

**Tribhuvan University**

**Critique of Global Capitalism in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis***

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## Critique of Global Capitalism in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*

*Abstract: This research explores how and why Don DeLillo has critiqued globalization or global capitalism in his novel Cosmopolis. This research contends that DeLillo's insular representation of a cosmopolitan America is the result of his fear towards others who enter in America through the process of globalization, and cause the events like 9/11. And, for DeLillo, the very process brings about clashes, gaps, and cracks in the American society as a whole and accordingly endangers the solidity of American culture. By taking theoretical insights on globalization proposed by Marshall McLuhan, Arjun Appadurai, Timothy Brennan and Shaobo Xie, this research unfolds that DeLillo takes neoliberal globalization as a threat for the solidity of American culture and evinces his anxiety towards global capitalism which creates binaries like master versus wage-slave, present versus absent, masculinity versus femininity, us versus them, civilized versus uncivilized, and so on.*

**Keywords:** globalization, global capitalism, the other, hegemony, subversion, homogenization

This research analyzes the process of globalization or global capitalism which is, for DeLillo, becoming a cause for the radical change in contemporary American societies, and with which their life is under threat. It also analyzes DeLillo's latent registration of an Orientalized other which educes 9/11, the deficiencies inherent in the west's global capitalist system that has made superpower America vulnerable, and the subversion of the culture of other ethnic minorities living in America. DeLillo in the novel outlines a tale of modern life filled with violence, money and materialism, the lust for sex and power, the apparently all-encompassing nature of technology and gadgetry, and self-centeredness. Here, DeLillo has become so much anxious about his land and people, but at the same time he has become utterly indifferent about the

others who are living in America for their better future. In this way, he has unsettled cultural issues. Binaries of any sorts essentially complement each other but DeLillo has rendered the culture of other ethnic as a threat to America.

The novel begins with DeLillo's central character Eric Packer's wish to get a haircut. The novel takes place at Manhattan, New York City during one- day- long expedition in April, 2000. Eric Packer (28-year-old founder and head of a large financial firm called Packer Capital), throughout this one- day- long journey, he goes through some momentous happenings such as meeting with his co-workers and wife one by one, watching the assassination of his economic rivals in Korea and Russia, losing billions of Japanese Yen, a group of protesters who appear to be protesting capitalism, U. S. President's crossing the town, and the coming funeral procession of his favorite singer, Brutha Fez, various meals and sexual encounters along the way. Then Eric rides in the limousine to the barbershop. The driver Ibrahim accompanies him inside the barbershop. Partway through the haircut, Eric is seized with the urge to leave, so he does, taking with him a gun owned by the barber. Eric then comes across a group of film extras lying on the ground pretending to be dead bodies. A little later, Eric is fired upon from the window of an abandoned apartment building. He goes inside and finds Benno Levin (whose real name was Richard Sheets) who says that he wishes to kill Eric as a way of striking back against the capitalist system. Eric encourages Sheets to kill him, and at the end of the novel, it is ambiguous whether Eric is alive or dead.

Don DeLillo portrays himself as an anti-globalist who seems to be critiquing Cosmopolis or global capitalism. The basic nature of globalization is the interaction and integration between the world's cultures, governments and economies, and it is also the process in which people, ideas and goods spread throughout the world. Pro-

globalists promote the global flows of people, ideas and goods. As a result, the cities become cosmopolitan by its nature where people from diverse cultural backgrounds inhabit. But here, Don DeLillo, instead of taking global flows of people, ideas and goods in a positive way, he sees it as credible threat for the solidity of American culture as well as the land, and it gets reflected through the casting of characters and plot. Thus, Marshall McLuhan's notion of "global village" fails here. And there occurs the cultural binaries as the ramifications.

