

The Generational Gap and the Role of Technology in the Contemporary Family

Mohamed Zaghlul*

moelomdaf2f1666@gmail.com

Abstract

This research focuses on the nature of the postmodern family, the absence of the real guidance of parents and the impact of technology and science that could be felt extensively in postmodern American society. This paper tackles Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985), Dave Eggers' *The Circle* (2013) and Jonathan Franzen's *Purity* (2015). The three selected novels expose the absence of the real identity inside the postmodern family and the emergence of technology as a new identity. These novels also portray how all aspects of life, especially the social side, have been combined with the role and dominance of technology that forms the sociology of the postmodern family. Therefore, this thesis focuses on the invasion of technology which has progressed in a sweeping and amazing range. This invasion influences human beings' lives such as the presence of computers, radios and other electronic devices.

Family is the source of the personal development and moral values within the society. It is often viewed as an idealistic solution to the problem of fragmentation and isolation in the contemporary society. Family in the postmodern society is characterized by alienation, loss of identity, unreality, skepticism, increasing access to information and the widespread of the electronic media. These characteristics are found in the three novels under study. In these three novels, the authors emphasize the feelings of isolation and fragmentation that are present in the postmodern world through both style and the subject matter as well as the inherent disconnection and confusion in the late twentieth century life.

This research also focuses on the break in the traditional family structure and the relationship between the parents within the contemporary society as well as the gap between children and parents that pushes children to search for a new identity in the shape of technology that compensates them but at the same time it has disastrous effects and ramifications on them. Technology can give them pleasure and make their life easier. But at the same time, it deprives them from their innocence, turning them into robots without souls. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between technology and the destruction of the family and the social and moral values within the society. Because much exposure to technology leads to the self-damage and loss of the privacy and identity within the family in the contemporary society.

Key Words: family; contemporary; society; postmodern; technology

* University of Helwan, Faculty of Arts, Department of Arts

Introduction

Postmodernism is a movement that appeared in the twentieth century. It represents a new age that is totally different from the age of modernism in many aspects such as reality and originality. Critics do not agree on one definition of postmodernism. However, it could be defined in general as “a rejection of many, if not most, of the cultural certainties on which life in the West has been structured over the last couple of centuries” (Sim VII).

In his book *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*, Stephen R. C. Hicks explains that postmodern people reject and deny truth accepted by their parents and search for truth that is based on their own experience and relationships. Hicks argues that postmodernism is "anti-realist, holding that it is impossible to speak meaningfully about an independently existing reality. Postmodernism substitutes instead a social-linguistic, constructionist account of reality" (6).

Postmodernism is anti-reality and rejects a lot of the traditional alternatives. This movement “often bills itself as anti-philosophical, by which it means that it rejects many traditional philosophical alternatives” (Singh132). For postmodernists, the notion of identity is absolutely different. Postmodern identity is collectivist rather than individualist. In this respect, Hicks claims that "Postmodern accounts of human nature are consistently collectivist, holding that individuals' identities are constructed largely by the social-linguistic groups" (6).

The situation of differences in beliefs, values and attitudes between one generation and another, especially between the young and the old is identified as the generation gap. The term generation gap became popular in in the United States and Europe in the 1960s. During this period, there were great differences in many things such as music, fashion and lifestyle as well as the differences in interaction and communication patterns. In other words, the phrase "generation gap implies a deep chasm which opens up between parents and children, between the old and the young, and which in somehow insurmountable" (Falk 53).

The actual differences between the old and young generations can be physiological, psychological and sociological. Physiological differences between parents and adolescents are very distinct. They are two different periods of dramatic change in body or thinking structures. On the one hand, there is a young generation with full power and energy that is adventurous, risk lovers and trouble makers. On the other hand, there is an old generation who is losing power and energy and seeking security and trying to avoid problems. In other words, the two generations are completely different in the way they look, feel, think and act.

Moreover, there are Psychological differences between the two generations. The old generation seems to be more realistic and conservative, and on the contrary, teenagers are often idealistic, but not always realistic and receptive. The sociologist Kingsley Davis argues:

There is, in short, a persistent tendency for the ideology of a person as he grows older to gravitate more and more towards the status quo ideology [...] The reality of an ideal for him is defined in terms of how many people accept it rather than how completely it is mirrored in actual behavior. The young, however, are idealists, partly because they take working ideals literally and partly because they acquire ideals not fully operative in the social organization (177).

Davis points out that children are always receptive with little social experiences that make them have unlimited ideals which soar to the sky. They soon find out that these ideals are not so in fact and this can lead them to mental conflict. In contrast, the old generation, with more social experiences, use the working ideals that are only accepted in the society.

The differences between the old and young generations can also be sociological. The rapid social changes have given the two generations different social content. These social changes have helped children and

youth to have different beliefs and attitudes as well as different ways of living and thinking. As a result, there is a loss of mutual identification and reciprocity between the two generations. "More than this, social complexity has confused the standards within the generations. Faced up with conflicting goals, parents become inconsistent and confused in their own minds in rearing their children" (Davis 180).

During the past two decades, the gap between parents and their children has been a topic of considerable debate. There have been several attempts by different social scientists to examine the truth of this popular belief and have created many contradictions. Some critics claim that the conflict between the two generations is ubiquitous and inevitable. Like the sociologist Kingsly Davis who argues that that "since sociological differences are inherent in family organization they are potentially capable of producing conflict" (178). This view is also promoted by Ramaa Prasad. In his book, *Generational Gap: Sociological Study of Inter-generational Conflicts*, he maintains that "the conflict between adult and adolescent is not new at all. What is new perhaps is the dimension it has reached today" (13). Moreover, he mentions that the differences between the "young and old generations reflect and represent ever moving cycle of time and progress" (15).

There are other critics who have a different perspective. For example, Gerhard Falk and Ursula Falk. They assert that "older and younger generations are neither entirely in agreement nor entirely in disagreement on a number of issues the researches presented" (56). In fact there is a good deal of reciprocity, communicative and interactive patterns between the generations. Without realization, parents pass on a part of themselves and their experiences to their children.

But the problem is that parents want their children "to be their carbon copies. They want them to follow the traditions. Many times parents are too self-centered to pay careful attention to their children's radical approach" (Trehan and Trehan 114). There are always a mutual relations between the old and the young within the family even in the contemporary society. But sometimes "contrasts may be caused by

children's polarized misperceptions of parents' attitudes - or, to a lesser degree, by parents' misattributions of children's attitudes" (Lancaster et al 452).

In this respect, in his book, *Building Great Relationships: All about Emotional Intelligence*, B. K. Trehan and Indu Trehan argue that adolescent/parent relationship should be constructed on a friendship. Youths need the experience and wisdom of parents and at the same time, we should always be "positive and open to learning something new from our children. [...] Perhaps, they know better on current events and modern hi tech stuff than us. This attitude of learning from grown- up children helps narrow down the generation gap, which is a major cause of conflict in many families" (101). Furthermore, Trehan and Trehan also emphasize on the idea of love that should control the relationship between the two generations because "love is the foundation of all relationships [...]. Building a great relationship is like building a house on a strong foundation of love" (9).

