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The Search for Meaning and Identity in the Underworlds of Underworld

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There's a word in Italian. Dietrologia. *It means the science of what is behind something. Evidently they feel this science is legitimate enough to require a name.*

- Don DeLillo, *Underworld*

In a world where the individual is constantly bombarded with images and information, the ability to sort through the onslaught and to uncover personal meaning (or the illusion of it) beneath the visual signs and stimulation is an essential skill of survival. In Don DeLillo's *Underworld*, individuals flail against this constant wave of signs, mediation, and the forces of cultural ideology in the search for some small grain of meaning that exists outside of this chaos. The novel spans half a century of American life and includes both fictional and historical characters and events and touches on various themes such as nuclear power, baseball, graffiti, history and waste. DeLillo explores the quest for meaning and the establishment of personal identity within the media-driven, consumerist society of the text through the various underworlds and their inhabitants, all of whom struggle to create a place for themselves in the shifting, chaotic, and virtual environment of the postmodern world.

DeLillo's fictional America engages with many aspects of modern and postmodern society and social theory. DeLillo insightfully represents the individual experiences of many contemporary American citizens as his novel addresses the central conditions and contradictions that plague their lives. This discussion of meaning and identity within *Underworld* therefore has larger implications regarding the performance of individuality and the location of meaning in the real spaces of our society. The

nature of reality is contested within the novel. DeLillo engages with the models of reality outlined by Louis Althusser and Jean Baudrillard, evolving from an understanding of reality as a product of ideology to a postmodern vision of a hyperreal simulated environment. Both theories look to capitalism as the origin of modern and postmodern conditions, beginning with the strengthening force of ideology in the lives of individuals and then exploding through the rise of technology and new forms of media and mediation that deliver the institutional message en masse. The term "American ideology," in the context of this paper, refers to the dictates of a capitalist economy and to the cultural and national myths reflected in the machismo of American sports such as football and baseball (as well as their ugly step-brother, the nuclear bomb). The hyperreal environment in which this ideology manifests itself, the over-world of signs, advertisements, and television, contributes to the longing for meaning that plagues many of the characters in *Underworld* (and, presumably, many modern American citizens as well). Additionally, physical space is created by, and simultaneously works to reinforce, notions of cultural ideology. DeLillo explores this relationship between space and ideology in the novel through the shadowy underworlds lurking beneath the hyperreal world above.

Ideology dictates what is visible and invisible, thinkable and unthinkable, personal identity and national history. According to Althusser, ideology is made material through one's actions, which are themselves conditioned by the internalization of this ideology. As modern citizens, therefore, we unconsciously internalize ideology but believe we are acting independently, and are thus "subjects" in both senses of the word:

> 1) a free subjectivity, a center of initiatives, author of and responsible for its actions; 2) a subjected being who submits to a higher authority, and is therefore stripped of all freedom except that of freely accepting his submission…The individual is *interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection*, i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself.' *There are no subjects except by and for their subjection*. That is why they 'work all by themselves.'"[i]

DeLillo describes this unconscious process in *Underworld* as the killing of the subjective "I" by the institutionalized "he." Modern society is populated by individuals in whom "the third person watches the first person. The 'he' spies on the 'I.' The 'he' knows what the 'I' can't bear to think about…The third person sends his nobody to kill the first person's somebody."[ii] And thus one's individuality is strangled by one's institutionalized identity. At the same time, individuals are also blinded to certain realities that exist outside of the ideological sphere. They become unable to see what is proverbially 'right in front of their eyes.' In *Underworld*, DeLillo provides multiple examples of this blinding in the form of various conspiracy theories. For example, one character posits that "the census bureau is hiding ten million black people…what a tremendous manipulation. And it's going on right in front of our eyes."[iii] However absurd, conspiracy theories undermine the self-serving dictates of an ideology that presents itself as true and therefore does not encourage the 'subject' to doubt its veracity. The underworlds of *Underworld* exist to some extent outside of this ideological framework and therefore allow the 'subject' to think and act beyond the dictates of ideology, thereby potentially escaping their incarceration and achieving a truly free and meaningful identity.

Meaning, in this context, refers to a sense of order, truth, and personal choice beyond the limits of ideological thinking. It entails a subversion of the unstable,

mediated environment. Although ideology does provide one kind of meaning, a narrative of order that includes space for a certain type of individuality (i.e. the consumer, the mass individual), this narrative is often depicted as hollow, simulated, and empty of meaning in relation to the lived experience of DeLillo's characters. Thus, my concept of meaning is predicated on its distinction from the model of identity and reality posed by institutions, rather than on any universal notion of meaning, truth or individuality. It also therefore leaves open the possibility that there is in fact no meaning to be found outside of ideology. This search is characterized by a dichotomy between playfulness and terror; it is at once creative and joyful in individuals' alternative performances of identity but it is simultaneously driven by feelings of dislocation, paranoia, and loss inherent in society. DeLillo represents this dichotomy on a large scale through the juxtaposition of baseball and nuclear Armageddon, patriotic machismo and potential global annihilation linked hand-in-hand. The stakes are high but so are (potentially) the rewards of locating stability, individuality, and real meaning in this mediated and increasingly violent world.

In modern social theory, this longing for meaning is fostered by the feelings of instability and disorientation caused by a society in which "all that is solid melts into air."[iv] The world in which we live, according to Marshall Berman, is "something unrecognizable, surreal, a mobile construction that shifts and changes shape."[v] It is characterized by the terror of disorientation and disintegration, paradox and contradiction, and the overpowering of the individual by bureaucracy and larger social forces. These conditions have been represented in literature from as early as the beginning of the twentieth century (or even earlier, as some would argue). In *Sister*

Carrie, Theodore Dreiser places his heroine amidst just such an overwhelming world in which "she was much alone, a lone figure in a tossing, thoughtless sea."[vi] Individuals are faced with the struggle of finding a place for themselves and asserting their identities against the current of uniformity, power, and consumerism – in a world where, according to DeLillo, advertisement jingles and brand names are "easier to identify than the names of battlefields or dead presidents."[vii] Georg Simmel was the first to articulate this predicament:

> The deepest problems of modern life flow from the attempt of the individual to maintain the independence and individuality of his existence against the sovereign powers of society, against the weight of the historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life.[viii]

The struggle to preserve one's individuality is also the struggle to find stability in a constantly shifting world, and to establish a meaningful identity and retain a firm hold on reality. The longing for meaning is thus tied to the manifestation of a unique identity, and both goals are inherently subversive of modern culture. Without this longing, one is likely to lose oneself in the "tossing, thoughtless sea" that "pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish."[ix] According to DeLillo, this "longing on a large scale is what makes history," it is "the unseen something that haunts the day,"[x] the invisible force of individual yearning that works against the visible institutional powers, the nagging anxiety of a drifting and ephemeral bereavement.

The modern environment in which one tries to establish such an identity is additionally destabilizing due to the fact that everything is exaggerated, sped up, and blown out of proportion, including the capacities for progress and for destruction. Berman describes society as simultaneously Faustian and Frankensteinian. The

modern citizen must contend with "insatiable desires and drives, permanent revolution, infinite development, perpetual creation and renewal in every sphere of life; and its radical antithesis, the theme of nihilism, insatiable destruction, the shattering and swallowing up of life, the heart of darkness, the horror."[xi] DeLillo describes postmodern technology in similar terms, associating it with nuclear weaponry ("all technology refers to the bomb"[xii]) as well as a Faustian drive for power: "it has to stretch itself out, overreach itself; it has to improve itself almost instantaneously."[xiii] And the consequence of this relentless cycle of creation and re-creation is an increasing capacity for overwhelming annihilation. In *Underworld*, the "Museum of Mishappens" reveals some of the monstrous effects of nuclear technology, the Frankensteinian corollary to our Faustian overreaching.[xiv] Historically, forces of imperialism and of revolution have demonstrated this capacity for violence and destruction as a defining characteristic of the modern world. As the forces of creation accelerate (including new technologies), so too do the forces of de-creation, and both represent sources of rightful horror in the mind of individuals caught in its iron clasp. Additionally, the evidence of growing nuclear developments and associated paranoia points to a world in which only escalating demonstrations of pain (or the threat of it) can be used to ground us in an ever-changing, ever-disintegrating reality.

To complicate matters, the distinction between illusion and reality is also often unclear in our media-driven, simulation-filled society. As one of DeLillo's characters describes it, "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 the opposite. This *is* real…It's a dream someone's dreaming that has me in it."[xv] As a

result, life can often seem (or maybe really is) "uniformly hollow, sterile, flat, 'one-dimensional,' empty of human possibilities: anything that looks or feels like freedom or beauty is really only a screen for more profound enslavement and horror."[xvi] The characteristic ability of modernity to generate forms of pageantry and performance, to confuse the distinction between show and meaning, complicates the question of what is real and where one can firmly locate oneself in this world. Furthermore, it places the veracity of personal performances of identity into question as well. When personal identity becomes merely façade, says Berman, "there will no longer be any illusion of a real self underneath the masks. Thus, along with community and society, individuality itself may be melting into the modern air."[xvii] What individuals once perceived as pageantry or presentation, an exaggerated outward performance of the self, has become seen as real in an era of mediation and simulation. "You're pretending to be exactly who you are," says DeLillo.[xviii] In the process, the distinction between real and false dissolves and individuality evaporates, as Berman suggests. DeLillo acknowledges this threatening reality in *Underworld*, hypothesizing that in the postmodern world you can "know all by the soul of one. Because they're all part of the same motherfucking thing…The state, the nation, the corporation, the power structure, the system, the establishment."[xix] Individuality has become appropriated by state ideology and the capitalist system, and has become an illusion; according to DeLillo:

> 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 an instantaneous capital that shoots across horizons at the speed of light, making for a certain furtive sameness, a planning away of particulars that

> affects everything from architecture to leisure time to the way people eat and sleep and dream.[xx]

This ideology extends into our subconscious, fooling us into thinking we are unique when really this very uniqueness is just a construct of capitalist ideology. Individuals have internalized this ideology to the point where they no longer recognize their subjection except for the inescapable and unlocatable feeling of loss evinced by so many of DeLillo's characters.