Since the text is about cosmopolitan city, it has a diverse culture and a large number of different ethnic groups inhabit as global citizens. Similarly, cosmopolitan cities are made up of super cultures, subcultures, and a wide variety of traditional cultures. It has dozens or perhaps hundreds of ethnic groups well represented in its population, and the residents of the cosmopolitan city have the opportunity to interact with a great many people of different backgrounds. It has also positive connotations that suggest that there is a significant degree of social harmony in a city based on shared elements of culture such as language, norms and a sense of community like A. Timur Sevincer, Michael Barnum, and Shinobu Kitayama bring the definitions of Short, Gilroy, Appian, and Mosteria in their research paper, "The Culture of Cities: Measuring Perceived Cosmopolitanism":

Cosmopolitanism is most often conceptualized as the degree to which a city is ethnically diverse, and it is typically operationalized as the proportion of the inhabitants who are foreign born ... has linked cosmopolitanism to a commitment to universalistic values and mutual respect among different groups, greater freedom, egalitarianism. (2)

Unlike Short, Appiah, Mosterin, and Gilroy, DeLillo has only demonstrated the negative connotations of cosmopolitan city. It seems like he is not ready to accept the

“others” as global citizens; that is why, he uses the word “other” throughout the text when he needed to address the others. It also suggests that even the other people are living like native ones in American society. In this way, he has tried to show the negativity of cosmopolitan city created by globalization.

DeLillo delineates American society facing extreme change. And this new changed environment is rapidly being away from the past and what is remained is quickly passing present. In this environment, society not only experiences altered consciousness but also increasingly speeding up of change. Thus, this speeding up results in the rapidly increasing obsolesces of relationships and cultures. For DeLillo, contemporary language itself is also becoming increasingly obsolete. He renders contemporary America, with New York functioning as an epitome for neoliberal globalization and its problems. The city is portrayed in a state of chaos, suffering from collective post-traumatic stress disorder. This is reflected in the “anti-globalists riots” (88), “the funeral procession of the Sufi rapper Brutha Fez” (131), “the trunche like state of the young clubbers” (127), and “the staged movie scene with three hundred naked people sprawled in the street” (172). This paper argues that DeLillo's portrayal of America reflects a society that does not fit with McLuhan's notion of “global village”.

The narrative of the speeding up of change can be observed with Packer's commentary on language and objects. Packer is obsessed to the latest technologies but he senses they are already becoming obsolete. Benno Levin says that, for Eric Packer, “things wear out impatiently in his hands” (152). Examples of this occur when Eric Packer thinks his video scan retrieval technology is “a technology that seemed already oppressively sluggish” (34). Later, he thinks, “plasma screens were not flat enough. They used to seem flat, now they did not” (140). This speeding of change creates not

just an obsolescence of objects and vocabulary, but personal human relations as well. The protagonist experiences relations in a very short duration of time. This high speed, one by one meetings demonstrate the speeding society. The fact that most of his human contact, including his prostate exam, occurs in a moving limousine. The relation between Packer and his wife Elise illuminates this idea. They have only been married a few weeks and they hardly know one another. She did not realize his eyes were blue, and he thinks she may be “Swiss or something” (17). They meet each other many times by chance during this one day journey, yet Eric never recognizes her as his wife. All characters seem temporary who enter and exit Eric's limousine.

To evince the bad aspects of globalized American society, DeLillo has used the rhetoric of exhaustion as well. DeLillo's choosing of characters and choice of plots and concerns suggest a kind of focus on decay, collapse, and eventually death, that is beyond individual control. This kind of rhetoric is impelled by the acts of passing away and giving up. In this way, DeLillo has rendered the gradual deconstruction in American society. DeLillo's characters and his narrator are more downward and deathward almost like Freud's concept of “death drive or thanatos” (22), and the use of language and rhetoric suggest disconnectedness and decline.

*Cosmopolis* uses a unified plot to suggest the ruinous influence of the global upon the individual. DeLillo's characters seek assistance with silence and confession of powerlessness in front of the technological speed-up, which is a kind of finding refuge in another zone. But in *Cosmopolis*, this another zone is must obviously linked with death-the characters' refuge is in death. It seems like Packer escapes from the world of technological speed-up towards the actual one, which is eventually recognizable only in death. He moves literally from the position of the billionaire living in the tallest apartment building in the world to the floor in a house marked for

demolition where his corpse may be found. Before he reaches this destination, he does everything that could link him back to the reality he has abandoned, but the destiny seems like unalterable dying-ultimate end with no return.