In postmodern society, there has been a social and cultural transformation in the American family. This transformation has led to a conflict between parents and children. This conflict has created a gap between the two generations in attitudes and beliefs as well as the way of living and thinking. On the one hand, the difference between the two generations may be the result of the rapid technology and the new world of automation that have created different problems that the preceding generation did not use to. Davis claims that "the extremely rapid change in modern civilization, in contrast to most societies, tends to increase parent – youth conflict...Inevitably, under such a condition, youth is reared in a milieu different from that of the parents; hence the parents become old- fashioned, youth rebellious, and clashes occur" (173).

On the other hand, the contemporary family new life style has developed conditions that have also limited the role of the parents and older adults inside the family and restricted the ability of the family to take care of their kids or youths. In other words, these new life styles,

modern social aspects, different cultures and new technologies have widened the gap between the two generations. As a result, "the opportunities for interaction have become fewer as the members of each age group have become more and more highly segregated. Children congregate with each other in child-care centers, schools, and youth-oriented groups" (Newman et al xi).

Hence, family is considered the main source of the personal development and moral values within the society. It is often viewed as an idealistic solution to the problem of fragmentation and isolation in the contemporary society. But family in the postmodern society is characterized by alienation, loss of identity, unreality, skepticism, increasing access to information and the widespread of the electronic media. These characteristics are found in the three novels under study (Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (1985), Dave Eggers' *The Circle* (2013) and Jonathan Franzen's *Purity* (2015). In the three novels, the authors emphasize the feelings of isolation and fragmentation that are present in the postmodern world through both style and the subject matter as well as they expose the inherent disconnection and confusion in the late twentieth century life.

Don DeLillo's *White Noise* is a good example that represents the postmodern family in which there is no either enough familial communication or a stable family structure. In DeLillo's *White Noise*, there are parents, step parents, brothers, step brothers, sisters and step sisters. Jack Gladney's house is a good example of postmodern home. Jack, the protagonist, lives with his wife, Babette, and four of their children from earlier marriages. It is a clear example of a disintegrated family where children live with their half-parents.

White Noise is written in the first person through the eyes of the main character, Jack Gladney to provide the reader with the true feelings and thoughts. Therefore, DeLillo uses an ironic tone that is mixed with expressions of love and compassion for his family. In fact, *White Noise* is considered a good example of postmodern literature,

known for its “thematic exploration of media saturation and the disintegration of the family unit. Throughout the novel, it is clear that Jack, like DeLillo himself, is “a modernist displaced in a postmodern world” (Wilcox 348).

People might normally think that parents are the ones who should guide and supervise the family. But in the digital age, children appear to be more knowledgeable, watchful and smarter than their parents who have a sense of self-doubt that makes them appear immature and incompetent. This is due to the children’s much exposure to social media platforms or different digital tools. Tom Le Clair mentions that “the irony of this inverted situation is that the professor and his teacher wife attempt to resist knowledge and regress into nostalgia while their children, despite their fears, move forward and outward into the Age of Information” (401).

Therefore, it is not surprising to find a child like the eleven-year-old Denise gives her mother advice about healthy food. She always scolds her mom for chewing cancer-causing gum or wasting food. She seems to know more than her mom. This is because of the modern technology, especially the television that allows children to have more access to information than ever before. As a result, children have more information that enables them to be able to lecture their parents about different things in life. Denise tells her mum “that stuff causes cancer in laboratory animals in case you didn't know” (DeLillo 24).

In fact, throughout the events of the novel, there are a lot of situations that show that the children’s knowledge is more than their parents and how the TV has become the only source of information and knowledge. Mark Conroy states: “The parent figures are Jack and his wife, Babette, but they do none the passing on of wisdom that is supposed to be [...] Instead, television seems to be the chief source of information and even guidance” (141).

Moreover, the fourteen-year-old Heinrich, Jack's son, always argues his father scientifically, technologically and even theoretically in a perfect way and outperforms the academic professor who is supposed to teach others. Heinrich is a good example of the contemporary young generation who is ready to ignore his senses and feelings and believes nothing but technology. Technology and the media turn him to be more knowledgeable than his father. He tries to prove to his father that reality is relative and everyone looks at it from a certain angle: "You see the sun moving across the sky. But is the sun moving across the sky or is the earth turning?" (Delillo 32)

Undoubtedly, Heinrich seems to have his own way of thinking. He is a crafty boy who always uses his mind to get himself out of his father's hardline reasoning. In the following quotation, Heinrich uses logic to explain to his father that there is no word that means now because the present moment is over before they've even finished saying it. He mentions: "Is there such a thing as now? "Now" comes and goes as soon as you say it. How can I say it's raining now if your so-called "now" becomes "then" as soon as I say it?" (Delillo 16)

Consequently, most of the characters in the novel, especially the young, depend on different technological tools and the media to learn facts and get information rather than their own physical senses. Heinrich does not trust his senses to the extent that he cannot believe that it is raining now because the radio says it is going to rain that night, not that moment:

"It's going to rain tonight."

"It's raining now," I said.

"The radio said tonight" (Delillo 22).

His father tells him: "Just because it's on the radio doesn't mean we have to suspend belief in the evidence of our senses" (Delillo 22). And then, Heinrich gives a reply that reflects his strong belief in technology rather than his physical senses: "Our senses? Our senses are

wrong a lot more often than they're right. This has been proved in the laboratory. Don't you know about all those theorems that say nothing is what it seems? There's no past, present or future outside our own mind" (Delillo 23).

Because of the lack of guidance, supervision and absence of identity inside the family, Heinrich becomes only comfortable with ambiguity. He has a relationship with a prison chess-partner who has killed six people. Moreover, Heinrich becomes a skeptical boy, who finds himself incapable of answering a question as simple as whether he would like to visit his mother in the summer. He says: "Who knows what I want to do? Who knows what anyone wants to do? How can you be sure of something like that? How do you know whether something is really what you want to do or just some kind of nerve impulse of the brain?" (Delillo 45)

On the other side, Jack (the father) represents the old generation who respects and believes in the physical senses and real personal connections. Jack seems to ignore his real character. He does not know himself very well. He never considers himself as a genuine although he is one of the best in his field. He is associated with his fake persona not the real one. He uses his initials J.A.K instead of his full name to identify himself.

From the beginning of the novel, it is clear that there is a strong relationship between Don DeLillo and Jack Gladney. DeLillo uses Jack "to explore the tension between the novel's two interpretations of plots and their relation to the formation of a coherent identity. DeLillo synthetically and thematically uses Gladney's identity faults to study and evince the problems that arise in transitioning identity from one dominant narrative mode to another" (Botkins 56). Moreover, Delillo uses the character of Jack to expose the loss of identity in the contemporary society. This is clear through Jack's constant quest for any trace of a meaningful pattern in the chaos that surrounds him. Jack begins to "wear heavy-rimmed sunglasses to bolster his credibility and changes his name from Jack Gladney to the more distinguished J. A. K.

