conspiracy chatter signify the presence of another fact in DeLillo’s novel. Rather than precisely claiming a truth value, Marvin’s theories assert the unstable and precarious nature of power in the late postwar period. They do not refer to an individual’s yearning to reach exactitude of political comprehension. But they stem from the shift from more definite and clearly defined lines of power balance to indefinite and undeterminable structures of power in the passage from Cold War years to the post-Cold War years. In the passage from the late Cold War to early post-Cold War times, Marvin’s presumptions are valuable so far as they point at a fracture in the monolithic power structures between states, which augur insecure and uncertain patterns of operation. The fall of the Soviet communism is the marker of this passage from secure and estimable lines of rivalry and power balances to indeterminable networks of power. Speaking of the end of postwar years in Part 2, Marvin underlines that the clearly delineated securities are gone, meaning that Cold War presented a kind of balance between USA and USSR, and that the end of it is a harbinger of a severe power imbalance. Marvin tells Brian Glassic:

You need the leaders of both sides to keep the cold war going. It’s the one constant thing. It’s honest, it’s dependable. Because when the tension and rivalry come to an end, that’s when your worst nightmares begin. All the power and intimidation of the state will seep out of your personal bloodstream. You will no longer be the main – what do I want to say? (170)

The power balance found within the estimable exchange of moves between the two states provided a peculiar sense of security in Cold War. Marvin says: “The cold war is your friend. You need it to stay on top” (170). The ‘Us and Them’ binary

between America and Russia paradoxically hints at a hidden harmony. And so it is put down in the Prologue: “Us and Them, how many bundled links do we find in the neural labyrinth? It’s not enough to hate your enemy. You have to understand how the two of you bring each other to deep completion” (51). Therefore, Marvin’s paranoid utterances, like Eric Deming’s rumors before him, also stand for the passage into a new type of paranoia. Peter Knight’s term ‘insecure paranoia,’ which he has coined to refer to the bifurcating and ramifying networks of power from the 1960s onwards, finds a recourse in *Underworld* within the shift from the Cold War politics to the post-Cold War politics of power. For Knight, *Underworld*

is both a product of and a creative response to the New World Order of connectedness that has reshaped the history of the last half-century. Its mutation of the rigid grammar of conspiracy theory into a decentered circuit of interplotted relationships moves beyond a simple shift from secure to insecure paranoia. (“Everything,” 832)

In addition to Marvin Lundy, Klara Sax also passes through a personal incomprehension and panic after the shatter of the secure paranoia by the end of the Cold War. She is the ex-wife of Albert Bronzini and one-time lovers with Nick Shay when Nick was seventeen. Klara is an artist, a painter of decommissioned aircrafts from World War II. In Part 1, Nick pays a visit to her work-site in the desert; and Klara, now in middle-ages, is portrayed in a state of confusion after the end of the Cold War, asking questions to Nick Shay resembling those of Marvin’s: “We’re painting these old planes as a celebration in a way but how do we know for sure the crisis is really over? Is the breakup of the USSR really happening? Or is the whole thing a plot to trick the West?” (81). Through Klara’s appearance in Part 1, dated 1992, DeLillo muses on the culmination of the insecurities of the New World Order and takes it as the turn of age for an insecure paranoia. Just as Bill Gray in *Mao II*, Klara Sax is in a nostalgic mode of yearning for the old secure type of paranoia and clearly delineated power structures:

Now that power is in shatters or tatters and now that those Soviet borders don’t even exist in the same way, I think we understand, we look back, we see ourselves more clearly, and them as well. Power meant something thirty, forty years ago. It was stable, it was a tangible thing. It was greatness, danger, terror, all those things. And it held us together, the

Soviets and us. Maybe it held the world together. . . . It's gone, good riddance. But the fact is. (76)

In *Underworld*, referring to the Foucauldian terminology, power is represented in its capillaries. Once the balance between the two super states is diminished, power creates endless paths. The new momentum of power to proceed in divergent patterns is the true source for the insecure paranoia in the passage to the New World Order. This is blatantly put down by Klara:

Many things that were anchored to the balance of power and the balance of terror seem to be undone, unstuck. Things have no limits now. Money has no limits. I don't understand money anymore, Money is undone. Violence is undone, violence is easier now, it's uprooted, out of control, it has no measure anymore, it has no level of values. (76)

This stress on the end of limits for the most significant markers of power, such as money and violence, means the change of power structures into more complex and unpredictable lines. In relation to this, lines of paranoia would undergo a similar process. Therefore, in general, *Underworld* "tunes in to the transition in American paranoia over the last four decades from an inflexible and monolithic belief structure in a personalized cabal, to a contradictory, ironic, and self-reflexive appropriation of the language of conspiracy theory as a populist way of making sense of larger social and political changes" (Knight, "Everything," 822).

Postwar paranoia is gradually transformed into the paranoia of capitalism in *Underworld*. In fact, the line of social and cultural transformation beginning from the 1960s had the roots of this shift from the postwar anxieties to the anxieties of the oncoming rise in capitalist power and its fluidity. Clyde, Hoover's personal aide, had the sense of this transformation. And perhaps he is the most agile figure depicted in *Underworld* at the time. In Part 5, during Truman Capote's Black and White Ball in 1966, Clyde feels a great transformation is underway:

There was self-conscious sense of some profound moment in the making. A dreadful prospect Clyde thought because it suggested a continuation of the Kennedy years. In which well-founded categories began to seem irrelevant. In which a certain fluid movement became possible. (571)

More specifically, *Underworld* represents how already-materialized mechanisms of capitalist power in Cold War forcefully surfaces by the end of it. “The Cold War,” Duvall suggests, “effectively masked the political economy but in its aftermath, nothing covers over the rapaciousness of multinational capital” (*Don DeLillo’s* 23).

The peak of global capitalism and its multinational networks by the 1980s and 1990s replaced Cold War as a source of insecurity. The postwar chaos and the secrets that dwarf the individual are complemented by the flourishing of the capital networks in DeLillo’s novel. Consequently, “the secret economic function of capitalism that belies democratic institutions” goes ahead of the oppression of the public by postwar paranoia (Osteen 148). Anti-democratic paradigm in postwar times is substituted and enhanced by the undemocratic institutions of late capitalism in *Underworld*. That is to say, DeLillo’s chief task in his novel is to represent the construction of undemocratic government in the Cold War and portray “the subsequent transition into neoliberal geopolitics” (Mattessich par. 14). In the novel’s epilogue, meaningfully titled “Das Kapital,” the global situation of new insecurities, the organs of multinational capital and their undemocratic executions, are explained by Nick Shay as follows:

Capital burns off the nuance in a culture. Foreign investment, global markets, corporate acquisitions, the flow of information through transnational media, the attenuating influence of money that’s electronic and sex that’s cyberspaced, untouched money and computer-safe sex, the convergence of consumer desire – not that people want the same things, necessarily, but that they want the same range of things. (785)

Hence, the function of paranoia and conspiracy theories conveyed so far should also be evaluated as efforts to survive in the passage to the insecure habitat of the New World Order. The tragic “falling apart of effective agencies of collective action,” for Zygmunt Bauman, is “a side-effect of the fluidity of the liquid modernity and evasive power” (*Liquid Modernity* 14). Furthermore, devoid of the necessary means of cognitive mapping, people see a right in taking refuge under conspiracy theories to delve into multinational capital networks. The impenetrability of the secret systems of global capitalism necessitates a conspiratorial perspective, as the only handy way of a shout for democratic participation. Fredric Jameson, in his

famous essay “Cognitive Mapping,” relates the increasing tendency for conspiracy theories to the unrepresentability of the complex-patterned power of late capitalism:

The project of cognitive mapping obviously stands or falls with the conception of some (unrepresentable, imaginary) global social totality that was to have been mapped. . . . Conspiracy, one is tempted to say, is the poor person’s cognitive mapping in the postmodern age; it is a degraded figure of the total logic of late capital, a desperate attempt to represent the latter’s system. (“Cognitive,” 356)

In this given context, *Underworld* portrays the post-industrial society as the new insecure habitat where power is nourished by the disintegration of rigid systems and where “the sense of displacement and redefinition” is the outstanding feature (786). In the Epilogue, the general portrait of late twentieth century America is drawn from Nick Shay’s eyes as such:

Some things fade and wane, states disintegrate, assembly lines shorten their runs and interact with line in other countries. This is what desire seems to demand. A method of production that will custom-cater to cultural and personal needs, not to cold war ideologies of massive uniformity. And the system pretends to go along, to become more supple and resourceful, less dependent on rigid categories. But even as desire tends to specialize, going silky and intimate, the force of converging markets produces and instantaneous capital that shoots across horizons at the speed of light. (785-86)

Nick Shay’s remarks touch upon the power of global markets, the pumped up force of consumerism in the national markets and their eventual relatedness. So, there is a certain corporate aspect providing the sense of uncanny in *Underworld*. The waste management industry and weapon technologies more specifically provide the corporate view in this equation, through the waste manager Nick Shay and nuclear weapon systems engineer Matt Shay. In other words, the corporations that play on great technological facilities within waste and weapon industries and their institutional networks contribute to the conspiratorial aspect of the novel. In an extended reach, *Underworld* is concerned with the conspiratorial nature of industrial and capitalist networks in the late twentieth century, complementary to *The Names*. In this respect, DeLillo tells Gerald Howard: “The paranoia in *Libra* flows from unknowable plots being worked out in hidden corners. In *Underworld* it comes from the huge overarching presence of highly complex and interconnected technological

systems” (“American Strangeness,” 124). This is going to be inquired in depth in the following sections of the chapter.

Finally, nuclear anxieties and the undemocratic conditions that enhance the sense of insecurity have continuity from the Cold War times to the post-Cold War times. The sweeping tone of paranoia dominant in both of these consecutive periods constructs individual and national identities. Therefore, conspiracy theory “has reflected the changes within global politics that the US has undergone since the end of the Cold War” and gave way to “the creation, consolidation, and reaffirmation of an identity” (Hantke, “God Save,” 221). Within the representation of the last 40 years of American society and culture, DeLillo’s novel offers a certain perception of identity construction. Compatible to the direction of the changes in social and cultural politics within the years of concern, *Underworld* puts forward a similar course for the motives of identity formation. Within this course of change, identity formations that originate from postwar paranoia seem to pass through the latent capitalist political economy of the late Cold War years, which is inquired under the next subtitle.

### **5.1.2. From Authentic to Artificial Identity Formation**

There is a certain narrative thread running throughout the novel that defines the shift in the formation of identities. The primary poles that determine identity construction are the authentic and the artificial. The authentic, meaning the original and genuine, provides a centripetal force as a cultural assembler that magnetizes a mass of people as an identity former while the artificial, referring to the remade and reproduced, has a centrifugal force that disseminate outwards within networks in the making of identities. The authentic supplies an appearance for the earlier mechanisms of cultural domination whereas the artificial belongs to the late capitalist mode of cultural hegemony. In *Underworld*, the former corresponds to baseball while the latter is met with electronic media technologies.

Like the mass audience in the baseball stadium in *Mao II*’s prologue, *Underworld* too fascinates with the idea of a crowd’s craze. In both novels, baseball firstly materializes the channeling of crowd’s energies into a popular and apolitical



event. In a way, baseball is a political social incident so far as it consumes public's creativity and political participation. It appears as a way of cultural domination. However, on the other hand, there is a specific democratic meaning to it as it can be reutilized by the popular culture to subvert its function as a tool of homogenizing the public. Karen's regard of baseball as a 'democratic clamor' in *Mao II* is further portrayed in *Underworld* through popular processes of signification. Therefore, baseball consists of both hegemonic and democratic processes depending on the meanings attributed to it and its utilization procedures.

Within the postwar context, baseball is the object of galvanizing fear. It is the primary source of identity accompanying the fear of secret Soviet threats. As a national catalyst, the 'Us and Them' binary between America and the Soviet Russia finds reflection in baseball through the Dodgers and Giants rivalry. In *Underworld*, the representation of baseball as a softener of postwar paranoia enhances its role of serving cultural imperialism. Concerning this function of baseball within the postwar frame, John N. Duvall feels necessary to go through the journalistic accounts of the game's representation in the print media of the times, in his article "Baseball as Aesthetic Ideology" which he wrote after the publication of DeLillo's "Pafko at the Wall" in 1992. He states:

The print media representing the interests of the middle class published articles on baseball that imply the following three interrelated points: 1) baseball is why we defeated Germany and Japan; 2) baseball is a justified form of cultural imperialism since the game embodies our democratic principles; thus, 3) baseball should be mobilized in the Cold War effort to help define America's difference from communism and the Soviet Union. (288)

The game's public appreciation as a marker of difference from totalitarian regimes, in fact, makes it a device of cultural unifier usable for the cultural logic of postwar domination. The chief function of baseball becomes persecuting domination. In other words, for Duvall, "baseball as an aesthetic of ideology [participates] in masking the hidden costs of America's Cold War victory" and it is the chief contributor in the novel to the consumer culture that tend to overwhelm political and economic matters by aesthetics (*Don DeLillo's* 29-31). In a sense, it goes by a complementary function to the fascistic power politics of the postwar period in

softening and veiling the gravity of political issues with the politics of aestheticization. Especially, the covering up of such a crucial incident as Russia's nuclear bomb detonation by the play-offs at the same date exemplifies the political function of the game. Finally, within this very American game lies a "totally unproblematized presentation of cultural imperialism" which hides its procedures by "[giving them] a cultural-aesthetic form that is American and democratic" (Duvall, "Baseball," 290).

Baseball has a purging effect for the people who suffered the repressive politics of the 1950s. It is a perpetrator of conformism for people and turns them into lonely but joyful crowd. The more people get to compensate their anxieties with sports talk and indulge in affairs of popular culture, the deeper they are grinded by power structures. Umberto Eco regards sports chatter as "calculated waste" and argues that it becomes a ritual where "intellectual energies are exercised and neutralized" and that thereby it is "a parody of political talk" by its futility and infertility ("Sports," 160, 163). In the context of *Underworld*, the apparent masking of the postwar political fears with baseball as recreation provides an easy passage to the capitalist economy of consumption. According to Eco, "sports chatter is the glorification of Waste, and therefore the maximum point of Consumption" ("Sports," 165). More clearly, it is a model or a drill for the economic model of the 1950s that prioritized the intensification of domestic consumption. In line with Eco, Lefebvre also underlines the excessive recreational imaginary and its relation to masking the capitalist political economy. According to him, in the twentieth century, "capitalist economy has apparently taken the form of a 'pleasure economy' " which he regards as "organized waste" that "conceals the economy of power" in "a form of mystification" (*Critique* 38). Baseball, therefore, signifies the individualist and capitalist ethos that climbs up by the 1950s in America. In DeLillo's representation, it aestheticizes and mystifies the dominant political economy and pacifies the lonely crowds of the postwar times.

Yet, in its dual function, baseball also gives DeLillo a chance to represent its power for democratic expression. Baseball is represented within the postwar context as a unique assertion for a public voice. It is an authentic source for identity

formation in the novel. Each audience is aware that there is history in-the-making at the time of the game and it creates a connectedness among them. According to Russ Hodges, the narrator of the game at the Polo Grounds, the game creates another current in the Cold War history with its originality:

Russ thinks this is another kind of history. He thinks they will carry something out of here that joins them all in a rare way. . . . Isn't it possible that this midcentury moment enters the skin more lastingly than the vast shaping strategies of eminent leaders, generals steely in their sunglasses. . . . Russ wants to believe a thing like this keeps us safe in some undetermined way. . . This is the people's history. (59-60)

Russ Hodges himself contributes to the aura of the game with his narration. His voice becomes an inseparable part of the event and intensifies its originality. Furthermore, he is still in a deep shock about the grandeur of the event in cultural history. After the game, his dialogue with his producer, Al Edelstein, exposes his feelings about being in a unique moment: "I'll tell you one thing for certain, old pal. We'll never forget today." (54).

The game is represented as an assertion against the manipulating force of the power block in the Cold War. The masses eye-witnessing such a distinctive moment in postwar history indirectly demonstrate a collective resentment against the hegemonic block in domination. People had the urge that their presence is felt through this popular event. Thomson's home-run shot is people's silent shot back to the Cold War administration: "This is the nature of Thomson's homer. It makes people want to be in the streets, joined with others, telling others what happened, those few who haven't heard – comparing faces and states of mind" (47).

Baseball is represented as a democratic element since it creates fissures within the paranoid intolerability of the power regime and paves way to an exchange of ideas and opinions among the public. In Part 1, looking back from 1992 to 1950s, Brian Glassic re-evaluates the mission that the game fulfilled. He compares it to another big shot in the American cultural and political history. He tries to focus on what Thomson's homer meant in 1950s by contrasting it to Kennedy assassination:

Glassic said, "When JFK was shot, people went inside. We watched TV in dark rooms and talked on the phone with friends and relatives. We

were all separate and alone. But when Thomson hit the homer, people rushed outside. People wanted to be together. Maybe it was the last time people spontaneously went out of their houses for something. Some wonder, some amazement. Like a footnote to the end of the war. I don't know." (94)

Marvin Lundy, in Part 2, similarly comments on the air of repression in the 1950s and on the collective motives of the people in believing in the power of the final playoff game. Marvin summarizes the unconscious fear of people at the times. He tells Brian, "You have to understand that all through the nineteen-fifties people stayed indoors. We only went outside to drive our cars;" and adds, "In other words there was a hidden mentality of let's stay at home. Because a threat was hanging in the air" (172). With his peculiar reasoning and inclination to expose connections among things, Marvin assumes awareness in people at the time about the relation between the nuclear detonation in Kazakhstan and the playoff game:

Not the day before or the day after. Because this was an all-or-nothing game between the two hated rivals of the city. People had a premonition that this game was related to something much bigger. They had the mental process of do I want to go out and be in a big crowd, which if something awful happens is the worst place to be, or should I stay home with my family and my brand new TV, which common sense says yes, in a cabinet with maple veneer. (172)

Along with telling about the logic of domination and the conditions of repression in the 1950s, Marvin implies that the Dodgers-Giants game was a challenge for the people to take the risk and go out in order to be a part of the most significant popular event not only of the year but also of all times. In fact, people did so to assert their identity and evade the overwhelming fear. They replied to the call of the game. Thus, Marvin's theory that the atomic shot is in a way related to Thomson's homer shot proves to be "unaprovably true" for Brian and it is "not completely unhistorical, not without some nuance of authentic inner narrative" (172). In order to underline the authenticity of the game and its connectedness to nuclear detonation, Marvin dwells on the possibility of a hidden connection in his peculiar style: "Marvin said, 'Which the whole thing is interesting because when they make an atomic bomb, listen to this, they make the radioactive core the exact same size as a baseball' " (172). Finally, either in Marvin's theories or in its cultural role as a way

of democratic call against the Cold War paranoia and repression, the baseball is a unique force due to a centripetal power of identity-making.

