

## **AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL IN DON DELILLO'S WHITE NOISE: A BOURDEUSIAN PERSPECTIVE**

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**Abstract:** *White Noise* is Don DeLillo's eighth novel which was published in 1985. The novel has been scrutinized by many scholars from different schools of thought. In this article, we try to read *White Noise* in light of Pierre Bourdieu's concept of different types of capital and make an effort to take note of representations of each of these types. Nevertheless, since the biggest contribution Bourdieu makes to discussions regarding capital is his explanations of social capital and cultural capital, this article uses Bourdieu's explanations of these categories of capital together with those of other Bourdeusian scholars in order to identify representations of social capital and cultural capital in the forms of the embodied state, the objectified state and the institutionalized state in the novel. In regards to social capital, the article argues that the efforts people make in *White Noise* to become members of various social groups are a strategy they devise in order to advance their overall capital. Furthermore, in terms of cultural capital, it is argued that its possession can help individuals gain benefits such as better chances of academic education and higher social ranks. Moreover, the findings suggest that access to the subcategories of cultural capital can elevate individuals' social position.

**Keywords:** Don DeLillo, *White Noise*, Pierre Bourdieu, social capital, cultural capital.

### **1. Introduction**

Harold Bloom in the introduction of the book *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations; Don DeLillo's White Noise* has considered *White Noise* a novel which is "much more than a period piece" (1). This is why after all these years, the book has not stopped appearing in various literary journals and discussions. DeLillo's *White Noise* is the story of Jack Gladney, the chairman of Hitler studies at the College-on-the-Hill, who lives in a small American town called Blacksmith (4). Jack is the narrator of the novel too; thus, everything we read is presented to us by Jack. He lives with his fourth wife Babette and their four children from previous marriages who are called Heinrich, Steffie, Denise, and Wilder. Jack's academic career is a matter of great significance to him. However, in spite of

having invented “Hitler studies” he does not speak the German language (31). Things seem stable and quiet in Jack’s life till one day Denise finds a vial of pills whose label reads “Dylar” which she had acquired from a company called “Gray Research” (61-62, 200). Meanwhile, their other child Heinrich informs them of a train accident which has caused the release of a poisonous substance (110). After deciding to evacuate their home, on their way to the camp, Jack gets in contact with the toxic chemical called Nyodene D. (138). Jack’s fear of death makes him panic throughout the rest of the novel. At the end of the novel, Jack, under the influence of his colleague Murray, decides to take revenge from Mink, the man who had given Babette Dylar, but fails in his plan and instead of killing the man he injures him and himself. He then decides to save themselves and thus drives to a near facility which is run by nuns (316). Jack returns home after the incident and carries on with his routine life (320).

By having a close reading of the novel one could realize that it has stood the test of time and is still relevant to the complexities of our contemporary life. This is why many scholars have tried to read the novel from their own points of view and thus offer new insights to this great work of fiction. Nevertheless, economic readings of the novel and their attention to its consumerist notions have always been areas of interest for scholars such as Haidar Eid and Karen Weekes who have analyzed notions of consumerism and capitalism in their works. This article intends to add to the previous discussions of the novel by offering a reading of it which relies on Bourdieu’s concept of capital and his two famous classifications of this concept which are social capital and cultural capital. We argue that access to these types of capital can result in higher chances of success for characters in the novel who make an effort to possess them or are already in possession of them.

Bourdieu, in his article “The Forms of Capital” offers a full account of its definition, classifications, and function. First, he considers capital “accumulated labor” whose seeking is the most significant stimuli which causes practices from the side of individuals (241). In other words, he considers capital as “the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world” and thus seeking capital is what regulates the society and the “games” in which individuals participate (241). Moreover, Bourdieu clarifies his breaking point with the Marxist understanding of the concept and condemns economic theory for limiting the term capital to only “mercantile exchange” and by doing that it “has implicitly defined the other forms of exchange as noneconomic, and therefore disinterested” (242). As a result, Bourdieu’s purpose is to offer an explanation of capital that “reintroduces capital in all its forms” (242).