To combat these larger forces that threaten to swallow one wholly and irredeemably, individuals strive to establish their identities firmly in a world that constantly shifts under foot and undermines their every move. One of the methods that DeLillo offers as a way to potentially achieve this is to look back to history, to locate oneself in a stable personal and communal past. As DeLillo illustrates, history – of the Cold War, of baseball, of small-town family events – indelibly informs who we are. In the past, before technology and increased mediation, the world was more real, "decades ago when things were not replayed and worn out and run down and used up before midnight of the first day."[xxi] Connecting to history, therefore, provides a way to ground oneself in a more stable environment, or so it would seem. DeLillo complicates this assertion, however, by identifying history on a large scale as ideological; it is the reflection of the cultural consciousness of a nation and is crafted by the institutional machinery that chooses to include events like a World Series baseball game while excluding others, like a USSR nuclear test explosion. As such, it provides a narrative that is not necessarily any more *real* just because it occurred in the less mediated past. History, for DeLillo, occurs simultaneously on a parallel personal level as well. Individual characters are forced to cope with the events in their lives that

inform their identities and understandings of the world. These histories are often just as fictional as those of the nation; as individuals alter and rewrite their own stories and craft stable narratives of a lost (and imaginary) *real* past. The blurring of boundaries between reality and fiction, as outlined above in relation to individual identity, therefore still exist within the seemingly stable historical past, in the narratives that are written for us and that we write for ourselves. DeLillo's historical narratives, like other seemingly promising avenues toward stability and order, repeatedly subvert individual efforts and leave one as uprooted and adrift as before.

The way one expresses his or her identity – ideological, fictional or otherwise – occurs in the physical spaces of society. One's interaction with one's physical environment consists of "innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production."[xxii] As we have seen, this space is contested, illusory, and unstable. We are forced to incorporate contradiction and insecurity into our material reality – to accept, in Paul Auster's words, that something "could be one thing…but it could also be another."[xxiii] Additionally, modern physical space, according to Althusser, is a product of cultural ideology. Althusser defines ideology as a representation of "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."[xxiv] The relationship of ideology to reality is thus triply removed. In other words, "it is not their real conditions of existence, their real world, that 'men' 'represent to themselves' in ideology, but above all it is their relation to those conditions of existence which is represented to them there."[xxv] Reality is therefore subject to physical and imagined alterations, and the individual subjective experience of this reality is seen as a construct of ideology. The

instability of modern life increases as Faustian technological breakthroughs, incessant acts of creation and destruction that change the physical landscape, occur in conjunction with mental notions of space and culture that also manifest themselves materially in Althusser's modern environment.

As a result of this connection, Althusser makes the claim that ideology has a *material* existence. Ideology finds physical expression through one's actions in the material world: "a man 'must *act* according to his ideas,' must therefore inscribe his own ideas as a free subject in the actions of his material practice."[xxvi] These rituals are practices that reinforce the reality and naturalness of everyday ideology in our lived relations to each other and to the places we inhabit. Individual actions within society thus compose the material existence of an ideological apparatus and ground that ideology in our real, lived experience:

> The existence of the ideas of his belief is material in that *his ideas are his material actions inserted into material practices governed by material rituals which are themselves defined by the material ideological apparatus from which derive the ideas of that subject*.[xxvii]

Althusser establishes a reality principle at the basis of an ideology that exists in the imagination. He argues that we operate in a 'real' world that is both a product and a cause of our imagined relations to it, culled from ideological representation (which masquerades as truth). For example, the World Trade Center towers are icons for DeLillo of the materially manifest ideology of capitalism – "the twin towers in the distance, a model of behemoth mass production, units that roll identically off the line and end up in your supermarket, with the day's prices."[xxviii] In this example, the built environment reflects the collective institutionalized actions of individuals and therefore the values of capitalism and uniformity that they (*subject*ively) uphold. However, this

relationship between individual actions and physical spaces can also be alternately subversive of cultural ideology. Paul Makeham describes this two-way relationship:

> Indeed, cities as a whole can be understood as sites upon which an urban(e) citizenry, in the 'practice of everyday life,' performs its collective memory, imagination and aspiration, performing its sense of self both to itself and beyond.[xxix]

The individual amidst this communal performance is either acting as an institutionalized subject, reenacting and reinforcing the ideology of the day, as in the case of the design and creation of the twin towers, "invulnerable metasigns of the system's omnipotence;"[xxx] or against it, in which case they are acting somehow outside of the dominant, communally-created space, operating within an alternative "underworld," as in the case of graffiti, for example. Alternative spaces and modes of performance provide the possibility, or at least the appearance of the possibility, of securing a meaningful place in an unstable and simulated world, one in which we must perform our irreplaceability or face being swallowed up by the torrential stream of mass production and consumption.

The relationship between cultural ideology and lived experience in the physical world, between imagination and reality, place and being, are, according to Edward Soja, "the ontological interrogations from which all social theory springs."[xxxi] Soja illustrates the "contemporary reassertion of space"[xxxii] in ideological debates, citing a necessary shift from a temporal to a spatial logic of understanding of society and social relations:

> Socially produced space is a created structure comparable to other social constructions resulting from the transformation of given conditions inherent in being alive, in much the same way that human history represents a social transformation of time.[xxxiii]

Space is both a product of society, as Soja demonstrates, as well as the medium and shaping force of social life, therefore making it inherent in any discussion of ideology.[xxxiv] Thus it is appropriate that DeLillo pairs "construction patters and altering systems of ritual"[xxxv] in the same sentence, binding changes in physical buildings with alterations in ideology. "Space is not a 'reflection of society,' it *is* society," claims Soja.[xxxvi] The study of individual identity and meaning thus necessarily incorporates a spatial dimension:

> If spatiality is both outcome/embodiment and medium/presupposition of social relations and social structure, their material reference, then social life must be seen as both space-forming and space contingent, a producer and product of spatiality.[xxxvii]

Therefore, the study of space and individuals' relations to it lies at the center of individual searches for meaning in *Underworld*. DeLillo narrates the difficulty of locating oneself in a stable space, "surrounded by all the things and textures that make you familiar, once again, to yourself,"[xxxviii] in a mutual exchange between self and environment, place and identity. However, this space can also be shifting and unreal, undermining the very sense of self that it informs. For instance, Klara describes feeling like a stranger in her own home:

> in alien space, in dreamspace still…a child located at the edge of a room, or a child dreaming the room but not in it herself—a room surreally open at one end, where the child stands or the dream begins, a room where things, where objects are called chairs and curtains and beds but are also completely different, unsupported by the usual guarantees.[xxxix]

Postmodern space is surreal, dream-like, amorphous, uprooted from any stable foundation of reality per se, and it thus unmoors hopes of a stable and localizable personal identity as well.

DeLillo's understanding of space and the nature of postmodern reality and individuals' relations to it is informed to a large extent by the theories of Jean Baudrillard. Baudrillard argues that we live in a hyperreality – a reality intensely mediated by technology and the overabundance of hollow signs, chains of signifiers that never refer back to a referent. Baudrillard, unlike Althusser, argues that in fact there is no basis in reality for the current ideology that governs social relations, "it is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real itself."[xl] What Althusser takes to be a stable, concrete (albeit ideologically-informed) basis in which we operate, Baudrillard identifies as a place of empty signs that do not meaningfully connect with reality at all. The shift in these two understandings marks the transition from the modern to the postmodern that is reflected in DeLillo's epic novel. Our contemporary world is constantly mediated by the forces and ideology of consumerism, through the technological mediums of film, radio, advertising, and other popular culture phenomena – all of which compose signs of the real that are consistently mistaken for the real itself.

For Baudrillard, American ideology consists of the dictates of consumerism and mass production, embodied in the image of the twin towers, as well American machismo represented by the threat of nuclear weapons. The bomb is a political tool that represents America's ideology of power and strength, parallel to the more benign tradition of national athletics. Both of these American traditions share the same illusion, "the illusion that order is possible."[xli] Coach Creed's motto in *End Zone* applies equally to football or to the Cold War; he says, "It's only a game, but it's the only game."[xlii] DeLillo's reality, like Baudrillard's, has become unreal, fictitious, a

simultaneously game-like and nightmare-esque fantasy of signs and symbols. The twin towers, mentioned earlier as physical manifestations of cultural ideology, further reflect the simulated and non-referential nature of reality in their Faustian (and Frankensteinian) implications, the prospect of endless and perfect reproduction on a massive scale. DeLillo describes the towers again (post-9/11) in *Falling Man*, this time as postmodern ideological fantasies: "Weren't the towers built as fantasies of wealth and power that would one day become fantasies of destruction? You build a thing like that so you can see it come down. The provocation is obvious. What other reason would there to be to go so high and then to double it, do it twice?"[xliii] Alternative ideologies view this monument to capitalism as a provocation, a threat to their opposing systems (of religion, for example). DeLillo proposes that there is something about this endless reproduction that prompts a destructive response, a dream of violently destroying (potentially through nuclear technology) the simulated nature of signs and spaces that make all efforts at establishing any coherent meaning virtually impossible.

