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# 厦门大学

## 博士学位论文

### 阐释美国当代社会: 德里罗作品的互文性研究

#### Interpretation of Contemporary America: Intertextuality

#### in the Works of Don DeLillo

### 马群英

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## Abstract

With sixteen novels, one novella, nine plays, and numerous short stories and essays under his belt, Don DeLillo's place in contemporary American literature cannot be denied. As a talented author, he has won critical acclaim since the publication of his first novel *Americana* in 1971. With his receiving of the National Book Award for *White Noise* in 1985, he has become the object of greater recognition and praise and has been recognized as one of the finest contemporary writers and keenest social critics of contemporary American life. DeLillo has received a great deal of critical attention. However, despite strenuous critical efforts and thoughtful interpretations of his works, there are still puzzling points about him. To have a better understanding and appreciation of his writing, the theory of intertextuality is applied in this dissertation. Based on theories of intertextuality by Mikhail M. Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes, Gerard Genette, and Harold Bloom, together with the critical theories and methods of New Criticism, Cultural Studies, and New Historicism, this dissertation aims at giving a comprehensive and detailed study of intertextuality in DeLillo's writing. With a comprehensive research on most of his works, this dissertation demonstrates that intertextuality is not only a main feature of DeLillo's writing, making his works exhibit characteristics of polyphony and heterogeneity, but also is a powerful tool for him to carry criticism of contemporary American society.

This dissertation consists of three parts: the introduction, five chapters and the conclusion. The introduction part gives a general survey of DeLillo's literary achievements and a brief review of DeLillo studies in academia and also presents the basic views and general structure of this study.

Chapter One, "Intertextuality and DeLillo's Intertextual Writing", serves to elaborate the theory of intertextuality, to offer a brief sketch of DeLillo's intertextual writing and to point out the significance of studying DeLillo's works from the



perspective of intertextuality. The term “intertextuality” was first coined in the 1960s by the French literary critic and feminist Julia Kristeva who based her discovery on Saussure’s theory of linguistic sign and Bakhtin’s theory of “dialogism” and “polyphony.” In general, the explanation on this theory can be divided into two main paths: the structuralist path, or the narrow intertextuality and the poststructuralist path, or the broad intertextuality. Structuralists such as Genette and Riffaterre hold that intertextuality refers to the obvious relationship between a text and other texts that exist in the former. Whereas poststructuralists such as Barthes and Derrida tend to give it a broad and general explanation and hold that intertextuality not only refers to the relationship between literary texts but also refers to the relationship between any text and the total knowledge of this given text, code, and signifying practices. Based on this theory, I find that DeLillo’s works are rife with examples of intertextuality--between his texts and those of other artists and traditional literary genres, between fiction and media, between fiction and history, and within his own works.

Chapter Two, “Self-reference and Self-citation: Intratextuality in DeLillo’s Works”, deals with intratextuality, or internal textual relations, within DeLillo’s own writing. Intratextuality is one of the striking features of DeLillo’s works. First, his paratexts such as covers, titles, subtitles, dedications and author’s notes interweave and corroborate with his body of texts. I mainly examine the original cover of *Underworld*, titles of *White Noise*, *Libra*, *Underworld*, *Falling Man*, dedication and author’s note in *Libra*. I find that, these paratexts, no matter how minimal they are, form a close relationship with his body of texts, perform the role of illuminating the latter, and are conducive to a comprehensive reading of his works. Second, taken as a whole, DeLillo’s works build upon a continuous chain of cross-references and interplay. He frequently incorporates his formerly published short stories into his subsequent novels. For example, five formerly published short stories are woven into portions of his magnum opus *Underworld*. He also repeats scenes, characters, motifs and narrative structures in disguised ways. For instance, philosopher-like characters appear in many of his works. Though they are different in name and profession, all of

them have a special ability to talk and can always see through things and provide intelligible views. They are analysts of contemporary America. DeLillo's extensive self-citation and repetition do not mean that his resource is exhausted; on the contrary, it is in this unique way of citing his former works or repeating scenes, characters or motifs he has used in his earlier writing that he reexamines his previous texts from a different perspective and stresses what he thinks as the main points of contemporary life so as to attract public attention. In addition, DeLillo consciously or unconsciously exposes traces of his artistic creation and operation, displaying meta-fictional intratextual relations either within a single work or among all his works as a whole. His meta-narrative not only creates the internal rhythm of his work and echoes its overall frame but also shows his concept of literary creation and let readers perceive his unique way of narration.