Bourdieu categorizes capital into three forms: “economic capital” which he defines as the type of capital “which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights”, “cultural capital, which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may

be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications”, and ultimately “social capital” which he considers to be “made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (243). He categorizes cultural capital into three subcategories: “the embodied state” which is traceable “in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body”, “the objectified state” or possession of capital “in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.” and “the institutionalized state” which he considers as “a form of objectification” of capital as can be seen in “the case of educational qualifications” which functions as “a certificate of cultural competence” (243, 248).

Regarding Bourdieu’s understanding of cultural capital, Weininger and Lareau explain that its main difference with previous conceptualizations is that he “maintained that culture shares many of the properties that are characteristic of economic capital” (1). What they mean is that in exactly the same way that economic capital is almost never distributed equally in most of the social fields, access to forms of cultural capital is also unequal. Thus, only a minority of individuals will have access to it, which creates a monopoly which will ultimately help them accrue its benefits and thus deprive others from such advantages.

Similar to cultural capital, social capital receives enough attention from Bourdieu as well. In a thorough explanation in “The Forms of Capital”, Bourdieu maintains that the most important factor regarding social capital is the quantity of the “durable network of ... relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” an individual can manage to establish (248). Thus, we may reason that a bigger size of such networks results in a higher amount of social capital. Furthermore, “membership in a group” can lead to the fact that the group members can have access to various types of capital which is “collectively owned” within the group (248-249). In other words, it can be argued that individuals form such networks in the pursuit of profits and thus such profits are what bonds the individuals together. As Bourdieu writes, in spite of the fact that not always does profit seeking occur consciously, such profits “are the basis of the solidarity” within groups (249).

As mentioned earlier, the biggest contribution Bourdieu makes to the discussion of capital is the fact that he steers away from rigid economic views which results in his explanations of social and cultural capital. Due to this, this article focuses on the presence of these forms of capital in *White Noise* and tries to evaluate them from a Bourdeusian standpoint.

## 2. Social Capital in *White Noise*

The first type of capital which is analyzed in this article is social capital. Interestingly, we encounter a manifestation of social capital in the first chapter

of the novel where Jack offers a description of students' parents who accompany their children to the college on the first day by mentioning that "They feel a sense of ... communal recognition" and that he considers them to be "a collection of the like-minded and the spiritually akin, a people, a nation" (3,4). The article suggests the phrase "communal recognition" refers directly to what Bourdieu considers "relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" ("The Forms of Capital" 21). Here in the novel, a perfect manifestation of this description is the fact that parents recognize each other and the most significant factor which binds them as the possessors of similar social capital is the fact that Jack considers them "a collection of the like-minded and the spiritually akin, a people, a nation". In this regard, Wouter Pinxten and John Lievens build on Bourdieu's explanation and contend that individuals who possess "similar amount and composition of the different forms of capital are closer together in social space, and this group of people consequently has the potential to become a social class" (1097). To put it simply, being called a nation is the result of owning similar types of capital such as "station wagons" or "massive insurance coverage" which brings them closer and binds them in a network of relationships (3). Thus, owning such forms of capital helps them authenticate their membership in that network.

Moreover, as was previously explained, the reason why individuals in the social field seek membership in such networks of connections is that by gaining such connections, they try to advance their position in the field and accumulate more capital. A perfect example of this effort is apparent in the relationship between Jack and his colleague Murray Jay Siskind who is new at the college and wants to invent Elvis studies (12). In a conversation between them we read:

"What kind of lectures do you plan giving?"

"That's exactly what I want to talk to you about," ...