The "endless inspired catastrophe of New York,"[xliv] including the twin towers, is an archetype of the unstable, limitless, haunted, and distorted ideological space of Baudrillard's description. According to Baudrillard, the city has become a simulation, a hollow façade, ephemeral and empty; "the city has become not merely a theater but itself a production, a multimedia presentation whose audience is the whole world,"[xlv] says Berman. This is no longer a 'real' space, but a 'hyperreal' one, completely divorced from all vestiges of reality as we once knew it:

> Abstraction today is no longer that of the map, the double, the mirror or the concept. Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a

> substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.[xlvi]

As one character in *Underworld* says, "Believe everything. Everything is true," (*U* 801) reflecting the fact that the distinction between reality and fiction has been lost, the referent has dissolved. Baudrillard presents the example of Disneyland as an archetypal American simulacrum of reality:

> Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the 'real' country, all of 'real' America, which is Disneyland (just as prisons are there to conceal the fact that it is the society in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, which is carceral). Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real, and thus saving the reality principle.[xlvii]

In contrast to a medieval or pre-modern society in which the individual is identified as 'real' in relation to 'false' objects, the evolution of mediation and reproduction has produced a society in which the distinction between real and false, sign and referent, no longer meaningfully exists. Even ideology itself no longer has any relevant meaning for individuals. There is now, in DeLillo's words, "an empty space where America used to be."[xlviii]

In order to navigate Baudrillard's conceptions of society, to "grasp the unfolding, fragmenting, decomposing and increasingly shadowy realities of modern life,"[xlix] one needs to be able to see through the simulations, to travel in the dark, unseen spaces outside of the production of modern life, to partake in DeLillo's science of *dietrologia*. Berman calls this key to survival a "shadow passport,"[l] assisting one in the search for what is real and meaningful. Deserts are an example of this type of non-simulated and non-ideological space in DeLillo's work, "the middle of the middle of

nowhere, that terrain so flat and bare, suggestive of the end of recorded time, a splendid sense of remoteness."[li] The desert is an equally postmodern space as the city in its contrasting desolation and emptiness, exposing the absence of meaning behind the "multimedia production" of the city. It is a negation of the city, a blank environment upon which to create from nothing. It allows for a search for meaning beyond the bombardment of signs, a sign-less landscape akin to Berman's shadow world.

In DeLillo's world of the novel, foundations of reality are "unstuck" and centers of value are "unmoored" from their traditional stable reference points. John Duvall describes DeLillo's fiction as portraying "the role of the media in a culture of simulation wherein representations of representations of representations create a regressive maze in which any notion of reality becomes obsolete or meaningless."[lii] The hyperconnectivity of the novel, in which "everything connects in the end, or only seems to, or seems to only because it does,"[liii] echoes this maze of associations and representations to the point where authenticity becomes impossible to locate, origins extend into infinity, and truth is reduced to relativity. For example, with the end of the Cold War and the shift from the modern to the postmodern, "many things that were anchored to the balance of power and the balance of terror became 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."[liv] Everything is oversized, blown out of all proportion to the extent that traditional reference points disintegrate and the ordinary reality of daily life grows less and less real.

Just as the state controls ideology in Althusser's model of reality, so too does it control many of the main simulations of society. According to Baudrillard, these simulations include the "facts" about wars, maps, census data, and the general distribution of knowledge. In *Underworld*, characters repeatedly doubt the veracity of state-disseminated information. For instance, "the size of Greenland changes map to map. It also changes year to year," forcing us to ask if it exists at all or if it has "a secret function and a secret meaning" [lv] under state control. This deception is enacted through technology and mediation. Even baseball, that stable icon of American identity, is no longer safe. One character laments, "We had the real Dodgers and Giants. Now we have the holograms."[lvi] Baseball, which in the Althusserian reading became an emblem for institutionalized American ideology, becomes, in the late twentieth century, also an emblem of the hyperreal, mediated reality that ideology has come to control, generate, and operate within. In *Underworld* and in postmodern life, "This isn't reality. This is virtual reality."[lvii]

In this society, even the reality of death is denied. It is shoveled into the underworld of dark, shadowy, invisible things, made unreal by our adamant refusal to acknowledge them. According to Duvall, "rather than the [natural] triumph of death, capitalism, in the form of advertising, celebrates the [unnatural] triumph of consumption, which is the denial of death."[lviii] In a similar vein, the reality of waste, the detritus of capitalism, is also denied within a simulated society; it is a reality *too real* for a world of the hyperreal to encompass. During the drive into Manhattan, the center of consumer culture, DeLillo's character finds the multitude of signs to be overwhelming – "all these were on the billboards around him, systematically linked in

some self-referring relationship that had a kind of neurotic tightness, an inescapability, as if the billboards were generating reality."[lix] The condom becomes the symbol of postmodern society, the mass-produced, mediated experience that penetrates to the most basic functions of human life. "This is what the twentieth century feels like,"[lx] claims one character in *Underworld*, the rubberized desensitization of true meaning and experience. The ideology of consumerism, the media-driven reality of advertisements and entertainment, in conjunction with potential state simulations, creates a society "realer than real,"[lxi] and in the process creates a byproduct of underworlds hidden from view, spaces unrepresented within the world of mediated signs.

The longing of individuals for a sense of a coherent reality is tied to their desire to establish a meaningful personal identity. In their search, DeLillo guides his characters to the unlit spaces of shadow and desert, absence and underworld, only to abandon them there without a light. Some characters successfully find their way, creating works of art or other manifestations of individuality, while others flounder in the emptiness. The study of *dietrologia*, the search for things that exist behind and underneath appearances, is the search for underworlds, identities, and meanings that American ideology denies. O'Donnell describes the relationship between the space of mainstream society and the underworlds of the text:

> Figuratively, the underworlds of *Underworld* exist as an alternative mirror universe of shadow identities, sites, and latent, loosely coupled systems that operate in parallel to the official world of normal schooldays, managed careers, and bureaucracies of containment that are constantly subject to interruption by unexpected others and objects bursting forth from below.[lxii]

The underworld exists as a space underneath the hollow cities and environments of postmodern life, and thus provides a space for individuals to potentially (re)locate

themselves apart from dominant ideological forces, to enter into the darkness behind the façade.

In DeLillo's novel, there is an "underreal" beneath the hyperreal. He shows us that we must look behind and within the mediation to find meaning. In the video footage of the Texas Highway Killer, there is a raw reality that cuts through the mediation:

> There's something about the nature of the tape, the grain of the image, the sputtering black-and-white tones, the starkness—you think this is more real, truer-to-life than anything around you. The things around you have a rehearsed and layered cosmetic look. That tape is surreal, or maybe underreal is the way you want to put it. It is what lies at the scraped bottom of all the layers you have added. And this is another reason why you keep on looking. The tape has a searing realness.[lxiii]

Underneath the mediation and simulated world of signs, there still exists for DeLillo the potential for some sort of raw, inescapable truth of human experience, the "realer than real." However, in this instance, the "real" is ironically constructed through the mediation of the scratchy tape, the grunginess of the home-movie. This irony, of higher meaning or reality found in dirt, baseness, and the grainy quality of film, is one of the main modalities of the novel that specifically arises again in the context of garbage. DeLillo plays with the traditional notion that meaning is transcendent and pure, instead associating it with the underworld, the dark and dirty and somehow more real mundane details of human life. These quotidian realities include the pain of death and violence that lurks inescapably beneath the empty tide of market forces. The image of Bruegel's apocalyptic sixteenth-century painting *The Triumph of Death*, reproduced in *Life* magazine (ironically), floats down among the litter at the baseball game in DeLillo's prologue. According to Patrick O'Donnell, this image represents

the underworld of "life-always-becoming-death,"[lxiv] the constant process of consumption and disposal that underlies capitalist society. Everything is mortal in capitalism, including images and objects. Individuals try to hold on to specific objects that tie them to some sense of history or identity, but they succeed only in further mediating their experiences as the objects are fated to die along with the historical moment or the human lineage that they represent. O'Donnell claims that "*Underworld* does not so much dwell on the triumph or inevitability of death as on the notion that humans and objects are forever shuttling between life and death in a process of recycling demarcated, once more, by the underhistory of waste."[lxv] O'Donnell therefore suggests that DeLillo holds out the potential for rehabilitation and regeneration on behalf of both objects and individuals through the process of waste, of death and dirt and scum, and then of renewal as something new and different.

From household garbage to radioactive nuclear waste to poop, the detritus of our consumer society comprises one of the main underworlds of *Underworld*. Waste is the unseen corollary of a society that mandates "Consume or die."[lxvi] Even though it is inextricably linked to our material society, waste nonetheless resides outside of mainstream ideology and therefore outside of our communal consciousness. DeLillo describes this institutionalized vision in relation to the garbage strike in the novel; "the garbage was down there, stacked in identical black plastic bags, and she walked past a broad mound that covered a fire hydrant and part of a bus sign and she saw how everyone agreed together not to notice."[lxvii] Even when confronted with the material substance head on, we turn our eyes away and pretend not to see the discarded byproduct of our daily lives. The landfill is described in similar terms:

> 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…The biggest secrets are the ones spread before us…Waste is the best kept secret in the world.[lxviii]

As a self-consciously overlooked phenomenon, waste is one of the main underworlds presented in the novel, one that lies at the foundation of the consumerist, simulated, hollow over-world that seeks to ignore and deny it entirely. It is an invisible force that nonetheless shapes our lives in powerful ways. According to one garbage theorist in the novel, "We make stupendous amounts of waste, then we react to it, not only technologically but in our hearts and minds. We let it shape us. We let it control our thinking. Garbage comes first, then we build a system to deal with it."[lxix] Civilization, history, and society are all built upon the foundation of waste, a foundation that is consequently denied visibility and relevance in our de-centered, simulated, and capitalist world in which the façade is the reality and the forces of the market rely on the aging of formerly coveted items as new things constantly come into fashion.