Marvin further doubles upon Russ Hodge's judgment that baseball is people's history. Yielding the home-run ball an authenticity as a baseball memorabilist, he values the ball as a relic of popular history. He briefly puts it: "This is history, backpage. From back to front. Happy, tragic, desperate" (174). He is a collector of objects with historic value, out of which he tries to re-write the history connected to that object. That is why Marvin is after the lineage of the ball for the past twenty-two years. Yet, looking back at the history of the ball, he sees Charlie (Chuckie) Wainwright Jr. at the root of the lineage. He is ardently looking for him in order to learn how his father got the ball. Actually, the missing link is the original owner of the ball in the first couple of hours just after the shot. Marvin can never establish the last link to complete his investigation. Hence, his relation to the baseball is in parallel to his perspective as a conspiracy theorist: "The attempt to reassemble a crucial moment in time out of patches and adumbrations – Marvin in his darkroom borrowing a powerful theme and using it to locate a small white innocent object bouncing around a ballpark" (181). In his search for it, Marvin is both after the secret history of the ball and he also uses the baseball as an authentic identity marker to affirm his own individuality just as he does with all of his other sets of collections.

The concept of the authentic, materialized in the legendary homer ball and other memorabilia in Marvin's collection, enhances the idea of nostalgia in *Underworld*. Nostalgia is one of the chief tools in the narrative to look back in the mid-century and the ideological tools of power at work. According to Duvall, "*Underworld* evokes American nostalgia about baseball and the early 1950s in order to critique both, and it is this critical evocation of nostalgia that allows the novel to double as a commentary on post-Cold War American life and the ways it is implicated in authoritarian – indeed almost proto-fascist – urges" (*Don DeLillo's* 31). In the narrative's comings and goings between the past and the present, the main tool is the baseball which provides "pornography of nostalgia" (320). To sum up, the baseball is the prime nourisher of the sense of nostalgia and the galvanizer of identities. And Marvin is taking full advantage of it for his imagination:

The ball brought no luck, good or bad. It was an object passing through. But it inspired people to tell him things, to entrust family secrets and unbreathable personal takes, emit heartfelt sobs onto his shoulder. Because they knew he was their what, their medium of release. Their stories would be exalted, absorbed by something larger, the long arching journey of the baseball itself and his own cockeyed march through the decades. (318)

Similar to Marvin's case, the baseball is also significant for Nick's sense of identity. However, his link with the baseball's history, as its current owner, passes through a reverse emotional connection, different from Marvin Lundy. Nick has a negative identification with the baseball due to the fact that it represents loss and bad luck for him. Nick Shay and his colleagues, Brian Glassic and Simeon Biggs (aka Big Sims), have an arranged meeting for an interview with Jane Farish, a BBC producer who wants to make a program about the salt domes Nick's company was testing for the storage of nuclear waste. In the middle of it, Brian insists that Nick should tell Sims about his possession of the ball. Though Nick hesitates to make it known at first, he tells his development of a negative emotional connection to the ball as part of his personal past: "Well I didn't buy the object for the glory and drama attached to it. It's not about Thomson hitting the homer. It's about Branca making the pitch. It's all about losing" (97). Nick associates the ball with great losses in his life. His loss of the father and the accidental murder he committed are all what he psychologically links the ball with. The ball points at a traumatized personal history for Nick, and he has the ball "to commemorate failure" (97). Therefore, the baseball evokes a reversed sense of nostalgia in the case of Nick to keep the pain of his personal failures alive.

Moreover, the tone of nostalgia in *Underworld* is not a personal mode of thinking for DeLillo himself. DeLillo admits Maria Moss in an interview that he himself does not feel nostalgic about baseball: "There's nothing to feel nostalgic for. The game is still being played" ("Writing," 160). Yet, he obviously asserts that the significance of the game has changed over time, meaning that it doesn't signify the same things for people culturally as it did in the 1950s. Baseball has become an inevitable component of the pleasure economy and offers a new paradigm as an

identity marker in the late twentieth century. In the same interview, DeLillo compares the past and the present of the game to reveal the new paradigm:

It is interesting to compare crucial home runs these days with Bobby Thomson's. By midnight of the first day, you will have seen videotaped replays of important home runs about 82 times. Then they start using the videotaped replays in commercials. . . . The Bobby Thomson home run, in comparison, was hard to locate. It's just old newsreel film, and it wasn't shown very frequently at all. That's the difference. ("Writing," 160)

The fact about the game is that it has lost its authenticity over time, as it has become endlessly reproduced in the media. It has lost its aura and thereby lost its power of constructing identities, compared to the context of the 1950s. Representing DeLillo's ideas, Brian Glassic tells Jane Farish that Big Sims is the only one among them who still loves the game:

Glassic turned to the Englishwoman. "I go to ball games when I go at all for the sake of keeping up. It's a fall from grace if you don't keep up. Nick has fallen from grace. Only Sims is completely, miserably in touch. We had the real Dodgers and Giants. Now we have the holograms." (95)

These people are still tied to the game not for its popular consumption as sheer entertainment, but miserably tied to an authentic memory of origin associated with the game. The sense of irony follows from the idea that though they know the game lost essence due to the reproduction processes of the media, they still try to cling to it in order to protect their memories of it.

There is a sharp contrast between baseball's role as an authentic identity marker and electronic media's excessive use of reproduction. In the Prologue, there is the minor story of a man on 12th Street in Brooklyn, who impulsively attaches a tape machine to his radio in order to capture Russ Hodge's broadcast of the game. This is said to be the only recording of the game and Hodge's famous broadcast. Over the forty years after the game, this gesture of carrying an event in the personal history to a future moment through replication has turned out to be a gesture for media industries. Essentially, Thomson homer is a legend and it still "continues to live because it happened decades ago when things were not replayed" (98). If the Dodgers-Giants game stands at one pole in *Underworld*, the other pole corresponds

to the endless replays in media whose effects on mass identity and popular culture cannot be underestimated. The latter pole is exemplified with two significant pieces of video in the novel, the Zapruder tape, a home video of the Kennedy assassination, and the home movie of Texas Highway Killer, a coincidental footage of Richard Henry Gilkes killing a driver on the highway shot by a little girl. These two footages pose the cultural hallmarks of the rising media technologies in the novel, in the 1960s and the 1980s respectively. They both run continuously throughout the novel in different chapters.

The continual replay of these two videos of violence mark significant paradigm leaps in the American cultural history. First of all, they bring forth a serious sense of desensitization in public against violence. As for the Zapruder film, the infinite replays of the Kennedy assassination almost legitimize the murder by the overexposed details of the case constantly in the loop: “here comes the car, here comes the shot, and it was amazing that there were forces in the culture that could outimagine them, make their druggiest terrors seem futile and cheap” (495). It is a matter of determining and shaping the public perception of events, which require no less brute force than the act of violence itself. On seeing the Zapruder tape again and again, Klara Sax wonders “if this movie was some crude living likeness of the mind’s own technology, the sort of death plot that runs in the mind” (496). The technology of the reproduced images dominates the individual mind’s way of perceiving and processing the incidents. They have a homogenizing force and manipulating power over cultural phenomena and public.

Thus, secondly, as it was argued in the context of *Mao II*, the private self yields to the articulating force of the public imagination that perceives the infinitely reproduced videos. In other words: “The space of the private self is increasingly shaped and determined by the anonymous ‘public’ imagery of the mass media” (Green 576). These images cause a problematical development of the relationship between the private and the public, for they impose the public image of the act of violence on individuals and dictate a definite type of perception of the image. The technologically reproduced footages begin to make more sense than the actual events. The force of the authentic, embodied in baseball, which is able to raise a



public voice, is diminished due to a standardization of emotions through the screen. Analogically, the ideology of containment in the Cold War finds recourse in the cultural politics of media technologies since the screen acts as a tool of containing the individual and confining him in front of the TV set. In consequence, there follows a diminished sense of democratic culture since democratic expression “has succumbed to . . . public opinion or tv echolalia” (Mattessich par. 6). The passage from the authentic to the reproduced, thus, follows the change from the originally produced identities to mass identities; in a sense, from a democratic sense of participation to a loss of individual expression.

Visual technologies have developed in the American cultural history in accordance with the ethos of capitalism throughout the late twentieth century. Image addiction weakens the memory, pushes the reproduced incident into timelessness and turns them into commodities. DeLillo opines on the inseparability of the two in his talk with Moss and especially underlines the effacement of the sense of historicity: “Maybe an obliteration of memory has set in. . . . I think all these repetitions create a warped consumerism. After a while you feel you’re consumer buying violent images” (“Writing,” 161). As also explained in the case of the repetitious disaster footages described in *Mao II*, the original incidents are pushed into a zone of timelessness, undermining the perception of historicity in *Underworld*. In Fredric Jameson’s perspective, the lessened sense of time undercut by postmodernity serves for the benefit of capitalism to assert its imperatives. Consumption appears as a substitute model of identity formation where historicity declines to be a source of authenticity and identity.

To sum up, baseball is progressively distanced from its originality as an authentic source of identity in 1950s. Its potential to construct an American identity in the times of postwar anxiety is transferred into capitalism’s use of baseball as a great industry of creating mass identities. In addition, the media itself is the perpetrator of forging popular identities through replication. Media’s use of baseball, according to Duvall, is an example of the cultural politics of capitalism which accomplishes a “decentralized totalitarianism” (“Baseball,” 286). Thus, baseball’s potential as a popular event to mobilize popular procedures of identification and

media's capacity to disseminate the politics of homogenization conflate in *Underworld*.

### 5.1.3. From Domestic Consumption to an Economy of Excess

As discussed previously, paranoid Cold War tension veiled the capitalist political economy. The paranoid state of anxiety overwhelming the era's collective psyche has been gradually directed to an economy of consumption as a substitute. After its mission as a galvanizer of a national identity, fear is also constitutive of a selfhood that is compatible with the rising domestic economy based on consumption habits. This is the other repressive side of postwar fears and instabilities. Corey Robin asserts: "The state changes the calculus of individual action, making fear seem the better instrument of selfhood. The emblematic gesture of the fearful is thus not flight but exchange, its metaphorical backdrop not the rack but the market" (Robin 50). This underlying shift from paranoia to widespread practices of consumption is one significant kind of secrecy in the postwar era, which principally underlies *Underworld's* narrative strategy.

Especially the 1950s appear in *Underworld* as the decade that witnesses an unprecedented boost of domestic consumption which also prevails throughout the following decades. The decade shows an ideological bombardment and repression materialized in the consumption of household appliances or status markers that work to contain the individual within the confined boundaries. In Part 4, Eric Deming makes a brief evaluation about 1950s in conversation with Matt Shay in 1974: "The placid nineteen-fifties. Everybody dressed and spoke the same way. It was all kitchens and cars and TV sets. Where's the Pepsodent, mom? We were there, so we know, don't we?" (410).

In Part 5, the Demings are depicted as a typical family in the 1950s. Their domestic habits and consumption inclinations stand for those of a whole American nation. The Demings' refrigerator is a central object in the house gathering the familial energies around, and the kitchen is a place for the daily house rituals. Erica, Eric Deming's mother, has got two favorite words: breezeway and crisper. Both words mean refrigerator and they exemplify how the household goods and products

are clad in a mode of familiarity through the appropriate jargon. The same strategy is also present in the easy-pronounced brand names, which naturalize the act of consumption through aesthetics of catchwords. Erica is keen on using the Jell-O cream almost as much as she loves pronouncing its name:

Sometimes she called it her Jell-O chicken mousse and sometimes she called it mousse Jell-O. This was of a thousand convenient things about Jell-O. The word went anywhere, front or back or in the middle. It was a push-button word, the way so many things were push-button now, the way the whole world opened a button that you pushed. (517)

The refrigerator is, hence, depicted as a small microcosm of a great market and represents a full political economy of consumer capitalism due to the appeal of all brand names and the gleaming packages: “The bright colors, the product names and logos, the array of familiar shapes, the tinsel glitter of things in foil wrap, the general sense of benevolent gleam, of eyeball surprise the sense of a tiny holiday taking place on the shelves and in the slots” (517-18). The aesthetics of goods is the chief motor of this practice. Eric, an infant in 1957, eats “Hydrox cookies because the name sounded like rocket fuel” (519). Similarly, Erica buys a “satellite-shaped vacuum cleaner” (520). What is as significant as the aestheticization of the products to fuel consumption in these examples is the aesthetics of weapons and surveillance systems carved in the shapes of products. Nuclear rockets and Russian satellites are such a part of daily talk and actual concerns of the day that they are also included in the market strategies to publicize products. More specifically, the ironic names and shapes of these products imply that the market economy takes advantage of the ongoing nuclear fear in the 1950s to pump up the mobility of domestic markets and raise the limits of consumption.

The representation of market aesthetics in *Underworld* should be evaluated in terms of Guy Debord’s analysis of ‘the spectacle.’ Aesthetic production becomes the chief principle in marketing commodities. In other words, the capitalist economy favors consumption as the mere meaningful act in the social space, and the distance from needs to desire is covered by aesthetics in the practices of consumption. *Underworld*, therefore, represents the secret economy based on “the undercurrents of desire” (Osteen 241). In fact, this is a matter, as Charlie Wainwright comments in

Part 5, of getting “the consumer by the eyeball,” and creating “retinal discharge” to make people “go completely crazy eyeballwise” in the act of consumption (531).

The spectacularized consumption of the 1950s has its counterparts at the end of the Cold War, too. This spectacularization is an overarching process, including all the decades in the late postwar years until the 1990s. Chapter 5 of Part 1 portrays Brian Glassic and Nick Shay in 1992 looking around in a museum-shop of condoms called Condomology. It is a shop of sexual instruments superfluously designed with condoms of innumerable variety. This is in fact a museum-like facility where one can see the evolution of the use of condoms, from being an object of birth control in the 1950s to a libidinal marker of various sexual pleasures in the 1990s. Nick depicts this sense of change:

Behind the products and their uses we glimpsed the industry of vivid description. Dermasilk and astroglide and reservoir-tipped. There were condoms packaged as Roman coins and condoms in matchbook folders. . . . We had condoms that glowed in the dark and foreplay condoms and condoms marked with graffiti. . . . We had lollipop condoms, we had boxer shorts printed with cartoon characters shaped like condoms standing on end, sort of floaty and nipple-headed, who spoke a language called Spermian. (111)

The object, of course, has metaphorical references. It connects libidinal economy to the economy of consumption and underlines the political dictate of the late twentieth century. It is a marker that refers to the arousal of desires together with an overgrowth of aesthetics in the service of consumer capitalism. Thus, condoms, as containers of bodily discharge, not only refer to Brian and Nick’s mission of waste containment as waste managers. But they also imply the shift from the containment of communism to the containment of consumers’ energy and time within malls and shopping facilities. Brian Glassic sees this mentality of containment in the physical design of the condom facility: “ ‘And the place is strategically located, out at the new frontier,’ he said. ‘I can see a satellite city growing out from this one shop, a thousand buildings, this is my vision, sort of spoked around the condom outlet’ ” (109). Duvall sees continuity between Cold War politics and Condomology in terms of the focus they both put upon individual freedom. He says: “If what the consumer experiences in Condomology is a sense of freedom, then it is an effect of capitalism’s

ability to conflate two fundamentally different notions of freedom: the Cold War, fought in the name of individual and political freedom, was in fact about free markets and consumer choice” (*Don DeLillo’s* 45).

The primary indicator of such a fast pace of transition to consumer capitalism in *Underworld* is garbage production. Garbage is what is left back after consumption and a solid remark about what and to what amount a culture consumes. Just as Karen sees heaps of garbage in her wanderings around New York in *Mao II*, *Underworld* poses a similar portrait throughout its six parts. A variety of product disposals ranging from domestic garbage to industrial waste is remarkably stretched over the whole narrative. Primarily, the variety and amount of garbage foregrounded in the novel sets a bottom-up critical look at consumer capitalism; that is, this critical perspective begins from where the production and consumption process is thought to end. DeLillo’s novel follows the way back from garbage to the relations of production by firstly taking waste into account as one of the primary leitmotifs of the novel. Therefore, masses of waste are an inevitable reality of American late capitalism. Keeping apart industrial and nuclear waste, which is another concern of the novel, it can be said that *Underworld* blatantly seeks for the design of the contemporary American society by looking at the design of waste. Jesse Detwiler, a garbage guerilla and an antagonist of consumer culture in the 1960s, underlines the same issue clearly: “I take my students into garbage dumps and make them understand the civilization they live in. Consume or die. That’s the mandate of the culture” (287). Essentially, such a great focus on waste production in the novel stresses the passage from, almost naïve, domestic consumption habits of the 1950s to immense waste production and waste facilities in the late twentieth century.

Baby food, instant coffee, waffle irons and newspapers that keep falling at the Polo Grounds; dumped house garbage in the streets and ghettos; and the massive landfills all refer to an economy of waste that result from the momentum in the economy of consumption. The excess of garbage does not directly convey a state of prosperity or an excess of production in industry. On the contrary, it stands for an excess of consumption. More severely, the abundance of garbage in *Underworld* indicates an economy of excess in late capitalist America. “Liquid modernity,” says

Bauman in his work *Wasted Lives*, “is a civilization of excess, redundancy, waste and waste disposal” (97). *Underworld*, then, reflects the capitalist political economy based on extreme consumption and the dictate for creating and satisfying an excessive appetite. How this political economy is internalized by the Americans is portrayed in the novel through the surplus of garbage. “This goddamn country has garbage you can eat, garbage that’s better to eat than the food on the table in other countries” (766-67). Consumption works as a pleasure economy in *Underworld* and the publicizing of consumption for consumption’s sake is the mentality behind this excess of waste. Furthermore, even waste and redundant materials bear the trademark of the dominant capitalist mode of property owning. When Big Sims tells Nick about a restaurant he went the other week, he mentions the food garbage enclosed within a cage outside the restaurant:

“Why do they cage it?” I said.  
He looked at me.  
“Derelicts come out of the park and eat it.”  
...  
“Why won’t the restaurant let them eat the garbage?”  
“Because it’s property,” he said. (283-84)

In short, the representation of waste in *Underworld* is in fact the representation of a great portion of late capitalist economy with its appeal beyond the saturation point in consumption and its indecent code of ethics which is apparent in the notion of waste-as-property.

The political economy that produces garbage on the extreme also creates a redundancy of people. More clearly, late capitalism, as depicted in DeLillo’s novel, disposes human beings in two ways. First of all, the circulation of people within the economy as interchangeable consumers depicts how humans made redundant due to the rule of commodification. Secondly, the system gives way to a great amount of human waste. That is, the commodification and monetarization processes, which are overwhelming in a global scale thanks to the New World Order, are the chief mechanisms that produce wasted humans. Bauman asserts: “The ‘problems of (human) waste and (human) waste disposal’ weigh ever more heavily on the liquid modern, consumerist culture of individualization. . . . [S]tillborn, unfit, invalid or unviable human relationships, born with the mark of impending wastage” (*Wasted*

*Lives 7*). *Underworld*'s major perspective on waste production can be understood by focusing on the set of economic principles which produces garbage disposal and human redundancy in the same way. In fact, the fixation on economic progress and the globalization of international capital have powerfully seeped within all the localities by their consequences, the most outstanding of which is the human disposal. Especially DeLillo's depiction of globalization in the late Cold War and post-Cold War periods exposes the actual processes that befall the wasted humans in *Underworld*. Globalization is "the most prolific and least controlled, 'production line' of human waste or wasted humans;" says Bauman, and argues that "all localities have to bear the consequences of modernity's global triumph" (*Wasted Lives 6*).