"You've established a wonderful thing here with Hitler. You created it, you nurtured it, you made it your own. ... It's what I want to do with Elvis." (11-12)

It is argued that the only reason Murray seeks Jack's friendship is to enter himself in the network of connections already established from the side of Jack and also to do something similar to what Jack has done. Nan Lin thusly explains this process: "social capital is an investment in social relationships through which resources of other actors can be accessed and borrowed" (*Social Capital* 24). Here it can be seen that through receiving help from his colleague, Murray will ultimately be able to benefit in his own academic status in the college. Of course, such a connection is not beneficial to one side only. Later on, Jack is able to find a teacher for his German language through his connection with Murray (32). As Lin rightly observes, "individuals engage in interactions and networking in order to produce profits" (19). The result of establishing such connections is finding new opportunities to advance one's position in the social field. In Jack's case, his

friendship with Murray helped him find a German language teacher whose lessons might help Jack accrue more institutionalized capital and elevate his status as a professor.

Another representation of complexities of social capital in the novel might be found in Jack's description of an incident when he enters his office and realizes Murray was waiting for him because "He'd been having trouble ... establishing an Elvis Presley power base in the department of American environments" due to the fact that "The chairman, Alfonse Stompanato, seemed to feel that one of the other instructors ... named Dimitrios Cotsakis, had established prior right" to create an academic subject about Elvis Presley (64-65). The question which arises here is why Murray asks Jack to help him with this problem especially when we know that Jack and Murray's areas of study are different. According to Bourdieu in his article "The Forms of Capital" when new people want to be added as members to social groups, "the whole definition of the group, i.e., its fines, its boundaries, and its identity, is put at stake" (250). Thus, in order to protect the status of the group, the members of every social group have a mechanism called "forms of delegation" which offers a group member the right "to represent the group, to speak and act in its name" and consequently guarantee "the concentration of social capital" within the group and thus "shield the group as a whole from discredit by expelling or excommunicating the embarrassing individuals" (251). In this instance, since Murray is only a "visiting lecturer" and new at the college, Alfonse Stompanato who acts as the head or delegate of the group, tries to hinder his membership within their intellectual group (10). As a result, in order to facilitate his membership, Murray starts building a friendship with Jack, who is an accepted and prominent member, through requesting him "to have lunch with him in the dining room" or even offering a dinner invitation to Jack and his wife (9-10, 39).

In fact, Murray's efforts at socializing with Jack fall in line with Bourdieu's explanation that "the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term" ("The Forms of Capital" 249). At this point, Jack offers to help Murray and mentions that "I suggested that I might drop by his next lecture, ... to give him the benefit of whatever influence and prestige might reside in my office, my subject, my physical person" (65). In spite of all the benefits gained by Murray, such an honorary presence by Jack has its risks too. In other words, unlike purely economic situations where objects similar in value get exchanged without any reduction or addition of value to them, in Bourdieu's understanding of capital, the act of exchange, especially exchanging favors for the sake of personal gain, can maintain risks for people involved. Simply put, the people involved in the act of exchanging are unconsciously aware that this act has the potential to add to their capital or put it at risk and thus it can change the group

definitions and boundaries by affecting its shared total capital. In this example, what is being exchanged is not the mere educational criteria in hand but in fact the significance of the presence of a prominent member of faculty bestowed upon a lower grade colleague and thus elevating his status. As a matter of fact, Jack's description of the event sheds light on how he is unconsciously aware of this proposition:

His [Murray's] eyes showed a deep gratitude. I had been generous with the power and madness at my disposal, allowing my subject to be associated with an infinitely lesser figure, ... . It was not a small matter. We all had an aura to maintain, and in sharing mine with a friend I was risking the very things that made me untouchable" (73-74).

Jack's use of the words and phrases like "generous", "the power and madness at my disposal", "lesser figure" and Murray's "deep gratitude" all stand witness to his structured knowledge of how his presence might ultimately lead to accumulation of cultural capital by Murray.

All in all, we encounter a multi-layered process here. By establishing a network of connections, Murray gains a benefit and can elevate his status among his colleagues and thus facilitate his own membership. However, with the knowledge of the fact that Jack occupies a higher educational status than Murray and thus owns more cultural capital, they are both aware that it is risky for Jack since in this exchange of capital, Murray is the side who benefits more. Nonetheless, by helping out his colleague, Jack has indebted him and is ultimately able to cash this favor by getting help from Murray in finding a German tutor for himself (32).