Gladney" (Behrooz and Pirnajmuddin 185). When Babette asks him to stop wearing them, he says, "I can't teach Hitler without them" (Delillo 221). Leonard Wilcox mentions that Jack is "unable, like his friend Murray, to submit himself happily to surface and simulacrum; rather he is plagued by a nagging late modernist, existential sense" (350). Therefore, Jack presents "the false character that follows the name around" (Delillo 17).

In *White Noise*, the characters live in their own electronic virtual world not in the real one. Susan Martins observes that the individual in DeLillo's *White Noise* is "no longer exist as an individual at all" (89). As a result, the relationship between the real and virtual lives is blurred and the confusion between them is obvious through the main characters of the novel. When Murray and Jack visit the Most Photographed Barn in America, there is a complaint that "the barn has become a simulacrum, so that "no one sees" the actual barn anymore" (Allen and Handley 366). This indicates that the virtual image of the barn has become more important for them than the real one.

Delillo also uses 'The Most Photographed Barn' as a symbol of the virtual life in the contemporary society. When Murray and Gladney drive into the country to see 'The Most Photographed Barn in America', "[r]ather than conjuring up associations with a pioneering past or an authentic rural life, the barn has been subsumed into the process of image replication; it is surrounded by tour buses, roadside signs, vendors selling post cards of the barn" (Wilcox 350). Murray explains to Jack the logic of a virtual reality where signs triumph over reality, where experience is constructed by the image in the simulated world: "We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura. Can you feel it, Jack? An accumulation of nameless energies" (Delillo 12).

For the postmodern people, the reality is identified only via screens or in a shape of data. Murray, Jack's friend, argues: "The family is strongest where objective reality is most likely to be misinterpreted" (82). Hence, in the contemporary society, identity

depends on the sum total of data instead of the real social and moral development of the individuals within the society. Jack tells Babette: "We are the sum total of our data" (141). This reflects the real connection between technology and the destruction of the family and loss of the individual's identity.

The relationship among the members of the family within the postmodern society is full of stress and anxiety because the family is no longer the main source of moral and social development. In the digital age, people have become only dependent on screens, media platforms or supermarkets for their personal connections or social and moral development. In the digital age, the supermarket not the family has become the only place where the members of the family gather and consult each other. It provides them with the sense of happiness and pride. It is the place in which they spend a lot of time to satisfy their needs for possession as well as it gives them a sense of power and confidence. At the supermarket, Jack's family unusually appears as a cohesive and unified family. Jack explains:

Babette and the kids followed me into the elevator, into the shops set along the tiers, through the emporiums and department stores, puzzled but excited by my desire to buy. When I could not decide between two shirts they encouraged me to buy both. When I said I was hungry, they fed me pretzels, beer, souvlaki.... My family gloried in the event. I was one of them, shopping, at last (83).

Buying commodities and spending money provides Jack with a sense of satisfaction and self-confidence. Jack mentions that "I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a person I'd forgotten existed. Brightness settled around me... I was bigger than these sums. These sums poured off my skin like so much rain. These sums in fact came back to me in the form of existential credit" (84). The supermarket replaces the family as a place of entertainment and enjoyment where people enjoy spending money as a sign of financial power and social prestige.

In fact, this feeling of excitement and happiness is temporary unlike the warm family relationships. Because once they leave the mall or supermarket, they keep their distances from one another. Jack states that “we drove home in silence. We went to our respective rooms, wishing to be alone” (84). This mirrors the issue of identity and self-esteem as well as isolation and alienation within the postmodern society.

The absence of real identities within the families in the contemporary society leads people to search for their existence through malls, supermarkets and technological tools that provide them with false identity and temporary sense of excitement or comfort. As a consequence, individuals in the digital age remain stuck in a constant search for the sense of self through different digital tools that they respect and appreciate “their power but criticize their dangerous consequences” (Osteen 3).

In the past, the traditional family used to gather to discuss their problems or the family future. But in the digital age, there is a sense of alienation among the members of the family within the society. In *White Noise*, the only thing that gathers the family is the TV or supermarket. At Jack's house, there is a Friday night ritual in which the whole family gathers to watch television. Jack considers the Friday night "a subtle form of punishment" (16). Although this is the only night that gathers them, they seem to hate it and consider it as a kind of punishment because they hate being together even if they are gathered to watch TV or listen to the radio.

Furthermore, when Jack's family gathers on Friday night to watch a lot of natural catastrophes such as floods, volcanoes and earthquakes, they are very attentive that they were "totally absorbed in those documentary clips of calamity and death” (Delillo 64). They astonishingly watch and enjoy these disasters without sharing others their pains or sorrows. Therefore, this reflects the selfishness and the split between the self and the others in the contemporary society.

People enjoy disasters "as long as they happen somewhere else" (Delillo 66).

In contemporary society, marriage is no longer a top priority in human life. There is a radical change in people's attitudes and opinions in terms of marriage, family and divorce. The idea of the dissolution of marriage gains social acceptance within the contemporary family and society. Family has lost its value as a social institution because the contemporary people have strong tendency to individualism rather than social or moral relations.

Divorce is one of the reasons that widens the gap between parents and children. It can cause instability and loss of identity as well as long-term social and psychological consequences. Kandi M Stinson mentions that "divorce and remarriage of parents may negatively affect parent-child relationships as well as disrupt relationships with other support network members" (135). When a daughter who lives with her mother comes to visit her father who lives with his children and wife, not her real mother, she feels that she does not belong to this house and is treated as an outsider. This is what happens to Bee, Jack's daughter. She lives with her mother not her father. Bee's father, Jack has already had his own family that he has built with Babette. When Bee comes to visit her father; she is considered as an outsider and disrupts all people inside the house and their habits. She gives them an uncomfortable feeling. Jack mentions:

Bee made us feel self-conscious at times, a punishment that visitors will unintentionally inflict on their complacent hosts. Her presence seemed to radiate a surgical light. We began to see ourselves as a group that acted without design, avoided making decisions, took turns being stupid and emotionally unstable, left wet towels everywhere, mislaid our youngest member (Delillo 46).

Don Delillo through *White Noise* exposes the terrible ramifications and impacts of divorce on people's lives, especially the

young. Steffie is another victim of divorce. She is about to travel to visit her mother and in a conversation with her father, she tells him how she can recognize her mother. Moreover, she is completely afraid that her mother will not send her back. This reflects how far divorce can distance between parents and children. Steffie mentions:

"How do I know I'll recognize my mother?"

"You saw her last year," I said. "You liked her."

"What if she refuses to send me back?"

.....

"It won't happen this time."

"You'll have to kidnap her back."

.....

"It won't happen in a million years."

"It happens all the time," she said. "One parent takes the child, the other parent hires kidnapers to get her back" (Delillo 117).