Chapter Three, "Writing and Rewriting: DeLillo's Inheritance and Subversion of Literary Tradition", mainly examines the intertextual relationship between DeLillo's texts and other literary texts and traditional literary genres by analyzing his intertextual strategies such as quotation, allusion, pastiche, and parody. DeLillo's extensive reading lays a solid foundation for his writing. He often mentions in interviews that authors such as Joyce, Faulkner, Nabokov, Hemingway, Beckett and Pynchon are all his literary influences. Through the practice of intertextuality, he skillfully employs a number of literary sources in constructing his own works. To begin with, he quotes phrases, sentences, paragraphs from, and alludes to, other works and writers. For instance, the title of his third play *Love-Lies-Bleeding* is a direct quotation from Wordsworth's namesake poem "Love Lies Bleeding", the epigraph of his *Cosmopolis* is directly quoted from a poem called "Report from the Besieged City" by the Polish poet Herbert. In many of his works, he alludes to Joyce and his works. Those quotations and allusions play active roles in his characterization and theme presentation. Secondly, he imitates such literary elements as characterization, image, scene, plot, and narrative style from various writers. Pynchon's way of characterization, Beckett's language style, Nabokov's literary scenes, and Joyce's method of narration are all reflected in his works. DeLillo quotes, alludes and imitates

to fit the narrative situation, which is always changing. By inscribing other works and literary traditions through such intertextual strategies as quotation, pastiche and allusion, he establishes a close connection with and pays homage to former texts and writers. However, DeLillo's writing is not in the least a mere repetition of others. While inheriting literary tradition and imitating literary elements of others, he at the same time shows his own talents and imagination and reveals his meditation on and rebellion against the tradition. Parody is one of the commonly used techniques in his writing. He frequently relies on traditional literary forms for his fiction but usually rewrites and transforms and even makes fun of them, thus challenging established norms of storytelling and creating narrative styles of his own. DeLillo applies parody in order to criticize reality. In *Running Dog*, he shows characteristics of thriller but does not follow its procedures, displaying the dramatization of the socio-political and cultural problems. In *White Noise*, he imitates elements of detective fiction but subverts readers' expectations, ridiculing the limitation of detection. In *The Body Artist*, he creates the atmosphere of Gothic fiction, but while readers are expecting to see a struggle between the heroine and the monster figure, he changes his strategy and makes readers speculate on such subjects as time, grief, and death through his ironic narration. So, by the method of intertextuality, DeLillo not only establishes a close relationship with other writers and literary traditions, but also creates his unique way of storytelling, and at the same time shows his concern for the problems of contemporary society.

Chapter Four, "Literature and Media: DeLillo's Dialogue with Media Culture", turns to explore and analyze the dense dialogic relation between DeLillo's writing and media culture. DeLillo was brought up and educated in New York. After his graduation in 1958 with a B.A. in Communication Arts, he worked in an advertisement company. Immersed in the media environment of contemporary America, he is heavily influenced by media culture. He mentions more than once that the paintings in the Museum of Modern Art, Jazz, European films and avant-garde art in Greenwich Village all enormously influence him. DeLillo has a strong affection for contemporary media culture and can always find inspiration from it. Firstly, his

writing displays a dense interaction with the filmic world. In terms of content, he not only uses cinematic images, populates his works with a host of film stars and directors, but also often absorbs and adapts real filmic works, especially that of Godard; in terms of style, he imitates the language of movie script, employs the film technique of montage, utilizes “camera-eye” perspective and hand-held camera technique. Through hybridization with film, he broadens the form of narrative of literature. Secondly, his writing often resorts to paintings and music. Paintings such as “The Triumph of Death” by the Flemish master Pieter Bruegel and still lifes by the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi are intricately interwoven into his writing, helping to create the themes and moods of his works. DeLillo also likes to make music stars as his characters and to incorporate song lyrics into his works. In *Great Jones Street*, his protagonist Wunderlick is modeled after Bob Dylan, an American pop music star. In the novel, he depicts the puzzlement and anxiety of musicians, demonstrating the drift of fragmentation and alienation caused by the media environment. In addition, DeLillo’s writing is a collage of media texts: television shows, radio programs, newspaper clippings, commercial advertisements, and other forms of contemporary mass media are all intercalated in his writing in one way or another. Through repeated quotation from and dense interaction with media, DeLillo successfully demonstrates a media-noise-saturated society, indicating that the world is threatened and under siege by the “waves and radiation” of media discourses. DeLillo is always experimenting with new techniques and different patterns of writing. As a participant in the media environment, he utilizes techniques from new media in order to expand the possibilities and boundaries of literary writing and concurrently incorporates media texts to show the inescapability of mass media in everyday experience and to produce probing critiques of the media-saturated society.

