

## Late DeLillo, Finance Capital and Mourning from *The Body Artist* to

### *Point Omega*

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Following the publication of his novel *Cosmopolis* (2003); Don DeLillo was frequently asked to comment on the hegemony of US financial markets. His answers would usually echo the beginning of his essay "In The Ruins of the Future"(2001),<sup>1</sup> as he stressed how, particularly in the 1990s and until the stock crash of the year 2000, the capitalist world had been living under the aegis of finance capital:

Culture was boiling with money. Capital markets surged. Multinational corporations began to seem more vital than governments. CEOs became global celebrities. And ordinary people entertained dreams of individual wealth. The Dow kept climbing and the Internet kept getting swifter and more inclusive. The confluence of capital and technology seemed to accelerate time. We were all living in the future, at least for a while.<sup>2</sup>

Global capital markets, as DeLillo argued, have effectively "reshape[d the] economic, political and social landscapes"<sup>3</sup> of the last ten years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The "socialization of finance" through the diffusion of consumer credit, mutual funds and online trading<sup>4</sup> propelled a sea-change in our cultural and mental habits. The instantaneous virtual movement of money around the world rendered even more profound that sense of "space-time compression"<sup>5</sup> which, according to David Harvey,

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characterised the shift from Fordism to flexible accumulation. DeLillo's focus on the economic, social and cultural role played by finance at the close of Twentieth and at the turn of Twenty-First century foregrounds my reading of late DeLillo's fiction as the expression of the crisis of US financialization and of US hegemony pursued primarily through financial markets and cyber-capital. Following Peter Boxall's suggestion that DeLillo's works "provide a poetic articulation of the decades that have produced it,"<sup>6</sup> I argue that DeLillo's late fiction can be interpreted as the poetic articulation of that decade which, for DeLillo, marked the end of the era of capital markets.

In general, I read Don DeLillo's oeuvre as an expression of the emergence, consolidation, and crisis of the process of financialization which offered a solution to the crisis of profitability which beset the US (and world economy) in the early 1970s, and produced a structural change within US capitalism. Financialization, in the words of Greta Krippner, is a

"pattern of accumulation in which profits accrue primarily through financial channels rather than through trade and commodity production. 'Financial' here refers to activities relating to the provision (or transfer) of liquid capital in expectation of future interest, dividends, or capital gains".<sup>7</sup>

Don DeLillo's novels address the peculiar structure of feeling which emerges within the financial sphere, and then gradually infiltrates the domains of everyday life. His fiction pins down the experiential effects of the liquidity fetish (Keynes) and exposes the structural contradictions within finance capital, contradictions which its class agents internalise. As Nick Heffernan also posited, DeLillo's works effectively

constitute a compelling representation of “the development of US-centered global capitalism from the initial domestic crisis of the long boom to the hypertrophy of world electronic financial markets at the turn of the millennium.”<sup>8</sup> His novels provide an analysis of American hegemony in the last forty years constructed around the neoliberal political-economic project, and enforced via financial markets and instruments.

Finance capital (by which I mean what David Harvey calls “a peculiar kind of circulation process of capital” which appears in the form of interest-bearing capital and centres around the credit system<sup>9</sup>) erases the commodity from capital’s formula M-C-M.<sup>10</sup> In so doing it renders invisible “the social content of economic relations”<sup>11</sup> embodied within C, and thereby rests on a “structured forgetting”<sup>12</sup> of labour. The erasure of C opens a gap over and around which the economic agents perpetuating the circuits of finance capital must consequently organise their social relations; these relations are no longer grounded within the referential network of production and consumption constituting the productive, or ‘real’, economy. As finance capital can thus flow unbridled, unfettered by the constraints of the commodity form, volatility, unfixedness and its tendency to avoid “uncomfortable collisions with matter”<sup>13</sup> gradually inform the meanings and values, the experiences, the actions and motifs, i.e. the structure of feeling, of that social group whose workings occur within the medium of finance capital. Within such a medium, its class agents immerse within “the fetish of liquidity”, as Keynes used to call it, and consequently must endure “the experiential effect of [their medium’s] fetishism.”<sup>14</sup> As a result, the world which emerges from DeLillo’s novels is a world held in “a state of abeyance”<sup>15</sup> over the gap originating with the loss of the commodity C within the realm of fictitious capital. In order to

understand what occurs within a finance-dominated economy one should investigate the reaction to such a loss within speculative capital's class agents.

According to Freud, a loss may originate either mourning or melancholia. Freud defines mourning as “the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on.”<sup>16</sup> The work of mourning entails a painful process of acknowledging and recognising such a loss. Melancholia, instead, is a response to a “loss of a more ideal kind, [a loss withdrawn from consciousness in that] one cannot see clearly what it is that has been lost...and what he has lost in him.”<sup>17</sup> Nicholas Abrahams and Maria Torok subsequently theorized that melancholia proceeds from “a trauma whose very occurrence and devastating emotional consequences are entombed and thereby consigned to internal silence, albeit, unwittingly, by the sufferers themselves.”<sup>18</sup> Melancholia gives rise to what they call, following Freud and then Klein, ‘incorporation’: “[i]ncorporation results from those losses that for some reason cannot be acknowledged as such [and produces] a refusal to mourn. ....Inexpressible mourning erects a tomb inside the subject [where] the loss is buried in [a] crypt.”<sup>19</sup> As a consequence of this refusal to mourn, they argued, consciousness is split and prey to disavowal: on the one hand, the person acknowledges that there is a lost object buried inside, on the other hand he/she chooses to disavow that such a loss has occurred. Such a split of consciousness rests on a precarious balance, where the buried object may resurface as a haunting presence. In my opinion, the erasure of the commodity form within the realm of speculative capital and the attendant “amnesia over labour”<sup>20</sup> can be analysed as a form of loss. Abraham and Torok's theory on melancholic incorporation offers a hermeneutic paradigm through which the effects that such a loss

produces both in socio-economic terms and at the level of class psychology can be explained and understood.

In effect, a state of profound disavowal informs an economic regime based pre-eminently on the speculative medium of finance capital. Disavowal, a process which also plays a central role within the notion of fetishism, consists in both acknowledging and denying the interdependence between finance and other forms of capital, particularly capital arising from the productive economy. Therefore, one may arguably describe the world of finance as resting on a split. On the one hand “the circuits of financing remain in the last analysis dependent on the needs of productive capitalists.”<sup>21</sup> On the other hand, finance capital denies such interdependence: given “the monetary endogeneity of its speculative means (credit financed by further credit)”<sup>22</sup> C is lost to the realm of finance. As a result, the structure of feeling proper of that social group whose workings occur within the medium of finance capital (and, given the pervasiveness of the financial economy, that of virtually all of us) rests on such a split, which entails disavowing both the existence of the world of the productive economy, the social relations arising from it, and their persistence in spite of finance capital’s dominance.