At the end of the novel, Jack's house loses its safety and comfort because of technology and drugs that bring nothing but stress and anxiety. Jack discovers that his wife, Babette takes a drug called Dylar to relieve her mental diseases such as depression or fear of death. Moreover, he gets shocked when she admitted having an affair with the Dylar project manager in exchange for the pills. As a result, Jack loses his confidence in his wife and his house is no longer a protective and comfortable place. Throughout *White Noise*, Delillo provides his readers a postmodern representation of modernist features by revealing "the depths of language, depths in which a kind of humanity is preserved, and a kind of spirituality, that is disavowed by poststructuralist thinking" (Boxall 14). Therefore, Jack's family

represents a good example of the postmodern family that is broken and disintegrated.

Family is very essential for the personal development of its members and building their self-esteem. Furthermore, it is responsible for providing them with security and the sense of belonging. It has a great impact on all aspects of people's lives such as values and beliefs as well as social skills and self-image. Wanda Draper states: "As the child develops, he or she gradually creates a perception of self" (2). Thus, family is a permanent source of support, guidance and confidence throughout life. But in postmodern society, family lacks unity and integration and is characterized by isolation and alienation.

A good example is Dave Eggers' *The Circle* that tackles a lot of contemporary issues such as the loss of identity, social connections and fears of the contemporary global world. Moreover, it casts the light on the relationship between the technological tools and the social and moral development and its ramifications and dangers on the family within the contemporary society. Alison Gibbons states: "*The Circle* can be seen as one of three contemporary novels by Eggers that explore, through fiction, the facets and fears of the contemporary global world" (11).

The Circle is written in a third-person point of view that follows the thoughts and actions of Mae to present an unbiased point of view. Throughout *The Circle*, Dave Eggers provides the reader with a lot of opportunities to realize that Mae is terribly misguided. Eggers uses two different tones to show the contrast between Mae's sense of joy with the 'Circle' and the tragic events that surround the company's increasing power.

Throughout *The Circle*, Eggers does not criticize any behavior or way of thought. Eggers uses various characters in his novel as "personifications of different parts of society. These characters sometimes complement, sometimes contrast each other and all of them together and their interactions create a small-scale model of what the

author perceives our society as” (Bermannová 10). In other words, throughout *The Circle*, Eggers shows his own idea of what he himself thinks of the current society and new generation through the setting and atmosphere as well as the main and secondary characters. He uses them “as metaphorical mirrors that show the twisted nature of the fictional society as a whole, represented by its most crucial part – a young mind full of potential” (Bermannová 6).

It is undisputed that family in the contemporary society has a different context with different opportunities and challenges. A context where technological innovations and the media are interwoven to the extent that it is difficult to realize when one should stop or begin. Mae, the protagonist is like many people in her society and her mistakes are the same like others. She is a blank slate just waiting to be written on. She is misguided by the ‘Circle’ and its rules. As a result, she forsakes her values, thoughts, and the sense of right and wrong and replaces them by the ideas and rules of the ‘Circle’ because she believes that the ‘Circle’ is the most important and powerful place in the world.

Mae is a daughter of a mother and father who keep working day and night and do not have enough time to see each other. Mae’s father is “the building manager at a Fresno office park, working fourteen hour days and leaving everything at home to her mother, who worked three shifts a week at a hotel restaurant” (Eggers 38). The relationship between them turns Mae into self-absorbed character. As a result, she is uncomfortable with her parents who are now relying on her for health coverage. She feels that she does many things to help them but they do not even appreciate that. But in fact, Mae’s relation with her parents is greatly affected once she becomes increasingly involved in the ‘Circle’, especially after the ‘Circle’s health monitoring devices that have deprived Mae’s parents from their privacy under the pretending of safety and protection.

Family is the real guide that should instill values of positive behavior and sense of responsibility among all its members. It is the most important institute that is responsible for the personal growth and

social development of all people within the society. But in postmodern family, people are more careful about their behavior and achieving self-control not out of the family but technology. In other words, in the digital world, technology not the family has the huge impact upon social connections and moral development within the society. Mae is more careful about her behavior not out of her social and moral beliefs but because she knows that she is monitored via a camera.

Therefore, she cannot do whatever she wants. For example, she cannot eat anything that she wants to avoid the criticism of all people around her and that "has a huge impact upon her life inevitably in terms of relationships and lifestyle" (İşık 160). In other words, Mae cares about her behavior not from religious perspective or social attitude but her good behavior comes only from her belief in technology. Bailey tells Mae that "my point is, what if we all behaved as if we were being watched? It would lead to a more moral way of life. Who would do something unethical or immoral or illegal if they were being watched?" (Eggers 290) Dave Eggers' *The Circle* points out how surveillance (technology) not the family is used as an instrument of discipline and control in the society and portrays "how people in modern society have become accustomed to the feeling of a constant observation after a period and, more importantly, they accept this situation in his novel" (İşık 161).

In the contemporary society, the construction of the individual's identity is completely different. The contemporary identity is strongly constructed by the images that are obtained via mass-communication means and social media platforms. They offer models and patterns that help the individual's identity to be shaped. These images lead to a new life style and permanent changes. The "predicament faced by Mae Holland, the protagonist in the novel under scrutiny, whose entire sense of identity and self-worth hinges upon the content she presents to her online audience, measured in the form of everyday data" (Kumar 39). Therefore, adopting a new style and changing one's identity have become modern and desirable attitudes according to everyone's option. As a result, the contemporary identity and social and personal

connections are characterized by fragmentation, alienation, and dissolution of boundaries between the self and others. The postmodern individual has become a part of a virtual world and a “reflective of a commodified and technologized culture that severs subjectivity from social process, reconstituting [his/her identity] in a realm of images or ‘signifiers’” (Dunn 65).

In contemporary life, people, especially the young get emotionally attached to the number of likes or comments than creating realistic versions of their identities. They share their data and personal information that can destroy the ethical boundaries and lead to the loss of the individuals’ identity and their moral development and social progress within the society. As a result, they have completely become indulged in the digital media and different aspects of social communication as the primary source of fun and personal relations instead of their families or real social connections.

After working in the ‘Circle’, Mae starts to spend more time on the social media and with the circlers more than with her parents. That is because Mae respects the ‘Circle’ more than her home or her friends. For Mae, the ‘Circle’ with its huge new technological tools, is the most powerful entity that she must obey and respect even if this will destroy her personal relations within the family. So, she sacrifices more and more of her time and energy for the ‘Circle’.

Consequently, Mae begins to hate her existence at home with her parents and appreciates only the ‘Circle’ with its technological tools. This is because the contemporary family has lost control over the digital world where social and personal connections are only via technological tools and social media platforms. Therefore, when Mae returns home to spend some time with her parents after working in the ‘Circle’, she does not sleep “more than five hours on any given night. Simply sitting in her parents’ dim living room, watching this basketball game, which meant nothing to her” (Eggers 73).

Hence, people should look at the social media with a critical eye and avoid screens and digital platforms. They should spend more time within their families or with friends who really love and care about them rather than online strangers who know them through their profiles. They should "realise that the social media life is not real and nobody is living the life as perfect as it looks on social media where everyone is too flawless to be real" (Sharma 230).