Chapter Five, “Memory and History: ‘Histories’ as Intertexts in DeLillo’s works”, examines the conversational relationship between DeLillo’s writing and history. As a writer full of historical consciousness, DeLillo shows his concern for history from the beginning of his writing. In most of his novels, especially in his later ones, his tightly knit intertextual relationship with history is demonstrated. He not only likes to insert

historical elements but also likes to review historical archives, absorb and transform historical texts. Emphasis in this chapter mainly falls on his three later novels--*Libra*, *Underworld*, and *Falling Man*. *Libra* is based on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. The novel consists of two lines: one recounts the life of Lee Harvey Oswald before assassination and the other is about former CIA agents' conspiracy to assassinate. Sandwiched between these two lines is the account of a man named Branch who is hired to write the history of the assassination. Throughout the book, DeLillo both makes use of and questions the Warren Commission Report, offering new perspectives on the assassination of the president in a space based on reality and imagination. *Underworld* mainly deals with histories of the Cold War. In this 827-page-long novel, using important events of America from the 1950s to 1990s as background, DeLillo mainly focuses on histories which are not recorded in the official narrative of the Cold War, thus questioning the American Cold War triumphalism. *Falling Man* is based on the catastrophic event of 9/11. Focusing on the day-to-day lives of a 39-year-old survivor Keith and his family, it precisely delineates the physical and psychological trauma of common people caused by terrorism. Most importantly, in the novel, DeLillo displays the other side of terrorists who are usually demonized and silenced by all kinds of narratives through his depiction of one of the hijackers Hammad, his life experience, his psychological development and how he is forced to participate in terrorist activities. Different from old standard historical narratives and the official narrative of the Bush administration, history in *Falling Man* is history which is unknown. Such kind of counter-narrative of DeLillo reflects the multiplicity and diversification of history. In a word, history provides DeLillo with inspiration and motivation and through his dense intertextual relationship with history he confuses the boundary between history and fiction, reevaluates and rethinks the past and memory, and offers new perspectives through which we can have a different perception of the past.

The conclusion part first summarizes the feature of intertextuality in DeLillo's writing, then reiterates the significance of intertextuality to DeLillo. Intertextuality runs through all DeLillo's works and becomes one of the conspicuous characteristics

of his writing. However, no matter what intertextual sources, DeLillo's concern is always America, a country he both loves and hates. During his more than forty years of career as a writer, DeLillo continuously experiments with various ways of narration, expands his subjects of writing, explores the nature of America and thus provides a panorama of contemporary American life. All these, without his practice of intertextuality, would be difficult for him to achieve.

**Key words:** Don DeLillo; intertextuality; rewriting; media; history

## 摘要

在美国当代作家中，唐·德里罗的文学地位是不能忽视的。迄今为止，他已经连续发表了16部长篇小说、1部中篇小说、9个剧本以及若干短篇小说、散文等。德里罗是一位极具天赋的作家，他的第一部小说《美国志》便为他赢得了评论界的赞誉。1985年，他的《白噪音》获美国国家图书奖，此后更是名声大震，被誉为优秀的当代美国作家和敏锐的当代美国社会生活批评家，引起了评论界的广泛关注。然而，尽管学界对德里罗的作品研究取得了很大的进展，但仍然存在令人困惑之处。为了对德里罗的作品有一个更全面、更深入的解读，本文运用互文性理论，以米哈伊尔·巴赫金、朱莉亚·克里斯蒂娃、罗兰·巴特、杰勒德·热内特以及哈罗德·布鲁姆等学者关于互文性的学说为主要理论框架，并结合运用新批评、文化研究、新历史主义等批评方法，对德里罗作品中的互文性做全面深入的分析，旨在说明，互文性叙事不仅是德里罗最主要的叙事方式，使其作品呈现出多重声音交杂的特点，也是他对美国当代社会进行批判的有力武器。