Nick Shay works within this invisible, negated space for a company of "waste handlers, waste traders, cosmologists of waste."[lxx] His work encompasses not only the physical byproducts of society, but more importantly, "human behavior, people's habits and impulses, their uncontrollable needs and innocent wishes, maybe their passions, certainly their excesses and indulgences but their kindness too."[lxxi] Nick sees waste as a potential path to meaning, evidence of human whims within the machinery of ideology, and also as a mysterious and invisible (yet ever-present) force. Therefore, waste is repeatedly characterized by Nick as "a religious thing."[lxxii] He describes the ritualistic care with which he undertakes his household recycling and garbage,

acknowledging, "There is no language I might formulate that could overstate the diligence we brought to these tasks…It was like preparing a pharaoh for his death and burial."[lxxiii] Working within this underworld is "ominous and magical," "waste has a solemn aura, an aspect of untouchability" that separates it from the ostentatious artifice of our society. According to Georges Bataille, waste reconciles the sacred and the profane (like DeLillo's irony in highlighting the *real* within the grainy tape of a murder). He identifies waste matter as heterogenous, something outside of the homogeneity of capitalist society, and therefore potentially redemptive due to its censored position. Homogenous society is incapable of assimilating heterogenous objects, like waste, which in turn endows them with a degree of power outside of the system; a current that Nick semi-consciously taps into.[lxxiv] However, as such, waste also helps to define the positive world by being the other against which it is opposed, by delineating the boundaries that it dictates. It therefore upholds the ideological world, and does not necessarily contain meaning just because it lies outside of the system.

The second main underworld of the novel exists in the form of real and hypothetical nuclear power and weapons development. Global nuclear capability is another highly influential and yet almost completely invisible force. Conforming citizens make a pact to not see or vocalize the presence of nuclear bombs that threaten their very existence. Nuclear power therefore occupies the same paradoxical position as waste; "Nobody's supposed to know this. It's something that's more or less out in the open but at the same time…secret. Untalked about. Hushed up."[lxxv] Its looming presence is denied by institutional ideology and yet ideology relies on it to function.

The "godhead of Annihilation and Ruin" [lxxvi] is controlled completely by the state, which uses it as a tool of ideological subjugation. For instance, Matt Shay, Nick's brother, describes his experience with the state-mandated bomb drills performed by institutionally-conditioned children: "He liked to duck and cover…He felt the comfort of numbers…He felt an odd belonging in the duck and cover. It was a community of look-alikes and do-alikes, heads down, elbows tucked, fannies in the air."[lxxvii] DeLillo reveals in this comically absurd image the extreme ideological power tied to the threat of the bomb and mass annihilation, as well as the paradoxically humorous 'backside' of the nuclear threat. Nuclear power is "the secret history that never appears in the written accounts of the time or in the public statements of the men in power. Those beautiful bombs and missiles. Those planes and submarines."[lxxviii] As an invisible foundation of modern society, like waste, working with nuclear weaponry also provides a behind-the-scenes perspective through which one can potentially locate real meaning and individuality in contrast to the institutionalized actions that the ideology around the bomb generates. DeLillo associates the bomb with waste, occupying a heterogenous existence outside of society; "Oppenheimer said, It is merde…He meant something that eludes naming is automatically relegated, he is saying, to the status of shit. You can't name it. It's to big or evil or outside your experience. It's also shit because it's garbage, it's waste material."[lxxix] Matt seeks to attune himself to this heterogenous undercurrent by working within the nuclear industry itself, a secret underworld that encompasses the prospect of complete destruction, the potential creation of an apocalyptic wasteland against which the landfills of Nick's world barely compare.

The physical location of Matt's job is also invisible to most people, taking place in "the Pocket," "a secret installation in the desert."[lxxx] The desert is a physical underworld in itself, a white space on the map. In this case, the blank space conceals the reality of the underworld of nuclear weapons development; "the white places on your map include the air base, the army base, the missile range, the vast stretch of the northwest called the Jornada del Muerto and the interdunal flats as well—the flats are map-white, on the page and in living fact."[lxxxi] The people who work here are similarly invisible in relation to mainstream thought. "We're not real," Matt claims, due to their existence outside of society, in the emptiness of the desert and the world of nuclear weapons. The protagonist of DeLillo's *End Zone* also finds himself in the middle of the desert. In this landscape, he thinks, "The thing to do, I thought, is to walk in circles. This is demanded by the mythology of all deserts and wasted places." The implication of this mythology of the underworld is that it's circularity leads one nowhere, and that despite existing outside of ideology, the desert remains as truly empty as ideology itself.

Additionally, nuclear capability – the threat of mass destruction, human casualties and genetic damage through multiple future generations – has undeniably God-like (and, conversely, Frankensteinian) implications. In response to Matt's description of his job and the raw power he works with, his girlfriend replies, "You make it sound like God. Or some starker variation thereof. Go to the desert or tundra and wait for the visionary flash of light, the critical mass that will call down the Hindu heavens, Kali and Shiva and all the grimacing lesser gods."[lxxxii] The blank space of DeLillo's desert, the unwritten narrative of nuclear capabilities – like the shadowy

presence of waste – provides either a physical and mental space behind ideology in which to locate meaning and individuality, or merely exposes the destruction and emptiness that lies at the foundation of modern life.

History, both personal and communal, is another driving force in the novel. It contains two opposing sides, the official and the unofficial, the latter of which occupies the mental space parallel to the physical spaces of nuclear desert and wasteland. Like the unwritten narrative of nuclear power, the other unwritten histories necessarily exist outside of ideology. For example, DeLillo opens the novel with an account of the famous Giants/Dodgers baseball game in 1951 that occurs alongside a Soviet nuclear test explosion, but only the game is remembered in the dominant cultural narrative. DeLillo describes the front page of the newspaper on the following day: "To his left the Giants capture the pennant, beating the Dodgers on a dramatic home run in the ninth inning. And to the right, symmetrically mated, same typeface, same-size type, same number of lines, the USSR explodes an atomic bomb—*kaboom*—details kept secret."[lxxxiii] Thus, "The Shot Heard Around the World," which literally refers to the homerun, takes on an additional shadow meaning in relation to the underworld of the bomb, "visions of an atomic holocaust lingering beneath the crowd's euphoria,"[lxxxiv] the juxtaposition of play and death appearing yet again. J. Edgar Hoover plays an interesting role in this relationship, occupying an underworld position in his acquisition of confidential information, while simultaneously working to uphold the simulated over-world by generating the official narrative. DeLillo explains Hoover's dedication to this tyrannical deception by revealing Hoover's personal fears of the various underworlds he engages in. As both a closeted homosexual and a germaphobe, "it is

the unseeable life-forms that dismay Edgar most,"[lxxxv] and that he subsequently seeks to eradicate. His obsessive outing of homosexual political figures referenced in the novel further attests to this. Hoover straddles the line between two worlds, perpetuating the façade in an attempt to destroy or at least control the dark underworld that horrifies him. Official and unofficial history, like visibility and invisibility, fame and secrecy, baseball and nuclear annihilation, "are the high and low ends of the same fascination, the static crackle of some libidinous thing in the world, and Edgar responds to people who have access to this energy."[lxxxvi] He embodies the boundary between over-world and underworld, living in the closet and working "in the semidark, manipulating and bringing ruin."[lxxxvii] History thus contains two streams, the official ideological story as sculpted by Edgar (out of fear and hatred), and the unofficial non-ideological under-story that he desperately attempts to control.

Like other underworld spaces, the absences in the official historical narrative, within "the spaces of the official play-by-play,"[lxxxviii] create a place in which individuals can search for personal meaning. The material objects of the past embody a physical representation of history, just as the materiality of waste and the scars of nuclear explosions create a physical underworld that reflects the mental shadow space created by thinking outside of the bounds of conventional prescriptions. The homerun baseball, the physical relic of the historical event, is traced throughout the book from owner to owner. The object grounds the owner within the official narrative (that chooses to incorporate the game rather than the nuclear explosion), and Nick therefore feels somewhat guilty about paying thousands of dollars for what he (somewhat unconsciously) recognizes as a selective narrative, a fiction of ideology. However, the

ball also paradoxically connects him to the underhistory of the bomb, the other event that occurred that day; as DeLillo reveals, "they make the radioactive core [of the bomb] the exact same size as a baseball."[lxxxix] The underhistory is therefore inherent in the official one, and his clandestine ownership of the ball nonetheless incorporates (at its center, no less) the unofficial narrative that it seemingly denies. Like with history, the other concepts and spaces in society are also haunted by their underworlds, the things and ideas unrepresented by ideology.

The core of society, the foundation upon which the ideological narrative is built, is founded on the underworlds of waste, nuclear power, and history – the invisible yet very real physical and mental spaces in which individuals look to fulfill their longings for meaning and identity. Ultimately, how individuals negotiate and engage with these underworlds determines if and how they manage to find real significance behind and within the mediated world, to form non-institutionalized identities and enable themselves to live meaningfully in postmodern society. Individuals attempt to subvert their position as institutional subjects and find meaning in a simulated world through art and other creative actions. Working within the underworlds of the novel, they attempt to produce individual meanings and expressions of identity, asserting their uniqueness and irreplaceability in the world.