The depiction of Bronx in several sections of the novel reveals the case of human disposal and the late capitalist hegemony over localities. The Bronx chapters are DeLillo's reflection on the overarching consequences of liquid modernity and his contemplation on them via the leitmotif of waste. In these chapters, especially in the ones portraying the 1990s, innumerable kinds of waste and various examples of wasted lives are drawn together, binding their fate to each other. Shortly, the region called 'the Wall' is a place of convergence of all kinds of waste late capitalism discharges. Around the Wall, there can be found heaps of domestic garbage, disposed food, and dumped materials even from laboratory and hospital wastes. In this parallel, several types of social outcasts are pictured to add up to the great portrait of Bronx.

When Sister Edgar and Sister Gracie go to see Ismael Munoz and his crew in the Wall to make their routine visit and present their help, they come to witness the ordinary dwellers of the region. It is, in fact, more like a parade of totally infringed mass of people. They happen to come up to prostitutes, people living in derelicts, blind people, people with AIDS, epilepsy and cancer, people in wheelchairs, junkies, mistreated infants and etc. Ironically, during Sister Edgar and the others' visit to the Wall, there appears a tourist bus in motley colors with a sign titled *South Bronx Surreal* above the windshield. It brings a group of European tourists to the derelicts as if they are making a city tour to historical ruins or some ancient site of

archeological value. They take photographs in a mood of entertainment and documenting, which analogically proves that the Wall amasses the remnants of the dominant economic system. Along with this grotesque moment of a tour bus visiting such a devastated city zone, it is Sister Gracie's reaction against the recklessness of the tourist group that underlines what the Wall stands for within the national and global politics of late capitalism: "Brussels is surreal. Milan is surreal. This is real. The Bronx is real" (247). It is the vivid depiction of a local zone that is ultimately affected by the whole global economy and the globalization of its drawbacks. In the final chapter of the novel, DeLillo once more pictures the local tragedies of a global hegemony:

The nuns deliver food to people living in the Wall and nearby, the asthmatic children and sickle-cell adults, the cases of AIDS and the cocaine babies, and every day, twice a day, three or four times a day, they drive their van past the memorial wall. This is the six-story flank of a squatters' tenement on which graffiti writers spray-paint an angel every time a local child dies of illness or mistreatment. (811)

Therefore, the transition from the consumption habits in the early postwar years to an incredible boost of consumption in the following decades point out an economy of excess. This late capitalist political economy, which also dominates the oncoming post-Cold War years in *Underworld*, creates an underground economy of waste. Waste, meaning both disposed materials and disposed humans, refers to the handicaps of the late capitalist system. Furthermore, waste should be regarded as the track of late capitalist power, which manages to penetrate local zones, exempt from any strict boundaries. Therefore, keeping the pursuit of this underground economy of waste may also enable to speak about the organizations of global capital. Hence, the focus on the environmental threats of waste production and the deeds of waste management industry make possible a critical perspective on the corporate side of this underground economy in *Underworld*. They expose the technological paranoia of the contemporary Americans for a secular apocalypse, which is a continuation of the nuclear paranoia of the postwar years. Moreover, DeLillo's representation of two strains of industries, waste and weapon industries, exhibit the secret power networks weaved by multinational corporations in the narrative. Finally, the dissemination of



power in the hidden zones of global capitalism is persecuted by corporations, whose secret connections serve as another source of modern day insecurity and paranoia.

## **5. 2. CORPORATE NETWORKS AND TECHNOLOGICAL PARANOIA: WASTE MANAGEMENT AND WEAPON INDUSTRY**

Briefly, through detailed and ambitious depiction of waste facilities and weapon industries, Don DeLillo represents the rise in technological progress as a source for dread. This technological paranoia is manifest in the eradication of nuclear-industrial wastes and in the ascending role of multinational weapon companies. The ecological risks and nuclear threats these industries breed have succeeded postwar fears. Furthermore, how the technological apparatus, under the command of corporate power, is inherently ideological and compatible for late capitalist economy is among the chief concerns in *Underworld*. Along with the environmental hazards, these corporations have also their secrets and subterranean zones of persecution. They further depict the illegitimate and hidden dissemination of the power of global capital. The multinational initiatives in *Underworld* are sources of threat with their corporate structures and organizations. Therefore, DeLillo's concern with these companies is pertinent to the diffusion of power networks in the passage to the New World Order by the 1990s.

The language to convey postwar paranoia and the religious awe attributed to it are similarly valid for toxic and nuclear waste in the entire novel. Nick Shay is an executive emeritus as a waste analyst in his company, Waste Containment (known as Whiz Co.). He visits research facilities for waste and travels to various geographies to teach about, analyze and seek containment sites for radioactive waste disposals. His professional approach to waste as a concept is highly suggestive of its status in the contemporary era: "We were waste handlers, waste traders, cosmologists of waste. . . . Waste is a religious thing. We entomb contaminated waste with a sense of reverence and dread. It is necessary to respect what we discard" (88). Waste is the inevitable component of the technological progress in the late twentieth century and it is a constant reminder of the lurking danger of a rapid nuclear development. It is a mirror for the inquiring eye to grasp the industrial and economic processes of development.

Brian Glassic, Nick's colleague, shares the same sense of awe and excitement the first time he gets to his work site, the Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island. He thinks he is hallucinating upon the grandeur of the view he comes up to in the facilities: "Three thousand acres of mountained garbage, contoured and road-graded. . . . It was science fiction and prehistory, garbage arriving twenty-four hours a day" (184). The sense of sublimity gets hold of him on the view of unloading barges, containers of toxic materials, drainpipes, sweeper boats picking up stray waste and the maintenance crew with special suits. The awesome structure of the landfill is comparable for him to the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza. Such impulsive thought underlines *Underworld's* approach to waste as the archeology of the contemporary civilization. Stricken by reverence to the facilities and by the amount of waste concerned, Brian presumes that the issue in the Fresh Kills landfill is not only that of containing waste, but of penetrating the subconscious and the subsystems of technology:

All this ingenuity and labor, this delicate effort to fit maximum waste into diminishing space. . . . And the thing was organic, ever growing and shifting, its shape computer-plotted by the day and the hour. . . . He looked at all that soaring garbage and knew for the first time what his job was all about. Not engineering or transportation or source reduction. He dealt in human behavior, people's habits and impulses, their controllable needs and innocent wishes, maybe their passions, certainly their excesses . . . and the question was how to keep this mass metabolism from overwhelming us. (184)

This vivid description of the landfill foregrounds the organic nature of both waste and the containment technology. They both act like metabolisms for they feed on the economy of excess, which is based on the human passions and uncontrollable desires. The dominant fear in the tone of the novel is the fear of this metabolismic growth, the independent cancerous development, of waste and the related technology. Jesse Detwiler, the waste theorist and garbage archeologist, is among the most illuminated figures in the novel as to the association between waste and civilization. For him the metastatic growth of waste brings forward its own imperatives: "Garbage always got layered over or pushed to the edges, in a room or in a landscape. . . . It pushed into every space available, dictating construction patterns and altering systems of ritual. And it produced rats and paranoia" (287).

Therefore, garbage and waste have an expanding potential in proportion to the limit of progress and have the power to strike back any minute as an unprecedented source of danger. Detwiler poses a reverse pattern of reasoning and prioritizes the formation of garbage to the construction of a civilization to stress the power of waste to backfire:

Civilization did not rise and flourish as men hammered out hunting scenes on bronze gates and whispered philosophy under the stars. . . . No, garbage rose first, inciting people to build a civilization in response, in self-defense. We had to find ways to discard our waste, to use what we couldn't discard, to reprocess what we couldn't use. Garbage pushed back. It mounted and spread. (287)

What amplifies the paranoia concerning waste is the imperative to maintain it under cover. Though waste is a by-product of the production cycle, it has an inherent dictate to be kept off from sight and talk. Bauman claims that waste is one great secret for liquid modernity and it is a must to hide and contain it to expose merely the bliss of modern civilization: "Waste is the dark, shameful secret of all production. Preferably, it would remain a secret. Captains of industry would rather not mention it at all. . . . And yet the strategy of excess . . . the strategy that prods, invigorates and whips up productive effort and so also the output of waste, makes the cover-up a tall order" (*Wasted Lives* 27). For him, modern waste-disposal industry is at the same time a branch of production since the cover-up policy contributes to the survival of the contemporary form of life. *Underworld* suggests a similar logic as to the secrecy of waste. The industry's mandatory masking of the excessive accumulation of what is left of consumption is manifest in Brian's contemplation before the mountains of garbage at the Fresh Kills:

To understand all this. To penetrate this secret. The mountain was here, unconcealed, but no one saw it or thought about it, no one knew it existed except the engineers and teamsters and local residents, a unique cultural deposit, fifty million tons by the time they top it off, carved and modeled, and no one talked about it but the men and the women who tried to manage it, and he saw himself for the first time as a member of an esoteric order. (185)

This ignorance about waste is deliberately imposed on people as a late capitalist strategy to save the appearance. In other words, the sight of waste is kept

secret in order not to raise a public awareness as to the consumer society and to the environmental risks waste augurs. “Capital’s solution is postmodern,” Duvall implies “since it has less to do with the real than the modeling of the real: don’t contain the growth of waste (since more waste means that business is good); rather, contain the appearance of waste” (*Don DeLillo’s* 46). This approach proves to be more meaningful when it is also compared to the postwar ideology of containment. A formula can be made up in like-manner to that of Duvall’s: don’t contain the communists totally, rather pose as if trying to contain them in every possible way. This recalls that with the attempt to contain the communist threat inside, the postwar state fortified its own hegemonic bloc. It is this way of power Detwiler clearly sees and reacts. What he tries to focus on with his hyperbolic remarks about waste is the late capitalist strategies of power embedded within the ideology of containment.

As a mouthpiece of critical attitude and to some extent of DeLillo himself, Detwiler thinks that waste is the “best-kept secret in the world;” (281) and makes a call to reveal the waste and the strategies of containment: “Bring garbage into the open. Let people see it and respect it. Don’t hide your waste facilities. Make an architecture of waste. . . . Get to know your garbage. And the hot stuff, the chemical waste, the nuclear waste, this becomes a remote landscape of nostalgia. . . . for the banned materials of civilization” (286). “Where there is design, there is waste” Bauman asserts; and furthermore, he stresses that “no objects” are ‘waste’ by their intrinsic qualities,” but they are “assigned to waste by human designs” (*Wasted Lives* 22, 30). Finally, *Underworld’s* concern with waste can be identified with a concern about the late modern design of contemporary American society and about the structure of the cultural and economic processes producing waste. Briefly, waste is DeLillo’s tool to reflect on the design of late capitalist power in America.

Waste produces a hermeneutic for *Underworld* and necessitates contemplating about secrecy with the ways of power. This thought-pattern is present in Nick Shay’s view of issues in the novel due to his religious upbringing: “The Jesuits taught me to examine things for second meanings and deeper connections. Were they thinking about waste?” (88). This is actually the overall attitude of DeLillo’s entire narrative in the evaluation of culture and economy. Waste, then,

provides a leitmotif for a conspiratorial view of assessing the contemporary structures of society. Nick's further thoughts on waste justify this textual strategy of deploying waste as a conspiratorial perspective. He tells his Russian colleague, Viktor: "Because the waste is the secret history, the underhistory, the way archeologists dig out the history of early cultures, every sort of bone heap and broken tool, literally from under the ground" (791). That's why Nick builds up a mythology of underworld, thinking of waste. Concerned with nuclear waste, he associates plutonium with the Greek deity of the underworld, Pluto. What is literally underground in the novel is the undercurrent of the power mechanisms that operate above the ground. And this reverence for the underworld in Nick's attitudes is in fact an allusion to the gradual descent of late capitalist power under the ground, both with its mechanisms and consequences.

The hazardous waste brings about its own machinery of secret economy. The toxic waste and chemical disposals have an international market of hidden exchange. The more hazardous the waste is, the greater the cost of eliminating it becomes. Some waste-handling corporations negotiate for the burial of waste in the lands of underdeveloped countries. This enables a criticism of the indecent global politics of the multinationals: "Those little dark-skinned countries. Yes, it's a nasty business that's getting bigger all the time. A country will take a fee amounting to four times its gross national product to accept a shipment of toxic waste . . ." (278). In relation to this, in Part 3, there is the case of a secret ship with a toxic cargo, constantly changing names and traveling from port to port. It is a solid mark for this illegal global exchange of waste and the related monetary relations.

Especially, the sense of anxiety due to the use of toxic waste amplifies the sense of insecurity in the age of late modernity and late capitalism. According to Ulrich Beck, the risks in the late century amount to disasters and catastrophes. The postwar fears have transformed to be the fears of ecological risks and underline a shift from postwar paranoia to the risk society, as Beck terms it. Technology is seemingly the vital element in the production of catastrophic risks, and risk production is also tied to the higher will of the industry and capital holders. Due to an unlimited use of technology and the corporate credo to profit more, risk is

everywhere in the late capitalist societies, and thus, it gains an ontological status (Ewald 227). Ursula Heise, in her article “Toxins, Drugs, and Global Systems,” speaks about the production of “riskscapes<sup>2</sup>” by toxins and the technology to redeem it in DeLillo’s novels. According to her, “complex and global technoeconomic systems as a source of risk is one of the challenges that faces contemporary narrative,” (773) and *Underworld* plays on the probabilities and the potentials of these challenges in the late century America. Shortly, DeLillo’s concern with waste signifies what Beck terms ‘reflexive modernization.’ In other words, the modern American society, as reflected via *Underworld*’s regard of waste and the containment technologies, confronts with the perilous consequences of the modernization processes, which begin to backfire and create a negative apprehension of modernization itself.

Waste-recycling, on the other hand, has become a contemporary norm with its inherent law in the world of the novel. It not only represents the late capitalist code of re-introducing waste into the production cycle, but also underlines the process of squeezing out what cannot be utilized again; and briefly, it reflects the postmodern substitution of the idiosyncratic with the interchangeable in the form of an industrial code (Evans 107-109). As representative of a waste company, Nick seems to internalize the code as an ideological attitude. He meticulously separates his household waste according to certain guidelines. However, this has gained a feature of obsession in him for he has begun to see every single item of product as waste to be recycled even when they appear unconsumed in their package. Similarly, Big Sims acquires the same gaze for waste in everything. He tells Nick about this change in him after he has started the waste management business, and Nick replies as follows:

“You see it everywhere because it is everywhere.”

“But I didn’t see it before.”

“You’re enlightened now. Be grateful,” I said. (283)

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<sup>2</sup> Heise refers to the following source for the term: The term *riskscape* is Susan Cutter's; quoted in Cynthia Deitering, "The Postnatural Novel: Toxic Consciousness in Fiction of the 1980s," in *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, ed. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1996), 200.

What Nick regards as enlightenment is actually equivalent to a kind of ideological surveillance. Both Nick and Sims appreciate the dominant code of recycling as a worldview. According to Mattessich, this is the case of “internalization of capitalist instrumentality that splits off in the subject an ideal function of self-monitoring compliance with the requirements of social reproduction” (par. 41). Therefore, waste management and recycling processes correspond to discipline, in Foucault’s terms, which inscribe the late capitalist ideology in people. Moreover, according to Jeremy Justus, the waste facilities function as ISAs (Ideological State Apparatuses), in Althusser’s terminology, with enclosed spaces of practice (par. 10-11). When the practices of the waste industry and their codes for recycling are disseminated as an ideological dictate and internalized by people, they act as Foucault’s Panopticon, putting the focus on people’s ideological self-surveillance.

Weapon industry and nuclear weaponry double upon the theme of waste in the novel. Devising and testing nuclear weapons are the chief provokers of technological paranoia in *Underworld*. The religious awe and reverence is also valid for war technology as it is for waste. The paranoia of a nuclear catastrophe has ruled in the postwar period and has not ceased to be after the end of the Cold War. In Matt’s insights, a dominant spirit of awe can be found pertaining to the whole postwar period: “All technology refers to the bomb” (467). The nuclear bomb is the core of all anxieties and source for the collective fantasies of mass destruction. The way war technology is apprehended by people can be underlined by the metaphors used about it. In chapter 2 of Part 5, Lenny Bruce uses a shocking image of instant mashed potatoes associating it with the bomb: “And that’s what this crisis is all about, incidentally. Instant mashed potatoes. The whole technology, man, of instant and quick, because we don’t have the attention span for normal wars anymore” (544-45). This imagery of vulgarity and evanescence feeds the paranoid feelings about the bomb, which amount to a kind of metaphysical dread. Matt Shay, for instance, prefers to speak about the atomic bomb in an imagery of drug-fed-hallucination, through the metaphor of a magic mushroom:

A mushroom with a fleshy cap that might be poisonous or magical. In Siberia somewhere the shamans ate the cap and were born again. What did they see in their trance state? Was it a cloud shape like a mushroom?

Death and magic, that's the mushroom. Or death and immortal life. (466-67)

Equivalent to the mission of Fresh Kills landfill of waste is a facility for weapon design and testing, called The Pocket. It is another technological facility with an enclosed space, practicing compatibly to the dominant ideology and functioning as an ISA to teach and diffuse it: "The pocket was one of those nice tight societies that replaces the world. . . . [I]t was self enclosed and self-referring and you did it all together in a place and a language that were inaccessible to others" (412). In other words, the facility not only creates war technology, but also utilizes technologies of discipline in its enclosure. In the Pocket, the sense of the incredible and unreal interpellates its employees to serve for the ideology of progress and technophilic fantasies of Cold War victory. With its huge infrastructure, emergency networks and vast geography, the Pocket is a living myth. Matt Shay works in this military-industrial complex, involved in weapon safing-mechanisms; and he tells Janet about the sense of absurdity embedded there: "It's mainly that I feel I'm part of something unreal. When you hallucinate, the point of any hallucination is that you have a false perception that you think is real. This is just the opposite. This *is* real. . . . It's a dream someone's dreaming that has me in it" (458). The air of sublime in advanced war technology has an appeal of its own that ideologically hails its workers in the name of perfection. Therefore, technological rationale contributes to the hegemonic practices of Cold War administration. Put it that way, what arrests the employees of the Pocket is not the love of mass destruction but the disciplining appeal of the aesthetics of high-tech warfare: "The bombheads loved their work but weren't necessarily pro-bomb, walking around with megadeath hard-ons. They were detail freaks. They were awed by the inner music of bomb technology" (404).