论文由引言、正文五个章节和结语三部分组成。引言部分简要介绍德里罗的文学成就、评论界对其作品的评述以及本文的观点和框架。

第一章“互文性及德里罗的互文性创作”从整体上梳理互文性理论的起源与发展轨迹以及德里罗的互文性创作特点，指出采用互文性这一理论视角探讨德里罗作品的研究价值与现实意义。“互文性”这一术语最早产生于20世纪60年代，由法国文学批评家和女性主义者朱莉亚·克里斯蒂娃根据索绪尔的语言符号理论和巴赫金的“对话”和“复调”理论提出，意指文本存在于与其他文本的关系之中。这一理论提出后，沿着两条轨迹发展：一条是结构主义的路径，热内特和拉法雷等结构主义者从狭义的路径出发，认为互文性是一个文本与存在于此文本的其它具体文本之间的关系；另一条是解构主义的路径，巴特和德里达等后结构主义者趋向于对互文性概念做宽泛的解释，认为任何文本与赋予该文本意义的各种语言、知识代码和文化表意实践之间有着相互指涉的关系。依据这一理论，笔者发现，互文性特征在德里罗的作品中得到了淋漓尽致的体现。他的作品不仅在内部以及与他人的文学作品和传统文学体裁之间形成互文关系，还与社会、历史的

大文本形成互动对话关系。因此，本文采用互文性这一理论视角，分析德里罗整个文学作品中的互文性特点，以期说明互文性理论对研究德里罗作品的价值和意义。

第二章“自我指涉与自我引用：德里罗作品中的内互文”主要考察德里罗作品中的内部互文关系。内互文是指同一文本内部各要素或者是同一个作家各作品之间的互文关系。内互文是德里罗作品的一个显著特点。首先，德里罗注重副文本对正文本的阐释作用。他的副文本如封面、标题、副标题、题献以及后记等跟正文本相互交织、相互印证。笔者主要选取《地下世界》的封面，《白噪音》、《天秤星座》、《地下世界》、《坠落的人》的标题，《天秤星座》的题献以及后记进行研究和分析，虽然这些副文本看似不起眼，却对德里罗作品的解读起到至关重要的作用。其次，德里罗的作品呈现一种相互参照、相互指涉的体系。他在创作中频繁引用自己之前发表过的作品，比如，鸿篇巨制《地下世界》包含他之前发表过的五篇短篇小说。他还变相重复自己先前作品中出现过的场景、人物、主题及叙事结构，比如，他的好几部作品中都有一个哲学家式的人物，虽然这些人物名字不同，职业各异，却都能言善辩，参透事务的本质，对当代美国文化做出理性的阐释。德里罗大量引用和变相重复自己的作品，并不意味着他已江郎才尽，而是以他独特的方式从新的角度重审自己的前文本，从而对美国当代社会的主要问题进行多次强调，以期引起世人的关注。此外，德里罗在创作中有意或无意地揭示自己的创作痕迹，使其作品呈现出元小说的互文特点。元叙述的手法既生成了他作品的内在节奏，呼应着作品的整体结构，又有助于他表达自己的创作理念，使读者领略到他独特的叙事方式。

第三章“书写与重写：德里罗对文学传统的继承与反叛”主要围绕引用、暗指、仿作与戏仿等互文性写作手法分析德里罗的作品与文学文本和传统文学体裁之间的互文关系。德里罗的广泛阅读为其文学创作奠定了坚实的基础。他在访谈中多次提到，他的创作受到乔伊斯、福克纳、纳博科夫、海明威、贝克特、品钦等作家的影响。通过互文性策略，他非常巧妙地将无数文学资源应用于自己的文学创作。首先，他引用别人的表达、语句、段落以及在作品中暗指别的作家和作品，比如，他的第三部戏剧《尾穗苋》的标题来自华兹华斯的同名诗歌，小说《大都会》的开篇引语来自波兰诗人赫伯特的诗歌“围城记事”。他也在多部作品中



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