The relationship between Mae and her parents is not good enough. She knows that and tries to find solutions. Even when Mae helps her parents by adding them to the 'Circle's medical plan, she does not realize that this step will alienate her more and more from her parents. It takes short time for Mae's parents to understand that the 'Circle's medical care comes with heavy conditions. It is difficult for them to go on being watched all the time from every one. They have lost their ordinary life that they know with some privacy:

This went on for an hour, and by the end, Mae was wrecked. The MS, her helplessness to slow it, her inability to bring back the life her father had known—it tortured her, but the insurance situation was something else, was an unnecessary crime, a piling on. Didn't the insurance companies realize that the cost of their obfuscation, denial, all the frustration they caused, only made her father's health worse, and threatened that of her mother? (Eggers 41)

Accordingly, Mae feels that her parents are not grateful for her efforts and are unhappy concerning the public affection that comes after Mae publicizes their problems. Therefore, she hates to stay with her parents and returns to the 'Circle's campus and decides that she is never going to leave it again. For her, the 'Circle' has become the real home that protects, amuses and embraces her:

Mae drove back to the 'Circle', determined that when she got back to campus, she would stay there. She'd had enough of the chaos of her family, of Mercer, her wretched

hometown. She hadn't even asked her parents about the See Change cameras, had she? Home was madness. On campus, all was familiar. On campus there was no friction. She didn't need to explain herself, or the future of the world, to the Circlers, who implicitly understood her and the planet and the way it had to be and soon would be (Eggers 199).

As a result, after working in the 'Circle', Mae starts to have her own life and her own way of thinking. She begins to separate herself from home not only physically but also mentally. She directs her respect and appreciation only towards the 'Circle' with its technological tools. The following quotation gives impression that there is a chasm between Mae and her parents concerning the way of thinking. Mae feels that her parents are not at the same level of thinking like her, so she always tries to avoid talking with them in specific topics, especially the technological ones:

Mae needed to change the subject. "I've averaged 97 so far," she said. "They say that's a record for a newbie." The look on her parents' faces was bewilderment. Her father blinked slowly. They had no idea what she was talking about. "What's that, hon?" her father said. Mae let it go. When she'd heard the words leave her mouth, she knew the sentence would take too long to explain. "How are things with the insurance?" she asked, and instantly regretted it. Why did she ask questions like this? The answer would swallow the night (Eggers 76).

Undoubtedly, children who are raised within authoritative family do better in school and are more successful later in life. Hence, there should be a frame that controls the relationship between children and parents. This frame comes from the rules that parents formulate for their children's behavior. Absence of family means the loss of these rules and as a result, destruction of all its members. This is clear through the character of Francis Garaventa who is Mae's co-worker. After his parents' death, he is put in the foster care system at a young

age and two of his sisters are abducted and killed. These bad circumstances turn him into socially stunted, clingy, and sexually inept:

“It’s the worst story,” Annie said. “His parents were such fuckups. I think there were like four or five kids in the family, and Francis was youngest or second-youngest, and anyway the dad was in jail, and the mom was on drugs, so the kids were sent all over the place. I think one went to his aunt and uncle, and his two sisters were sent to some foster home, and then they were abducted from there (Eggers 31).

Furthermore, there is Annie Allerton. She is Mae’s college friend who gets Mae the job at the ‘Circle’ and is two years older than Mae. The impact of the family is very clear on her. She comes from a very rich family but she goes under stress when her family’s history becomes public with one of the ‘Circle’s new programs. Then, she begins to learn problematic things about her ancestors. Annie mentions: “My ancestors were the ringleaders or something. They raided Ireland, brought back slaves, sold them all over the world” (Eggers 230). In fact, this situation shakes her self-confidence and her ability to face society. By the end of *The Circle*, Annie becomes a shadow because the ‘Circle’ and its social tools suck her dry and lead her to lie unconscious in a coma. Dr. Villalobos says that “it was caused by stress, or shock, or simple exhaustion” (Eggers 263). Hence, loss of the social and moral values within the family brings nothing but depression and anxiety to the society and affects directly on its members, especially the young.

Over time, Mae loses her identity and her outer relations with her friends and turns gradually into a robot without a soul. She has become more superficial once she goes transparent. For Mae, the ‘Circle’s environment is completely different from anything she has ever known. It is a place where there is a different sense of community with no boundaries or privacy among people. The ‘Circle’s ideology depends on the idea that sharing everything such as information and experiences is the only way for the development and progress of the

society. This is obvious through the 'Circle's' vision: "Secrets are lies. Sharing is caring. Privacy is theft" (Eggers 168).

Finally, Mae's rise within the 'Circle', brings her more challenges because she keeps achieving the 'Circle's' goals and vision at the expense of her moral values and social beliefs. As a result, she suffers an inner conflict between her achievements in her career and her social and moral values which causes her numerous ethical crises. But in the end, Mae has chosen the world of connectivity and transparency than the family or moral and social considerations.

In the traditional family, parents were the ones who take care of children and teach them from their previous experiences. Children undoubtedly form their personal development through their relations and interactions within the family under the responsibility and supervision of their parents. Hence, helpful and loving family environment enables its members to take their responsibilities and achieve their social and cultural development. On the contrary, negative family experiences can lead to long-term social and moral problems as well as stress and confusion within the family.

Accordingly, the family plays a crucial role in shaping a child's social identity because the values and beliefs that children can get within the family provide them with a healthy environment for personal growth and social development. Family can instill a sense of belonging and identity through love, respect and good relations between parents and children. These issues of identity and modern complicated relationships are clearly discussed in Jonathan Franzen's *Purity*. Through this novel, Franzen criticizes the contemporary society and the acceleration of information that has led to the feeling of alienation and isolation.

Purity shows two different generations of a contemporary American family who do their best to make sense of their lives. It represents a typical family within the contemporary society, a family with different identities and different individual stories. It also indicates

the fragmented nature of the postmodern human who has relations only via screens and social media platforms. László Sári states that “the complexity of *Purity*’s narrative structure is a way of unveiling a complicated set of relations between characters and how their individual stories intersect with one another” (106).

Franzen’s *Purity* also portrays realistic American attitudes and gives a broader picture of American society within the digital age. Throughout *Purity*, Franzen exposes the issue of mutual interaction of cultures in the contemporary society. It is the novel of “multiple cultural context where the author depicts historical, political, national peculiarities of different cultures, namely American and German” (Lushnikova and Osadchaia 517).

The sections within *Purity* that are told from the perspectives of Pip (the protagonist), Leila (a journalist) and Andreas Wolf (the founder and director of Sunlight Project) are all in the third person to allow smooth transitions between different places and different people. But the section of Tom (Leila's lover) is told in the first person. It is a novel that is “full of characters with ulterior motives. No one is pure; in the same way that no one was actually free in Freedom” (Scholes np). Therefore, Franzen uses an interesting jumbled chronology structure and his tone is very critical and powerful. Colm Toibin states:

Purity, in other words, depends more on story than on style. It can seem, in fact, as though there is a battle going on in the novel between the slackness of its style and the amount of sharp detail and careful noticing [...]. This colorful use of plot, along with the loose, inelegant style and the introduction of multiple subplots and side characters, take their bearings less from Dickens than from Anthony Trollope (np).