In the readings offered below, I will analyse a series of DeLillian characters who, either directly through their professions, or indirectly due to the financialization of more and more facets of contemporary life, embrace a peculiar financial structure of feeling. Their existences are gradually marked by a willing suspension from the constraints of matter and the peculiar collapse of the flow of time that finance capital generates. DeLillo’s characters’ sense of euphoria arising from disembodiedness, volatility and transience and, more significantly, their anxieties and fears can be read as the result of their suffering from a form of melancholia which can be traced back,

directly or metaphorically, to the obliteration of the commodity form and of labour from the dominant financial mode. In contradistinction, the failure of finance capital to provide an endless solution to the process of US capital accumulation in the twentieth and twenty-first century, produces a response which can be read through the shift from melancholia towards mourning.

### ***Cosmopolis, finance capital and melancholia***

*Cosmopolis* (2003), describes the effects of the ascendance of finance capital which became momentous in the 1990s. *Cosmopolis*, to quote from DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997), is about the worldwide domination of "[f]oreign investment, global markets, corporate acquisition...the attenuating influence of money that's electronic...the instantaneous capital that shoots across horizons at the speed of light, making for a certain furtive sameness, a planing away of particulars that affects everything."<sup>23</sup> However, the novel, set on a day in April 2000, recalls the collapse of the stock market and the burst of the New Economy bubble, which for DeLillo marked the moment when "the 20<sup>th</sup> century truly ended."<sup>24</sup> The crash precipitated a recession with worldwide consequences "revealing the mountain of corporate indebtedness" originating in the financial spree that had been taking place for nearly 10 years.<sup>25</sup> In recalling the 2000 crash, the novel also anticipates the spectacular crisis that brought down financial institutions, such as Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, AIG and Citigroup, in late 2008.

Its protagonist, financier Eric Packer not only lives within the gap opened by the obliteration of the commodity economy, but, as the embodiment of American finance capital, he fosters such erasure. Packer's absolute immersion within the speculative medium results in his total denial of the loss of the commodity form, and in

his unquestioned belief that speculative capital is the only form of capital available. Indeed, the limousine journey through New York that Packer undertakes reveals the existence of other economic regimes and temporalities at work within the city's fabric. From Packer's point of view i.e. from the standpoint of the dominant socio-economic formation he incarnates, however, these other economic formations are rendered residual or archaic (to use Raymond Williams's terminology) and are spectralised. Indeed, for Packer "all civilizations [and all human activities are] perceived principally through the prism of economics [and t]he inherent discipline of unfettered [financial] markets."<sup>26</sup> Eric in fact portrays and explains human reality as an extension (in linearity and predictability) of the reality of the markets. He reduces reality to "lucid units in the financial markets...the zero-oneness of the world, the digital imperative that defined every breath of the planet's living billions."<sup>27</sup> Reality, for Packer, amounts to the virtual space contained in the computer screens, upon which he observes the electronic impulses, representing money moving worldwide. Indeed, consistently with his medium which has evacuated the body of the commodity, Packer seeks to evaporate human bodies in order to make them functional to the technological markets, and to render the "zero-oneness of the world"(C 24) definitive. Packer himself aspires to be reduced to "quantum dust,[and] to live outside the given limits, in a chip, on a disk, as data,"(C 207) in order to fully become part of weightless and dimensionless medium of cyber-capital. Packer disavows not simply the existence of other factions of capital, but pre-eminently the fact that "finance capital has to be something like a stage in the way it distinguishes itself from other moments in the development of capital."<sup>28</sup> Packer, by contrast, believes that the financial stage at the close of twentieth century marks a break within the long history of capitalism. In my view, his belief reflects the actual perception that the financial round of accumulation had constituted a watershed

in capitalist history. As Peter Gowan argued, the so called “New Wall Street System” through increased leverage, derivatives, shadow banking and other financial innovations introduced since the late 1970s, appeared to have provided the definitive cure for capitalism’s structural tendency to crisis.<sup>29</sup>

Within Packer’s world (and in contrast with the monetary reality of the Diamond District (C 64) and the economic reality of the barber in Hell’s Kitchen (160)) the only form of capital available is that of finance capital and, as a result, “the art of money-making” or “*Chrimatistikos*”(C 77) predominates.<sup>30</sup> As Packer’s chief of theory, Vija Kinski, claims: “[a]ll wealth has become wealth for its own sake. There’s no other kind of enormous wealth. Money has lost its narrative quality the way painting did once upon a time. Money is talking to itself”(C 77).Kinsky notes how the long history of dematerialization characteristic of capitalism has reached, during the financial phase at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, new levels of abstraction: property, she argues, “no longer has weight or shape. The only thing that matters is the price you pay....You paid the money for the number itself...the number justifies itself”(C 78). Kinsky offers the most appropriate description of fetish capital and of the self-referential nature of financial markets which seemed, at that stage in history, to have fulfilled its own aspirations. Money, traded in the place of the commodity, detached from the creation of real assets, is now a fetish of itself. Not only does interest appear, as Marx described, “the primary matter”<sup>31</sup> of capital, but the prices of assets listed and exchanged on the stock markets are disassociated from their underlying economic value.<sup>32</sup> Numbers, once only a formal expression of “economic value, [masking] societal value”<sup>33</sup> no longer bear a trace of their origin in the commodity world. Money now lives “a new ghostly electronic life”<sup>34</sup> in “the de-materialised cyber-space in which financial and speculative [transactions] occur.”<sup>35</sup>

As a result, the notion of time within the realm of cyber-capital is profoundly transformed. Within financial markets, as Charles P. Kindleberger argues, the predominant assumption is that “the prices that are anticipated next week and next month determine the prices that prevail today, in effect a backward-looking view from the future to the present.”<sup>36</sup> DeLillo also perceives that the future is collapsing into the present and argues that “cyber-capital creates the future”: time has become “a corporate asset.... The present is harder to find. It is being sucked out of the world to make way for the future of uncontrolled markets and huge investment potential”(C 79).<sup>37</sup>

The best way to gloss Packer’s temporality, and by extension of finance capital, is through Paul Ricoeur’s analysis of time .Ricoeur points out, following St. Augustine, that we can only apprehend time as it is passing, in the very fugacity of a present which is constantly on the verge of becoming a past, or as an expectation of the future to be. The experience of human time becomes knowable through the distension of the soul. The soul extends towards the past (as memory) and towards the future (as expectation) and time is “articulated through a narrative mode.”<sup>38</sup> Following Ricoeur’s notion of temporality, one may argue that a cramped experience of time, rather than a distensive one, foregrounds the future-orientation of financial markets, as a result of which temporality is deprived of memory and totally bent towards the future as expectation. Packer reduces the experience of a distensive present to a mere act of expectation (which may explain his gift of foresight), while refusing any extension towards the past, a refusal marking a wilful act of structural amnesia. Deprived of its ability to stretch, recollect, expect, the soul, Ricoeur and St. Augustine argue, is stuck in an eternal present which fails to bestow meaning on existence because the soul has lost the organizational power to construct life as a narrative characterised by a past, a

present and a future. Read against Ricoeur, the “little hollow of non-time”(C 76) produced by ghostly money resembles, as we shall see, the non-narrative time of Mr Tuttle in *The Body Artist*, with his future already prescribed for him - the dead time of his spectral existence.