The weapon industry, too, has its well-kept secrets. *Underworld* posits that the high-tech war facilities of catastrophic amounts naturally work on secrets and leave behind certain facts to be kept hidden. The riskscape created by war industry are treated as non-present and are veiled within the history of Cold War. The novel informs about the incident of a thermonuclear bomb of megatonnage mistakenly released from a B-36 on the city limits of Albuquerque in 1957. The event has been kept as a secret for seventeen years. Similarly, there are other riskscape stemming



from the nuclear tests, the consequences of which are among the secrets of the industry. Eric Deming talks about the downwinders of the Nevada Test Site. These are said to have suffered a range of serious diseases due to exposure to nuclear spills and chemicals. That these long-hidden secrets spread in the form of rumors enhance the feeling of technological paranoia in the novel. Furthermore, in the last part of the novel titled “Das Kapital,” which is dedicated to an undoing of the secrets of both industrial and economic realms, Nick’s colleague Viktor Maltsev takes Nick to “the Museum of Misshapens” (799). It is a department of the Medical Institute and contains the biological remnants of nuclear spillage and tests such as disfigured fetuses and specimens of ill-grown body parts, exhibited in a vast number of jars. Again, it is the Cold War ideology of maintenance and a reflex of national defense that enable to hide and repress these calamitous incidents.

There are also repressed personal secrets and memories concerned with the wars and weapons, which help reveal the humane side of the personnel in the facilities working for this dehumanized mechanism of technology. Louis T. Bakey and Chuckie Wainwright disclose the frail side of theirs as bombardiers and navigators. In other words, the depiction of their emotions as people from within the war industry presents an incongruous picture amid the vile face of war. In chapter 6 of Part 5, they are pictured as two aircraft pilots serving in the military for the mission in Vietnam in 1969. Louis is aware of the psychological mechanisms that kept the whole crew of bombers do their work and soften the inhumanity they cause. All the technicians and bombheads use acronyms to ease the traumatic aspects of bombing and to aestheticize the cruelty for their comrade bombers. According to Louis, these acronyms “come from remote levels of development, from technicians and bombheads in their computer universe. . . . These are men who feel an armpit intimacy with the weapons systems they maintain and fly. This gives their acronyms a certain funky something” (606). The aircraft Louis and Chuckie fly is called a BUFF (Big Ugly Fat Fuck), and the nose art is titled Long Tall Sally (later on seen as Klara Sax’s project as a junk aircraft), depicting a long-legged tall blonde. Just as the easily-pronounced and compatible name Jell-O, these acronyms and nose-art pieces mask the real military experience of bombing with easy aesthetics of slogans. Yet, Louis’ first experience of a simulation of a fifty-kiloton nuclear bomb over the

Nevada Test Site gives him the creeps, and he is in awe due to the enormous flashlight consequent to the release, which makes him see his own hand bones for an instant. He is shocked even with the simulation of the real war. And Chuckie undergoes a similar sense of alienation to his mission of bombing the Vietcong. He is in a state of awkwardness on seeing that he is bombing people he is indifferent to:

Chuckie used to love these bomb runs but not anymore. He used to feel a bitter and sado-sort of grudge pleasure. . . . The bombs fluttered down on the NVA and the ARVN alike, because if the troops on both sides pretty much resemble each other . . . you have to bomb both sides to get satisfactory results. The bombs also fell on the Vietcong, the Viet Minh, the French, the Laotians, the Cambodians, the Pathet Lao, the Khmer Rouge, the Montagnards, the Hmong, the Maoists, the Taoists, the Buddhists, the monks, the nuns, the rice farmers, the pig farmers, the students protesters and war resisters . . . they were all, pretty much, the enemy. (612)

Briefly, technological rationale is represented as an ideological a priori in itself in *Underworld*, persecuted by the technicians and bombheads. This forges up a technocratic administration in the context of the Cold War. With the appearance of supporting the national defense, such technocracy is legitimized by the political power of postwar administration. Therefore, in Jürgen Habermas' terms, 'purposive-rational action' creates its own technical apparatus and bureaucracy as exercised by the weapon industry. Consequently, the effects of this technocracy and hegemonic power penetrate the public sphere in the form of technological paranoia.

Very significantly, a name from Frankfurt School of critical theorists is pronounced in the novel, which strongly highlights the use of technological rationale in forming a hegemonic bloc. In the same chapter of the novel, it is mentioned that Herbert Marcuse is one of the authors Chuckie Wainwright had hard time finding in his military base. This reference to Marcuse at first sight evokes Marcuse's remarks on the one-dimensional society created by technology. According to him, technology is a political tool of domination and a device for the rationalization of unfreedom. In the sustenance of economic and industrial growth, technology brings about control and domination as surplus paradigms. This rationalization of a one-dimensional social space through technology is also manifest in technologies of surveillance. Part 4 pictures Matt Shay looking at the Landsat photos taken from space in 1974 and

contemplating about the nature of these images. His apprehension of these satellite photos revealed many things at once and most importantly the inherent relation of industrial progress with surveillance and discipline:

The pictures were false-color composites that revealed signs of soil erosion, geological fracture and a hundred other events and features. They showed stress and drift and industrial ravage, billion-bit data converted into images.

He saw how remote sensors pulled hidden meanings out of the earth.

...

And he thought of the lives inside the houses embedded in the data on the street that is photographed from space.

And that is the next thing the sensors will detect, he thought. The unspoken emotions of the people in the rooms. (415)

Therefore, advanced industrial society, represented by weapon technology in this case in *Underworld*, and the capitalist economy provide hegemonic domination. The impersonal power of scientific and technological rationality intensifies the capitalist hegemony. In Cold War years, when power blocs between two superstates are rigid and power balances clear, the power of technological rationale is overt. It finds a way of manifestation and legitimation within the context of the Cold War politics. Disconcerted by the mode of secrecy in these years, Matt Shay expresses feeling of relief upon the exposition of power through bomb detonations, which is rather preferable to lurking evil schemes and secret plots: "He was happy, hearing the echo carom off the ranges now. . . . Yes, he loved the way power rises out of self-caressing secrecy to become a roar in the sky" (468). These are like moments of power ejaculations and emotional discharge within the atmosphere of secrecy, and make visible the tensions of the period in solid technologic outbursts. However, the case of tracing power through blatant technological progress and domination is not always easy because capitalism collaborates with technology in many forms and through a system of connections. Therefore, the impersonal power of technological administration principally finds recourse in the impersonal power of capitalist economy, which seems to surface only to the vigilant sight.

There are a number of occasions to evaluate the technological paranoia stemming from an entire system of connections between capitalism and technology. Therefore, a more blurred portrait is valid for the exercise of power. It is again Matt

Shay in 1974, who manages to read these links in a conspiratorial perspective: “He felt he’d glimpsed some horrific system of connections in which you can’t tell the difference between one thing and another, between a soup can and a car bomb, because they are made by the same people in the same way and ultimately refer to the same thing” (446). This set of connections can be furthered. Matt Shay also reflects on the connection between a popular orange juice ad (called Minute Maid) and agent orange, the code name for the bomb he dropped on Vietnam while he was recruited for the army in the past: “And how can you tell the difference between orange juice and agent orange if the same massive system connects them at levels outside your comprehension?” (465).

The massive system Matt underlines actually refers to the association of industrial progress and capitalism. Just as technological progress reifies and dehumanizes the lifeworld, so does consumerism by reifying everything to exchange relations. This relation is overtly disclosed by the practices of advertisement campaigns described in the novel: “Every third campaign featured some kind of play on weapons” (529). For instance, some campaign picks up George Metesky, the Mad Bomber of the 1940s, to publicize their product with the slogan “*Bomb your lawn with Nitrotex*” (528). Still another commercial-video shows the race between a white and a black car, implying USA versus USSR, to market the brand Equinox Oil. The video is shot in the Jornada del Muerto in New Mexico, which is the site for the first atomic test. The race ends in the Trinity site, marked by a monument that spots the exact place of nuclear explosion. Clearly enough, *Underworld* manages to put forth a picture demanding a cynic look on the possible connections between seemingly irrelevant systems, weapons and consumer goods. Seeing the case as such, it is argued in the novel that the colonization of the lifeworld by advanced technological networks and ideology has been succeeded by another strain of hegemonizing practices. That is, capitalism also colonizes the lifeworld via the much popular aesthetics of consumption and advertising business, which is constantly associated with the ideological nature of technological networks in the novel.

Another challenge in *Underworld* is the combination of waste and weapon industries in the 1990s. “Das Kapital” discloses the nature of such conflation,

underscoring the greatness of paranoia in the age of corporate business. Nick Shay and Viktor Maltsev fly to the Kazakh test site to watch an underground explosion, executed by Viktor's company - Tchaika - to destroy nuclear waste. The destruction of nuclear waste by military methods exemplifies the affinity between the two industries and foregrounds the connection between the networks of weapon and waste companies. Tchaika signifies a new industrial business; it is a weapon company that "sell nuclear explosions for ready cash," (788) and whose basic business line is waste. In Viktor's words, this is the "fusion of two streams of history, weapons and waste" (791). DeLillo's use of this achievement by the Russian company also highlights a fact that waste has been a much ignored issue throughout the Cold War years, and nuclear weapons had been more blatant a point of focus. It is especially when Cold War period ends that waste appears as an ultimate matter of concern. DeLillo tells Moss about the function of the nuclear explosion in Kazakhstan by Tchaika: "What I had in mind was the way in which for forty years we thought in terms of weapons and failed to think in terms of waste these weapons produce" ("Writing," 166). Analogically, the fusion DeLillo talks about takes place in the novel with a reference to the bloodline between two brothers Nick and Matt Shay, the former a waste analyst and the latter an engineer of nuclear weaponry.

This fusion of two streams of industry underlines the extent that corporate business reaches in the post-Cold War world. Rendered in sheer secrecy, the corporate transactions become the hallmark of the New World Order. The power of global capital is manifest in the unlimited power of these transnational companies. Both Russia and America are capitalist superpowers now and both celebrate the new status quo. "The Soviets always wanted bigger yield, bigger stockpiles," argues Nick and further adds; "They had to convince themselves they were a superpower" after they lost the Cold War (790). And it is Viktor who quite simply puts down the common Russian and American interests in these military industries: "The perfect capitalist tool. Kill people, spare property" (790). Therefore, the end of the Cold War has fortified the nascent globalizing economy of the earlier decades. According to Duvall, DeLillo's novel depicts at what price the Cold War is won and focuses on the rapid momentum of globalization that pushes the two former rivals on the verge of identical states:

From individual families buying fallout shelters in the 1950s to Reagan's "Star Wars" Strategic Defense initiative in the 1980s, much of America's real and symbolic capital was spent in the maintenance of a definition, an ability to distinguish ourselves from our Cold War Other, the Soviet Union. The demise of Reagan's Evil Empire and the end of the Cold War means that this master Us-Them binary of the 1950s through the early 1990s can no longer mask the effects of multinational capital in a period of increasing globalization. (*Don DeLillo's* 67)

From Viktor again it is learned that his company is like a small private army which also has an intelligence unit to protect their assets. They have worldwide connections to "the commonwealth arms complex, top bomb-design laboratories and the shipping industry" (788). These ramifications are examples for the unbounded flow of transnational capital and the contemporary corporate enterprise. Therefore, *Underworld's* concern with the underground connections of corporate power tends to portray "the multinational corporation as a lethal risk both in its products and by virtue of its structure" (Heise 767). These companies are the perpetrators of what Bauman terms 'negative globalization' which trespass local barriers, creating underground networks of business relations. Similarly, the ship, Detwiler earlier mentioned to be carrying industrial waste, is also suspected of carrying CIA heroin to finance a covert operation. Therefore, paranoid set of connections is a determinant of these multinational firms. And compatible to the theme of the intractability of waste in DeLillo's novel, these secret connections are intractable too.

All the interconnectedness mentioned so far is a result of the intermingling lines of late capitalist power, which breeds an atmosphere of uncertainty in the aftermath of the Cold War. DeLillo's representation of this sense of disorganized state of capitalism in the early nineties is of a conspiratorial make. According to Knight, the popular conspiratorial perspective in *Underworld* stems from the "absence of a Fordist sense of stability and security" in corporate culture; and "the quasi-conspiratorial collusion of hegemonic interests in the globalized economy" justifies such a paranoid perspective ("Everything," 824-25). The fall of the Soviet Republic has brought about more unpredictable and fluid power structures. Therefore, the only possible way of cognitive mapping appears as conspiracy theory, which can be regarded as the only mode of thought compatible to the post-industrial epistemology. Finally, the New World Order has allowed the construction of the

world conspiratorially with its polycentric and uncontrollable structure of power relations.

In the globalized world of power relations, organizational networks are foregrounded, leaving individual agency and decision-making in the background. In other words, amidst dense networks of power, individual agency has been transferred to corporate agency. Corporations are the extensions of the hegemony of multinational capital and function on the principle of what Robert Paul Resch calls 'internalization of the internationalization.' In other words, the logic of multinational capital infiltrates the structure and rationality of corporate bodies. In turn, these corporations "seem less like systems comprised of human decision makers with limited knowledge and more like self-motivated agencies, repositories of secret intentions, with the capacity for astonishing control of consumers and workers" (Melley 188). DeLillo's apprehension and representation of these corporations in *Underworld* is rather cynical. Corporate capitalism and its executive bodies are pictured as hierarchical systems of order. These corporations are seen imposing both patterns of behavior on their employees and a definite social structure together with a certain mode of thought over the rest of the society. Nick summarizes the ideological role and the formational mission of these corporations in a couple of instances:

Corporations are great and appalling things. They take you and shape you in nearly nothing flat, twist and swivel you. And they do it without overt persuasion, they do it with smiles and nods, a collective inflection of the voice. You stand at the head of a corridor and by the time you walk to the far end you have adopted the comprehensive philosophy of the firm, the *Weltanschauung*. (282)

Especially, DeLillo's treatment of multinational companies with a focus on the term *Weltanschauung*, German for worldview, is an attempt to disclose the institutions and the ideology of late capitalism. As it can be conceived of in the quotation above, the late capitalist ideology, infiltrating patterns of conduct through 'smiles and nods,' manage to create common sense rather than push forward a coercive use of power. Thus, the command comes not as an outer-imposed obligation but as a willful-compliance to the dominant ideology in the Gramscian sense. Nick comments on the patterns of social structure and character formation they produce, which is also manifest in all the bureaucracy they create and technology they utilize:

The corporation is supposed to take us outside ourselves. We design these organized bodies to respond to the market, face foursquare into the world. But things tend to drift dimly inward. Gossip, rumor, promotions, personalities. . . . You feel the contact points around you, the caress of linked grids that give you a sense of order and command. It's there in the warbling banks of phones, in the fax machines and photocopiers and all the oceanic logic stored in your computer. Bemoan technology all you want. It expands your self-esteem and connects you in your well-pressed suit to the things that slip through the world otherwise unperceived. (89)

In fact, this role of corporate capitalism was on the prowl well before its peak in the early 1990s. There were already occasions of outspoken discontent with the corporate future of America back in the 1960s. Commenting on the beatnik spectators in a 1962 Lenny Bruce show, the third person narrator feels it necessary to link the rising corporate culture to the overwhelming fear of the bomb at the time: "In the beatnik canon it was America's sickness that had produced the bomb. . . . The bomb was their handiest reference to the moral squalor of America, the guilty place of smokestacks and robot corporations" (545). Several decades of development and adaptation has yielded a plenty of space for the dissemination of corporations. *Underworld's* primary focus is on the times when their strategies are at the zenith and their networks well-knit. Nick once again exemplifies the 'moral squalor' of their executive strategies with reference to the manners of the executives of his company in their headquarters: "In the bronze tower we used the rhetoric of aggrieved minorities to prevent legislation that would hurt our business. We learned how to complain, how to appropriate the language of victimization" (119). This kind of corporate adaptation of street manners and strategically applied militant modes of conduct enhance the idea of plotting. In a conspiratorial manner of setting up strategies and networks, the contemporary corporate culture conspires to protect its profits and maintain its networks. On looking at Viktor Maltsev, Nick conceives the strategies and mottoes of Maltsev's company, which also stands for the equivalent bodies in the New World Order: "At a glance he belongs to these wild-privatized times, to the marathon of danced-out plots. The get-rich-quick plot. The plot of members-only and crush-the-weak. Raw capital spewing out. The extortion-and-murder plot" (802).



'Everything is connected' theme, dominant throughout the entire novel, also has a place in the end chapter. The theme is transferred from the endless connections of the corporate culture to the cyberspace. In "Das Kapital," Nick Shay is seen surfing on the internet in 1992 and he happens to visit the address - <http://blk.www/dd.com/miraculum>. The website accounts for the story of Esmeralda, a fifteen year old dweller of derelicts, who was raped and murdered in the Wall. The site is for the commemoration of Esmeralda, yet the idea of the internet further evokes notions for interconnectedness in Nick's mind. He sees the hyperlinks and connections in cyberspace as the new continuum of networks that he has experienced and witnessed in the corporate culture. Cyberspace not only analogically represents the New World Order of networks, but is also a substitute continuum of power dissemination that is augured to take place in the service of capitalism in the years to follow. Nick makes an association between the two as follows: "How the intersecting systems help us pull apart, leaving us vague, drained, docile, soft in our inner discourse, willing to be shaped, to be overwhelmed" (826). The geographical expansion of the empires, nations and armies, comments Brian Glassic in his talk to Nick, is now replaced with a rivalry on cyberspace. The war for territories has now turned into a race for microchips (787). Therefore, the world wide web is the new source for paranoia and paranoid links. All in all, *Underworld* opens with an initial type of paranoid technology, the bomb and the fear it produces, and ends with another, cyber-technology and all the paranoid connections it hosts.

To sum up, the technological paranoia that the waste and weapon industries have disseminated finds a fresh new correspondence in the internet technology, which is another major motif for network formations. Secondly, the secret mechanisms of power, pictured under the waste and weapon industries, both stood for the redemption of personal memories, for instance that of Nick losing his father and killing George Manza, and also for the repression of the secrets of emerging global political economy. Nick Shay, aware of both of these strains of secrets, shows discontent in the last chapter about the state of being an individual among such dense power networks. He, like Klara Sax, has a nostalgic perspective in his fifties concerning the secure paranoia of the Cold War years in his childhood:

I long for the days of disorder. I want them back, the days when I was alive on earth, . . . the days of disarray when I walked real streets and did things slap-bang and felt angry and ready all the time a danger to others and a distant mystery to myself. (810)

Therefore, finally, Matt's comment on Nick's suspicion and paranoia about the murder of their father can be generalized over the whole postwar world of instability and over the vastly globalized world in the aftermath of the Cold War: "Let the culture indulge in cheap conspiracy theories" (454). Because this is the only probable reflex and available attempt of cognitive mapping amidst huge intersecting structures of ideological hegemony and capitalist power.

### **5. 3. RESISTANCE NETWORK FORMATIONS**

*Underworld* puts forth a vast number of practices of resistance just as it portrays the multiplied sites of power dissemination. The representation of cultural and political resistance in America from the postwar times until the early 1990s contains a sweeping range of examples. The novel, as it has been put several times so far, is indulged in the phases of transformation within both the exercise of power and similarly within the patterns of resistance. Especially, 1960s and the following decades in America reflect a new era of structuration both in power mechanisms and resistant behaviors. DeLillo's narrative depicts this transformation of resistance, as well as that of power, within a dissemination of networks. Resistance is not exercised within a single contained domain of political sphere, but it creates a multiplication of political sites and is diffused in quality and quantity. Finally, the resistant forms portrayed in *Underworld* assert that maneuvers of dissidence tactically follow the patterns of ideological mechanisms of state repression and the blueprints of the capitalist apparatus in its new phase.