Purity is a novel about the life of a young woman named ‘Purity’ or (Pip) Tyler. Pip is a recent college graduate with a school debt and a burning desire to discover the truth about her father whom

she has never met. Pip is searching for her identity and trying to discover the truth about her family's past. This pursuit of her father's identity comes as a result of living in a world of fragmented nature where there are no real relations but just superficial digital connections via screens and digital tools. Throughout the events of the novel, Pip keeps searching for a mature parent who can provide her with strength and the warmth of the family instead of her mother that causes her stress and anxiety.

From this perspective, Mary Wanda mentions: "A sense of trust and mutuality, or sharing of life with the nurturing parent, builds hope and strength within the child" (101). Hence, the family plays a crucial role concerning the personal development of its members, especially the young and its social and moral role begins since the birth and continues to the challenges of adulthood. It constitutes the frame in which the features of the personality are formed.

In *Purity*, there is a strange relationship between a mother and a daughter. Pip's problem is that she is completely out of her mother's care or concern. She is a girl with no real identity. Furthermore, "[s]ome of [Pip's] friends in Oakland also had problematic parents, but they still managed to speak to them daily without undue weirdness transpiring, because even the most problematic of them had resources that consisted of more than just their single offspring. Pip was it, as far as her own mother was concerned" (Franzen 3-4).

Therefore, parents should be aware of their responsibility in supporting and guiding their children. Open and respectful relationships can be the basis for healthy relationships between parents and children within the family that can help children to interact effectively and achieve their social and cultural development. But, in the following quotation, Pip appears to suffer a lot because her mother conceals everything about her birth place or her father's identity:

Pip hesitated and then confessed: —I've been through every scrap of paper my mother owns. If she had a diary, I

would have read it, but she doesn't. If she had an email account, I would have broken into it. I've gone online and searched every database I can think of. I don't feel good about it, but she won't tell me who my father is, she won't tell me where I was born, she won't even tell me what her real name is. She says she's doing it for my protection, but I think the danger is only in her head (Franzen 23).

Hence, bad relationships and misunderstanding between parents and children lead to bad future and psychological problems for children. Pip does not trust her mother for not telling her any information about her or her father's identity and "all she needed was his name and date of birth. But her mother defended this information as if it were a vital organ that Pip was trying to rip out of her" (Franzen 35). This has its terrible ramifications and serious impacts on family relations and children's social development within the society. Absence of trust between Pip and her mother leads her to be afraid of outsiders. She becomes to trust no one inside or outside her house and this widens the gap between Pip and her mother.

A good example of this gap is after living with her mother for a long time, Pip comes now to realize the real age of her mother and she might die soon. This reflects how far the chasm is between a daughter and a mother. They live together for a long time but they cannot even recognize their physical features. "Although her hair was thick and very long, there were dry-looking strands of gray in it, and the skin at the base of her throat was like a peach a day past ripe. That night, Pip lay awake in bed and worried that her mother might die soon" (Franzen 2).

Although Pip is a part of *Purity*, she is unable to feel her real identity or find real peace. Pip's boyfriend Jason suggests that "her personhood is invalid because, "Pip [...] Pip, I don't know. It just doesn't sound like your name when I say it" (Franzen 26). Pip's name has become something that is imbued with deep "shame" (Franzen 61). As a result, she "seals her own fate when she gives away her name to

Wolf, entrusting him with the power that is inherently attached to her name and also allowing for Wolf to shape who she is” (Chou 49).

Therefore, the loss of Pip’s name to Wolf via electronic devices is considered the first connection on her part to “feel closer to an Internet celebrity” (Franzen 67). This confirms that “something as simple, and yet as significant, as a name can work insidiously against the identity of an individual” (Chou 50). In addition, several reviews point out that Pip's name is considered “an allusion to Dickens's *Great expectations* [...] there are certainly some self- consciously Dickensian aspects to the plot of *Purity*. Pip is not literal orphan, but she is a kind of figurative one, in a book of absent or estranged fathers, and there is a vast unclaimed inheritance lurking in the background” (Ley np).

Through *Purity*, Franzen describes the reality of individuals in the digital world where everyone suffers mental diseases such as depression and alienation. In fact, family and technology are interwoven together to form the main reason beyond these contemporary mental diseases. Pip’s mother tells Pip that she looks tired and depressed. She says, “You sound sort of more depressed than usual” (Franzen 3). And then, Pip replies: “Isn’t that everybody’s life?” (Franzen 3)

Furthermore, during this conversation between Pip and her mother, we discover that Pip’s mother is unable to sleep well and is suffering from insomnia. For Pip, “no avail, there were actual medications she could take for her insomnia” (Franzen 8). This situation reflects the alienated nature of the contemporary society where the sense of love or sharing others’ pains is not on the priority of its people’s interest. Pip refuses to share her mother’s pain just because she knows that there is a medication for it.

Therefore, there is a connection between drugs as a medication and the salvation of the mental pains of the digital age. In the contemporary society, there is a sense of alienation, isolation and depression that comes from people’s trust in technology and drugs

more than their trust in themselves or even their families. In other words, people neglect their human side that is very important for their healthy social development and cling to modern technological tools such as (Internet and Social media) that increase their stress and anxiety. Consequently, “Franzen’s *Purity* can serve as a gateway to exploring various aspects of American society and psychology. It is a complex and multilayered narrative that delves into the lives of its characters and offers insights into contemporary American culture and the human psyche, especially in using Technology” (Saeed 252).

Franzen places all the blame on the absence of the real identity and guidance within the family in the contemporary society as well as the overuse of the screens and social media platforms. These digital tools eliminate the real role of the family and usually keep people tired and worried and cause them mental and psychological diseases. Franzen indicates this in Laila’s speech with the senator:

The drugs are almost all prescription stuff. Adderall, OxyContin. Drugs to help you pass the time. Senator continues that the problem is: “In Technology We Trust..... We put our trust in the safety of the warheads, and we neglect the human side because tech problems are easy, and human problems are hard. That’s where the whole country is right now (Franzen 219).

Hence, throughout *Purity*, Franzen emphasizes that much exposure and overuse of these digital tools destroys the personal relationship between the self and others as well as the loss of identity and suspension of the real role of the family. This leads to the main point of the research that is the trust between people and technology and the absence of the real role of the family within the society in the digital age. Franzen warns his readers against the absolute dependency on the technological tools and neglecting their human sides and real personal connections within the family. It is believed that “this kind of personal interchanges that form in the early months and years set the stage for how children will perform later” (Draper 3). Dependingly, the

family not technology is the main source of the healthy moral and social development that all the personal and social connections should be via it.