### 3. Cultural Capital in *White Noise*

The second type of capital which is traced in *White Noise* is cultural capital. In this section, the article aims to point to illustrations of the three types of cultural capital, the "embodied state", the "objectified state", and the "institutionalized state" in the novel.

#### 3.1 The Embodied State

The first type of cultural capital analyzed in this article is the embodied state. The most significant point regarding this state from Bourdieu's perspective is that achieving the embodied state of cultural capital is a time-consuming process which necessitates involvement of an individual in the social games and conventions present in the society ("The Forms of Capital" 18). In other words, unlike economic capital which can be gained independently of the social conventions, like in the instance of being born in a wealthy family where the child can inherit the money without any personal cost or effort, the embodied state of cultural capital requires one's integration in the regularities of a society.

Furthermore, another differentiating factor between economic capital and the embodied state of cultural capital is the fact that unlike the previous one, the latter cannot be exchanged at will (18).

As mentioned earlier, Bourdieu considers the embodied state of cultural capital what we generally call “culture” (18). One example of this cultural aspect which can be seen in *White Noise* is capitalism, consumerism it entails and the appreciation of wealth. According to Haidar Eid, one of the main observable incidents in the novel “is a greedy desire for shopping, a desire that expresses a system of values” (216). Similarly, Karen Weekes considers consumerism a key element in the novel and argues that *White Noise* represents a society in which many important themes have lost meaning but “capitalism and consumerism are on hand to fill the void” (289). As we start reading the novel, we first come across Jack’s appreciation of the wealthy families whose children are attending the college. For instance, Jack’s view of these parents is telling: “They’ve grown comfortable with their money” (3) and there is “something about them suggesting massive insurance coverage” (6). Then, he refers to their cars by calling the gathering of these families “assembly of station wagons” (4). Nevertheless, the significance of this passage goes beyond the mere ownership of instances of economic capital such as “station wagons”, families’ level of income or their “insurance coverage”. As a matter of fact, the important point here is the people who own these things share some similar attributes, characteristics and behaviors.

Susan A. Dumais illustrates this point in Bourdieu’s definition of embodied cultural capital by stating that “embodied cultural capital referred to one’s tastes, ways of speaking and carrying oneself, and general knowledge of the culture valued by the dominant classes” (375). We witness instances of these attributes in parents’ description by Jack:

The parents stand sun-dazed near their automobiles, seeing images of themselves in every direction. The conscientious suntans. The well-made faces and wry looks. They feel a sense of renewal, of communal recognition. The women crisp and alert, in diet trim, knowing people’s names. Their husbands content to measure out the time, distant but ungrudging, accomplished in parenthood, something about them suggesting massive insurance coverage. (3)

The explanation Jack offers from these parents all refer to their embodied cultural capital. Bourdieu maintains that the most important aspect of embodied cultural capital manifests itself through body (*Distinction* 190). It is argued that the “conscientious suntans”, being “crisp and alert”, “in diet trim” or even being “distant but ungrudging” are all instances of embodiment which have been acquired through time. As mentioned earlier, based upon Jack’s description, all the attending students come from similar families sharing similar monetary and

economic possession. As a result, the possession of this type of economic capital has differentiated its possessors from the other members of the society. This so-called nation of parents who can afford college education for their children have specific ways of appearance or behavior, or a specific embodied capital.