Through her artistic endeavors, Klara Sax engages with all three underworlds of waste, nuclear weapons, and history. In her early work, she makes art out of waste and other discarded objects; "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."[xc] Klara begins her career by examining the invisible objects of daily life, bringing them into her

consciousness and then reintegrating them into society as art. Another example of this kind of reappropriation of waste can be seen in the Watts Towers, the buildings created by Sabato Rodia completely from discarded objects. He creates an aesthetic beauty out of the garbage, harmony out of chaos:

> Whatever the cast-off nature of the materials, the seeming offhandedness, and whatever the dominance of pure intuition, the man was surely a master builder. There was a structural unity to the place, a sense of repeated themes and deft engineering. And his initials here and there, SR, Sabato Rodia, if this was in fact his correct name—SR carved in archways like the gang graffiti in the streets outside.[xci]

The power of Klara's and Rodia's art is that it molds unity from disunity, it seemingly stabilizes the unstable world and reinvents the discarded objects of that world. Simultaneously, it is an expression of individual identity, like graffiti or a personal signature, emphasizing one's irreplaceability within society.

Klara, whose name means bringer of light, associates the creation of a meaningful identity with her art, without which she feels completely invisible. Wandering around New York city, she describes herself as "between projects and humanly invisible and waiting to go back to work, to make and shape and modify and build."[xcii] At the same time, she recognizes the courage required to live outside of ideology, an individual apart from the crowd, invisible at times and alone; "a bracing form of self-awareness," she says, "learning to be unseen."[xciii] She removes herself from the throng of modern life – the "tossing, thoughtless sea" of social forces – and discovers "a hidden city above the grid of fever streets…the street abounds in idiosyncracy, in the human veer, but you have to go to roof level to see the thing distinct, preserved in masonry and brass."[xciv] From this privileged vantage point, Klara

> realized how rare it was to see what stands before you, what a novelty of basic sensation in the grinding life of the city—to look across a measured space and be undistracted by signs and streetlights and taxis and scaffolding, by your own bespattered mind, sorting the data, and by the energy that hurrying people make, lunch crowds and buses and bike messengers, all that consciousness powering down the flumes of Manhattan so that it becomes impossible to see across the street to the turquoise tiles of some terra-cotta façade, a winged beast carved above the lintel.[xcv]

The overwhelming stimulation of the city is blinding, inhibiting one from even recognizing it any longer as merely 'some terra-cotta façade' controlled by the 'winged beast' of state ideology. Institutionalized subjects no longer see what is before them, and only when Klara steps outside of this space, seeing it from above, is she able to recognize it for what it is and separate herself from it. As a result of her experience, Klara moves to the desert to escape the bombardment of signs and distractions of society. She exchanges the hollow bustle of city life for the silence and emptiness of the Western desert, an underworld space that she identifies as appropriate for her personal creation of art, meaning, and identity.

The desert space itself is essential to Klara's art. "This is an art project, not a peace project," she says, "This is a landscape painting in which we use the landscape itself. The desert is central to this piece. It's the surround. It's the framing device. It's the four-part horizon."[xcvi] Through this installation, she symbolically places herself in this desolate space and frames her work in the context of the anti-ideological (or under-ideological) environment.

In the desert, Klara engages with the underworlds of nuclear power, history, and waste. The desert bears the signs of society's nuclear history, "the visible signs of all the detonations we set off. All the craters and warning signs and no-go areas and burial markers, the sites where debris is buried."[xcvii] Like making art from waste, the

appropriation of nuclear technology symbolizes her engagement with the underworlds of society and the destructive and hidden state forces that are the byproducts of our Faustian, consumerist drive. However, in using the warplanes as art, these tools of institutional power, Klara is not so much creating an alternative to ideology but rather revealing an invisible aspect of the material reality of ideology that is commonly ignored. She paints over these relics of institutional power, changing the discarded *objects* into symbols of the institutionalized *subject's* act of 'working all by oneself' under the dictates of ideology. She attempts to uncover the individual lives within the machines and within history, finding the *human* meaning in the dead and deadly objects. She articulates her mission to Nick:

> See, we're painting, hand-painting in some cases, putting our puny hands to great weapons systems that came out of the factories and assembly halls as nearly alike as possible, millions of components stamped out, repeated endlessly and we're trying to unrepeat, to find an element of felt life, and maybe there's a sort of survival instinct here, a graffiti instinct—to trespass and declare ourselves, show who we are. The way the nose artist did, the guys who painted pinups on the fuselage.[xcviii]

Klara is fighting directly with state power and desperately asserting not only her own unique identity and individuality, but also the individuality of all of those silent, anonymous people who operated the planes, worked on the nuclear technology, and painted the pinup model. Her goal is to find truth and meaning in human life *within* the ideological world; she says, "What I really want to get at is the ordinary thing, the ordinary life behind the thing. Because that's the heart and soul of what we're doing here."[xcix] Although she removes herself physically from the space of the city, her art still exists within the ideological paradigm that the city represents, exposing the human components that compose it.

Another aspect of ideology, that of history, is represented visually in her art through the image of Long Tall Sally, the pinup figure painted on the nose of the one of the aircrafts. The commerciality of this image of objectified femininity is ironic in light of its elected position as the center of her work of art. Not only is the image comic in its representation of history as a leggy white woman posing for the camera, but it also contains an underhistory of race and class that remains unrepresented in society and in her art. The underhistory of the image includes the individual stories of the artist who painted it and the pilots who commanded the aircraft (including a black man, as DeLillo reveals later in the novel) as well as the misrepresentation of the figure itself. The painted white pinup model is the ideological cover-up of the black prostitute to which the real Long Tall Sally originally refers in the blues song of the same name. The appropriation of this image by white America reflects the further appropriation of black music and the existence of black people as outside of mainstream ideology for much of American history. The fact that Klara chooses this image as the heart of her installation, unconscious of its background, is indicative of the fact that she is never able to completely undermine the ideological world she believes she has left behind, and as a result only embodies a select group of human subjects in her art, failing to reflect the full breadth of human experience operating beneath the system.

Furthermore, Klara is also not completely successful in separating her own identity from cultural ideology and years of institutionalization. Like Simmel's critique of fashion, what she finds in the desert is only the illusion of uniqueness and non-ideological meaning; she is caught within the empty circularity of DeLillo's

desert, which is inescapable and void of meaning. For Klara this self-distanciation is merely a form of "being different"[c] that is actually captured within the ideology of capitalism and the American mythos of individualism. The changing of the spelling of her name, from Sachs to Sax – "*x*, mark of mister anonymous"[ci] – further evidences the delusion of real individuality that she operates under, instead actually identifying herself with the unselfconscious 'subjects' she represents in her art.

And yet, the experience of seeing her work of art is nonetheless sublime, transcendent, and intensely moving, as described to the reader by Nick. From a hot-air balloon above the desert, "the piece began to emerge out of distance and haze, the mesh rectangle completed now, ranks of aircraft appearing as one unit of fitted parts, a shaped weave of painted steel in the monochrome surround…It was a heart-shaking thing to see, bursts and serpentines of color, a power in the earth."[cii] The piece is so massive as to require a God-like perspective from above, just as Klara has to see the city from above in order to recognize it for what it really is. However, this move to the perspective of the eye of god and the incorporation of the horizon line into her work of art is actually the same move that occurred in art history from the medieval era to the renaissance and are staples of institutionalized artwork. Klara thus cannot completely escape convention in either form or content. However, this does not render her art any less impressive or beautiful to Nick. As a symbol of (institutionalized) human experience, Nick believes in the illusion of individuality that she represents, locating himself within the capitalist, white, nuclear world of her art. Although not able to completely escape the binds of ideology, Klara's work nonetheless supplies herself and the viewer with "the appearance of a meaningful life."[ciii] According to Makeham,

institutionalized citizens "always find something to give us the impression we exist,"[civ] and this is exactly what Klara's art does for herself and for Nick.

Klara's work with waste, Rodia's towers, and the installation in the desert are all compared to graffiti. Graffiti is an artistic declaration of individuality, often in the form of a calligraphic signature in bright colors and bold shapes across private or state-owned property. It is an in-your-face appropriation of institutionalized space, transforming it through art into a statement of anti-ideology and anti-uniformity. Every graffiti artist has a different tag, a pseudonym rather than a signature, an illegal identity. Additionally, graffiti shares many of the characteristics of institutionalization and mediation. The reproduction of the individual tag is akin to "brand name dissemination,"[cv] the paradox of uniqueness and mass production that occurs with fashion and other goods and services in the capitalist market. It gives individuals a sense of choice and individuality in their purchases, while in reality cementing their institutionalization through the *illusion* of choice and individuality that encourages them to 'work all by themselves' for the very system they believe they are subverting. By taking garbage and making it into art, Klara works with the discarded products of consumer society and reinforces the illusion of irreplaceability in the commodified world – a world in which "one day you're in, and the next day you're out." In addition to emulating commodity culture, graffiti also "parodies the mass media; by appearing everywhere, it aspires to the placeless publicity of mass print or televisualization."[cvi] Graffiti therefore replicates the dominant culture that it simultaneously undermines. Susan Stewart argues that the gesture of replication and mass production is highly subversive because of its very affinities with society:

> It forms a critique of the status of all artistic artifacts, indeed a critique of all privatized consumption, and it carries out that threat in full view, in repetition, so that the public has nowhere to look, no place to locate an averted glance. And that critique is paradoxically mounted from a relentless individualism, an individualism which, with its perfected monogram, arose out of the paradox of all commodity relations in their attempt to create a mass individual; an ideal consumer, a necessarily fading star…While that paradise of consumption promised the transference of uniqueness from the artifact to the subject, graffiti underlines again and again an imaginary uniqueness of the subject and a dissolution of artifactual status *per se*.[cvii]

Graffiti therefore subverts ideology by revealing its delusions, and in the process questions the nature of art or anything that identifies itself as unique and individual in our mass-produced, simulated society. Graffiti demonstrates the absence of individuality and meaning in society, but does not fill that absence with anything, it does not produce meaning where there is none nor mold an individual identity that can be translated into society in a meaningful way.