#### **5. 3. 1. New Social (Grassroots) Movements**

New social movements signify the multifarious types of social and cultural struggles against mainly the repressive apparatuses of the state, the overwhelming codes and values of market economy, and the multinational capital that especially arose in the 1960s in America. Taken under the general title of the New Left, these social movements brought about new dynamics of resistance, trespassing the single

and unique politics of the labor class. New social movements display a heterogeneity manifest in the formation of various groups of different claims. The authenticity in the new social movements lies in their opening up of new zones of life to politics and cultural struggles depending on the variety of their concerns and types of resistant practices.

A general evaluation of these movements yield that their “trajectory is toward the amplification of civil liberties, curbing the violence of the state and capitalist institutions, and more equitable distribution by employers and bureaucrats” (Adam 317). Both in the effort of expanding the limits of civil rights and surmounting capitalist exploitation of social relations and nature, these social movements have dealt with a wide range of problems pertaining to race, gender, identity politics, ecology and violence. Fighting against the commodification of social life, bureaucratization and cultural homogenization; these movements have also resented against all kinds of social subordination and cultural politics of social hegemony. The overall concern of the New Left can be put down as follows with regards to the whole variety of new social movements:

New left radicals recognized two means of effecting peaceful revolution. The first was the technique of mass mobilization that the civil rights movement and the antiwar movement brought to new heights in the 1960s. The second lay in cultural change, in which the new left increasingly placed its hopes and aspirations in its later years. New-left radicals would develop an alternative way of life, built upon values opposed to the familiar world of competition and materialism. (Rossinow 95)

The New Left politics of 1960s in America, apparent in the new social movements paradigm, targeted transformation in the social and cultural patterns, instead of an entire change in the political structures. Though mainly regarded as revolutionaries, the supporters of the new social movements are primarily indulged in context-bound issues, identity rights and new lifestyle concerns. These new social movements are “not defined by class boundaries but are marked by a common concern over social issues;” hence, they are “defined by common values rather than a common structural location” (Pichardo 417). More specifically, due to the lack of a historical development of a working-class and a well-established class-consciousness

in America, class-based politics did not form a heritage and did not serve for the collective solution as in Europe (Brake 105). Hence, culturally rebellious youths are observed to have ignored the theoretical rigidity of the Old Left and gone beyond the idea of class to encompass a wide range of inequalities and subordination in various zone of life in late modern society. Therefore, they do not aim at a total structural change in the society in terms of a class binary. Rather, through their inclination for ethical claims and cultural politics of everyday life, they aim at setting alternative patterns of behavior and “trying out new forms of life in movement networks held together” (Mayer and Roth 303). Instead of a wholesale seizure of political power, a disengagement from market rationality and conformism to forms of cultural hegemony makes up their agenda.

*Underworld's* depiction of a variety of social movements infused with vigor contributes to the hectic panorama of the 1960s. This chaotic atmosphere has witnessed a sweeping range of countercultural practices from mild symbolic resistance to armed violence. The counter-hegemonic struggles have, to a certain extent, contained political militancy in the 1960s ad 1970s in America. Some group-oriented or individual acts of terror have always been a part of the countercultural impulse of resistance. Being called the urban guerillas, these radical activists have stood with armed violence against the state forces and capitalist institutions. The Weathermen (later known as, the Weather Underground Organization) who are among the most radical factions of leftists groups preaching class-based militancy, set a trademark in the American history with their savage bombings of mostly government buildings and banks (Brake 110). Similarly, Theodore Kaczynski, the mad bomber in the 1970s known as the Unabomber, was seen to direct his social criticism against the technocratic culture and industrial society through his serial bombings and bomb-cargoes. His radical thoughts were later on publicized in 1995 in a booklet named *Industrial Society and its Future*, also known as the *Unabomber Manifesto* (Lentricchia and McAuliffe 39). This armed activism and use of vulgar forms of resistance finds correspondence in DeLillo's novel through radical groups like The Alley Boys, who'd “deal, steal, get the edge, carry the piece and pursue the conduct of the war” (511) against the state and all established social norms.

Yet, apart from such brutal use of resistant force, DeLillo's depiction of the social movements in these decades focus on other groups in the pursuit of acquiring definite rights through a set of civil rights marches, demonstrations and student rallies. Black marchers are well a part of the sixties chapters of *Underworld*. In several occasions they come to push against the police forces to make public stands together with a crowd of students. In chapter 2 of Part 5, for instance, a typical struggle between armed forces and Black rights marchers is pictured in all its vulgarity. And one Rose Meriweather Martin, Manx Martin's elder sister, is captured and carried to the truck to be sent to jail due to her protests, along with a number of black people beaten and heavily stroke by the guardsmen.

In addition, the majority of mass protests in the novel are directed against Vietnam, which is triggered by the overwhelming conditions of the Cold War. Actually, the Cold War, which is the main cause behind nuclear armament and Vietnam War, essentially led almost the whole generation of the sixties to radicalization in their claims for democracy and peace (Rossinow 92). In fact, as it has been mentioned heretofore, the Cold War conditions legitimized the repressive politics of the state and the hegemonic capitalist political economy; and thus, it is mainly the conduct of the Cold War conditions that almost each distinct social movement essentially oppose in the novel. This resentment against the Cold War politics is concretized in *Underworld* by the protests against Vietnam directed to Edgar Hoover. Before the Black and White Ball in 1966, Hoover and his aide Tolson are planning for the night in their suite at the Waldorf, and Tolson informs Hoover about the protests outside the Plaza Hotel where the Ball is going to be held:

“What is it the bastards are protesting? Pray tell,” Edgar said in a tone he'd perfected through the years, a tight amusement etched in eleven kinds of irony.

“The war it seems.”

“The war.” (555-56)

Behind the anti-Vietnam campaigns lies a greater dissent against the technical apparatus and the technocratic formation of the state in the Cold War period. The actual subject of the protests is the convergence of nuclear weapons with the ideology of the state. The New Left radicals' uprising against Vietnam can, thus, also

be regarded as “a tactical manoeuvre against a military-industrial complex with virtually insurmountable weapons of social control, from computer surveillance through nuclear weaponry” (Adam 327-28). In chapter 2 of Part 4, Matt Shay is seen watching the protestors of nuclear weapons complex, the Pocket, positioned at the wrong gate of the facility. Ironically, “he half wanted to tell the protestors to move their operation up to the road” to find the correct entrance of the Pocket (409).

Another significant instance of protest and student rally against nuclear weaponry and Vietnam takes place in chapter 6 of Part 5. Marian Bowman, the future-wife of Nick Shay, listens to the local radio news about the student marchers’ protests of the Vietnam War. Deducing from both the intermittent announcements on the radio and voices of loudspeakers outside, she comes to comprehend that the protests are targeted at more than a single issue:

The radio said, Faculty Document 122 authorizes force against students.  
Faculty document 122 authorizes force against students.

She began to understand that this was Vietnam Week on campuses across the country. And this was Dow Day here in Madison, a protest against Dow Chemical, whose recruiters were active on campus and whose products included a new and improved form of napalm with a polystyrene additive that made jellied matter cling more firmly to human flesh.

...

The station was reporting Dow Day and seemingly taking part. The radio said, PigPigPigPigPigPigPig. (599)

Dow Chemicals are the producers of the new type of napalm bomb and Agent Orange, which have been widely used in Vietnam. The Dow Day contains multitudes of protests, not simply against Vietnam and the use of chemicals weapons, but also the brutalized extensions of state power over the students, all of which are fortified by the politics of Cold War. And most significantly, it also exemplifies minor resistant practices against such conglomeration of problems. Together with arousing public dissent, the student protestors also have taken over the local radio station to broadcast instructions to make of a fertilizer bomb, which can be manufactured “by mixing one part liquid detergent Joy with two parts benzene or one part gasoline” (603). In conclusion, violence brings violence, and student protestors are on action

trying to find ways to retaliate the uncontrolled ways of power by the state through various micro-resistances on the spot.

The technical apparatus is an object of protest not just because it serves the progress in the war technology, but because it serves the dissemination of capitalist social codes. The technological rationale also contributes to the subordination of the public domain by satisfying capital's demand of social control. "With the advent of a service/technical economy with its emphasis on growth and information management," Pichardo claims, "capital accumulation necessitates social as well as economic domination" (Pichardo 419-20). In fact, it is the new corporate culture that both supplies the technological infrastructure for capitalism and functions as the indoctrinating force, as it can be observed in the cases of Dow Chemicals and the Pocket. Yet, this corporate culture is at the same time the reason for the emergence of the multiplicity of the types of social protests. More specifically, it can be claimed that the transition to post-Fordist society is the main momentum in the appearance of multifarious types of New Left radicals and new social movements.

The flexible labor markets, non-rigid production organization, and the post-Fordist principle to reach a greater variety of consumer tastes are directly relevant to the production of a greater variety of dissenting groups in the society. The variety of consumer goods due to the post-Fordist production type is among the outstanding causes for the emergence of a variety of new social protests. L. A. Kauffman sees a great correlation between the standardized production lines of Fordism and the postwar strategies of producing a homogenous American culture, which is represented in the consumer based identities of 1950s in *Underworld*: "The dominant postwar sense of being American was produced and reproduced with the same efficiency and predictability of Ford's automobile assembly lines. . . . The emergence of post-Fordism led to the systematic targeting of more specialized groups of consumers" (157). "With the crisis of Fordism," as Mayor suggests similarly, "the conditions for protests were transformed. As crisis symptoms spread, they broadened the appeal of various protest movements" (311). In fact, this transformation to the network organizations of multinational capital and the change into new market

strategies within the corporate culture has brought forward the materialization of wide range forms of dissent. Again Kauffman notes:

Social identities in the postwar and especially post-sixties period have come to be formed in intimate relation to consumer goods.

...

In the political realm, there is a remarkable parallel between this new importance of 'taste cultures' and market segments in U.S. society and the move, since the 1960s, from a common counterculture to a plurality of radical subcultures. (157)

To conclude, the passage to the product variability and the targeting of specific consumer segments, as represented in the Condomology section in *Underworld*, are the principles that indirectly produced the abundance of oppositional social movements peaking in the 1960s and 1970s, which are also represented in the further chapters of the novel.

The new social movements paradigm in *Underworld* can be understood as the rising voice of the public sphere against the undemocratic administration and hegemonic late capitalist regime of the Cold War period. The dissolution and "refeudalization of the public sphere, through a corporatist fusion of the state institutions and commercial conglomerates" are what these social movements react against (Fornäs 89). In fact, they oppose the multinational capital networks by setting up similar networks of resistance in the civil society. All the social protests seen within the cultural sphere under different concerns function for the toughening of the lifeworld against the imposition of the logic of capital. Thus, political and cultural dissent in the sixties proceeds through "the postwar proliferation of what might be called micro-public spheres, each within its own distinctive discourses . . . [and through] small networks of public interaction marked by a level of vibrancy and engagement almost wholly lacking in the capital-p Public Sphere" (Kauffman 15).

The mass movements and protests in the 1960s exemplify the expansion of the networks of resistance against the diffusion of micro-powers of the state and capitalist institutions, in Foucauldian terms. The proliferation of the sites of struggle for a participatory democracy, expressed mainly in the types of civil rights marches and anti-war protests, announces a displacement of strict borders of struggle and its



substitution with more fluid frontiers. According to the theories of Laclau and Mouffe, the multiplicity of political spaces is a trademark in advanced capitalist societies. For them, the most significant paradigm in the formation of these new forms of struggle is the multiplicity of ‘nodal points’ around which the resistant subjects are articulated. The plural character of the oppositional social movements stems from the unfixed and decentered nature of subject positions in the late capitalist society. The contemporary resistant movements in *Underworld*, as of 1960s and 1970s, comprise heterogeneity of protests, which are spread over networks and determined by the social context of the post-Fordist era. Thus, “the multitude of additional sites of struggle” and “the proliferation of conflicts” have channeled the new social movements’s focus on micropolitics within the civil society (Adam 325-26).

The official approach to the new social movements and radicals are materialized in the person of Edgar Hoover. As expected of him, he treats the diversity of protesting groups with a paranoid feeling. He speaks through the state’s anxiety about the resistant potential of the social movements. Simply put, his personal irritation against the social movements is actually the voice the Cold War government’s:

Through the battered century of world wars and massive violence by other means, there had always been an undervoice that spoke through the cannon-fire and ack-ack and that sometimes grew strong enough to merge with the battle sounds. It was the struggle between the state and secret groups of insurgents, state-born, wild eyed – the anarchists, terrorists, assassins and revolutionaries who tried to bring about apocalyptic change. (563)

Edgar Hoover still recognizes no actual chance for a socially and culturally oriented set of movements against the repressive politics of the state, yet he merely deems that an ongoing conspiracy could only lead to such widespread group of insurgents igniting social resentment during the Cold War. Through his eyes, the decade’s subcultural resentment is an evil conspiracy to overthrow the state and is supported by the communists inside: “He thought the time might be coming, once again, when ideas became insurgent and rebel bands were reborn, longhair men and women, scruffy and free-fucking, who moved toward armed and organized

resistance, trying to break the state and bring about the end of the existing order” (563-64).

Actually, the war protestors make a presence within the Black and White Ball held in the Plaza Hotel where Edgar Hoover and Clyde Tolson come across them. The protestors attend the Ball in the masks of Asian kids and severely criticize the official policies with several slogans. Moreover, one of the female protestors happens to dance with Clyde Tolson in her mask and sarcastically stings Tolson for the role of the social stratum he belongs to:

“. . . We can look around us,” she whispered, “and see the business executives, the fashion photographers, the government officials, the industrialists, the writers, the bankers, the academics, the pig-faced aristocrats in exile. . . . Because they’re all part of the same motherfucking thing,” she whispered. “Don’t you think?”

Well, she just about took his breath away, whoever she was.

“The same thing. What thing?” he said.

“The state, the nation, the corporation the power structure, the system, the establishment.” (575)

After Tolson and the woman converse, a band of protestors clad as monks, nuns and executioners raid the dance hall, which is to Hoover’s shock. The band is not a recognized one, and the Internal Security cannot come up with a certain name for the group. In a manner of paranoia and condemnation, Hoover has a totalizing look on all the various kinds of dissenting subcultural groups, all active in the sixties. Furthermore, he is suspicious of the inherent links among them: “Find the links. It’s all linked. The war protestors, the garbage thieves, the rock bands, the promiscuity, the drugs, the hair” (577). Very basically, Hoover’s paranoia indirectly turns out to be true. They are all linked not by a conspiratorial insurgence or under a communist lead. But, in the sense that Laclau and Mouffe have put down before, this diversity of social protests and groups is inherently linked for they all share a common opposition to the settled capitalist ethos. The plurality of social antagonisms and the multiplicity of the points of resistance aim at a ‘radical democracy.’ Therefore, these manifold social movements are the outstanding evidence of the totalization of the social by the Cold War regime and they display the rejection of this totalitarian impulse. Finally, they expose the unfixed and anti-binary nature of resistance in the transformation to

the post-Fordist society; and they respond to the politics of late capitalism through micro-resistances.

### **5. 3. 2. The Quotidian and the Ritualistic Resistance: Art of the Everyday and the Politics of Space**

The interest in the quotidian as a new site for power struggles in the 1960s and onwards is also a concern for *Underworld's* representation of power politics. Everyday life is as much a realm of ideological representations of power as it is a zone of unpredictability for the practice of micro-resistances. In the fashion that Lefebvre has put down, everyday is the locus for the hegemonization of public space through cultural practices and reifying social relations. The diffusion of power in everyday life brings forth a network of resistant practices. There always exists within the everyday a sense of contingency and complexity of counter-hegemonic forces in late capitalist cultural sphere. A strand of resistant actions in the novel against the Cold War administration and the dominant political economy are fascinated with this potential of the quotidian for a proliferation of symbolic resistant practices.

Everyday is a refuge for various underworlds of resistance against the dominant cultural and political bloc. Don DeLillo indirectly emphasizes the political significance of the realm of the everyday in a highly symbolic scene between juvenile Nick and Father Paulus. The father lectures Nick about how to name the different parts of a shoe under different terms. Much to Nick's astonishment, Father Paulus' mastery on a variety of seemingly futile details about everyday knowledge appears as a virtue. In fact, this is DeLillo's way of underlining the role of the quotidian knowledge in the articulation of popular resistance, which is thematized in several places in the novel:

“Everyday things represent the most overlooked knowledge. These names are vital to your progress. Quotidian things. If they weren't important, we wouldn't use such a gorgeous Latinate word. Say it,” he said.

“Quotidian.”

“An extraordinary word that suggests the depth and reach of the commonplace.” (542)

Essentially, it is the improbability of attaining control over the everyday realm that makes DeLillo highlight the role of the quotidian in such a way. That is to say, DeLillo's notion of the everyday in its relation to power struggles resembles those of Lefebvre's. He tells Kim Eichlin in an interview concerning this remark about the quotidian: "There must be something *mysterious and beautiful* in the everyday. And there is something curiously elusive about the everyday" ("Baseball," 148; emphasis added).

Micropolitics of resistance are directed to a transformation of the everyday through minor and scattered forms of dissent instead of a total enterprise of transformation. At least, quotidian resistant practices aim at more direct and partial assaults on the system with short-term but sensationalistic effects. Umberto Eco, in his article "Striking at the Heart of the State," claims that "the idea of a Che Guevara-type revolution has become impossible" within the present corporate culture and the spread of multinational capital since the system is "headless" and "killing the king" won't suffice (115). Hence, for him, the most popular types of resistant actions comprise local struggles and acts of harassment. In *Underworld*, in line with this spread of micropolitics of resistance, local struggles and acts of harassment have come to portray the popular forms of dissent. The 'mysterious and beautiful' elements that DeLillo finds in the quotidian have come to be structured as a strand of resistant practices in the popular power politics of post-1960s. The potentials of the everyday are introduced into resistance forms through ritualistic elements of performance art. Gestures of symbolic resistance against the capitalist spectacle and social relations, like in the avant-garde Situationist movement in France, are clad in popular art in *Underworld*. The idea of revolutionizing urban spaces happens through artful violence. In other words, in *Underworld*, the resistant structuring of social spaces to generate alternative experiences of life in the quotidian take the form of what we might call 'stylized vandalism.'

Garbage guerillas in *Underworld*, a kind of urban guerilla, are among the perpetrators of symbolic or rather artful vandalism during the office of Edgar Hoover. They plan raids on people's garbage cans and expose their personal trash to create an effect of obscenity about personal consumption. They provide a sense of

uncanny by mimicking the violation of personal secrets. The garbage raids are operated on a principle of voyeurism. As far as Clyde Tolson informs Hoover before the Black and White Ball in 1966, the guerillas' next target is Hoover's garbage for a public spectacle. Tolson tells Hoover:

“Confidential source says they intend to take your garbage on tour. Rent halls in major cities. Get lefty sociologists to analyze the garbage item by item. Get hippies to rub it on their naked bodies. More or less have sex with it. Get poets to write poems about it. And finally, in the last city on the tour, they plan to eat it.”

...