Packer hopes that one day the tempos and rhythms of financial markets will regulate everyday reality. The spectral quality of market futurity would produce an eternal present, “always a wholeness, a sameness”(C 91), and would erase all the significant local and regional realities, whether economic or cultural which instead survive at street level in the novel, testifying to the resistance of socio-economic heterogeneity, albeit in residual or diminished form as tenuous “spaces of hope”.<sup>39</sup> Packer’s encounter with such realities is problematic insofar as his melancholic incorporation prevents him from acknowledging and understanding the content of the material world and of the social relations these realities represent. Packer incurs momentary spells of doubt and anxiety, particularly in front of the death by fire of a protester, and when confronted with the physical materiality of his body which hinders his total assimilation to and as virtual capital. Yet, given his pathological condition originating in the melancholia characterising his medium, he refuses to come to terms with the implications of these other forms of temporality and reality at work within the capitalist system. Consequently, Packer can only prefigure a time-horizon which accommodates all forms of capital interaction and human relations within itself.

In addition, Eric refuses to acknowledge the growing evidence of the dangers of global financial crises (such as the one he triggers with his own speculation against the Yen) and the limitations and “structural and systemic vulnerability [of] the socio-economic world system”<sup>40</sup> relying predominantly on financial markets. In effect, as the embodiment of capital, Packer has interiorised capital’s structural contradictions,

specifically a destructive drive through which it constantly searches for a more profitable “fix”.<sup>41</sup> Packer willingly embraces his self-destruction in order to render the vacuum that finance produces even more definitive. His determination to push “the logic of cyber-capital to new extremes”<sup>42</sup> can be read as a form of creative destruction whereby “the violent destruction of capital [occurs]not by relations external to it, but rather as a condition of its self-preservation.”<sup>43</sup> While towards the end of the novel, he might recognise that deregulated markets do not provide “a viable theoretical guide to ensuring the future of capital accumulation,”<sup>44</sup> he does not question its teleology or interpretative paradigm.

Yet, while Packer remains deeply entrenched within his melancholic incorporation and “self-contained”(C 192) world, *Cosmopolis* registers manifest forms of resistance against the deeply anti-social character of finance capital and its disrupting temporality. As David Harvey points out, the time-horizon proper of the financial sector now dominant “create[s] an unwelcome temporal compression that is deeply stressful to other factions of capital [and] simply cannot accommodate to temporalities of social and ecological reproduction systems in a responsive way.”<sup>45</sup> In protesting against the homogenising time-horizon of Wall Street, the protesters also manifest a growing dissent against the “era of neoliberal globalisation and the role of New York financial markets in particular, and the U.S. in general, in forcing a certain pattern of political-economic development”<sup>46</sup> via practices of financial “accumulation by dispossession.”<sup>47</sup>

The crisis of finance capital that DeLillo presciently describes in *Cosmopolis* signals the necessity of recuperating embodied forms of materiality which have been spectralised, and the need to restore the centrality of the productive economy, and of other forms of capital which are alternative to, or coterminous with finance. In effect,

as economist Robert Brenner argues, the shift towards a financial regime of accumulation never solved the problems affecting the global manufacturing sector. As the current economic situation demonstrates, once the fictitiousness of the financial system has been exposed, the unsolved problems in the productive economy have re-emerged as a sort of return of the repressed, compounding the financial crisis and rendering the economic recession so severe and persistent.<sup>48</sup>

### ***The Body Artist and the shift towards mourning***

In this context, DeLillo's *The Body Artist* (2001) can be read as a metaphor for the recuperation of the body of the commodity C and of labour, recuperation which can only occur through the shift from melancholia and incorporation towards mourning proper and introjection. Mourning, in Abraham and Torok's terms, refers to "the principle of gradual self-transformation in the face of interior and exterior changes in the psychological, emotional, relational, political, professional landscape."<sup>49</sup> Mourning rests on introjection, a mechanism which leads to the acceptance of death and its transformative experience. From *The Body Artist* onwards, mourning informs DeLillo's fiction and, to borrow from Judith Butler, "th[e condition] of mourning suppl[ies] a perspective by which to begin to apprehend the contemporary global situation"<sup>50</sup> lived under the aegis of finance capital.

The novel can be seen as a narrative of introjection, or at least a novel in which Lauren Hartke, a performance artist and protagonist of the novel, painfully manages to accept the death of her husband and the transformations which her loss bring about also thanks to the help of the mysterious Mr Tuttle. Tuttle is a psychic projection of Lauren's bereaved psyche –and, at the same time, the projection of Rey as Lauren's lost love-object whose presence in fact prevents her from incorporating her loss. Her

exposure to Tuttle allows her to conceive of, and to live through, the timelessness and disembodiedness which characterise both death and finance capital. Through Tuttle, Lauren can also consciously experience what it means to live in a “state of abeyance”(FM 4), from which successful mourning (rather than its repudiation) can occur.

Abeyance, to borrow from art historian T.J Clark, marks “the momentary suspension of the future tense...the moment...preceding connectedness...at which the relations between things are still in the process of being made up.”<sup>51</sup> Such a moment, as DeLillo shows in *The Body Artist*, causes those who experience a loss to live “on the threshold of life and death, [in an] interim state. Not balance, but not imbalance either; neither vitality nor *rigor mortis*...a body stirring into death, or hanging on for grim life.”<sup>52</sup> Thanks to Mr Tuttle, Lauren is able to apprehend timelessness: in effect, Tuttle’s temporality (like Packer’s) is a hollowed time, “a kind of time that is simply and overwhelmingly there, laid out, unoccurring [emptied of] names and dates and distinctions”<sup>53</sup>, where the future is “simultaneous with the present”(BA 77). Yet, by living through mourning, Lauren will recover a sense of emplotted time which will help restore a sense of the future as possibility and of the past as “belatedness” (BA 91). Through Tuttle, who is a ghost with a body, Lauren will understand that the transformative work of mourning also entails losing the body in order to recover the experience of embodiedness (and of bodily time). Indeed, as a body artist, Lauren, professionally able to “shake off [her] body”(BA 104), becomes, like Tuttle, “a blankness, a body slate...a spook”(BA 84). Yet, in erasing her body, Lauren can recuperate that same body, and with it a notion of human time, which will allow her to supersede death.

When read in connection with *Cosmopolis*, *The Body Artist* reveals itself to be a powerful metaphoric representation (in the Ricoeurian sense of showing the similar through the different) of the spectralization of the commodity form produced by the shift towards a regime of financial cyber-capital, and the disembodied social materiality which finance has produced since the 1970s onwards. While Packer's desire to annihilate this body pointed to extending spectralization even further, here Lauren's double exercise in both erasing her body and preserving it, instead can be interpreted as a desire to recuperate that body of the commodity which speculative capital obliterates, even though such a body would still experience spectralization in the process of exchange, where "not an atom of matter enters"<sup>54</sup> the process.