Nonetheless, this is not only these families who have incorporated such cultural values. As was mentioned earlier, another significant cultural value in the novel is consumerism. *White Noise* is filled with characters who spend much of their time shopping and even attributing value to it. For instance, we read a passage in the novel where Jack is describing going shopping with his family and meets Murray for “the fourth or fifth time ... in the supermarket, which was roughly the number of times I’d [Jack had] seen him on campus” (35). One might wonder about the number of times Jack meets his colleague in the supermarket and ask about the reason behind this number. Furthermore, in another one of Jack’s visits to the supermarkets we read him saying that “the supermarket is full of elderly people ...” (167). The importance of the supermarket becomes clearer when we read Jack saying that: “everything was fine, would continue to be fine, would eventually get even better as long as the supermarket did not slip” (170). Consequently, the act of shopping and going to the supermarket is not a mere routine activity for the individuals in the novel. In this regard Karen Weekes believes that the supermarket signifies a “promise of abundance” which “provides community” (299). In other words, in Weekes’s perspective, the supermarket is not a mere place of shopping but in fact an area for socializing. This article argues that the importance of shopping and going to supermarket goes even one step further than what Weekes says: it is in fact a kind of cultural activity bearing codes of cultural worth.

However, how can shopping be viewed as an example of the embodied state of cultural capital? Bourdieu suggests that the acquisition of cultural capital occurs without “deliberate inculcation” and “quite unconsciously” (“The Forms of Capital” 18). This form of unconscious integration in the act of shopping can be seen in Jack’s own account of the pleasures he receives from it: “It seemed to me that Babette and I, in the mass and variety of our purchases, in the sheer plenitude those crowded bags suggested, the weight and size and number, the familiar package designs and vivid lettering, the giant sizes ... it seemed we had achieved a fullness of being ....” (20). Jack’s specific satisfaction achieved by shopping can be explained by Bourdieu’s idea which maintains that the “incorporation of the fundamental structures of a society”, as can be seen in Jack’s case who has internalized the social convention of shopping and consumerism, results in “the production of a common, meaningful world, a common-sense world” (*Distinction* 468). In other words, the reason Jack believes shopping gives them such a level of satisfaction is that spending economic capital for acquiring objects bought from shops and the supermarket involves them in a routine action among the other individuals in the novel who need and buy a lot



and this involvement gives them a sense of belonging to a group. Ciaran Burke reiterates this aspect of the Bourdieusian perspective of cultural capital by saying that “it is a sense of understanding and belonging to situations connected to a social class group” (14). For Jack and his family, spending economic capital gives them a chance to indulge in consumerism, which is only indulged in by wealthy families who can afford to fill their bags in shops and supermarkets, and thus share a similar cultural activity, inclination and value with a specific social class.

Another significant point regarding Jack’s shopping experiences is the fact that Jack tries to distinguish himself and the feeling that shopping gives him from “people who need less, expect less, who plan their lives around lonely walks in the evening” (20). This is due to the fact that capital regulates the “practical knowledge of the social world” which “implements classificatory schemes ... of perception and appreciation which are the product of the objective division into classes (age groups, genders, social classes) and which function below the level of consciousness and discourse” (Bourdieu *Distinction* 468). In other words, the embodied cultural capital has a twofold importance: first, the possessors of this type of capital try to distinguish themselves from others. Second, those who lack this form of capital recognize the value of its possession by others. In Jack’s case, this practical knowledge of the social world, which in Bourdieu’s theoretical framework operates as “a self-regulating device programmed to redefine courses of action” to comply with society’s values, divides the society Jack lives in into various groups (*Outline* 10-11). In this instance, we may see the class of the possessors of embodied capital and the class of those who do not possess it.

### 3.2. The Objectified State

After having a glimpse at some examples of embodied state of cultural capital, the article tries to elaborate on the presence of the second type of cultural capital in the novel: the objectified state. Bourdieu, in his article “The Forms of Capital”, uses the objectified state of cultural capital to refer to “cultural goods” and objects whose value is twofold: “cultural goods can be appropriated both materially—which presupposes economic capital—and symbolically—which presupposes cultural capital” (247). Thus, a cultural good like a painting has a twofold significance: first in its materiality as an object, the acquisition of which only requires economic capital, and in its symbolic value which offers the possessor a form of status or prestige. Weininger and Lareau in their article “Cultural Capital” explain the concept of the objectified state by saying that certain objects can have cultural value “insofar as their use or consumption presupposes a certain amount of embodied cultural capital. For example, a philosophy text is an ‘objectified’ form of cultural capital since it requires prior training in philosophy to understand” (1). Thus, it can be realized that in the same way that access to a specific college degree can be considered

a form of capital helping to elevate one's social status, access to a specific object or a property can have a similar function.