Benno's last paragraph questions the purpose of Benno's life or any life that is simply a prison from which there is no escape except death as Benno tells in his confession, "There are dead stars that still shine because their light is trapped in time. Where do I stand in this light, which does not strictly exist?" (155). In this way, Benno is commenting upon his own place in this universe. Unlike Packer, Benno is stuck with his ideas and memories, and such things make him vulnerable to make any sense of his life. If Packer elopes from technology, Benno remains with his "pencils", his paring "knife", and his "iron desk"-but even those fail to show any meaning to his experience.

DeLillo demonstrates his protagonist Eric Packer having been affected by this rapidly changing state. His antagonist, Benno Levin, says that Packer is, "always ahead, thinking past what is new ... he wants to be one civilization ahead of this one" (152). As a result, he has an access to huge wealth, information, and technology, and his attempts to live in this ever accelerating vanishing past and present is, perhaps, to show the negative image of cosmopolitan city. His reflections on the insufficiency of modern language show the novel's portrayal of a radically-changing environment. Vija Kinski explains that "we need a new theory of time" (81). This suggests a kind of changed environment; the accelerated speed of change. DeLillo not only comments on society's changing state but also on the seemingly uncontrollable speed at which this change take place. Vija Kinski serves to reinforce this message. Vija Kinski says,

And property follows of course. The concept of property is changing by the day, by the hour. The enormous expenditures that people make for land and



houses and boats and planes. This has nothing to do with traditional self-assurances, okay. Property is no longer about power, personality and command. It's not about vulgar display or tasteful display. Because it no longer has weight or shape. The only thing that matters is the price you pay.  
(77-78)

Here, what DeLillo tries to prove is that there is no longer the past reality in American cosmopolitan cities. The only thing that is there is globalized and capitalist society. Everything is changing, which is, for DeLillo, a threat for American original state.

DeLillo has used the archaic words like “Automated Teller Machine” (154) and “Walkie-Talkie” (102) in this novel. And Packer's critique of archaic vocabularies delineates the novel's portrayal of a dying American socio-economic and cultural order. DeLillo, perhaps, is worried about the originality of American cosmopolitan cities that is being replaced by banality and boredom as Michiko Kakutani writes in his article, “He's a cartoon nihilist, a comic-strip capitalist pig, and the story of his cross-town trip to the barber, for all its melodrama and violence, turns out to be a long day's journey into tedium” (10). Society is rendered as suffering from the age of globalization. For all his wealth, power, and access to information, he is a desperate for real experiences as “the protester who lights himself on fire” (99). This is ultimately expressed in his desire for a financial “haircut”. This paper claims that DeLillo is trying to say that America is not historically suited to cope with these new changed realities of a globalized world.

There is a sense of unavoidable disaster, a small private apocalypse which may indicate a larger collapse. In this novel, the death of the protagonist is announced early as an unavoidable incident. In such case, the death should be cruel, the agony of the protagonist should be there, the death should be schemed or imagined as a form of

vengeance, the protagonist should be imagined by his aggression, but there is no any satisfaction, rather the death ends in a disappointment, an unnecessary, meaningless act, suggesting an exhaustion of a certain kind of cultural pattern. Importantly, this exhaustion is emphasized by the narration itself; in this novel the apparent linearity of narration is qualified by the intruding of Benno Levin's self-styled confessions and by the constant questioning of the nature of time. DeLillo might have created such kind of context to show the modern globalized world that has caused the inevitable disaster in the American society.

Don DeLillo's central character Eric packer dominates DeLillo's text as his name suggests he is one of the packs, all packed into one. It means his ideas, thoughts, emotions etc. are dominating other characters' culture. Thus, Eric Packer seems imperialistic as Timothy Brennan asserts, "the idealistic politically utopian vision of globalization is countered by a corporate imperial vision that is its polar opposite" (876). Similarly, there is no equal share among characters; rather, the text is like one-way traffic-full of Eric Packer's narration. It is like Brennan's concept of "totality" as he writes "The concept of "totality" employed by some critics of globalization theory is reminiscent of that theory, but, again, inverts it" (883). It shows presence and absence dichotomy where presence occupies a position of dominance in human society over absence.