Lauren's performance piece *Body Time*, while undoubtedly offering a visual and aesthetic representation of the disincarnating experience of death and grief, also offers an artistic representation of the condition originated by global capital. The performance goes from the material concreteness of an ancient Japanese woman, whose gestures recall that of Noh drama through that of a much more ethereal executive woman hailing a taxi and checking her wristwatch (a gesture that repeats the ending of *Cosmopolis*), and finishes with the representation of a Tuttle-like, ghostly figure. The shift from one figure to another allows readers to visualise the gradual spectralization of the commodity form and the concomitant shift towards a time that has been hollowed out and stuck in an eternal present. Lauren depicts the time of Noh, which following Pete Nicholls, we might describe as revolving around "belatedness."<sup>55</sup> In contradistinction, the time of the Tuttle-like figure is that of the eternal present symbolised by the 24/7 internet feed of a two-lane road in a Finnish village, Kotka. The video becomes an appropriate symbol of David Harvey's notion of space-time compression and of the delocalised time horizon of market movements.

This temporality is also that of the executive woman, a temporality however which Hartke strives (with the extremely slowed down gesture of stretching her arm to hail the taxi) to extend. Indeed, as the reviewer of the performance notes, the piece, as its title suggests, has been designed to make the “audience feel time go by, viscerally, even painfully”(BA 104). Such a performance piece (which effectively anticipates Douglas Gordon’s installation *24-hour Psycho* in *Point Omega*) constitutes a DeLillian, aesthetic representation of the need to restore other temporalities than the one characterizing finance capital. In capitalist terms, I would suggest, such a restoration would entail the cohabitation of what Peter Gowan defined as “the tempos and rhythms of two kinds of financial flows linked to different kinds of circuits”: on the one hand, the circuit of money capitalists who favour liquidity and seek quick returns and, on the other hand, those of the employers of capital seeking to set up much longer-term investments in fixed capital or commodities.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Mourning and melancholia in the wake of 9/11***

In *Falling Man*, with “grief [now] nationally recognised and amplified”<sup>57</sup> by the experience of mourning arising from 9/11, DeLillo focuses on the effects that the wound opened within “the narcissistic heart”(FM 113) of America and the capitalist West has had both on individual consciousness and on the American political and cultural body. *Falling Man* chronicles the desire to write a narrative that attempts to make sense of such a “horror”, and death.

Yet, there’s another dimension than that of personal mourning which DeLillo explores in his novel. Recovering from the trauma of the falling towers also entails, as in the case of characters such as Martin Ridnour, reconsidering the recent history of US capitalism and of US global politics. In particular, Ridnour reads 9/11 as the

consequence of the US (and its allies') continuous politics of appropriation and dispossession, as those politics "shape[d] lives, millions of people, dispossessed their lives, their consciousness"(FM 47). For him, the painful experience of mourning produced by 9/11 should lead to the acknowledgement, the avowal of the asymmetries and inequalities that "[m]arkets hide...very effectively"<sup>58</sup> insulating those who live in the abundance produced by financial markets from the "social dislocations entailed by financial expansions"<sup>59</sup> affecting the most vulnerable territories and people.

The attacks on the WTC have inaugurated a new era which appears to be in stark contrast with the previous decade dominated by capital markets and their structural amnesia. As survivor Keith Neudecker affirms: "These are the days after. Everything now is measured by after"(FM 138). The kind of "after" which emerges in *Falling Man* should prompt us to escape, as Linda Kauffman suggests, amnesia over history which is both wilful and convenient, for not only does it hide the displacements of global capitalism, but it also tends to place the event of September 11 in a historical vacuum.<sup>60</sup> Amnesia, blindness, denial, disavowal over the events that might have led to 9/11 compound the structural amnesia informing financial capital as to what concerns the existence of a multiplicity of values, productive forces and materialities and "human habitat[s]"<sup>61</sup> which originate within different socio-economic systems possessing a distinct local character, or which are situated outside the social and cultural logic of Western capital altogether. The need to occupy a space of suspended judgement complements the need to fully inhabit the temporal suspension attending mourning. The collapse of the towers produces a physical vacuum, a spatial correlative of the psychic emptiness generated by the loss of thousands of lives. Death opens a gap within which characters are suspended, caught between the need to "wal[k] away from it and into it at the same time"(FM 4). DeLillo suggests we should inhabit such a

vacuum, and live in a “state of abeyance”(4), since out of abeyance, a collective experience of mourning towards introjection over the attacks might constitute a training ground for also subverting the melancholic incorporation dominating the financial era.<sup>62</sup>

Indeed, the need to be held in abeyance in order to escape the refusal to mourn informs DeLillo’s depiction of Keith Neudecker, the survivor of the attacks who must make sense of the event of which he was part and witnessed. Inhabiting the time of mourning leads Keith to experience a kind of disembodiedness arising from death. Like Lauren Hartke, Keith can only recuperate “what he’d lost in the tracing of memories” (*FM* 91) by inhabiting this ghostly, disembodied, life born out of mourning in order to recompose the disarticulation between his body and mind.

Most prominently however, the best representation of what inhabiting the vacuum produced by the attacks entails comes from another performance artist, called Falling Man, whose unannounced and ghostly apparitions across the city revive the most disturbing and horrific images of the attacks: those of the jumpers and, in particular, of one immortalised by Richard Drew’s photograph, whose memory haunts the city. Falling Man’s performance becomes meaningful precisely because of his dangling, since by dangling in the void, the artist produces an objective correlative of the condition of mourning that New Yorkers, Americans and the West inhabit post 9/11. Like the Morandi still life, and the Alzheimer patients, his performance objectifies the experience of living in a state of abeyance, of hovering in a vacuum between life and death. His unexpected apparitions also force passers-by to revive the event, to renew the memory of the jumpers which the collective imagination tries to suppress, as censorship of the photograph of the real falling man exemplifies.<sup>63</sup> The performance, rather than a “heartless exhibition”( *FM* 220), seeks to achieve the kind of

suspension of the self, the kind of abeyance that can help to keep the West, and particularly the US “from falling into distortion and rancour”(FM 104). The man’s dangling should evoke the hope of a new future that emerges from the “strands of bent filigree...the last things standing”(FM 25) that constitute DeLillo’s “ruins of the future”, the ruins upon which to construct a counternarrative to that dehumanising narrative written by the terrorists on 9/11.