Additionally, in a world where stability and metanarratives cannot exist, the creation of unity and meaning through art cannot be anything but false and illusory. Berman tells us to distrust anything that is not constantly in a state of change, and Baudrillard discredits any attempt of locating a coherent order among signs. Graffiti escapes this criticism as the tags carry "neither connotation not denotation, they escape the principles of signification and, as *empty signifiers*, erupt into the sphere of the *full signs* of the city, dissolving it on contact."[cviii] In contrast, Klara's art is still, stable, locatable in space. Her art, like a still life, is "unfailing in its grip on eye and mind, on memory and identity,"[cix] and therefore questionable in its supposed articulation of rational meaning. Klara's art, although like graffiti in some ways, is unlike graffiti in its attempt to create a coherent order (hence the 'framing' of her work in the desert). It is permanent and only visible from a privileged position in the air and therefore not

amenable to mass reproduction or exposure. It remains tucked away in the desert, a secret experiment in creating individual identity and meaning, falling short of the subversive status of graffiti by attempting to manifest an alternative meaning and individuality outside rather than underneath or within the realm of ideology.

Graffiti artist Ismael Muñoz makes the underworld of the Bronx visible through his art and achieves greater success than Klara in subverting the ideology that marginalizes him. The Bronx is described as a wasteland, "a landscape of vacant lots filled with years of stratified deposits—the age of house garbage, the age of construction debris and vandalized car bodies, the age of moldering mobster parts. Weeds and trees grew amid the dumped objects. There were dog packs, sightings of hawks and owls."[cx] The wasteland of the Bronx is an underworld, a place existing beyond the simulation and order of Manhattan, uncaptured within the ideological sphere of influence and, for all intents and purposes, invisible to most of society. At one point, a bus of foreign tourists drives through the neighborhood, unable to recognize the place and the people there as real. One of the residents yells in frustration, "It's not surreal. It's real, it's real…Brussels is surreal. Milan is surreal. This is real. The Bronx is real."[cxi] Ismael's graffiti is an act of trespassing and appropriating the space controlled by the state apparatus and making it individualized and visible in a new way that reflects the underworld behind the ideology, the *real* life of the Bronx.

Ismael, a.k.a. Moonman 157, paints entire subway trains with his tag and achieves immense visibility; as one character acknowledges, "You've seen it. Everybody's seen it."[cxii] Like Klara, Ismael feels invisible as himself but becomes

highly visible through his art. He is "the unknown hero of the line…revealing himself in cartoon glow."[cxiii] While Klara chooses the desert space as the context for her art, Ismael appropriates the subway trains that travel through the literal underworld of the city. His art is an art in motion, thundering up from the depths and bursting colorfully into the city above. He understands, unlike Klara, the power of an unlocatable presence, an art that bombards you from all sides; "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."[cxiv] His artwork jars its spectators out of their ideological blindness and forces the presence of his individuality and existence into their consciousnesses (in a way that Klara's static piece fails to do).

Moonman 157, Ismael's artistic psuedonym, is tied to his personal identity and to his past in the Bronx, the unofficial underworld that drives his creations. In fact, "the whole point of Moonman's tag was how the letters and numbers told a story of backstreet 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 ball players with a bat angled between them.[cxv]

His work tells the story of the underworld, articulates the silent history, and forces his life and the life of the entire community into public consciousness. The graffiti is inescapable:

> You can't *not* see us anymore, you can't *not* know who we are, we got total notoriety now…and the train go rattling over the garbagy streets and past the dead-eye windows of all those empty tenements that have people living there even if you don't see them, but you have to see our tags and cartoon figures and bright rhyming poems, this is the art that can't stand still, it climbs across your

> eyeballs night and day, the flickering art of the slums and dumpsters, flashing those colors in your face—like I'm your movie, motherfucker.[cxvi]

Ismael, as already a marginal figure within dominant cultural ideology, a racial minority and resident of the Bronx, more easily manipulates the system and consequently subverts it than Klara. This enables him to embody in the creative product of his efforts the real, gritty, mundane and yet transcendent human experience of which Klara's art falls short.[cxvii]

Nick Shay, as an insider in the underworld of waste, occupies a position similar to Ismael's. However, Nick is largely unconscious of his subversion as he repeatedly aligns himself with the national mythos and the 'subjects' of Klara's art. Nick works directly with waste, but instead of making it into art, he creates systems to shape it, control it, and regenerate it. His work directly upholds the foundations of postmodern life, and he sees his position as a kind of mystical visionary working behind the scenes, "a member of an esoteric order, they were adepts and seers, crafting the future, the city planners, the waste managers, the compost technicians, the landscapers who would build hanging gardens here, make a park one day out of every kind of used and lost and eroded object of desire."[cxviii] According to Michel de Certeau, this type of hidden production and reappropriation of the objects of consumption constitutes an individualistic subversion without ever leaving the capitalist system. This creative re-use of objects is an "art," a manifestation of individual identity within a consumerist society that drowns individuality in its ideology of mass production and consumption. de Certeau illustrates this type of subversion through the example of Native Americans' manipulation of American ideological rituals and laws that were imposed upon them:

> They subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. They were *other* within the very colonization that outwardly assimilated them; their use of the dominant social order deflected its power, which they lacked the means to challenge; they escaped it without leaving it.[cxix]

Nick's work is similarly subversive, creating new meanings and uses for the waste products of society. He creates something productive out of literal garbage and reintroduces it into society, making it visible again in a different form. Nick's work is restorative; beginning with "the unsorted slop, the gut squalor of our lives," he then is able to return "the baled and bound units out into the world again, the chunky product blocks, pristine, newsprint for newsprint, tin for tin, and we all feel better when we leave."[cxx] Nick works behind the scenes, leaving his mark in the form of the millions of pounds of trash that he regenerates and reintegrates into the world on a daily basis. While Klara works with concepts of beauty and high art, Nick and Ismael's graffiti and waste treatment are far removed from this aesthetic, operating instead in a world of dirt, lawlessness, and scum. The shock of the underworld of waste and the bright aggressive medium of graffiti is a necessary component to their success in subverting the hegemonic view. Klara's beauty and art is anodyne in relation and therefore not powerful enough to shake the spectator out of his or her incarcerated perspective.

Nick's daily generative output embodies the meaningful human presence operating behind and within the system, the individual manipulation of consumed objects that de Certeau identifies as the primary mode of individuation available in modern and postmodern societies. It is the same human experience to which Klara was trying to connect, unsuccessfully. Nick's work is a unique expression of his individual identity outside of the (illusory) consumerist method of buying things.

Nick's position with waste as under ideology and yet upholding it is repeated in his relationship with the underworld of history. Waste itself "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."[cxxi] Working within the underworld of waste, Nick upholds official ideology. Similarly, Nick professes to uphold the official ideological historical narrative as well. His generic ideological responses throughout the book act as empty assurances, in which not even he manages to find comfort. For example, in response to Klara's statement that reality is vaguely fictitious and unreal, Nick attempts to defend its meaning, professing:

> I lived responsibly in the real. I didn't accept this business of life as a fiction, or whatever Klara Sax had meant when she said that things had become unreal. History was not a matter of missing minutes on the tape. I did not stand helpless before it. I hewed to the texture of collective knowledge, took faith from the solid and availing stuff of our experience…A single narrative sweep, not ten thousand wisps of disinformation.[cxxii]

In an additional attempt to ground himself within this ideological reality, Nick collects baseball memorabilia, including the famous homerun baseball from 1951. However, the ball itself contains an unavoidable understory and therefore ironically connects Nick further to the anti-ideological narrative. Unsurprisingly, the baseball does not provide the comfort and stability he seeks. Material relics are necessarily incapable of providing personal meaning considering that the official narrative they represent is itself unstable, empty, and based upon the unofficial underworld Nick helps operate, like the nuclear underhistory associated with the baseball. He acknowledges, "For years he didn't know why he was chasing down exhausted objects…Some terror beneath the skin that made him gather up things, amass possessions and effects against the dark shape of some unshoulderable loss. Memorabilia. What he remembered."[cxxiii]

His desire for the objects of history represents a commodification of memory, the institutional appropriation of individual experience and history; or, conversely, his reaction to his fear that everything is meaningless and insubstantial, and in response desperately seeking objects with vested identities to hold on to.

However, Nick undermines this clinging to official narratives through his act of rewriting his own personal past. Nick's father was "a man whose narrative is mostly blank spaces, date of birth uncertain,"[cxxiv] and this absence in history allows space for Nick to piece together his own version of the story. He rejects the "true" story that he is told ("the logic, he decided, did not impress him"[cxxv]) and crafts his own version of the events as he chooses, believing instead that his father was murdered gruesomely by the mafia. Nick, through this act of revision, fictionalizes history and undermines the ideological narrative. Stories are as a good as truths for Nick, which is appropriate in a society in which mediation and simulation have resulted in the hollowing out of signs of the real, conflating reality and appearance, truth and fiction.