“And expel it,” Clyde said. “Publicly.” (558)

This use of an act of harassment as a stylistic tool for the exposure of garbage is a highly symbolic act of resistance. In fact, the act of harassment is twofold. The garbage raids are directed firstly to the codes of the consumer society, and secondly to the politics of surveillance foregrounded by the FBI in the Cold War period. The dominant mood of anxiety, for the raise of which Hoover is responsible for the most part, hits back to him as the chief officer of the Cold War politics of containment through this symbolic act: “How odd it seemed that such a taken-for-granted thing, putting out the garbage, could suddenly be a source of the gravest anxiety” (558). Both the economy of excess in capitalism and the “obscene excess” (Mattessich par. 35) in the political economy of postwar surveillance strategies are raided symbolically by this procedure of popular performance art. Therefore, the resistant element in the everyday, with uncontrollable energy and uncontainable forms of dissent, oppose “sophisticated biopolitical management of people's desires and freedoms;” and consequently react against the domination of “the ‘underworld’ of lived experience, conceived as a ‘secret’ place where consent is withheld or resistance is expressed” (Mattessich par. 35). The garbage guerillas make use of the everyday forms of resistance to arouse a counter-fear against the everyday fears of liquid modernity and the anxieties in the post-Fordist society. Everyday is taken as the locus where the everyday fears of late capitalism is experienced and at the same time where these fears are re-channeled back against the significant parts of the administrative system.

The terrorizing tactics utilized by the performance art of garbage guerillas penetrate the space of the private, the garbage can, and make it public by forming a spectacle out of it. The paradox is that garbage is never merely an item of the private space, but always an extension of the dominant economic system; and thus, it is essentially a by-product of the economic system manifest within the public space. Therefore, by the type of anxiety garbage guerillas provide, garbage serves to disclose and simulate the state's penetration into the private spaces of the public by strict monitoring. This type of harassment is an act of outwitting the hegemonic forces. In de Certau's terms, it is a re-use and a re-appropriation of the components of the dominant culture and retaliation through disseminated daily unofficial practices. Lacking a certain area of confinement, these resistant tactics determine the everyday as their locus of action against the well-defined institutions and spatial procedures of the state's subordinating strategies. Finally, in de Certau's words again, garbage guerillas may be claimed to aim at forming 'a network of anti-discipline.'

Another pre-eminent form of stylized vandalism in *Underworld* is graffiti writing, or throwing tags, as Ismael Munoz (Moonman 157) speaks of it. This popular form of art expresses a bottom-up voice of the streets. It is a true art rising out of the public space, and it is a form of art that enables tactical maneuvers in spatial fluidity due to the fact that it does not belong to any confined space of artistic consumption. It is a street-born grassroots movement, which is an indirect way of decrying problems within the urban spaces and underlining the dysfunctional mechanisms of public services emerging in the 1960s and following into the early 1990s. Joe Austin, in his work about the history of graffiti writing in New York City, evaluates the appearance and the general function of this popular artistic form as follows:

Writing was inspired by the political mass movements of the 1960s, by the utopian strains swirling within the contradictory mixture of counterculture and commercial popular culture, by urban youths' own sense of the narrowing possibilities for social acceptance and economic mobility in a postindustrial city, and by the traditions created within earlier youth formations, which they inherited. (4)

As the assertion of presence by the subordinated suburban youth, graffiti writing becomes their way of communication to the larger society. Ismael Munoz represents this impulsive urge to signify and reflect the under-life in the Bronx to the wider social strata: “The whole point of Moonman’s tag was how the letters and numbers told a story of backstreet life” (434). This spontaneous public conversation, or rather the symbolic dissent and its spatial diffusion in the urban space, puts forth the untold story of the people in the margins of the society. DeLillo posits this idea about the function of the writing profession through the character of Munoz: “this is the art of the backstreet talking, all the way from Bird, and you can’t *not* see us anymore, you can’t *not* know who we are, we got total notoriety now” (440). The resistant feature of graffiti art is thus voiced by Munoz’s self-perception and the value he sees in his own performance. In fact, the ritualistic element, amplified by the aesthetic value of this resistant voice, also gives it a more enduring and systematic appearance. Munoz’s pieces are eloquently present “with high-lights and overlapping letters and 3-D effect, the whole wildstyle thing of making your name and street number a kind of alphabet city where the colors lock and bleed and the letters connect and it’ all live jive, it jumps and shouts” (433). Analogically, the locking letters and the spatial aesthetics of tagging alphabets resemble the cultic patterns of ritualistic rebellion of the cult in *The Names*. It stands for the formation of a counter-systematic of using the lived spaces over which the dominant power is imbued and inscribed.

Graffiti writing serves for a “re-territorializing” of urban spaces by disrupting “the uniform orderliness of shared public spaces” and introducing alternative “cultural aesthetic codes” through the everyday (Austin 103). This ritualized process of resistant writing in the novel, symbolized by gestures of tagging and bombing, highlights the procedure of marking a peculiar territoriality by the alienated minority within public spaces. Against the state’s and capitalism’s wide reach of incorporating strategies, spaces tagged with graffiti are regarded as autonomous zones of expressive identity which satisfy a subcultural sense of belonging. Aiming at a demarcation of an authentic site for expression, Munoz and his crew’s acts of writing accompany the demands of other social movements and takes place among the wide scale of resistant social movements. Therefore, graffiti writing signifies a

transformation of the political education of young people after the late 1960s and more specifically their yearning to “appropriate cultural and physical spaces of relative autonomy” (Austin 270).

The fear introduced to public sphere and the sense of offense in people fulfill a communicative connection between the alienated youth and other social communities on an instinctual level. In mimicry of the pervasive fear in liquid modernity, the art of graffiti aims to publicize the problems and the habitat of disillusioned people at the cost of scaring and irritating its addressees. The backdrop of capitalist accumulation and the consequent social and economical problems, especially in Bronx, are laid bare in the novel by the codes of graffiti writing through what may be termed “the democratic aesthetics of shared public space” (Austin 6). Munoz takes this act of communication seriously and enjoys the shocking effect of his art in terms of arousing surprise by its peculiar sign system:

He liked to watch the eyes of platform people to see how they reacted to his work.

His letters and numbers told a story of tenement life, good and bad but mostly good. The verticals in the letter *N* could be drug dealers guarding a long diagonal stash of glassine product or they could be schoolgirls on a playground slide or a couple of sandlot ballplayers with a bat angled between them. (440)

One important thing is the choice of places where Munoz and his crew prefer to paint. Subways are their main location to assemble and perform their art. Actually, behind this choice lies the avoidance of remaining static and frozen in their resistant procedures. Subway trains both provide mobility for their messages and fluidity in their organization and locus:

There was no art in bombing platforms and walls. You have to tag the trains. The trains come roaring down the rat alleys all alike and then you hit a train and it is yours, seen everywhere in the system, and you get inside people’s heads and vandalize their eyeballs. (435)

Subways present an outstanding metaphor by which the underworld and network images are combined in the novel. That graffiti is an underground art and that it sets up networks of practice are thus deduced from this metaphoric value of the subway system. More significantly still, the emergent resistance potential in



bombing trains with graffiti imply that an underground network is always ready to spring from within the hegemonic dissemination of power networks. The subway system not only serves as a mock-institutional meeting ground for the graffiti artists for their productive work but also functions as a “citywide mass media” that forms a “centripetal force” holding the subculture together (Austin 249). Therefore, the use of the subway system by graffiti artists in *Underworld* puts forth a territorialized counter-practice of power that spreads just under the nose of an institutional location.

Seen from a wider perspective, tactics of writing graffiti can also be associated with commercial campaigns. Targeting the perception of the receiver with harsh, witty and flashing slogans and calligraphic designs, both advertisement and graffiti patterns use similar eye-catching tactics. In fact, it is due to this association that DeLillo uses the same jargon for the two practices. While the success of the advertisements owe much to their appeal for the consumers’ eyeballs, as it has been mentioned above in the case of consumer spectacles, graffiti depends on the same principle. As it is put in the novel, “this is the art that can’t stand still, it climbs across your eyeballs night and day” (441). Thus, throwing tags is employed as a way of outwitting and tricking the dominant strategies within consumer capitalism. It reproductively manipulates the dominant cultural codes of commercializing. In this sense, it is “a means to ‘democratize’ print and visual reproduction technology” (Austin 266).

As for the final analysis, one last way to assess the role of resistant popular art within the context of *Underworld* is to focus on the opportunity of comparing the terrorizing effects produced by the garbage guerilla and the graffiti artist to the terroristic acts of violent sort. The terrorizing tactics and vandalized art of popular artists in *Underworld* present a stylistic terror and symbolic resistance whereas the catastrophic incidents wrought by the Alley Boys or the mad bomber produce chaos. In other words, symbolic resistance of mock-violence follows more of a creative and productive path pushing an alternative set of codes within the cultural sphere in contrast to the acts of dissenting violence. Therefore, terroristic art and acts of terrorism happen to be portrayed as two different branches of severe resistance in the

novel, both of which have a place in the cultural and political atmosphere of the late-1960s in America.

Moreover, the use of vandalistic art also makes a problematic out of the representation of terror in the novel. It questions the relationship between terrorism and its media coverage. According to Mexal, acts of terrorizing always take for granted a community of observers:

Terrorism, then, is collectively produced, but it is also collectively consumed. In the end, it conjoins the historical moment with a disparate community of observers; it recreates the populace and the public sphere through its technological exposition, its configuration as spectacle. (334)

In other words, an act of violence can only be evaluated as terrorism so long as there is a public consensus on the nature of the event. At that point, the role of media to interpret and publicize a violent act plays a vital role in terms of naming it terrorism.

Media can either create a public notion on a single incident as terrorism or it can undermine the severity of the act of violence through endless replays and reproductions. As in the case of the constant replays of JFK assassination and Texas Highway Killer video, electronic media has got a lessening effect on the acts of terror, casting them into banality and commodity form. Yet, on the contrary, acts of stylized vandalism, as in the case of garbage raids and throwing tags, are not electronically mediated. Or rather, though Munoz's tags appear a couple of times on the evening news, they still retain their shocking power in the underground tunnels. And in their uniqueness, they vigorously attain the impulsive reactions of observers in the public space. Finally, acts of stylized vandalism and terrorizing art form a contrast to the reproduced spectacles of terrorism. They achieve an organic network of communication and circulation of resistant codes and messages different than the electronic networks of transmission. In this sense, the potentials of the quotidian raises a more true-to-life perception of the tension between the hegemonic and resistant forces through a more 'democratized print' in the form of everyday art.

### 5. 3.3. Avant-garde and Waste: Politics of Montage

What further accompanies the resistance of vandalistic popular art in *Underworld* is the use of avant-garde art. Avant-garde art takes the elements of physical violence and aesthetics of harassment and invests it into the political perspective of a refined art form. In other words, it inserts the shocking element of harshness into the universe of artistic production through an ambiguous use of imagery. Therefore, it amplifies the street manners of dissent in a socially acceptable way. Whether avant-garde is a sound way of resistance or is bereft of any resistant energy since it is an incorporated form of expression is a secondary line of discussion for this context, and it is avoided for the time being. However, it should be underlined that examples of avant-garde in the novel creates fresh perspectives to envision the major concerns of DeLillo's work about the capitalist economy and the history of Cold War.

Klara Sax is the central character that is involved in the procedures of the avant-garde. She contributes to DeLillo's political comprehension and the novel's critical perception of the issues in progress from the mid-century to the late century America. Behind Klara's massive installment of the 230 abandoned B-52 atomic bomber aircrafts within the Arizona desert lies a serious criticism of the cultural politics of Cold War and the consequent capitalist ideology. Klara's art project functions to structure a refreshed awareness of the dominant cultural and political issues through a re-ordering of the artifacts of the era in concern. It can be asserted that her reproductions and installments, in a sense, are a materialist evaluation of the historical conditions that she thematizes in her art. In order to understand the resistant and critical dynamics in Klara's avant-garde art, which are also essentially shared by DeLillo himself, the stylistic continuity between Klara's early artistic aspirations and her later career should be inquired. Thus, the early phases of her artistic adventure in 1974 and in 1978, narrated respectively in Part 4 and Part 3 under the titles "Cocksucker Blues" and "The Cloud of Unknowing," illuminates the production of her masterpiece in 1992, narrated in Part 1 titled "Long Tall Sally."

Klara appears as a waste artist in Part 4, under the nickname 'the Bag Lady,' turning types of refuse and waste into art. Her art is collage-based, and she performs

her art as a bricoleur. Since it is “a post-painterly age,” as she explains to her colleague and friend Acey, she avoids mere representational art and she turns to bricolage to convey a political aesthetic: “We took junk and saved it for art. Which sounds nobler than it was. It was just a way of looking at something more carefully. And I’m still doing it, only deeper maybe” (393). In this early period of her career, she is in a sort of discovery mode about the capabilities of expression and of having a say on the larger culture through the everyday cultural artifacts. Acey sees a spark of future success in her attempt, promising a critical vein of art. She muses on Klara’s technique and encourages her: “You take your object out of the dusty grubby studio and stick it in a museum with white walls and classical paintings and it becomes a forceful thing in this context, it becomes a kind of argument. . . . It becomes very, I don’t know, philosophical” (393). Therefore, mainly her pursuit of authentic artistic and political expression depends on the technique of re-contextualization.

Moreover, she doesn’t seem to be content with the easy-go aesthetics of instant popular art. She repaints surfaces with various types of paints and chemicals that help her think about the nature of the works she does. She sees herself as a craftsman, and the materials she works with loads her a sense of commitment and belonging, not to the higher culture but to a modest life of toil and surroundings: “And it took her years to understand how this was connected to her life, to the working-class grain, the pocked sidewalks, beautiful blue slate in fact, cracked and granule at the corners, and the tar roofs, and the fire escapes of course” (471-72). Therefore, Klara feels the lack of a sense of historicity in the contemporary art and she perceives her need for a historical perception in her politically expressive art of bricolage: “Art in which the moment is heroic, American art, the do-it-now, the fuck-the-past – she could not follow that” (377). The art that is dissociated from historical perspective regresses to be a commodity or an empty sign. Seeing this fact, Klara substantially supports her artistic commitment with the motives of a personal past:

She needed to be loyal to the past, even if this meant, most of all if this meant incorporating her father’s disappointments, merging herself with the many little failures he amassed like faded keepsakes. She thought of his View-Master reels of the Grand Canyon and the great West, the unreachable spaces he clicked into place on his stereoscope, and she recalled so clearly the image of Hopi scout posed on the edge of some

rimrock, and whatever it was out there in the 3-D distance, the Painted Desert or Zion Park, and how her own smallness, her unnoticeability was precisely the destiny she'd assigned herself. (473)

This early scene posits the flash forwards of Klara's colossal project on the Western desert. Furthermore, her project's historic quality of tying the inquiry of a personal past to a cross-section of the national history can also be found in her early contemplation above. But, most importantly, what astonishes Klara and brings her a heightened sense of artistic awareness is her witnessing of two inspirational art pieces by the famous Russian director Sergei Eisenstein in 1974 and the Italian architect-sculptor Sabato Rodia in 1978. In Radio City Music Hall, Klara watches Eisenstein's film *Unterwelt*, which is actually a non-existent film in Eisenstein's filmography and a faux element devised by DeLillo in *Underworld*. The film is essentially inspirational to Klara's techniques of representing her age. No less effective than the film, Rodia's Watts Towers, an "architectural cluster" (276) of soda cans, beer bottles, ceramic tiles, pottery shards, sea shells, and broken glasses, is a weird piece of engineering-sculpturing. Completed in 33 years, from 1921 to 1954, this colossal amassment of steel rods, pipes and wires poses an example of a structure that is constructed out of the bricolage aesthetics. The aesthetic qualities and the productive processes of these two pieces of art are deeply reflected in Klara's project of repainting de-commissioned atomic bombers in the desert.

*Unterwelt* is a film about a mad scientist with a tone of surrealistic touch. Yet, what determines its weight in the novel is how it narrates its subject instead of what it tells. First of all, Eisenstein's film is an experimental one, in which he uses the camera angles and fragments of shootings in a kind of dialectical juxtaposition. The authenticity of his cinema language depends on his use of montage whereby he draws political conclusions by installing antithetical shots consequently: "In Eisenstein you note that the camera angle is a kind of dialectic. Arguments are raised and made, theories drift across the screen and instantly shatter – there's a lot of opposition and conflict" (429). The rapid pace of the Eisenstein film proceeds with instant close-ups and juxtapositions of images from multiple camera angles. This forms a "politics of montage" in which details from different contexts are "intercut" and piled on one another (443).

Significantly, *Unterwelt* is depicted as Eisenstein's secret rebellion against the official art of the Soviet politburo, "a protest against socialist realism, against the party-minded mandate to produce art that advanced the Soviet cause" (431). In other words, firstly, the film is political since it aims an opposition against the Soviet power regime. It reflects the challenge of individual freedom of expression against the block of hegemonic institutions. And secondly, it has a peculiar aesthetics of montage to underline the contradictions of the system and the facts he criticizes: "All Eisenstein wants you to see, in the end, are the contradictions of being" (444). Thus, it definitely fits in to the function of the avant-garde in creating a split of perspective when looking at ordinary things or at a slice of life. Finally, Klara is pictured as absolutely impressed by Eisenstein's achievement; she keeps seeing Eisenstein's fragments in her mind and having the movie "all around her" (445).

Similarly, Sabato Rodia's *Watt Towers* presents an art of montage out of used and found objects. There are apparent product labels on the glass and tile fragments that decorate the concrete blocks, such as 7-Up, Canada Dry and Milk of Magnesia. The economy of juxtaposing cultural fragments into a higher form of artistic product is the underlying contradiction in the Towers. On his visit to the Towers, Nick Shay puts his impressions as follows: "Whatever the cast-off nature of the materials, the seeming offhandedness . . . [t]here was a structural unity to the place, a sense of repeated themes and deft engineering" (277). And consequently, this further enlightens yet another phase of the conflict about the Towers, which is the building up of idiosyncrasy out of disposable waste and interchangeable discharge: "But the curious thing, the contradiction," tells Nick, "is that I was standing in the middle of a fenced enclosure in a bungalow slum looking up at the spires of the great strange architectural cluster known as the Watts Towers, an idiosyncrasy out of someone's innocent anarchist visions" (276). This achievement by Rodia, an illiterate man indeed, is a challenge to the high culture and a re-writing of the under-history of the American consumer culture in the mid-century through the politics of montage. Osteen comments that Rodia's art goes much beyond an assertion of idiosyncrasy. For him, it synecdochically represents the notion of American history and community, crystallized by the economical and social forces implied in the recycling economy; and he asserts that "Watts Towers thus epitomize how art can become an

‘agent of redemption,’ reconstructing hope and beauty out of the wreckage of history; as such it offers a model for all post-Cold War artists” (Osteen 255).