Despite the efforts to turn the experience of bereavement into a moment for reflection, and eventually transformation and change, *Falling Man* registers the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of pausing and reflect over the causes of the attacks without being accused of justifying or exonerating the violence perpetrated by the terrorists. In particular, DeLillo evidences the fierce opposition which separates those who, like character Nina Bartos, refuse to take the experience of mourning arising from 9/11 as an opportunity for a broader political and historical meditation on the hegemonic role played by the USA on a worldwide scale, and those like Nina’s partner, Martin Ridnour. Nina and Martin’s failure to reconcile their positions suggests that the aesthetic balance that DeLillo wishes to pursue, via a counternarrative arising from mourning, must find a correspondent form within the political, ethical and economic theories and practices. Such practices should be aimed at counterbalancing the asymmetrical distribution of privileges, power and wealth which often results from the enforcement of financial dispossession through which the USA have so far preserved their capitalist empire..<sup>64</sup> Over the years, financial crises and the IMF’s imposed adjustment programs have been deployed to attack those social-economic formations which fail to accommodate the endless accumulation of capital, leaving “millions of traditional urbanites displaced or immiserated by the violence of the ‘adjustment’.”<sup>65</sup>

The fictional 9/11 terrorists in *Falling Man*, Hammad and Samir, arguably belong to that immiserated immigrant population described by Davis who feed Germany's informal economy. DeLillo's reconstruction of the events leading to 9/11 effectively shows these young men as they target the current US imperial world order and, more significantly, what members of the RETORT collective defined "the dream of consumer spectacle"<sup>66</sup> and the "submission of more and more facets of human sociability...to the deadly solicitations (the lifeless bright sameness) of the market."<sup>67</sup>

"The enormous narcissistic wound opened up by the public display of [the US] physical vulnerability"<sup>68</sup> has given way to retaliation, exemplified by the War on Terror and the invasion of Iraq, through which the US have sought to reaffirm their political and military superiority. The war (rebranded Overseas Contingency Operations by the Obama administration) constitutes, in the words of Judith Butler, another fall into "national melancholia, understood as disavowed mourning [which] follows upon the erasure from public representations of the names, images and narratives, of those the US has killed."<sup>69</sup>

### ***The Point Omega of US hegemony?***

The vision of the War on Terror as the rejection of the experience of bereavement produced by 9/11, as Judith Butler formulates it, in part foregrounds my reading of DeLillo's latest novel *Point Omega* (2010), where the novelist also meditates on the disavowed violent outcomes of the war waged by the US and the deadly toll of the conflict. The novel revolves around Richard Elster, an elderly scholar who has helped the Pentagon legitimise the war by lending his intellectual authority to produce morally convincing arguments for justifying the invasion, and who has flown to the Mojave desert to meditate on extinction. A young director, Jim Finley,

accompanies the scholar in his retreat in the hope of producing a documentary displaying Elster alone against a wall as the latter dissects and eviscerates his stint as a Pentagon consultant.<sup>70</sup> In fact, Elster's "spiritual retreat"(PO 23) into the desert exemplifies the old man's escape from "two years of living with the tight minds that made the war"(PO 18) and, more significantly, from the memory of the conflict itself. In particular, Elster wishes to escape the "news reports on television that show dead or wounded people"(PO 50) which may remind him of the horrors and death resulting from the war in Iraq.

Indeed, I would suggest that Elster's refusal to confront the deadly outcome of the war may be akin to the disavowal proper of melancholia. Yet, Elster is prey to a deeper form of refusal which prevents him from acknowledging that the "military neo-liberalism"<sup>71</sup> (of which the war is a manifestation) arises from the need to guarantee the safe and profitable navigation of US imperial capital throughout the global system now threatened by "the growing disaffection and anti-systemic sentiment generated by [US-led] neoliberal globalization."<sup>72</sup>

Although Elster affirms that he hates violence, even shunning the thought of it (PO 50), his position brushes against that of Nina Bartos in *Falling Man*, when he affirms that the Iraq war was a necessity: "A great power has to act. We were struck hard. We need to retake the future...We can't let others shape our worlds, our minds. All they have are old dead despotic traditions" (PO 30). For Elster, like many Americans, the violence suffered on 9/11 provides a "moral justification for retaliation"<sup>73</sup> since the only alternative to what has been perceived (or constructed by the media and the Bush Administration) as Evil must be extirpated. Yet, endorsing such a view reflects Elster's inability to avow, and therefore question, the violence of practices of dispossession upon which American Empire is premised. Indeed, Elster's

militarism and disavowal of the violence which informs his vision of a conflict, recalls the vision of war which DeLillo has extensively explored in his second novel *End Zone* (1972). Here DeLillo provides an analysis of US militarization, and of the war mentality which shapes US culture. Militarization, for historian Michael S. Sherry, defines the historical, economic and cultural process by means of which, from the 1930s onwards, “war and national security became consuming anxieties and provided the memories, models and metaphors that shaped broad areas of national life.”<sup>74</sup>

As I have argued in my analysis of *End Zone*, the war mentality and militarization so deeply engrained in American culture rests on a fetishised notion of war, whereby an extreme fascination with conflict and its techniques of destruction, used as an affirmation of power and superiority, leads to a disavowal of the death and losses warfare produces. In *End Zone*, DeLillo explored how his protagonist Gary Harkness, by seeking exile in the Texas desert and an obscure institution called Logos, acquires a military cast of mind, its values, language and beliefs, and the military education he receives fosters the melancholic incorporation of death, violence and pain as the outcome of any war.<sup>75</sup> As in *End Zone*, the desert in *Point Omega* becomes a geographical correlative to the psychic encryption which Elster pursues, a space where his meditation on the extinction of mankind and of human consciousness, fostered by his reading of Teilhard de Chardin, allows him to further disavow extinction understood as death produced by the conflict in Iraq.

While Elster remains convinced of the necessity of the war (*PO* 30), as a melancholic he must defuse the work of his split conscience, symbolised by Jim Finley and his documentary. Jim’s project could lead him to acknowledge his own guilt in having supported the war, the imperialistic hubris which has characterised the invasion of Iraq, the death and destruction that war has produced and the crimes committed by

his nation in the name of democracy and freedom against ‘terror’. Specifically, DeLillo focuses his critique of the war on the practices of torture which have been perpetrated under the name of ‘extraordinary rendition’. An analysis of rendition, of its etymological history and linguistic evolution constitute, within *Point Omega*, one of Elster’s more renowned pieces of scholarship. The essay seems to precede the war and possibly the attacks of 9/11, and takes readers through an exploration of the word’s multiple meanings. Elster is particularly critical of ‘rendition’ understood as “a giving up or giving back” (*PO* 33), a surrender through “a method of questioning using what he called enhanced interrogation techniques” (*PO* 33). Rendition, Elster claims, is a “performance” (34), a “drama” enacted within a secluded room. Here “actors naked, chained, blindfolded, other actors with props of intimidation, the renderers, nameless and dressed in black” carry out “a revenge play that reflects the mass will and interprets the shadowy need of an entire nation, ours”(34). The idea of rendition as both a confession and a performance conflate to evoke the image of torture. According to Elaine Scarry, during torture physical pain is inflicted in order to provide a “wholly illusory, but to the torturers and the regime they represent, wholly convincing spectacle of power”<sup>76</sup>. Scarry argues that torture annihilates the conscience of the prisoner, and with it his culture and materiality, via the infliction of bodily and psychological pain. Pain destroys the voice and consciousness of the prisoner and substitutes it for that of the torturer in order to extort a confession (or, to use DeLillo’s term ‘rendition’), confession which amounts to the affirmation of a “fiction of absolute power.”<sup>77</sup>

The term ‘extraordinary rendition’ is never spoken or referred to, and Elster refuses categorically to discuss the issue with Jim. Such a refusal further reflects Elster’s melancholic stance and the problematic confrontation with the reality he has helped legitimise, a reality which, in his essay, he had strongly criticized.