In addition to his father's disappearance, Nick also murdered a friend when he was a young adult. Nick has to reinvent himself after this event; "He was shaped and made. First unmade and then reimagined and strongly shaped and made again."[cxxvi] This act of self-renewal and re-creation parallels Nick's corresponding work with waste, taking the empty shells of used and discarded objects and putting life back into them, reintegrating them into society just as he is reintegrated after his crime. Similarly, stories themselves are often acts of recycling ideology or old narratives to create something new and meaningful. According to de Certeau, "stories about places are makeshift things. They are composed of the world's debris."[cxxvii] Nick's creative

acts of narration and waste treatment are therefore further linked in that both are regenerative and individualistic appropriations of identity within modern society.

In contrast to the actions of Nick, Klara, and Ismael, the Texas Highway Killer provides an opposing example of a personal performance of identity that is a negation of life, meaning, and individuality. Unable to find a productive outlet, such as Klara's art, Ismael's graffiti, or Nick's recycling efforts, the Texas Highway Killer turns to murder to gain the attention and illusion of individuality he craves. Unable to generate a secure sense of self from within, the murderer requires external validation in order to feel that he is irreplaceable in society. DeLillo describes, "how he had to take his feelings outside of himself so's to escape his isolation…Richard had to take everything outside, share it with others, become part of the history of others, because this was the only way to escape, to get out from under the puissant details of who he was."[cxxviii] Like graffiti artists, he adopts a pseudonymic identity, known only to the public as the "Texas Highway Killer." Additionally, he requires the mediation of this identity through the gaze and attention of others, feeling his own insignificance diminish as more and more eyes are drawn to his pseudonym, his alter-ego. He also supplements the mundane details of his own existence by living vicariously through the tragedy of his victims: "He came alive in them. He lived in their histories, in the photographs in the newspaper, he survived in the memories of the family, lived with the victims, lived on, merged, twinned, quadrupled, continued into double figures."[cxxix] Rather than performing and affirming his own unique identity, the serial killer experiences a self-destructive dissolution into the identities of his victims. Through his actions, the Texas Highway Killer mass produces himself like a commodity, distributing his identity ad

infinitum into the consciousness of popular culture, with no empathy or emotional connection. He mediates his identity through the doubly mediated gaze of others through newspapers and, especially, television. According to DeLillo, "the serial murder had found its medium, or vice versa."[cxxx] The footage captured of the murder of one of his victims is replayed endlessly on news channels, to the point where the reality of the image is diluted and the pain and shock of it loses power. Upon first viewing, the footage "is innocent, it is aimless, it is determined, it is *real*," but, as is the nature of a hyperreal society, "they would keep running it until everyone on the planet had seen it…they would show it to the ends of the earth,"[cxxxi] until all meaning is lost. This ballooning of personal identity into a popular culture phenomenon reflects Simmel's proposition that performances of identity and irreplaceability in modern society, the extremities and peculiarities that delineate one as different, "must be produced and they must be over-exaggerated merely to be brought into the awareness even of the individual himself."[cxxxii] Unlike graffiti, which replicates modes of mass production and visualization in order to subvert ideology, the killer's actions are not subversive. Instead, they work directly to feed the mediation, paranoia, and ideology of modern life. The highway killer ends up mass producing and disseminating himself like any ordinary product for consumption, and as a result he is forced to repeat the act over and over again as the initial attention fades and new events usurp his place in the media spotlight. This empty cycle of destruction and the illusion of meaning is not escapable through acts of violence, as the killer attempts, but only through *creative* acts of art and recycling like those of Ismael, Nick, and Klara. The Texas Highway Killer fails to establish meaning or individuality, merely replicating the fleeting and illusory

nature of consumerist society and resorting to escalated acts of violence to garner momentary visibility for himself.

Another example of failed subversion is represented in the character of Lenny Bruce, the dark comedian that capitalizes on the paranoia caused by the overhanging threat of mass destruction cultivated by the Cold War. His morbidly humorous stand-up skits attest to the violent characteristics of modern society, in which "mass annihilation offers, for some, the only possible resource for configuring selfhood and imagining community."[cxxxiii] Rather than devolving into violence, Lenny looks to the humor within the apocalyptic underworld of nuclear warfare to find meaning. In a tone of dry mock-seriousness, he says, "Understand, this is how they remind us of our basic state. They roll out a periodic crisis."[cxxxiv] He uses the potential violence inherent in modern life to highlight our status as subjects working under a façade of state power. Baudrillard explains the escalating nuclear tension in similar terms, claiming that politicians "needed that aura of an artificial menace to conceal that they were nothing other than mannequins of power."[cxxxv] However, in his performance Lenny also makes a joke out of this. He taps into the cruel reality of modern life through comedy, the only medium capable of capturing the full paradoxical nature of it, the horror and the humor simultaneously. Lenny plays with the boundaries and disjunctions between ideology and reality, playfulness and paranoia. "How real can a crisis be if we're sitting in a club on Santa Monica Boulevard and going ha ha ha?" he asks.[cxxxvi] The joke is on us, however, as our common identity, our institutionalization and illusion of individuality relies on this constant threat, the "searing realness"[cxxxvii] of unimaginable acts of violence. It is the only stable thing in modern society; it provides the illusion of

a coherent order and rationality that one clings to in spite of oneself. Lenny's favorite motto is "*We're all gonna die!*"

> Yes, he loved saying this, crying it out, it was wondrously refreshing, it purified his fear and made it public at the same time—it was weak and sick and cowardly and powerless and pathetic and also noble somehow, a long, loud and feelingly high-pitched cry of grief and pain that had an element of sweet defiance.[cxxxviii]

Somehow, by articulating the paradox of the hyperreality of nuclear war, the emptiness of the threat paired with the inescapable reality of death, Lenny and his audience experience a momentary release from the ideology in which they are embedded. They achieve a freedom through humor, a cathartic and fleeting escape by acknowledging the reality of emptiness and death that lies beneath the simulacrum.

Although Lenny is able to penetrate the simulacrum of society, he is unable to permanently separate himself from it or uncover any meaning within it (besides that of death, which is a negation of individuality and meaning). Like Klara, Lenny changes his name (from Leonard Alfred Schneider) to fit in with the "invisible middle"[cxxxix] of American society, the "mister anonymous" of the institutionalized subject. Fighting from this position as an ordinary citizen, Lenny speaks out against censorship in an open battle with the government, but ultimately loses the struggle and overdoses on morphine. The institution overpowers his individual rebellion, which unlike Ismael's illegal graffiti or Nick's heterological recycling, is enacted within the ideological realm and therefore summarily crushed by state forces.

One of the causes of the modern emptiness experienced by the various characters of the novel stems from the unmapability of postmodern spaces. Cognitive mapping is an individual's ability to navigate space. Due to the over-sized nature of

postmodern society, however, the extended sphere of influence of the city and the citizen makes this mental mapping impossible. According to Simmel, "for the metropolis it is decisive that its inner life is extended in a wave-like motion over a broader national or international area"[cxl] than ever before. Therefore,

> a person does not end with limits of his physical body or with the area to which his physical activity is immediately confined but embraces, rather, the totality of meaningful effects which emanates from him temporally and spatially. In the same way the city exists only in the totality of the effects which transcend their immediate sphere.[cxli]

As a result of this extension across space, Fredric Jameson argues that "the truth of [the human] experience no longer coincides with the place in which takes place."[cxlii] In DeLillo's words, "You used to have the same dimensions as the observable universe. Now you're a lost speck."[cxliii] In the postmodern world, through mediation and technology, information and individuals are increasingly mobile, transporting ideas and goods across space and incorporating the entire world into an extended capitalist marketplace. *Underworld*, similarly, in its extensive and bewildering connectedness, "can indeed be read as a symptom of the crisis in 'cognitive mapping' that Jameson outlines."[cxliv]

The inability to locate oneself in space has a direct effect on the establishment of one's identity, essentially destabilizing and dislocating the self—creating a world in which "everybody is everywhere at once."[cxlv] Characters that successfully appropriate space in DeLillo's novel, including Ismael, Nick, and Klara (to a certain extent), are also the most successful at crafting identity and meaning in the postmodern world. Characters that fail to do this, notably the Texas Highway Killer and Lenny Bruce, end up destroying themselves (through mass reproduction or death, respectively). The

successful characters are those that work in an underworld space and therefore outside of the massive scale that ideological space now encompasses. The underworlds, although also unmapped (in the case of the desert a literal white spaces on the map), allow individuals the agency to shape and change the space themselves. It becomes mappable in the sense that the individual is able to locate his or herself within it by molding the space and crafting the corresponding mental narrative to reflect their individual experiences. Examples of this form of cognitive mapping include the meaning behind Ismael's tag "Moonman 157" and Nick's crafting of his own selfhood and history. Thus, personal acts of art and regeneration (both mental and physical) serve as tools for mapping the self in the postmodern world, which Jameson claims is essential to locating stability and meaning. According to Peter Knight:

> [DeLillo] suggests that even if traditional forms of clear-eyed political critique are no longer available (because we are all immersed in a system that is too complex for our current perceptual apparatus to comprehend), then certain forms of art might yield – in their deep structural form rather than their manifest content – a kind of 'cognitive mapping' of our current situation.[cxlvi]

The art of the underworld, claims Knight, therefore contains the potential to act as a guide to meaning and individuality. Ismael and Nick, the two most successful characters in this regard, develop models of graffiti and recycling, respectively, that both demonstrate paths to a productive and meaningful functioning in reality. In contrast, the performances of the Texas Highway Killer and Lenny Bruce, because they fail to escape or permanently undermine the ideological over-world, also fail to establish the concrete individual identities or meaningful 'maps' necessary for survival. The juxtaposition of these various individual efforts in the novel leads Duvall to conclude, "DeLillo, it seems, wants us to imagine that, beyond the realm of media

simulation, there is still a possibility for the artist to effect change."[cxlvii] He hints at the fact that, within the emptiness behind the simulacrum and mediation of modern life, there is in fact the potential for real meaning and individuality, the possibility to creatively alter space and locate oneself firmly in the world.