Klara Sax, the post-Cold War artist foreshadowed all in Eisenstein’s and Rodia’s political aesthetics, takes advantage of her predecessors’ expressive styles. Her technique of montage has got depths of statement. Firstly, her installment of the re-painted war refuse in the desert may evoke the sense of a giant but joyous and artful landfill. Inherent in the project is the dominant late capitalist paradigm of recycling economy. By re-decorating the aircrafts, more or less, she aims “saving them from the cutter’s torch” (70). Furthermore, the landscape is used as the calculated background of her montage and is an essential component of her art project, which denotes a location for the containment of waste: “The desert is central to this piece. It’s the surround. It’s the framing device” (70).

Yet, it is a simplifying glance to regard her project only as a recycling facility. Thus, secondly, the historical implications should be evaluated in her use of junk material and choice of the landscape. The preference of the defunct bombers helps circulate the images from the recent history, exhibiting all the gravity of the Cold War period. They function to be historical relics as much as they are junks. In that parallel, the desert also has a mission of a reminder of the American achievements in face of the atomic Soviet threat: “The desert bears the visible signs of all the detonations we set off” (71). Finally, Klara’s aesthetics of juxtaposing re-painted bombers and the desert yields a conflating picture of Cold War history and capitalist economy. Through art, she promises redemption and hopeful thought for the future. This implication of salvation offers “a phoenixlike resurrection out of the ashes of the capital,” and in fact, it is *Underworld*’s celebration of the avant-garde artist who manages to “forge economies of grace from the dead matter of weapons and waste” (Osteen 254).

Finally, this redemptive quality in Klara’s project owes much to the “survival instinct, [in fact] a graffiti instinct” in her art, which is an attempt to cry out the nation’s need to “trespass and declare [them]selves, show who [they] are” (77). Just like the nose artists that painted pinups on the fuselages of aircrafts for morale and self-assertion to survive the cruel conditions of the War, Klara endeavors to redeem

the Cold War history by a cathartic memorial of the Cold War conditions. Thus, just as the abandoned aircrafts stand for the end of the World War II, Klara's artful re-fashioning of the scrap war machines announces the end of the Cold War period. Klara's achievement is best appreciated by Nick and his wife Marian, floating over the site of the project in a hot air balloon. They come to an awareness of the traumatic Cold War experience by witnessing the enormous number of planes and the hulking size of the entire war junk exhibited in the desert. Nick's remark is conclusive about Klara's intentions: "And truly I thought they were great things, painted to remark the end of an age and the beginning of something so different only a vision such as this might suffice to augur it" (126).

The core of Klara's effort, then, is to penetrate the underhistory of the national trauma by tracing the quotidian experience via war refuse. This is where the mission of the avant-garde is involved in her art because avant-garde art claims to insert art into the daily order of things to vivify a new critical understanding. Klara openly puts the basic motive behind her attempt: "What I really want to get at is the ordinary thing, the ordinary life behind the thing" (77). The montage technique Klara uses to redeem waste helps her rebel against the official narratives of history by the push of the avant-garde into the order of the daily life, which helps her create a monumental art for the lost souls of the Cold War, resembling Munoz's monument of the Wall in Bronx (Gleason par. 9-10). It is thanks to her understanding of the resistant art and her aspirations from the examples of montage that she can set up a connection with the national past.

According to Philip Nel, "DeLillo keeps returning to the ambiguous legacy of the avant-garde as a way of imagining a resistance to the forces in which his characters find themselves enmeshed" (730). The contradictions offered by the montage technique are suggestive in the context of *Underworld* since they refer to the function of the historical avant-garde, as in the cases of Dadaism and Surrealism, which tend to disclose the ideological underpinnings of the Cold War period (Nel 731). Briefly, Sergei Eisenstein, Sabato Rodia and Klara Sax all represent the critical and resistant potential of avant-gardism in *Underworld*. Their art helps envision the disparate fragments of the dominant cultural and political hegemony. Their



techniques of production encompass the contradictory aspects and conflicts in the power blocks they criticize. Eventually, *Underworld's* cynical evaluation of late capitalism's contradictions and its retrospection on the paranoid Cold War atmosphere and vulgar conduct of ideological power are put forth via the resistant dynamics of the avant-garde art. It could then be clearly concluded that DeLillo's own text itself is in the same vein with the avant-garde artists it exemplifies. It dialectically seeks to reveal the cultural hegemony by depicting myriads of life fragments and cultural cross sections within a collage-like mixture of representations. Hence, in the end, that the Cold War ideology is intercut with the late capitalist ideology in the general frame of *Underworld* suggests that the disseminated power practices of the latter operate no less vulgarly than the repressive politics of the former.

## CONCLUSION

The three novels analyzed in this dissertation converge on the axis of cultural and political representations they bear and the relevant critical perspectives they put forward. Being the products of the post-1980s' cultural atmosphere and paradigms, *The Names*, *Mao II* and *Underworld* are rich in cultural details, political statements and critical visions about their periods. DeLillo's novels are loaded with sarcasm and a tone of negative assessment against the late capitalist world. 'Panic' and 'fear' are the two basic elements in the ideological and narrative structure of these three novels. In all of the novels, mystery, secrecy, conspiracy dynamics and levels of paranoia stand out as fictional tools to enlighten aspects of contemporary American culture and late capitalism. In each novel, different depths and aspects of corporate culture, neo-liberal ideology and the New World Order are scrutinized and thematized via the core concept of fear in order to display more blatantly the power-play in progress.

*The Names* is a re-contextualization of the mystery-romance narrative. The entrepreneurs' stories in pursuit of business interests and their encounter with the local dangers and the exotic in these classical romances find correspondence in DeLillo's novel in the world of global capitalism. The colonial period is replaced by late capitalism, and the individual adventurer is replaced by the multinational corporations. The 'uncanny' of the third-world regions and the middle-East is juxtaposed with the fear and awe bred by corporate agents and business networks. In this way, there appears an opportunity to observe their patterns as two opposite forces. However, the paranoia corporate capitalism and its agents produce appears much more overwhelming and extensive than the local risks, terrorist attacks and cultic violence of the third-world people. In fact, it is this first line of paranoia, namely the everyday fear instigated by global capitalism, which triggers reactionary dangers and oppositions. Briefly, global business is depicted in the form of conspiratorial structures involving hidden pacts, mutual interests, clandestine agents, and intelligence services.

*Mao II* is literally not a conspiracy narrative or a spy fiction, yet the paranoid perspectives and the conspiracy dynamics can be applied to the reading of the work to reveal the ideological impositions and manipulations within the cultural sphere of late capitalism. The sense of insecurity in this second novel of the dissertation is expressed in the individual's depreciation, loss of autonomy and will. In the novel, the individual agent is shown to be devalued in the face of two strands of forces. The first one is the human crowds or masses which stand out as a leitmotif in the narrative. The characters are shadowed by the will and power of various crowd types ranging from religious crowds and fanatic masses to terrorist groups and idly shopping crowds. Each type of these collectivities posits alternative ways to cope with the feeling of 'agency panic' and displays the relevant drawbacks of contemporary American culture that push people to the margins. The second force that dehumanizes the individual is the cultural apparatus and the ideology of the free market. Via the victimization of the characters of Bill Gray and Karen, the operation of the culture industry with its various threads and its ideological manipulations are laid bare. Specifically, the consumer culture, the media practices, replication techniques and the visual culture, and the publishing industry are depicted as the mechanisms of oppression. Thus, in *Mao II*, conspiratorial plotting is analogically present within the co-optation dynamics and the capitalist ideology that set up a cultural hegemony over the lifeworld.

The themes, the time spans and the cultural representations of contemporary America in the first two novels are covered and further elaborated in *Underworld*. This third novel is comprehensive of the four decades of American cultural and political history and is enriched with myriads of fictional and historical figures and incidents. Basically, *Underworld* focuses on the shifting of paradigms from the early times of the Cold War to the early years of the post-Cold War. The significance of the novel is that it attempts to trace the cultural and political continuities and ruptures that took place between these two periods. The basic rupture exposed in the novel is between the characteristics of Cold War paranoia and the post-Cold War insecurities. The easily defined paranoid thought patterns of the people caused by the rigid postwar administrations and the paranoia of nuclear threats from the Soviet Russia are transformed into not-easy-to-define patterns of industrial dangers, ecological

risks, political uprisings and the low level paranoia in the everyday life of a culture manipulated by global capital. This shift from the clear-cut lines of paranoia to a more diffused nature of everyday fears in the post-industrial society also indicates a change in the power structures and their conceptualization. The monistic power block of the Cold War government and the galvanizing fear that help them keep the population around a single identity is gradually substituted towards the post-Cold War years by the power dissemination and the consequent emergence of liquid fear. In other words, the expansion of power and capital in networks require the spread of paranoia and insecurity in networks and capillaries as well.

The premise in *Underworld* that Cold War politics masks the impacts of capitalist economy and its oppressive aspects is a suggestive one. Though consumer economy has its roots in the Cold War, its significance was overshadowed by more fatal topics like the nuclear panic or the oppressive bureaucratic apparatus. The booming economy of consumerism veiled by the postwar atmosphere continues into the post-Cold War years with more severely ruining effects. It finds expression in the novel in the switch from the domestic consumption habits in the 1950s to the economy of excessive consumption during the 1980s. One other indicator of this case is manifest in the parallel treatment of the weapon and waste industries and the paranoia they arouse. In *Underworld*, while the weapon industry and the armament race mark the technological paranoia with reference to the postwar defense politics and Vietnam, the waste industry and recycling facilities underline another aspect of the technological paranoia regarding the catastrophic environmental hazards and also denote the peaking consumption economy. Furthermore, both weapon and waste industries have their own subterranean zones where corporate networks conduct their business in secrecy, which is not only tolerated but also supported by the global economy and the logic of the transnational capital. Hence, the novel focuses on the big picture that depicts the blatant and unprecedented rise of the capitalist empire in America when the Cold War is over.

Briefly, the lines of conspiracy and paranoia are related to the neo-liberal ideology of the late capitalist society and the New World Order. In each novel, the conspiracy dynamics, plots and paranoid structures basically function to refer to the

hegemonic blocs in question. In *The Names*, it is the business elite and the corporate agents that build a bloc that conduct all the political and economic issues and perpetrate the developing countries' victimization. In *Mao II*, the insecurity of the individual and the authentic writer stems from the cultural hegemony that is established by the culture industry and the media. *Underworld* depicts the hegemony of the Cold War governments and the Federal Bureau and their use of public paranoia to create a unified American identity marked by anti-communism. This truly reflects the Gramscian notion of hegemony since people are willfully submitting to the oppressive Cold War politics in order to escape the communist threat. By this way, any resentment against the economic and social shortcomings would be labeled as communist sympathy and this helps the hegemonic bloc intensify their domination. This hegemonic bloc is also accompanied in *Underworld* by the military-industrial leaders and the corporate culture, which further produce awe and dehumanization in people. Therefore, the production of a twofold hegemonic bloc in *Underworld* is portrayed temporally so as to include the types of hegemonic practices in continuity. Thus, thinking through conspiratorial perspectives in the given contexts of the three novels corresponds to an ideology critique.

Althusser's concept of ideology as the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence helps explain paranoia's function to construct hegemony on people in DeLillo's novels. Paranoia is the prism that reflects the individuals' relationship to their environments and articulates the perception of their conditions of life. State-imposed paranoia and the fears aroused by the dominant economic system serve to condition the public sphere and make the individuals more vulnerable for interpellation. In the three novels, paranoia has a disciplinary effect on people and subdues them to make them conform to the requirements of the present system. In brief, paranoia is employed as the ideological tool of late capitalist society.

In all the three novels, the democratic spirit, implied as essential to the neo-liberal world-view, is ruined by the very hand of the capitalist institutions as well as the hegemonic blocs. Corporate bodies take over the public decision-making initiatives, which politically block the autonomous individual from democratic

participation. They are also so powerful as to unofficially determine the external affairs with any country and set up bureaucratic bonds to penetrate into the domestic affairs of any land for usurpation. Furthermore, the clandestine arrangements of these bodies are complementary to the undemocratic procedures of the other institutional practices. The covert ideological dictates of the culture industry and the secret politics of a mono-block postwar power regime further ruin the notion of democratic awareness. In other words, secrecy and democracy are antithetical terms, and they seem to clash every time in different occasions in each work of Don DeLillo. Hence, the characters' paranoid drives and states of panic should be regarded as yearnings for more democratic public sphere. The paranoid thoughts of ongoing conspiracies, curiosity about secret pacts and the fear of grinding mechanisms are the public's cry for a democratic transparency against secrecy. Thus, James Axton's maturation process in *The Names*; Karen and Bill Gray's existential panic in *Mao II*; Nick Shay, Matt Shay and Marvin Lundy's disillusioned states in *Underworld* all contain and exemplify the use of paranoia and conspiracy theories as the most popular and easiest access for a comprehension of the big picture in a state of helplessness and disappointment. Finally, conspiracy theories and paranoid patterns of thought seem to function as ways of reclaiming a democratic civil society exempt from the dictates of the culture industry, imperatives of transnational capital and the hegemonic politics of oppressive governments.

In this dissertation, conspiracy theories have been associated with the late Marxist and post-Marxist social and cultural criticism. It is generally argued that conspiracy theories in DeLillo's fiction provide an opportunity of cognitive mapping to portray capitalist institutions and the complexities of global capitalism. The fears and anxieties which conspiracy theories foreground in these novels reflect the inequities of capitalism and the social conflicts that arise out of the dominant political-economy. In a general sense, DeLillo's fiction makes use of conspiracy structures and paranoid perspectives to shed light upon the distribution of power and theorize its forms of dispersal. In this sense, it schematizes a strategic understanding of power relations where alliances, strategies and tactics are on the fore, compatible with the network of secret relations and conspiratorial networks. Thus, conspiracy dynamics in DeLillo's novels enhance an evaluation of the power dissemination

within relevant historical and social contexts via the ‘antagonism of strategies’ in Foucault’s words.

‘Everything is connected’ theme, especially highlighted in *The Names* and *Underworld*, is expressive of this strategic notion of power as well as of paranoid associations. Exceeding the number of just individual connections, the institutional and corporate connections define the real features of the world of global business. The system, in fact, is set up on the basis of the connections led by the liquid flow of global capital. This hectic appearance introduces in the two novels a sense of ambiguity and non-linearity in the chain of events. The density of interconnectedness among the seemingly irrelevant elements actually hints at a constant displacement and diffusion of power. The interconnected elements and the ambiguous lines of intersections are useful only for tracing the trajectories of complex power relations. In other words, conspiratorial connections and paranoid associations in *The Names* and *Underworld* enable an access to the microphysics of power that almost run in capillaries.

Furthermore, strategic notion of power relations requires strategic action that is stretched over a long time span in the cultural sphere. The microphysics of decentred power relations appear within the cultural practices, which are mostly determined by the dominant rationality of the capitalist cultural apparatus. The long-term strategic actions accomplished by the culture industry and its ideological underpinnings, associated with Gramsci’s notion of ‘war of position,’ clarify the process that intensify the impoverishment of the lifeworld. The cultural production processes, which are exemplified mainly by the visual culture, consumption habits and identity formation procedures, situate the individuals in a domain of power where they are subdued by the ever-present but invisible structures of capitalist power. Strategic alliances in the field of culture gradually achieve a co-optation of the public without arousing a direct reaction in people, which label the conspiratorial capillaries of capitalism.

Principally, it is posited in this dissertation that much of the social and cultural conflicts in the three novels are ‘overdetermined’ by the late capitalist economy and its institutions. Many of the interconnections that are speculated about

in these novels mainly cut across the axis of the present economical and ideological set up. However, this conception of overdetermination is not inclined to reduce the multiplicity of the conflicts in the general sense of the term. Differing from the simplistic economism of vulgar Marxism, the approach of this dissertation is more eclectic since it aims to capture and depict the multi-form antagonisms in late modern American society. Therefore, an adequate understanding of the strategies of global capitalism is needed in order to analyze the conspiratorial outlook and trajectories of power.

The logic of difference and heterogeneity, which is an essential part of conspiracy theory, is manifest in the multiplicity of social antagonisms in DeLillo's fiction. The diffusion of conflicts in a variety of relations, as numerous exemplified in *Underworld*, is characteristic of advanced capitalist societies. The variety of social antagonisms and new social movements are the consequences of the 'hegemonic articulation' processes conducted by the late capitalist ideology. A number of new identities appear subject to the hegemonic practices and they cover a considerable space in the political scale. Anti-war campaigns, student marches, black rights protests, countercultural movements, and the sensibilities of the New Left in the 1960s are some of the examples for different reactions to the various aspects of the hegemonic bloc. Though they seem to stem from different origins, they all aim to set up a radical democracy, and share a basic resentment against the hegemonic discursive practices.

The multiplicity of political identities and spaces are portrayed in all three DeLillo novels. The representation of this diversity of social antagonisms and reaction types posit the politicization of the many spheres of life. Almost every aspect of the quotidian is imposed with power politics and incorporated by the strategies of power play. The resistant use of space and cultic crimes in *The Names*; the terrorist resistance in *Mao II*; multifarious social movements, civil rights rallies, urban guerillas, and lifestyle anarchists in *Underworld* are the main indicators of this flourishing everyday politics with an extended space and variety. In the sense that Lefebvre puts forth, entire life seems to be politicized in DeLillo's fiction. The dialectics of repression and emancipation in progress in the everyday is what DeLillo



depicts in his conspiracy and paranoia structures. And the everyday, with its complexity and contingency, bears the counter-hegemonic potential against the hegemonic practices in late capitalism.

The practices of resistance are therefore manifold, in correlation to the wide expansion of the microphysics of power in the three novels. The micro-resistances, individual resentments, and mass movements mirror the far reach of oppressive power politics in each novel. The variety and types of resistance acts in the three novels can be categorized under two major categories: a) acts of terror and violence either literal or stylized. b) artistic forms of resistant expression. However, these two categories cannot be easily compartmentalized, yet there is a certain sense of transitivity between them.

Firstly, the cultic violence and killings in *The Names* are literal acts of terror. Yet, the tone of the uncanny, the randomness in their appearance and tactical use of space, and their inclination for the metaphysical exclude them from the definition of simply a terrorist group. Apart from who they kill and what they resist, how they act is significant to analyze their commitment. They certainly pursue a definite aesthetics for both political and violent action due to their peculiar engagement to the elemental world in reaction to the world of monetary power and business. Secondly, the novel that James Axton's son is writing in the Ob language can be counted as a piece of art. However, this short piece that covers the very last chapter of *The Names* is not directly a politically-oriented piece of expression. Its function is to add up to the general tone and use of the metaphysical, which is highlighted as an alternative and exclusive zone to the power-imposed world of the novel. This little piece also makes sense when Axton's maturation process and his final spiritual enlightenment in the final scene in Acropolis are considered. Thus, both violent action and literary expression in *The Names* share the same assets and provide metaphysical salvation and linguistic rupture from the dominant patterns and language of power as the novel's general premise for emancipation.