Extraordinary rendition, with its outright negation of a fair trial and the use of torture, instantiates the dehumanising logic at the heart of the war on terror, a logic which fails to offer an alternative to that equally dehumanising logic of the terrorism which America wishes to fight. In the aftermath of the attacks, extraordinary rendition may effectively have allowed the US to enact a collective need for revenge. However, as Elster had noted, such a practice transforms the governments enforcing it into “criminal enterprises” (*PO* 33), whose use of language, mired in abstraction and sophistication, “conceal[s] the shameful subject it embrace[s]” (*PO* 34) and turns practices of torture into “an instrument of state security” (*PO* 35).

In contrast with Elster, the novel voices the need to avow that the war can only produce death, destruction and horror and that, in the face of its hegemonic decline, the US have resorted once more to war and militarization to reaffirm their role as a worldwide economic and military leader. The novel therefore denounces a specific American pathology characterising the post-9/11 period which can only be avowed and understood by entering a moment of temporal suspension, a state of “abeyance”, a condition which in this novel is represented by Douglas Gordon’s installation *24-hour Psycho*. The installation, which figures in *Point Omega’s* prologue and epilogue, shows a 2 –frames-per-second version of the film which therefore lasts 24 hours.

DeLillo uses *24-hour Psycho*, to evoke an experience of time which is so slow and dislocating (in a fashion that recalls the harrowing slowness of *The Body Artist*) as to enable viewers “to see the depths of things so easy to miss in the shallow habit of seeing” (*PO* 13). Arguably, just as the quasi-stillness of the image allows the anonymous spectator to gain unprecedented awareness over the dynamics of the film, so a moment of temporal abeyance could offer an insight into the pathological condition – i.e. melancholic incorporation understood as the illness of mourning–

which informs American cultural fascination with war and the disavowal of the injury and pain it produces.

In engaging critically with the issue of the war in Iraq, *Point Omega* also poses questions about the logic underlying the new imperialism through militarism, pursued under George W. Bush, which compounds and extends the financial mentality undergirding US culture. At one point, Elster explains his engagement with the Pentagon derived from the wish to help the military devise what he calls a “haiku war. A war in three lines”, a “transient” war (*PO* 29). The idea of a ‘transient’ war evokes the notion of “Shock and Awe”, through which the US hoped to gain immediate dominance of the Iraqi territory. According to Randy Martin, this technique is a form of pre-emption, which coupled with deterrence, is premised upon a calculation and management of risk carried out following the same logic and using the same IT computational models through which finance seeks to “harvest market volatility for gain.”<sup>78</sup> In addition, Martin argues that the occupation reflects financial practices of dispossessions, since after destroying facilities, job networks and sources of social wealth by means of war, occupiers fly from commitment to reconstruction, leaving those populations to fend for themselves on the principle of self-management which undergirds the financial mentality.<sup>79</sup>

As I have argued, Elster’s attempt to annihilate his split conscience, in order to disavow his “crimes and guilt” (*PO* 30), is reflected by his interest in the theories of father Teilhard de Chardin about the *omega point*. For father Teilhard, the omega point defines the highest stage in the evolution of mankind, the point where consciousness reaches the highest degree of complexity.<sup>80</sup> However, Elster subverts the positive connotation that the omega point has in Teilhard, and his *point omega* becomes the emblem of an exhausted, consumed consciousness which desires to be finally

annihilated. As Elster explains, “something’s coming...we’re all played out...time to close it all down...we want to be the dead matter we used to be”(PO, 50). For Elster, the point omega is the point of extinction, and his search for this “end zone” emerges from his desire to get rid of “the burden of consciousness”(50). Elster’s feeling that mankind has reached its terminal stage may effectively originate within a more a pervasive sense of exhaustion which animates the book and may be traced back to both the protraction of the war, and particularly its economic costs which compound the crisis caused by the credit crunch and the economic recession. Therefore, the DeLillian point omega may be read as a metaphor for a terminal stage within the evolution of a particular historical and economic cycle under the aegis of US hegemony.

Giovanni Arrighi theorised that the financial phase which the US embraced in the late 1970s signals the terminal phase of a systemic cycle of accumulation (MCM<sup>1</sup>) and the emergence of China as the new hegemonic leader in world economy.<sup>81</sup> Following the argument made by David Calleo, Arrighi posits that the USA have undertaken a phase of “exploitative domination” through military intervention, which exemplifies their refusal to acknowledge their declining hegemony and to adjust to the emergence of a new world order under a new leader . Such a refusal may, in the long run, lead to the breakdown of the international system constructed over the last four decades. Arrighi concludes that the intervention in Iraq has effectively precipitated the terminal crisis of the US, and has accelerated the shift towards a new world order, although it is still not clear whether an East Asian leadership will “provide system-level solutions to the problems left behind by US hegemony.”<sup>82</sup> Faced with the prospect of complete loss of hegemony, accepting the failure of the War on Terror as the pursuit of a new American century and the attendant loss of global dominance for the US becomes even more crucial, particularly as it may offer a route out of its crisis

and help redefine a global role for the US vis-à-vis China and other emerging capitalist powers vying for world supremacy.

Whether in the form of a loss originating with the disappearance and death of a loved one, or one originating in death as the outcome of war, or losses of an ideal kind, such as that of hegemony, the notion of loss emerges as a central preoccupation within late DeLillo's fiction. As if to stress the continuity existing between *The Body Artist*, *Falling Man* and *Point Omega*, at the end of the latter novel DeLillo inserts the inexplicable disappearance and alleged death of Jesse, Elster's daughter, an event which nullifies the old man's attempt to disavow death. DeLillo does not offer readers a clue as to whether Elster's personal confrontation with bereavement actually helps him to heal from his melancholic incorporation of death and loss produced by a war fought to preserve an (agonizing) US-dominated world order. While the novel seems to advocate the need to fully acknowledge these losses in order to undertake a process of transformation at a personal, and by extension at a political and social level, the persistence of melancholic incorporation and disavowal of inequalities and losses resulting from either war or financial practices are symptomatic of a form of resistance against such a change. Most prominently, the resistance of finance capital, in spite of the crisis, remains dominant within US economy and appears to defeat the effort of mourning as an alternative to the pervasiveness of financial melancholy. As the \$700 billion bailout testifies, finance capital seems to have benefited the most from the crisis, a crisis which has increased the asymmetrical distribution of wealth and inequality in the country. Indeed, as the short story "Hammer and Sickle" (2010)<sup>83</sup> seems to argue, DeLillo appears somewhat sceptical about the attempts at regulation by the Obama's administration which have evoked the (non-existent) threat of the spectre of Communism haunting the US. The short story, possibly a prelude to a more

thorough investigation of the current American economic situation, begs questions as to the effectiveness of such measures in harnessing the powers of global finance capital and the lack of a plan for the resurgence and renewal of US manufacturing sector on a long-term basis.