References to this type of capital start as early as the ninth page of the novel in which Jack describes the dress code observed by department heads at the college:

Department heads wear academic robes at the College-on-the-Hill. Not grand sweeping full-length affairs but sleeveless tunics puckered at the shoulders. ... I like clearing my arm from the folds of the garment to look at my watch. The simple act of checking the time is transformed by this flourish. Decorative gestures add romance to a life. (9)

From the way Jack describes academic robes, one might realize that they go beyond a mere formality. They are worn to send messages. One such example of these messages is found when Jack mentions the symbolic effect of the dress on "checking the time" (9). This short sentence illustrates the transformative power of the robe which adds a cultural value to the act of looking at the watch and results in regarding it as something marvelous from the perspective of the students. Thus, the professor who wears the robe gains a high status as well. In addition, as was mentioned earlier, understanding how to make use of the robe presupposes that Jack has already acquired the necessary embodied cultural capital and knowledge of how to behave with the object and knows its symbolic value.

Another instance of the objectified state of cultural capital is a pipe which is used by Jack's colleague, Murray, and signifies a cultural value: "'You're smoking a pipe,' I said. Murray smiled sneakily. 'It looks good. I like it. It works.' He lowered his eyes, smiling. ... . A tradition of stem virtue seemed to hover about his gestures and expressions" (282). In fact, in this conversation which is recited by Jack to the reader, Jack's mentioning "a tradition of stem virtue" and Murray's smile both suggest that they have embodied the cultural premises of their society which enables them to see and use the pipe as an object with cultural value. One more example of how this process works might be found in the passage where Jack tells his wife about the memory of his discussion with the chancellor regarding changing his name and the changes he made in his appearance in order to become a more prominent professor:

On one such night I got into bed next to Babette and told her how the chancellor had advised me, back in 1968, to do something about my name and appearance if I wanted to be taken seriously as a Hitler innovator. Jack Gladney would not do, he said, ... . We finally agreed that I should invent an extra initial and call myself J. A. K. Gladney, a tag I wore like a borrowed suit. ... The glasses with thick black heavy frames and dark lenses were my own idea, an alternative to the bushy beard that my wife of the period didn't want me to grow. Babette said

she liked the series J. A. K. and didn't think it was attention-getting in a cheap sense. To her it intimated dignity, significance and prestige. (16-17)

This long but illustrative passage indicates how the most basic things can gain the status of capital in the objectified state, whose possession in their own turn can help their possessors to accumulate more capitals. In other words, we can observe that the most rudimentary things like Jack's name tag and his glasses gain the status of objectified form of cultural capital, whose accumulation helps him raise his status in the college. Bourdieu and Wacquant in their article "Symbolic Capital and Social Classes" mention that the objectified cultural capital "function[s] as a kind of primordial language, through which we are spoken more than we speak it, in spite of all strategies of presentation of self" (298). Thus, the name tag Jack uses, the "glasses" he owns and the "robe" he wears are used by him to send a message beyond their physical importance.

However, the question which might be asked here is how such basic and rudimentary objects can send messages of high significance. Bourdieu and Wacquant in the same article indicate that the significance such as "intrinsic charm" or "charisma" carried by such objects signifying the embodied state of cultural capital is nothing but the mere product of "adhesion" to all the cultural values which are accepted in society and are "materialized in officially recognized and guaranteed symbols, signs of distinction, ... certificates of charisma such as titles of nobility or school credentials, objectified marks of respect calling for tokens of respect" (299). What it means is that in order for an object to be accepted as a form of objectified state of cultural capital in a field, the members should see it as valuable. As can be seen in this particular example, the dress code in the college acts as a symbol not only for Jack but also for the other members of that field. This is why Murray tries the pipe. In fact, he is trying to be distinctive and consequently build prominence and status for himself in the college.