In *Mao II*, Abu Rashid's Maoist group in Lebanon that kidnapped the French poet and made bomb attacks on the site of the public reading of his poetry belongs to the group of armed resistance. The peculiar thing in DeLillo's use of this terrorist

group is that their case in Beirut has no direct historical relevance to the realpolitik in the American sphere. DeLillo employs this politically engaged armed group as a source of contrast against the discourse of capitalist incorporation, on the one hand, since the terrorist figure can only stay beside the co-optation of the culture industry. However, the terrorists' tactical alliance with the Western media for coverage though they are obviously against internalizing the values of Western morals is suggestive about the power of the capitalist codes. On the other hand, DeLillo focuses on the terrorist group in terms of group identity and the erasure of individual will it requires. And he compares it with the dynamics of incorporation in the capitalist West. DeLillo's deduction that Eastern totalitarianisms and Western capitalism display similar hegemonic dictates is a general premise valid for the whole novel.

The writer figure, Bill Gray, is the other preeminent figure of resistance in *Mao II*. He is the cynic figure who is aware of the loss of artistic expression as a voice for democracy, yet he still hopes to give out an honorable stance with his personal initiative. The democratic tenets he supports are absolutely opposite to the totalitarian terrorist structures although both parties seem to criticize the same aspects of liberal capitalism. What DeLillo achieves is a dynamic comparison of the political visions, capabilities and flaws of these two resistant figures. In the end, Bill Gray dies unexpectedly, which symbolically asserts the weakening or even the death of the politically committed writer as the responsible figure of his age.

*Underworld* portrays almost all the types of resistant groups that historically appeared in the post-1960s America. The portrait is huge in variety, including the New Left radicals, anarchists like the Alley Boys or the mad bomber, street performance artists like garbage guerillas and the graffiti artists, and avant-garde artists like Klara Sax. The new social movements are mainly composed of radical political activists. In *Underworld*, they are mainly seen to attend a variety of protests and rallies. They essentially do not use violence in their activities, yet the civil rights marchers and anti-war protestors encounter with the police force and are harshly distributed by the armed forces of the state. Nevertheless, the anarchist radicals, exemplified by the mad bomber and the Alley Boys, support violent political actions since they see it as legitimate against the all-powerful and armed state forces. They

can be regarded as committed to the discourse of terrorism although they mainly appear in individual acts.

However, the ritualized violence or the stylized vandalism of Moonman, the graffiti artist, and the garbage guerillas should not be categorized under the title of terrorism. It is better to locate them between art and violence for their aims of creating sensationalism do not target the physical ruin of any individual or corporate body. But their symbolic attacks aim at an institutional criticism of the state and the capitalist economy. Their game of resistance depends on trespassing the boundaries of any institutional space, inflict 'anti-discipline' within the institutional spaces and thus commit, in de Certeau's terms, an act of 'outwitting.' Garbage guerillas harass personal garbage and extend the limits of the personal space into the public space by an exhibition of Edgar J. Hoover's garbage to the public. It is an innocent but a tactical maneuver that aims to criticize institutional forces of the state, such as the Federal Bureau, via Edgar Hoover. At the same time, it underlines the economy of excessive consumption by focusing on waste. In their symbolic acts, criticism against both lines of ideology and power politics converge in a single resistant performance. Similarly, the graffiti artists that tag the subway trains create an anti-network just within the official subway network. Likewise, they are committed to spatial tactics to assert that they are present within the system and oppressed by the dominant economic order. The use of spatial fluidity by tagging the trains, not the platforms or the walls, give out the message that they are ever-present within the system and capable of doing anything just as the capitalist micro-powers are. Their resistant procedures defy being enclosed in any space to cope with the disseminated power networks. Thus, the symbolic violence and the performance art of these resistant groups mainly depend on the use of spatiality to assert their identity and to avoid being pinpointed by the systemic forces.

Political expression through art is also present in the novel. It puts forth a more refined vein of historical criticism against the Cold War times and the power politics it has created. DeLillo foregrounds the politics of montage in Klara Sax's colossal project of painting World War II refuse aircrafts in the desert. As a narrative strategy, DeLillo attempts to juxtapose the drawbacks and memories of the Cold War

with the recycling economy through Klara's performance of painting the old bomber planes to save them from the cutter's torch. This artful way of recycling the war relics and yielding their historical authenticity by the use of politics of montage requires an historical understanding of the context she problematizes. Therefore, in *Underworld*, making art out of waste through montage is raised over the depthless art that is exempt from a historical perspective. DeLillo makes use of the historical avant-garde and legitimizes the use of montage art with reference to figures like Sergei Eisenstein and Sabato Rodia. Essentially, montage technique in avant-garde performances functions to reveal the conflicts and contradictions of a whole by juxtaposing different fragments to reach a greater entity. The contradictions of the object of criticism are laid bare and rearranged in order to be highlighted within the new expressive entity in the art of montage. And in general, apart from Eisenstein, Sabato Rodia and Klara Sax's artistic and political expressions, Don DeLillo's general project in *Underworld* is compatible with the politics of montage in rearranging different fragments from the national history and from the individual stories of some dozens of characters from various social strata to display the contradictions of the Cold War years and the consequent boom of global capitalism.

It is also noted in the *Underworld* chapter that the wide range of resistant acts and the multiplicity of the social antagonisms stem from the heterogeneity of the strategies of power politics in the post-industrial societies. The multiplicity of political spaces and the proliferation of the points of conflict in advanced capitalist societies result from the expansion of the 'nodal points', using Laclau and Mouffe's terminology, by which the masses are subject to various hegemonic strategies. This premise in *Underworld* can also be generalized to the grand picture depicted by all three novels. The plural subject positions in post-Fordist societies and multiple levels of victimization caused by transnational capital give birth to a considerable diversity of oppositional movements and resistant acts. Therefore, it is asserted in this dissertation that the complexities and the diverse protocols of capitalist power are mirrored by the unprecedented rise of manifold resistant procedures and their unpredicted spread.

Resistant acts exemplified in the three novels, namely the social movements, acts of terror and ritualized violence, all produce a kind of paranoia against the fears created by the dominant administrative practices, technological apparatus and the corporate culture. In other words, resistance networks form a counter-conspiracy against the grand conspiracy of state politics and corporate capitalism. As a general premise in DeLillo's fiction, resistance networks originate just within the very networks of the hegemonic practices. Power and resistance practices cannot be totally dissociated in terms of the spaces they are generated and the procedures they employ. Simply put, since strategies of power and politics of hegemony give birth to homologous forms of resistance, power and resistance are entangled. As it is depicted in DeLillo's fiction, the patterns for the relation of domination and resistance can be schematized in knots and networks which invalidate a totally separate understanding of these two terms. Each term of the binary bears in itself the other term in potential; hence, they are not absolutely different modes of action. This case, in fact, is expressive of the relational understanding of power. In DeLillo's fiction, that the tension between power and resistance is set by the use of the same forms of conspiracy and paranoia manifests this strategic notion of power. Paranoia, since it is utilized by both oppressive and resistant forces, is the locus for a relational and strategic structure of power.

DeLillo's fictional representation of power politics in late capitalist America does not conform to a binary portrait of power and resistance. A strictly binary picture of power relations is irrelevant firstly in the sense that the power game is not played merely between a bourgeoisie class and a unified working class, but between the diffused power practices of abstract world systems and a plurality of resistant subject positions. Secondly, DeLillo projects transitivity between the procedures of power and resistance via the structures of paranoia and conspiracy. As stated above, the seemingly distinct procedures of power and resistance can replace one another, as observed in the strategic use of paranoia which serves as a tool of both power and as resistance. Likewise, the cultic terrorists groups in *The Names* spread paranoia in the business circles by imitating the random movements and fluid mobility of the power elite and the global capital. The Maoist group of Abu Rashid in *Mao II* tries to employ the tactics of the Western media, yet symbolically ends up being

incorporated. Similarly in *Underworld*, Edgar J. Hoover, who is partly responsible for paranoid Cold War state politics, panics and is cast into paranoia in the face of chaos caused by the multiple social movements and resistant actors. Therefore, the many types of resistance in DeLillo's novels do not point at alternatives for an absolute emancipation or power's revolutionary change of hand. Instead, they are partial and instant reactions against the aspects of the system. And fictionally, this use of multi-form resistant acts serves for a mapping of power-resistance distribution and their locations of practice. Thus, resistance as 'diagnostic of power,' in Creswell's words, enables situating the sources of domination; and the fictional representation of resistance is functional in indicating the variety of the sites and modes of power.

In general, there runs the dialectics between rationality and irrationality in DeLillo's portrayal of the cultural landscape and the current economic system in his fiction. Rationality denotes the over-rationalization of the lifeworld by abstract systems and the overwhelming dissemination of power in the public sphere. DeLillo asserts the irrational in the form of mystery and myth as an opposite source of power against the domination of 'purposive rational action.' The 'mysterious' provides a competing source of knowledge against the official explanations for the course of events and supplies a way to penetrate the subterranean and to create reverse ideological perspectives. In a 1999 interview with Chénétier and Happe, DeLillo comments about the use of mystery in relation to its contribution to the narrative structures, to the linguistic grip of reality, and to the new explanatory horizons:

**Q.** – *For you, then, mystery is not a notion that acts as mere narrative spring; it seems to affect the very texture of what you write, drives the writing rather than suggests the possibility of specific explanations?*

**DeLillo** – I think it's a function of the fact that I tried to get under things, into them and under them and frequently there is no logical explanation for many of the things in this book [*Underworld*] in particular and in my fiction in general. . . . There is an enormous mystery for me in the use of language and in creating correspondences in a sentence, in finding curious relationships between words, things that are not planned, things that are not logical, things that happen intuitively. I think this is the «cloud of unknowing», to quote the medieval theologian . . . (“Interview;” 2<sup>nd</sup> ellipsis in orig.)

This use of mystery as counter-knowledge, as a way of seeing what is underneath, is compatible with the use of paranoid and conspiratorial lines of explanation. The hermeneutics of the mysterious is apparent both in DeLillo's employment of ancient or modern urban myths and in his choice of leitmotifs in his fiction. The language cult in *The Names* is a true source of balance against the power structures, and it channels the metaphysical into the political discourse of the novel. Furthermore, ancient scripts and dead languages, as leitmotifs, are the veins of mystery that implement the dialectics of the rational and irrational. In the novel, the main setting of this dialectics is Greece, which is the furthest end of Western geography and the place where the Western civilization has originated. DeLillo's setting this dialectics into motion in Greece, thus, is highly significant in supplying a critical perspective against the American intelligence units and corporations in pursuit of power and financial profit. This implication of familial ties between the ancient Greek and the modern America not only displays the evolution of reason to the extreme rationale of domination, but also indicates the familial ties between the rational and the mysterious.

Similarly, DeLillo begins his portrait of the American cultural landscape in *Mao II* through the depiction of a mass wedding ceremony conducted by the Moon cult, which is un-American in origin. However, the normative tendency of distancing the roots irrationality from American culture and associating it with the distant Eastern culture is gradually invalidated by DeLillo. The West – as the cradle of reason – and the East – as the bed of irrational crowds and hypnotizing ideologies – are entangled in their procedures of dominating their people and are represented as homologous in setting up hegemonic orders. Therefore, the depiction of a cultic wedding ceremony is a good example of DeLillo's critical portrayal of American cultural sphere and the equivalent protocols of subduing the democratic public sphere. In other words, the irrational serves as a strategy of reading the over-rationalized domain of culture and provides a fresh vision to figure out the ever-present yet hiding power mechanisms. In this sense, 'image' as the leitmotif of *Mao II* occupies a central role since it is the dominant element in the service of the culture industry by its ubiquity and banality at the same time. Visual culture and visual technologies – ads, replication techniques, Andy Warhol's pop art, visual media

narratives, and photography – happen to create the same results and the similar irrational force of domination on the public sphere as that of the totalitarian regimes in the Eastern cultures. Thus, the visual is a way of access to a specific form of knowledge to evaluate the dynamics that control crowds and appreciate the hypnotizing power of the culture industry.

In *Underworld*, there are more than one leitmotifs that are equally functional to display myriads of lines of connections. The bomb, the baseball and waste are all fictional elements that work as objective correlatives that combine various threads of the narrative. The bomb dominates the public imagination throughout the Cold War years; and furthermore, it connects personal pasts, technological progress, paranoia, and the state politics to one another. Similarly, the ball combines the national history with private histories; and thus, generates the main narrative thread of the novel. These leitmotifs produce counter-systematic of penetrating the official discourses and create a public awareness of ‘history-in-progress.’ Likewise, landfills and waste reveal the secret procedures of the advanced industrial progress and the hidden aspects of the dominant political-economy. Waste provides almost a reverse-analysis of the history of a civilization; and it is an analogical tool to shed light upon the similarities between the politics of containing garbage and containing all the subversive thoughts in the American political history. Therefore, the ‘under-history’ of America is written through all these leitmotifs by building up modern myths. The dark sides of contemporary American history are enlightened via the uncanny and the mysterious as alternative forms of knowing and seeing. Thus, the use of the paranoid and conspiratorial perspectives is implemented through these leitmotifs as an authentic form of historical knowledge.

DeLillo’s use of mystery and the language of the mysterious supply a counter-discourse against the mystification in the capitalist societies considering the real relations of power, in Guy Debord’s words, and the fake sense of historical and social unity. The language of fiction that DeLillo employs to depict and then unveil the modern myths bears dense layers of the quotidian and marks of the various social strata. Since the locus of these modern mysteries is sought within the everyday, DeLillo’s fiction puts forward a historical retrospection from within the language of



the everyday. Especially in *Underworld*, the layers of language use display the articulation of the imagination and worldviews of diverse social and individual identities. The representation of historical and social reality through the language of fiction in DeLillo's novels aims at more than a sense of verisimilitude and exactitude. DeLillo is keen on the subversive use of language in fiction, and the bond between language and history in his novels is set up in a way to enlighten the unofficial records of history and to reflect the daily public imagination. In an article that DeLillo wrote about the publication of *Underworld*, he comments on this relationship between the language of fiction and its effect on historical representation:

Language can be a form of counterhistory. The writer wants to construct a language that will be the book's life-giving force. He wants to submit to it. Let language shape the world. Let it break the faith of conventional re-creation.

Language lives in everything it touches and can be an agent of redemption, the thing that delivers us, paradoxically, from history's flat, thin, tight and relentless designs, its arrangement of stark pages, and that allows us to find an unconstraining otherness, a free veer from time and place and fate. ("The Power")<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, it can be claimed that DeLillo's use of language and his fictional poetics is palimpsestic. The word 'palimpsest' literally refers to a writing material, a parchment or a scroll, that is used more than one time after the written material is scraped off. Though the writing on the parchment is either completely or partially erased for re-use, the previous writings can be seen and read underneath the present script. As a literary metaphor, palimpsest denotes an overlay of deeper structures and diverse segments of a literary work or the entity it fictionally represents. In these two senses of the term, the three novels handled in this dissertation bear the features of a palimpsestic writing. Firstly, DeLillo creates a nebulous aura to portray the mystifications of the dominant economic apparatus and its cultural devices of suppression. All the corporate networks, the military-industrial complex, tools of the

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<sup>3</sup> Don DeLillo's article, titled "The Power of History," is published in The New York Times, on Sept. 7, 1997. Generally, it is the author's account of his initial premises in writing *Underworld*, and he also puts forth his own poetics of writing fiction. The excerpt above from the article not only reflects the use of language in *Underworld*, but also his general view about the power of language in fiction writing. Several of his interviews also include bits and pieces of DeLillo's perspectives about language and its functional use in his various novels.

culture industry, media, and the other minor institutions and practices of capitalism are so densely located in DeLillo's novels that they almost posit a profane world of fantasy. However, underneath this complex picture of social and cultural practices, the strategies of power and resistant tactics can be observed. The unified, static, and ahistorical structure of the advanced capitalist societies in DeLillo's novels is gradually negated through a focus of miniscule operations of power and resistance beneath the big apparent picture.

Secondly, DeLillo's novels represent the social and cultural segmentations through the quotidian practices and language. His inclination to penetrate the subterranean is his main motive in his fiction writing. He exposes the private lives, personal dreams, private languages and jargons in relation to the national history and big international institutions. Therefore, he handles American history and the cultural sphere from within everyday sensibilities and provides a more true-to-life point of view. Thus, far from being myopic, the inclination for the subterranean and the palimpsestic fictional layers are structured within the conspiracy-paranoia rhetoric to discern the undercurrent flow of power relations.

Surprisingly, DeLillo does not write within the confines of a definite political doctrine and he actually denies having a political program. He also denies being a member of 'the paranoid left,'<sup>4</sup> and mentions that he is politically independent though his writings are shaped within the paranoid discourse against the dominant neo-liberal American ideology. Furthermore, as he confesses to Mark Binelli in an interview, it is also a fact that DeLillo marched and protested against the war in Vietnam in the 1960s, yet did not have any affinities with the lifestyle radicalism and the counterculture of the times (*Intensity*). Though DeLillo sounds fussy about not

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<sup>4</sup> See Anthony DeCurtis. " 'An Outsider in This Society': An Interview with Don DeLillo" pp 73. In his 1988 interview with Anthony DeCurtis, DeLillo blatantly dissociates himself from any political party:

**DeCurtis:** You've been denounced as a member of the paranoid left. Do you have sense of your books as political?

**DeLillo:** No, I don't. Politics plays a part in some of my books; but this is usually because the characters are political. I don't have a political theory or doctrine that I'm espousing.

For a similar remark, see also Christoph Amend and Georg Diez's interview with DeLillo that originally appeared in *Die Zeit* magazine on 11 October 2007. The English translation of the interview is available at <<http://dumpendebat.net/static-content/delillo-diezeit-Oct2007.html>>

being associated with the discourse of a certain political faction, his perspective in the representation of the economic and cultural apparatus is akin to the discourse of late Marxist criticism of the modern day capitalism. His fiction is inevitably political insofar as he takes the American cultural sphere and the practices of international corporations as his themes. DeLillo's fiction are inscribed with the many forms of power politics within the late capitalist culture, running in networks and implemented within capillaries. DeLillo's novels are hence attempts to decipher the complexities of the dominant relations of production – namely the post-industrial phase of capitalism – and the relevant cultural politics via the conspiratorial-paranoid perspectives and the palimpsestic fictional structures. In brief, DeLillo's fiction should be regarded as of a Leftist imagination and must be classified under the politically-oriented categories of writing.

In conclusion, Don DeLillo does not offer any political alternatives or solutions of any kind for the problems and social ills at hand. He is occupied more with representing the underworlds and the 'underwords'<sup>5</sup> of contemporary American society. However, a latent late Marxist discourse is recognizable in his fictional perspective of evaluating the late phase of capitalism and the social changes inclined towards the oppression of the civil society. His conspiratorial perspectives work as a source of ideology critique in his fiction, and they display the microphysics of power and resistance which are conducted within strategic maneuvers. Therefore, DeLillo's is an endeavor to construct a cognitive mapping of the sites and dissemination of power and resistance, which builds up a mental geography of the power-resistance knots that operate in contemporary American society.

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<sup>5</sup> This new coined word is originally from the work titled *Underwords: Perspectives on Don DeLillo's Underworld* edited by Joseph Dewey and his colleagues. The term refers to Don DeLillo's self-reflexive linguistic exercise in *Underworld* that mirrors the psychological perspectives of people from different social layers via the language of various class jargons and the heap of linguistic codes belonging to various age, profession and culture groups.

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