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for the extremely helpful suggestions, the editors of *49<sup>th</sup> Parallel*, and, above all, Daniel King and Fiorenza Dossetto for giving me the opportunity to take part in the “Twenty-First Century American and Canadian Voices” symposium which was held in Nottingham on June 17<sup>th</sup> 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> See Don DeLillo, "In the Ruins of the Future", *Harper's Magazine*, December 2001, 33: "the surge of capital markets has dominated discourse and shaped global consciousness. Multinational corporations have come to seem more vital and influential than governments. The dramatic climb of the Dow and the speed of the internet summoned us all to live permanently in the future, in the utopian glow of cyber-capital, because there is no memory there and this is where markets are uncontrolled and investment potential has no limits."

<sup>2</sup> Don DeLillo, "A Day in the life of the Present: Don DeLillo on *Cosmopolis*." Interview with Paul Gediman. *Borders Web Site* (2003), par. 7.

<sup>3</sup> John Ralston Saul, *The Collapse of Globalism and the Reinvention of the World*, (London: Atlantic Books, 2005), 3.

<sup>4</sup> The term comes from Christian Marazzi, *Capital and Language*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008), 16. Marazzi points out how the "massification of stock market investment" (16) increased dramatically in the 1990s to the point that "in 1998, for example, the liquid assets of American families amounted to 13,800 billion dollars, of which 43% was held in stocks, 23% in banks deposits and 17% in mutual funds" (61).

<sup>5</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 286.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Boxall, *Don DeLillo. The Possibility of Fiction*, (London: Routledge, 2006), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Greta Krippner, "The Financialization of the American Economy", *Socio-Economic Review* 3 (2005), 174.

<sup>8</sup> Nick Heffernan "Money talking to itself: Finance Capitalism in the Fiction of Don DeLillo from *Players to Cosmopolis*", *Critical engagements. A Journal of Criticism and Theory*, Vol.1 N°2 (Autumn/Winter 2007), 57.

<sup>9</sup> David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital. New Edition*, (London: Verso, 2006), 283.

<sup>10</sup> As Marx theorised, within the financial circuits capital (M<sup>1</sup>) no longer appears as the final product of the circulation of commodities (C) in which money (M) was transformed, but rather the product of money (M) that self-reproduces (M1). See Karl Marx, *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1* (New York: The Modern Library, 1906), ch.4 and *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 3* ((London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1959), ch. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Aglietta, *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation: The U.S. Experience* (London: Verso, 2001), 9.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen Shapiro, "Transvaal, Transylvania: Dracula's World-System and Gothic Periodicity", *Gothic Studies* 10:1 (May 2008), 33.

<sup>13</sup> Doug Henwood, *Wall Street. How it Works and for Whom*, (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 235.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Godden, "Fictions of Fictitious Capital: *American Psycho* and the Poetics of Deregulation", *Textual Practice* 25:5, 855.

<sup>15</sup> Don DeLillo, *Falling Man*, (New York: Scribner's, 2007), 4. Further reference to this novel will appear parenthetically in the body of the text as *FM*.

<sup>16</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. XIV*, ed. by James Strachey, (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 243.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 254, 255.

<sup>18</sup> Nicholas T. Rand in N. Abraham and M. Torok, *The Shell and The Kernel. Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 99.

<sup>19</sup> Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 130.

<sup>20</sup> Godden, "Fictions of Fictitious Capital", 856.

<sup>21</sup> Suzanne DeBrunhoff, *Marx on Money*, (New York: Urizen Books, 1976), 98.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Godden, "Fictions of Fictitious Capital", 859.

<sup>23</sup> Don DeLillo, *Underworld*, (London: Picador, 1997), 785-86.

<sup>24</sup> Don DeLillo, "Great American Novel? Terrifically Outdated", *The Times*, 14 May 2003, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Brenner, *The Boom and the Bubble. The US in the World Economy*, (London: Verso: 2003), 292-293.

<sup>26</sup> Saul, *Globalism*, 17-19.

<sup>27</sup> Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis* (London: Picador, 2003), 24. Further reference to this edition will appear parenthetically in the body of the text as *C*.

<sup>28</sup> Fredric Jameson, "Culture and Finance Capital", *Critical Inquiry*, Vol.24, N° 1 (Autumn 1997), 248.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Gowan, "Crisis in the Heartland. Consequences of the new Wall Street System", *New Left Review* 55 (Jan-Feb 2009), 6-7. John Lanchester, in his extremely useful and detailed account of the Credit Crunch, *Whoops!*, underlines how the dramatic rise of the financial sector which eventually led to current crisis and recession took place in a climate of "unchallenged victory for the capitalist system, a clear ideological hegemony of a type which had never existed before." With the collapse of the Communist Bloc in Europe, "capitalism was unthreatened as the world's dominant political-economic system. Under those circumstances, ...the financial sector, which presides over the operation of capitalism...reward[ed] itself with a disproportionate piece of the economic pie." John Lanchester, *Whoops!* (London: Allen Lane, 2010). DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* and its protagonist's behaviour are an expression of the climate that Lanchester describes.

<sup>30</sup> The term is drawn from Aristotle's *Politics*, where the philosopher subordinates 'chrematistike', or the art of money making, to 'oikonomia', or the science of household-governing. For Aristotle, the accumulation of wealth deriving from money growing out of interest constitutes the most hateful and most unnatural form of wealth. Unlike Aristotle, Packer considers interest-bearing money the only form of wealth acquisition and the endless accumulation of money as the only aim and end of oikonomia. For a similar argument see Aaron Chandler, "An Unsettling

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Alternative Self': Benno Levin, Emmanuel Levinas and Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*", *Critique* 50.3 (Spring 2009), 246-247. Marx also considers Aristotle's distinction in Chapter 4, note 6 of *Capital. A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 1*. (New York: The Modern Library, 1906), 170.

<sup>31</sup> Karl Marx, *A Critique of Political Economy Vol. 3* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1959), 392.

<sup>32</sup> Marazzi, *Capital and Language*, 27.

<sup>33</sup> Saul, *Globalism*, 22.

<sup>34</sup> Henwood, *Wall Street*, 38.

<sup>35</sup> David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 62.

<sup>36</sup> Charles P. Kindleberger, *Manias, Panics and Crashes. A History of Financial Crises*, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2005), 33.

<sup>37</sup> The collapsing of space and spatial distance produced by the development of techno-capital constitute a central element in *Cosmopolis*. As Peter Boxall argues, the novel shows how "in the new space and time of electronic globalization [...] here can morph into there, the very possibility of distance gives way to an unboundaried, simultaneous presence." Boxall, *Don DeLillo*, 222. The instantaneous transmission of information upon which cyber-capital markets function provides a further instance of what Marx in the *Grundrisse* called the "annihilation of space through time" Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (New York: Vintage, 1973), 539.