Concerning the objectified state of cultural capital, it should be stated that different objects can have different cultural values within different societies. Tony Schirato and Mary Roberts further explain Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and maintain that "anything can go through a phase where it is associated with or can constitute cultural capital" (179). The name Jack chooses for his son is a telling example of the objectified state of cultural capital in the novel. He explains the reason why he named his son "Heinrich" to his daughter Denise thus:

"I thought it was a forceful name, a strong name. It has a kind of authority."

"Is he named after anyone?"

“No. He was born shortly after I started the department and I guess I wanted to acknowledge my good fortune. I wanted to do something German. I felt a gesture was called for.”

“Heinrich Gerhardt Gladney?”

“I thought it had an authority that might cling to him. I thought it was forceful and impressive and I still do. I wanted to shield him, make him unafraid. People were naming their children Kim, Kelly and Tracy.” (63)

In an article called “Cultural capital in educational research: A critical assessment”, Lareau and Weininger write that cultural capital “allows culture to be used as a resource that provides access to scarce rewards” (587). In this instance, Jack has tried to use the name “Heinrich” as an instance of objectified cultural capital which can benefit himself since he is “chairman of the department of Hitler studies” and can also protect his son and empower him (4, 63).

### 3.3. The Institutionalized State

The last type of cultural capital discussed in this article is what Bourdieu refers to as the “institutionalized state”. In simple terms, the example Bourdieu uses to define this type of capital is the certificates one receives from academic institutions like colleges (“The Forms of Capital” 247). In the previous sections it was explained that seeking capital, in whatever form it might be, is always a strategy adopted by an individual in an effort to elevate his position among the other members of the society. In *White Noise*, “College-on-the-Hill” can be viewed as an academic institution in which institutionalized state of cultural capital is granted to the students.

For Bourdieu, the educational system and specifically the higher educational system is a means for the dominant group within the society to yield their desired cultural values upon students since he considers it “an institutionalized classifier” whose function is “reproducing the hierarchies of the social world ...” (*Distinction* 387). Richard Harker builds on Bourdieu’s idea and maintains: “Just as our dominant economic institutions are structured to favour those who already possess economic capital, so our educational institutions are structured to favour those who already possess cultural capital” (87). In *White Noise*, where Jack describes the students, we can realize that they all come from families with access to high economic and cultural capital. It was suggested that the parents’ ownership of “station wagons” could be read as owning an example of objectified cultural capital. In a similar way, we see the students’ ownership of similar objects such as “the junk food still in shopping bags” or “onion-and-garlic chips, nacho thins, peanut creme patties, Waffelos and Kabooms, fruit chews and toffee popcorn; the DumDum pops, the Mystic mints” signify consumerist values and other items like “the stereo sets”, “personal computers”

and “phonograph records and cassettes” (3) signify cultural values and can be read as cultural goods whose possession and use entails having embodied cultural capital. It can be seen that the college students possess forms of economic and cultural capital similar to the ones possessed by their parents. The children possess “limited-edition T-shirts” and “easy-care knits” as their parents possess “station wagons” and “massive insurance coverage” (3).

Furthermore, according to Bourdieu in his article “The Forms of Capital”, “the educational qualification, invested with the specific force of the official, becomes the condition for legitimate access to a growing number of positions, particularly the dominant ones ... .” (254). Thus, the families with economic and cultural capital at their disposal try to invest in their children’s chance of gaining such “access” and thus send them to academic institutions like College-on-the-Hill. An illuminating part of the novel which can support this claim might be found where Jack explains some details about this institution and those who enter it: “Tuition at the College-on-the-Hill is fourteen thousand dollars, Sunday brunch included. I sense there is a connection between this powerful number and the way the students arrange themselves physically in the reading areas of the library” (41). Jack goes on to explain some of these ways of arrangement:

They sit on broad cushioned seats in various kinds of ungainly posture, clearly calculated to be the identifying signs of some kinship group or secret organization. There is an element of overrefinement and inbreeding. But it is only the language of economic class they are speaking, in one of its allowable outward forms, like the convocation of station wagons at the start of the year. (41)

As a matter of fact, the reason these children have been able to attend the college, the reason they show such gestures and “outward forms” is that their families have access to specific types of economic and cultural capital. Previously, it was mentioned that parents’ bodily properties and appearance are suggestions of their embodied cultural capital. In this case, “the way the students arrange themselves physically in the reading areas of the library” and their “overrefinement and inbreeding” refer to the embodied capital of the children of these families (41).