The relationship between Anagret and her mother is another example of a bad relationship between a daughter and her mother. Anagret's mother is a drug addict and she does not care about her daughter. Horst (Anagret's step father) tells Mae: "Your mother is a drug addict, [...]. She steals narcotics from the hospital and uses them when she's there and also when she's home. Did you know that?" (Franzen 92) Anagret's mother is married to someone called Horst who tries to have a sexual relationship with her daughter. When Anagret asks her mother about drugs, her mother simply tells her that "if a little bit of something at the hospital was left unused, she or one of the other nurses might take it to calm her nerves, but it didn't mean the person was an addict" (Franzen 94).

Franzen's *Purity* exposes the uncomfortable and damaging relationships between parents and their offspring such as the relationship between Andreas and his parents. It is one of the terrible relationships of the three novels. Andreas does not know if his father is his real father or not. His mother suffers from depression and is also sexually promiscuous. She is the main reason behind sending him to a psychiatrist when he was a teenager. When he grows up, all he has in his mind about her bad memories:

And the time he'd gone to her office at the university to have a permission slip signed, and again the door was locked, and after some minutes a male student had come out, his hair plastered with sweat, and Andreas had tried to go through the door but his mother had pushed it shut from inside and locked it again (Franzen 92).

Consequently, it is the mother that has destroyed her son's life and made him hate his childhood. Franzen mentions that "what had depressed him was his childhood bed, the bed itself, in the Müggelsee

house, and the feeling that he'd never left it" (Franzen 232). This terrible childhood turns Andreas to be a killer and makes him lose his identity. So, he has to conceal his real identity and create an online persona that provides him with comfort and stability.

Afterwards, he travels and succeeds to have his own project on the web and becomes a famous man but is still hollow inside. He creates a virtual world and a false image of the self to escape from his outrageous past that leads him later to commit suicide. He is unlike Pip, whose pursuit to her father's identity leads her to learn some details about the history of her family and her birth. Then, she comes back to herself and the society and this affects positively on her relationships with others and her sense of her own identity. Therefore, *Purity* is about "the efforts of its characters to find a place in a world that resists reconciliation, in which we always and forever fight to be understood?" (Ulin npn)

Conclusion

This research focuses on the gap between children and parents that leads children to search for new virtual identities via the media and digital tools. Actually, technology can provide people with pleasure and make life easier but at the same time, it deprives them from their innocence, turning them into robots without souls. Technology is considered the main factor behind changing the traditional values and behaviors within the contemporary society. Moreover, it has become the primary source of social and moral development that people act and behave according to it.

Undoubtedly, the family plays a very essential role in the social and moral development of the individuals within the society and has an effective role in forming the person's character. Furthermore, it represents the human and moral values for its people. On the contrary, bad experiences within the family affect negatively on the social development of the children and damage the relationship between the self and others. In addition, the conflict between parents themselves

affects the psychological development of the children and changes the “nature of the parent-child relationship, creates anxiety and distress over stimulation’s and frightens children, weakens parents, protective capacity and compromises identify formation” (Nazir 1395). The family in the three novels is a representation of the contemporary society and reflects the characteristics of its individuals as well as the tension and anxiety of the digital age.

There is a strong relationship between technology and the destruction of the family and the social and moral values within the society. Much exposure to technology leads to the self-damage and loss of the privacy and real life within the family in the contemporary society. The ‘Circle’s company deceives the customers and employees by convincing them to abandon their real lives and adapting a shallow virtual lives.

But at the same time, technology provides its users with a sense of power and comfort. Likewise in *The Circle*, the central character, Mae feels through technology that she can control and guide the world. As a result parents lose their ability to direct and guide their children inside the family because the center of authority passes from parents to technology because “the Internet gives the opportunity for self-presentation and identity construction” (Stern 97).

As a result, the contemporary family has lost its basic function in society. Family is no longer the main source of information, knowledge and protection. In addition, children seem to be more open, watchful and smarter than their parents. This has led to the emergence of recent styles of life and new ways of thinking that are based on what they hear or see via the media and digital devices. This is clear through the relationship between Heinrich and his father in *White Noise* and the relationship between Mae and her parents in *The Circle*. In the three novels, the children not the parents seem to guide and take control of everything around them.

Technology touches everyone and everything in the contemporary society, especially the young people because they are the ones who grow up looking at screens. They are indulged in technology to the extent that they cannot imagine their lives without these technological devices such as smart phones, laptops and tablets. These digital devices take control of people's lives and have become responsible for the discipline within the contemporary society.

Likewise in *The Circle*, Eggers shows an oppressive system which controls people through hidden cameras. Technology in the 'Circle' is responsible for people's behaviors and attitudes. Digital media have turned people to become prisoners in their own lives. Postmodern people are monitored willingly because they want to share every moment of their lives on social media such as Mae Holland who decides go transparent and share people every moment of her daily life by using See Chang Camera.

Hence, to live in peace, people should be careful with these digital devices and avoid much exposure to them. Furthermore, there should be real personal and social relations instead of these virtual ones that lead to loss of the identity and destruction of the self as well as the mental and psychological diseases. Likewise in *White Noise*, all the characters, especially the main character, Jack experience different forms of alienation in relation to their identities.

In fact, the three novels warn against the dangers of pursuit of idealistic ideology that is appeared via technological tools at the expense of ethical considerations and social and moral values. People should stop embracing technology without completely understanding its terrible ramifications on individuals and the whole society. They should have their own responsibilities towards this technological advancement and the promotion of tech companies in this digital age. These terrible ramifications of technology on the main characters are obvious in Egger's *The Circle*. Technology is the main reason behind Mae's separation from her parents and the death of her friend Mercer who dies due to Mae's quest to prove her technology's superiority.

Undoubtedly, technology has a significant impact on people in the contemporary society and has transformed the way that people live or work. Therefore, People can make use of it in different fields such as education and medicine as well as shopping and connecting with people. But the overuse and addiction to digital tools and social media platforms create a lot of negative impacts on human mental health that leads people to suffer mental and psychological diseases such as stress, alienation and isolation. Likewise in *Purity*, the central characters, Pip and Andreas Wolf suffer depression, anxiety, and alienation due to constant exposure to a huge amount of information via different types of the digital media.

These diseases are not biological but they are a result of the huge amount of information that the human mind suffers to understand. It is not about technology; it is about the accumulation and acceleration of information and personal data that people send and receive every moment. As a result, individuals start to feel fatigue and minds start to suffer different mental diseases such as stress and anxiety. These diseases appear as a result of their much exposure to digital tools and social media platforms. Throughout *White Noise* , Don DeLillo exposes a society that completely depends on technology for answers to everyday problems. Jack, the protagonist and even his kids always think about technology (television and radio) to know about their surroundings or solve their problems. Therefore, if people are not cautious and aware about the dangers and ramifications of the technological tools, they will keep suffering numerous mental diseases that have become overwhelming in the digital world.

