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A Jazz Cathedral. A Reading of Don DeLillo's Underworld

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Abstract:

Pubblicato nel 1997, "Underworld" è considerato il capolavoro di Don DeLillo. Di certo è la sua opera più complessa ed impegnativa. Solo un'analisi serrata può dissotterrare la miriade di temi e simboli, nonché seguire le vite interconnesse di decine di personaggi lungo i decenni della Guerra Fredda.

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Don is pretty supportive." DeLillo, slight, softly spoken, sassier in his prose than his person, frowns and says, "I sometimes wonder who they're talking about. I sometimes wonder who it is who is supposed to be exerting this influence on younger writers." DeLillo was still a child when he started positioning himself at what he describes in Underworld as "an angle to the moment". His parents moved separately from Italy to New York, where they met and in 1936 had a son. DeLillo supposes his parents' foreignness gave him a sense of detachment, a grain of perse... "I listen to the same jazz I listened to when I first discovered it existed. Coltrane and Miles Davis, and Charlie Mingus. You don't know Mingus? Don DeLillo. Illustration: Daniel Clowes. Have we held Don DeLillo's Underworld against him? Masterpieces of an epic scale are a tricky business, not least for the distorting effect they can have on the rest of a writer's works. Tolstoy wrote two, but most mortals — Melville, George Eliot, Joyce — only get one. And while War and Peace and Anna Karenina cycle through screen adaptations, how many readers reach for a major minor work — a work of beauty but of limited scope — like The Kreutzer Sonata? The same question already applies to Zero K, DeLillo's new novel.