<sup>38</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative Vol. I*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 10, 52.

<sup>39</sup> See David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Crosthwaite, "Fiction in the Age of the Global Accident", *Static*, Issue 07: Catastrophe, (July 2008), 2,3.

<sup>41</sup> "Fix" derives from David Harvey, who uses the word's multiple meanings in the elaboration of his concept of the "spatial fix" through which he describes capitalism's addiction "to geographical expansion as much as .....to technological change and endless expansion through economic growth." David Harvey, "Globalization and the 'Spatial Fix'", *Geographische Revue* 2/2001, 24.

<sup>42</sup> Heffernan, "Money Talking to Itself", 68. As Heffernan points out, Packer's decision to pursue his financial destruction by undertaking "huge and reckless" transactions "suggests not so much a transcendence or negation of finance capital as much as a mutation in its forms to a higher level of abstractions"(69).

<sup>43</sup> Marx, *Grundrisse*, 749-50. Packer recalls Shumpeter's notion of creative destruction when witnessing from his limousine the protest against the financial institutions. Far from inquiring into the origins and motives of the protest, Packer can only conceive of the protesters as system's agents, lubricating and facilitating the shift towards a further round of accumulation. Creative destruction, in Joseph Shumpeter's formulation, constitutes: "[the] process of industrial mutation [which] incessantly revolutionizes the economic structure *from within*, incessantly destroying the old one, incessantly creating a new one. This process of creative destruction is the essential fact about capitalism." Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1975), 82-83.

<sup>44</sup> Harvey, *Neoliberalism*, 188.

<sup>45</sup> Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, 58-59.

<sup>46</sup> David Harvey, "Cracks in the Edifice of the Empire State" in M. Sorkin and S. Zukin eds., *After The World Trade Center. Rethinking New York*, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 58.

<sup>47</sup> "Accumulation by dispossession" represents a contemporary version of Marx's primitive accumulation and it is carried out via the privatization of land, appropriation of natural resources, the imposition of private property rights, the suppression of local forms of production and consumption and, "ultimately the credit system as a radical means of primitive accumulation." David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 145.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Brenner, "What is Good for Goldman Sachs is Good for America The Origins of the Present Crisis." Center for Social Theory and Comparative History, Institute for Social Science Research, UC Los Angeles (February 2009). <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0sg0782h>

<sup>49</sup> N.Rand in Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel*, 101.

<sup>50</sup> Judith Butler, *Precarious Life. The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, (London and New York: Verso, 2006), 28.

<sup>51</sup> T.J. Clark, *The Sight of Death. An Experiment in Art Writing*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 106, 118.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

<sup>53</sup> Don DeLillo, *The Body Artist*, (New York: Scribner's, 2001), 77. Further reference to this novel will appear parenthetically in the body of the text as *BA*.

<sup>54</sup> Marx, *Capital, Vol 1*, 55.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Nicholls, "An Experiment with Time: Ezra Pound and the Example of Japanese Noh", *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (Jan., 1995), 13.

<sup>56</sup> Peter Gowan, *The Global Gamble: Washington's Faustian Bid for World Dominance*, (London: Verso, 1999), 14.

<sup>57</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, xiv.

<sup>58</sup> Harvey, "Cracks in the Edifice of the Empire State", 59.

<sup>59</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, "The Social and Political Economy of Global Turbulence", *New Left Review* 20, Mar-Apr 2003, 68.

<sup>60</sup> Linda S. Kauffman, "The Wake Of Terror: Don DeLillo's 'In The Ruins Of The Future,' 'Baader-Meinhof,' and *Falling Man*", *Modern Fiction Studies*, Volume 54, Number 2 (Summer 2008), 357.

<sup>61</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing. Lineages Of The Twenty-First Century* (London: Verso, 2007I), 222.

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<sup>62</sup> For a similar point of view see Benjamin Bird, "History, Emotion and the Body", *Literature Compass*, Vol. 4, N°3 (2007), 561-575. Bird reads several texts written in the aftermath of 9/11 (among which *Cosmopolis*), and although he does not refer to a peculiarly financial melancholia, he nonetheless suggests that the national process of mourning following 9/11 could lead to "consider the close connection between American corporations and violence, both that between individuals within corporate culture and that which is provoked or abetted by corporations"(562).

<sup>63</sup> DeLillo's *Falling Man* evokes one of the jumpers captured in a photograph by Richard Drew which circulated on the Internet on the very first day after the attack and was immediately censored.

<sup>64</sup> See Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing*, 212-234 and Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 137-182.

<sup>65</sup> Mike Davies, *Planets of Slums*, (London: Verso, 2006), 152.

<sup>66</sup> RETORT(Iain Boal, T.J. Clark, Joseph Matthews and Michael Watts), *Afflicted Powers. Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War*, (London: Verso 2005), 186.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 19. Yet, the jihad theorised by Amir is a mirror-image of the the spectralization which invests those rendered invisible by the fetishism of capital. In fact, the terrorists fail to draw the line between those who effectively impose the capitalist world-system they so fervently want to destroy and those who, even in the West, succumb to the process of capital accumulation. The kind of brotherhood in the name of religion and jihad that Atta and Al Qaeda construct not only feeds on the technology of the very system it seeks to destroy but also produces a "global theocratic state, unboundaried and floating"(DeLillo "In The Ruins of the Future", 40) which mirrors the global, unboundaried, floating system of liquid capital, with the exception that in Atta's world the flow of blood substitutes for that of capital. The unity in the brotherhood, for me, reflects a serial unity which (not differing much from the seriality of capital markets) excoriates the cultural differences, the multiple social facets characterising the Islamist world in its entirety.

<sup>68</sup> Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, 7.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, xiv.

<sup>70</sup> Don DeLillo, *Point Omega*, (New York: Scribner, 2010), 50. All subsequent reference to the novel will appear parenthetically in the body of text as *PO*.

<sup>71</sup> RETORT, *Afflicted Powers*, 12.

<sup>72</sup> Ellen Meiksins Wood, *Empire of Capital* (London: Verso 2005) xi, xii-xiii.

<sup>73</sup> Judith Butler, *Precarious Life*, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Michael S. Sherry, *In the Shadow of War. The United States since the 1930s*, (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995), xi.

<sup>75</sup> See my "End Zone and the Militarization of the USA" in Alessandra De Marco "'Living in the glow of cyber-capital.' Finance Capital in Don DeLillo's Fiction", Unpublished DPhil Thesis, University of Sussex, 2010.

<sup>76</sup> Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain. The Making and Unmaking of the World*, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 27.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

<sup>78</sup> Randy Martin, "War, by All Means", *Social Text* 91, Vol.25, N° 2 (Summer 2007) 18,.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>80</sup> See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008) esp. chapter 2, 254-272.

<sup>81</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century. Money Power and the Origins of Our Times*. (London and New York: Verso, 2002), 6.

<sup>82</sup> Giovanni Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing*, 164-65.

<sup>83</sup> Don DeLillo, "Hammer and Sickle", *Harper's Magazine*, December 2010, 63-74.

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