In fact, what differentiates the level of academic achievement between students from various social classes is not based upon their inherent talent but in fact stems from the regulating power of cultural and economic capital (“The Forms of Capital” 17). Concerning this point, Susan A. Dumais explains that cultural capital can help the children of families who own economic capital throughout their “educational process” (375-376). In the case of the students at college-on-the-Hill, the similarities between the behaviors seen in the students and their parents stem from the fact that these students have grown up in

families sharing similar values and capitals and access to these capitals gives them the chance of entering the college.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Bourdeusian explanations of cultural capital and social capital makes it possible to differentiate these types of capital from the mainly economic form. The application of these explanations enables us to identify the representations of cultural and social capital in the novel. As a result of this application, the article suggests that the possession of these types of capital can lead to the enhancement of social or professional position among the characters. Consequently, these characters try to achieve this goal by broadening their circles of friendship and establishing new connections which result in higher social capital. Furthermore, the characters follow the cultural values of their society for the same purpose. In the case of the embodied state of cultural capital, it is shown that characters follow consumerist patterns since they signify an elevated cultural significance. In the case of the objectified state, it is illuminated that the possession of items which signify cultural value, is used by the characters as signs of taste and distinction. Ultimately, regarding the institutionalized state, the article suggests that families with access to economic and cultural capital invest in their children's education since it helps them in their future.

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### تحلیلی از سرمایه اجتماعی و فرهنگی در رمان سر و صدای سفید اثر دان دللیو: دیدگاه بوردیویی

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**چکیده:** سر و صدای سفید هشتمین رمان دان دللیو است که در سال 1985 منتشر شد. این رمان توسط بسیاری از محققان از مکاتب مختلف فکری مورد بررسی قرار گرفته است. در این مقاله سعی بر این است که با توجه به مفاهیم ارائه شده توسط پیر بوردیو از انواع مختلف سرمایه، خوانشی از این رمان ارائه دهیم و سعی کنیم به بازنمایی هر یک از این انواع سرمایه در آن توجه کنیم. با این وجود، از آنجایی که بزرگترین سهمی که بوردیو در بحث سرمایه دارد، تبیین او از سرمایه اجتماعی و سرمایه فرهنگی است، این مقاله از توضیحات بوردیو به همراه سایر محققان بوردیویی در مورد این دسته از سرمایه ها استفاده می کند تا بازنمایی سرمایه اجتماعی و سرمایه فرهنگی را در قالب های حالت تجسم یافته، حالت عینیت یافته و حالت نهادینه شده در رمان شناسایی کند. در رابطه با سرمایه اجتماعی، مقاله استدلال می کند که تلاش هایی که شخصیت های رمان برای عضویت در گروه های اجتماعی مختلف انجام می دهند، استراتژی ای است که آنها برای پیشبرد سرمایه کلی خود طراحی می کنند. علاوه بر این، در مورد سرمایه فرهنگی، این استدلال وجود دارد که برخورداری از آن می تواند به افراد کمک کند تا مزایایی مانند شانس بیشتر در برخورداری از تحصیلات آکادمیک و رتبه های اجتماعی بالاتر کسب کنند. علاوه بر این، یافته ها نشان می دهد که دسترسی به زیرمجموعه های سرمایه فرهنگی می تواند موقعیت اجتماعی افراد را ارتقا دهد.

**کلیدواژه ها:** دان دللیو، سر و صدای سفید، پیر بوردیو، سرمایه اجتماعی، سرمایه فرهنگی