Therefore, in a society in which "truth, reference and objective causes have ceased to exist,"[cxlviii] the individual struggle to find meaning and identity is the central plight of postmodern life. According to Berman, this struggle is characterized by "men and women asserting their dignity in the present—even a wretched and oppressive present—and their right to control their future; striving to make a place for themselves in the modern world, a place where they can feel at home."[cxlix] DeLillo demonstrates that locating one's self in space, in the underworlds of *Underworld*, and crafting meaning and individuality within that space is the only successful solution to this dilemma. One must look beneath the signs and ideology, engage in the science of *dietrologia*, and create meaning and individual identity where it otherwise does not exist.

In the epilogue, DeLillo validates the presence of meaning in society through the vision of Esmeralda. A young victim of rape and murder in the Bronx, Esmeralda's face appears after her death transposed upon the large Minute Maid billboard that hovers above the street. DeLillo describes the miraculous vision in highly religious and transcendent terms. It is a moment of redemption for the entire community *by and through* the mediation of the advertisement; it affirms the real, basic, universal human experience available *underneath* the bombardment of signs. Esmeralda represents hope, meaning, and the possibility to transcend limitations. Her seemingly magical

reappearance serves as a physical reminder of the power of individuals even against the seemingly overwhelming forces of society. DeLillo, through the constructive artistic projects narrated within the novel, shows us as postmodern readers that there is still the potential to find meaning and develop a real individuality even within the overwhelming, unstable, and apocalyptic nature of the contemporary world.

ENDNOTES

[i] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," J. Rivkin and M. Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1998) 303.
[ii] Don DeLillo, *Underworld*, (New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction, 1997) 119.
[iii] DeLillo, *U* 336.
[iv] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982) 89, quoting Marx.
[v] Berman 92.
[vi] Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (New York: The Modern Library, 1917) 11.
[vii] DeLillo, *U* 39.
[viii] Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971) 324.
[ix] Berman 15.
[x] DeLillo, *U* 11.
[xi] Berman 102.
[xii] DeLillo, *U* 467.
[xiii] Don DeLillo, *End Zone* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972) 84.
[xiv] DeLillo, *U* 799-800: "He takes us to a place he calls the Museum of Mishappens…The fetuses, some of them, are preserved in Heinz pickle jars. There is the two-headed specimen. There is the single head that is twice the size of the body. There is the normal head that is located in the wrong place, perched on the right shoulder…Then there is the cyclops. The eye centered, the ears below the chin, the mouth completely missing. Brain is also missing."
[xv] DeLillo, *U* 458.
[xvi] Berman 170.
[xvii] Berman 110.
[xviii] DeLillo, *U* 103.
[xix] DeLillo, *U* 575.
[xx] DeLillo, *U* 786.
[xxi] DeLillo, *U* 98.
[xxii] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984) xiv.
[xxiii] Paul Auster, *Ghosts* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986) 34.
[xxiv] Althusser 294.
[xxv] Althusser 295.
[xxvi] Althusser 297.
[xxvii] Althusser 298, original emphasis.
[xxviii] DeLillo, *U* 377-378.
[xxix] Paul Makeham, "Performing the City" *Theatre Research International*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (United Kingdom: International Federation for Theatre Research, 2005) 152.
[xxx] Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993) 82.

[xxxi] Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London and New York: Verso, 1989) 135.
[xxxii] Soja 12.
[xxxiii] Soja 80.
[xxxiv] Soja 7.
[xxxv] DeLillo, *U* 287.
[xxxvi] Soja 70, quoting Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grass Roots* (1983, 4).
[xxxvii] Soja 129.
[xxxviii] DeLillo, *U* 482.
[xxxix] DeLillo, *U* 479.
[xl] Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings*, ed. M. Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988) 2.
[xli] DeLillo, *EZ* 112.
[xlii] DeLillo, *EZ* 15.
[xliii] Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (New York: Scribner, 2007) 116.
[xliv] DeLillo, *U* 494.
[xlv] Berman 288.
[xlvi] Baudrillard (1988) 1.
[xlvii] Baudrillard (1988) 5-6.
[xlviii] DeLillo, *FM* 193.
[xlix] Berman 257.
[l] Berman 257.
[li] DeLillo, *EZ* 30.
[lii] John Duvall, *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) 5.
[liii] DeLillo, *U* 465.
[liv] DeLillo, *U* 76.
[lv] DeLillo, *U* 315, 316.
[lvi] DeLillo, *U* 95.
[lvii] DeLillo, *U* 92.
[lviii] John Duvall in Hugh Ruppersburg and Tim Engels, eds., *Critical Essays on Don DeLillo* (New York: G. K. Hall & Co., 2000) 274.
[lix] DeLillo, *U* 183.
[lx] DeLillo, *U* 584.
[lxi] DeLillo, *U* 158.
[lxii] Patrick O'Donnell, *Cambridge Companion*, 114.
[lxiii] DeLillo, *U* 157.
[lxiv] O'Donnell, 114.
[lxv] O'Donnell 114.
[lxvi] DeLillo, *U* 287.
[lxvii] DeLillo, *U* 388.
[lxviii] DeLillo, *U* 185, 281.
[lxix] DeLillo, *U* 288.
[lxx] DeLillo, *U* 88.
[lxxi] DeLillo, *U* 184.

[lxxii] DeLillo, *U* 88.
[lxxiii] DeLillo, *U* 103, 119.
[lxxiv] Georges Bataille, "Heterology," J. Rivkin and M. Ryan, eds., *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., 1998) 373-375.
[lxxv] DeLillo, *U* 405.
[lxxvi] DeLillo, *U* 563.
[lxxvii] DeLillo, *U* 728.
[lxxviii] DeLillo, *U* 594.
[lxxix] DeLillo, *U* 77.
[lxxx] DeLillo, *U* 404, 402.
[lxxxi] DeLillo, *U* 404.
[lxxxii] DeLillo, *U* 458.
[lxxxiii] DeLillo, *U* 668.
[lxxxiv] Philip Nel, *Cambridge Companion*, 19.
[lxxxv] DeLillo, *U* 18.
[lxxxvi] DeLillo, *U* 17.
[lxxxvii] DeLillo, *U* 571.
[lxxxviii] DeLillo, *U* 27.
[lxxxix] DeLillo, *U* 172.
[xc] DeLillo, *U* 393.
[xci] DeLillo, *U* 277.
[xcii] DeLillo, *U* 372.
[xciii] DeLillo, *U* 374.
[xciv] DeLillo, *U* 371.
[xcv] DeLillo, *U* 379.
[xcvi] DeLillo, *U* 70.
[xcvii] DeLillo, *U* 71.
[xcviii] DeLillo, *U* 77.
[xcix] DeLillo, *U* 77.
[c] Simmel 336.
[ci] DeLillo, *U* 483.
[cii] DeLillo, *U* 124-5.
[ciii] Makeham 152.
[civ] Makeham 152.
[cv] Michael Warner, "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," in Bruce Robbins, ed., *The Phantom Public Sphere* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 253.
[cvi] Warner 254.
[cvii] Susan Stewar, quoted in Warner, 253-254.
[cviii] Baudrillard (1993) 79.
[cix] DeLillo, *FM* 11.
[cx] DeLillo, *U* 238.
[cxi] DeLillo, *U* 247.
[cxii] DeLillo, *U* 377.
[cxiii] DeLillo, *U* 434.

[cxiv] DeLillo, *U* 435.
[cxv] DeLillo, *U* 434, 440.
[cxvi] DeLillo, *U* 440-441.
[cxvii] It is interesting to note as well that as a side operation Ismael salvages junk from the trash heap and re-sells it, much like what Nick does on a larger scale.
[cxviii] DeLillo, *U* 185.
[cxix] de Certeau xiii.
[cxx] DeLillo, *U* 810.
[cxxi] DeLillo, *U* 791.
[cxxii] DeLillo, *U* 82.
[cxxiii] DeLillo, *U* 192.
[cxxiv] DeLillo, *U* 276.
[cxxv] DeLillo, *U* 766.
[cxxvi] DeLillo, *U* 416.
[cxxvii] de Certeau 107.
[cxxviii] DeLillo, *U* 266.
[cxxix] DeLillo, *U* 271.
[cxxx] DeLillo, *U* 159.
[cxxxi] DeLillo, *U* 156, 232-233.
[cxxxii] Simmel 338.
[cxxxiii] David Noon, "The Triumph of Death: National Security and Imperial Erasures in Don DeLillo's *Underworld*," in *Canadian Review of American Studies* (Vol. 37, No. 1, 2007) 87.
[cxxxiv] DeLillo, *U* 507.
[cxxxv] Baudrillard (1988) 10.
[cxxxvi] DeLillo, *U* 507.
[cxxxvii] DeLillo, *U* 157, in reference to the footage of the Texas Highway Killer.
[cxxxviii] DeLillo, *U* 547.
[cxxxix] DeLillo, *U* 592.
[cxl] Simmel 335.
[cxli] Simmel 335.
[cxlii] Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping," in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (University of Illinois Press, 1990) 349.
[cxliii] DeLillo, *U* 170.
[cxliv] Peter Knight, *Critical Essays*, 295.
[cxlv] DeLillo, *U* 805.
[cxlvi] Knight 37.
[cxlvii] Duvall, *Cambridge Companion*, 4.
[cxlviii] Baudrillard (1988) 3.
[cxlix] Berman 11.

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