Therefore, good open communication is considered an essential factor for healthy family relationships that can help children to interact effectively and achieve their social and cultural development. In *Purity*, technology fails to unite any of the characters. At the end of the novel, Pip herself feels disgusted with Facebook and turns off her computer. She feels fatigue and wants to have a rest. On the contrary, Pip and her parents begin learning how to empathize with one another and come

together face to face in the small cabin that Anabel (Mae's mother) lives in. Hence, Alienation issue can also be solved by establishing the correct social and moral values in the society and getting back to the family as the most important institute that is responsible for the healthy social and moral developments of all its members.

The three novels emphasize that much exposure and overuse of the digital tools destroy the personal relationships between the self and others as well as the loss of identity and suspension of the real role of the family. The joint message in the three novels is that the family not technology is the main source of the healthy moral and social development that all the personal and social connections should be via it. Therefore, Through the three novels, the writers warn the readers against the absolute dependency on the technological tools and neglecting their human sides and real personal connections within the family.

Works Cited

Allen, David, and Agata Handley. "The Most Photographed Barn in America: Simulacra of the Sublime in American Art and Photography." *Sciendo*. vol. 8, no.8, 2018, pp. 365-385. DOI: 10.1515/texmat-2018-0022

Behrooz, Niloufar and Hossein Pirajmuddin. "The Nostalgic Sublime in Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and *Cosmopolis*." *Humanities Diliman*, vol. 15, no, 2, 2018, pp. 177-194.

Bermannová, Alica. "The Circle as a social critique." *MUNI*. Web
<https://is.muni.cz/th/llmuh/> Accessed 28 December. 2024.

Botkins, Zac. *Sorting, Telling, & Keeping: A Study of Intrusive Narratives in Relation to Identity Formation in Don DeLillo's White Noise*. The Ohio State University, 2018.

Boxall, Peter. *Don DeLillo: the Possibility of Fiction*. Routledge, 2006.

Chou, Megumi. *The View from Somewhere: Ambivalence in The Fiction of Jonathan Franzen and Amitav Ghosh*. Durham University, 2019

Conroy, Mark. *Muse in the Machine :American Fiction and Mass Publicity*. Columbus University Press, 2004.

Davis, Kingsley "The Sociology of Parent-Youth Conflict." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 5, no. 4, 1940, pp. 523-535.

Draper, Wanda. *Your Child is Smarter than You Think! Unleashing your Child's Unlimited Potential*. Morgan James publishing, 2014.

Dunn, Robert G. *Identity Crises: A Social Critique of Postmodernity*. U of Minnesota, 1998.

Falk, Gerhard and Ursula Falk. *Youth Culture and the Generation Gap*. Algora Publishing, 2005.

Gibbons, Alison. "Eyes of the World." *American Book Review*, vol. 36, no. 5, 2015, pp. 11- 12.

Hicks, Stephen R. C. *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault*. Scholargy Publishing, 2004.

İşik, Derya. "A Foucauldian Reading of Dave Eggers's *The Circle*." *Jornal of Modernism and Postmodernism Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2020, pp.154- 162. DOI : 10.47333/modernizm.2020265884

Kumar, C. Sathish "Unmasking Dave Eggers' the Circle: Power and Deception in the Modern Tech World." *Shanlax International Journal of English*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2023, pp. 36–42.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34293/rtdh.v12iS1-Dec.55>

Lancaster, Jane et al. *Parenting Across the Life Span: Bio-Social Dimensions*. Aldine De Gruyter, 1987.

Le Clair, Tom. *In the Loop: Don DeLillo and the Systems Novel*. University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Ley, James. "Novelist Yells at Cloud: Purity by Jonathan Franzen."

Sydney Review of Books, 2015, Web.

<https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com>

Lushnikova, Galina I. and Tatiana Osadchaia. "J. Franzen's Novel 'Purity': Transcultural Perspective." *Dialogue of Cultures - Culture of Dialogue: from Conflicting to Understanding*, Eds. Elena Tareva and Tatiana N. Bokova, vol. 95, 2020, pp. 513-521. *European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences*. DOI: 10.15405/epsbs.2020.11.03.55

<https://www.europeanproceedings.com>

Martins, Susan. "White Noise and Everyday Technologies." *American Studies*, v. 46 no. 1, 2005, pp. 87-113.

Nazir, Salma. "Parental Conflict and its Effects on Youth Self Esteem." *International Journal of Asian Social Science*, vol. 2, no. 9, 2012, pp. 1392-1400.

Newman, Sally et al. "Preface." *Intergenerational Programs: Past, Present and Future*, Eds. Sally Newman et al, Taylor & Francis, 1997.

Osteen, Mark. *American Magic and Dread: Don DeLillo's Dialogue with Culture*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000.

Prasad, Ramaa. *Generation Gap: Sociological Study of Intergenerational Conflicts*. Mittal Publications, 1992.

Saeed, Leqaa. "Info Technology and Mental Health: A Study of Jonathan Franzen's Purity in the Scope of Berardi's Theory." *Journal of Language Studies*. vol.8, no.2, 2024, pp. 245-269.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25130/Lang.8.2.12>

Sari, László. "Realism and Regimes of Truth in Jonathan Franzen's Purity." *Contemporary Perspectives on Language, Culture and Identity in Anglo-American Contexts*, Eds. Éva Antal and Csaba Czeglédi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019, pp.102–115.

Scholes, Lucy. "Jonathan Franzen's Purity: Is it the great American novel?" *BBC*, 2015. <https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20150901-jonathan-franzens-purity-is-it-the-great-american-novel>

Sharma, Glory. "The Simulation of Utopia in Dave Eggers' *The Circle*: A Critique of Deception and Power in Digital Society." *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, vol. 8, no. 8, 2023, pp.192-233.

Sim, Stuart. "Preface." *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*, Ed. Stuart Sim, 3rd edition, Routledge, 2001.

Singh, Prasad Raj et al. *Postmodern Quests in Applied Philosophy*. Lumen Publishing House, 2012.

Stern, Susannah. "Producing Sites, Exploring Identities: Youth Online Authorship." *Youth, Identity, and Digital Media*, Ed. David Buckingham et al., The MIT Press, 2008, pp. 95–118.

Stinson, Kandi M. *Adolescents, Family, and Friends: Social Support after Parents' Divorce Remarriage*. Praeger Publishers, 1991.

Toibin, Colm. "Jonathan Franzen's 'Purity'." *The New York Times*, 2015.

Trehan, B.K and Indu Trehan. *Building Great Relationships: All about Emotional Intelligence*. Sterling Publishers, 2010.

Ulin, David L. "Review Why Read Controversial Author Jonathan Franzen's New 'Purity'? The Fierce Writing." *Los Angeles Times Book Critic*, 25 August 2015, www.latimes.com/books/jacketcopy/la-ca-jc-jonathan-franzen-20150830-story.html. Accessed 26 July. 2024.

Wilcox, Leonard. "Baudrillard, DeLillo's 'White Noise,' and the End of Heroic Narrative." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1991, pp. 346–65. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1208561>. Accessed 8 Nov. 2024.