DeLillo has also created a kind of clash between west versus east. This novel consists two parts, and each part is made up of two chapters, and each chapters are divided by one half of The Confession of Benno Levin. This novel also contains two interconnected narratives: one focused on Eric, the other on Benno Levin (Richard sheets). Eric begins his journey in the morning and ends at night, moving from east to west across 47th street in New York from 1st Avenue to 12th. Benno, on the other

hand, moves from night to morning and from west to east, starting 12th Avenue with the two characters paths crossing roughly in the middle of Manhattan on 5th Avenue. Here, the main aim of Benno has become to kill Eric as he questions to himself, “And how will I find him to kill, much less actually aim and shoot? ... But how do I live if he's not dead?” (154). Similarly, all the killings are happening in the East such as the death of Arthur Rapp-managing director of the International Monetary Fund who was killed “live on the Money Chanel” (33) in Pyongyang. And Nikolai Kaganovich, Russian Media mogul and personal friend of Eric, is found “shot to death outside Moscow” (81). In this way, this paper claims that Don DeLillo has not balanced the binary between the West and East.

There is also the binary division between masculinity versus femininity: men are demonstrated as more masculine, whereas women are demonstrated as more feminine. DeLillo has attached the stereotypical gender attributes to his male and female characters. He has demonstrated his central character Eric as very successful, strong, brave, independent, and so on as he writes, “He smocked and watched, feeling strong, proud, stupid and superior” (116). Each and every happenings revolve around him. Similarly, Benno, DeLillo's another male character, wants to kill his own boss. In this way, DeLillo has demonstrated all the male characters as macho, but at the same time female characters are rendered as submissive, collaborative, vulnerable and obviously as sexual toys. DeLillo writes by attaching stereotypical gender attributes between Eric and Elise, “She was rich, he was rich: she was heir-apparent, he was self-made: she was cultured, he was ruthless, she was brittle, he was strong, she was gifted, he was brilliant, she was beautiful” (72).

Eric's first sexual partner of this busy April day is Didi Fancher, his art dealer. DeLillo writes, “A minute later he was in her apartment” (25). It seems like whenever

he wants, he can have sex with her. It is somehow unsuitable in reality. Before meeting Didi Fancher, Eric meets with “his wife of twenty-two days, Elise Shfrin” (15). Sadly, though they are husband and wife, they do not have emotional intimacy between each other-as they hardly know each other. Elise says to Eric, “You never told me you were blue-eyed” (17). And it seems like the only thing that Eric is interested with his wife is sex from gender perspective as he says, “When are we going to have sex again?” (18). Similarly, in the next meeting, Elise says to Eric, “Is that the hotel you wanted to take me to?,” then Eric replies, “We don’t need a hotel. We’ll do it in the ladies’ room” (119). Furthermore, DeLillo writes, “He wanted to take her out in the alley and have sex with her. Beyond that, what? He did not know” (122). In this way, Eric has demonstrated Elise as a sexual toy for Eric.

The another woman Eric has sex with is Jane Melman, his chief of finance. DeLillo writes, “He sees her in her wallow and feels his pelvic muscle begin to quiver. He says tell me to stop, and I’ll stop” (51). This gaze upon Jane Melman is unbearable as Eric says, “Do you know what I see when I look at you? I see a woman who wants to live shamelessly in her body ... All the same. Days like this. I look at you and feel electric” (49). Similarly, Kendra Hays, his bodyguard and lover, is the another woman with whom he has sex while talking about official matters. In this way, DeLillo has portrayed male characters as macho, but female characters as someone who are serving for the fulfillment of Eric's needs.

The basic nature of globalization is the movement of people among nations as Meltem Karadag and Senay Kuzu write in their research paper, “The Cosmopolitan and Entrepreneurial City: Urban Reimagining in Gaziantep”, “As Skrbis and Woodward have stated in reference to Beck, cosmopolitan culture is a form of social action and imagination that is globally open, fluid, and hybrid rather than local

regional or national” (1108), but Don DeLillo is so much afraid with others in this text. The others, non-Americans in general, find the US' unprotected doors open, dare enter it, blend in the host community, and, being close-minded, betray all the bounties. In this way, he exposes the binary of us and them. The central character Eric packer takes himself as the citizen of the world, as his chief of technology Shiner says “And we have meaning in the world. People eat and sleep in the shadow of what we do” (14), nevertheless, he is so much afraid that he always sees “credible threat” in his life throughout his one-day long journey. It delineates that he is not happy with American cosmopolitanism. Thus, it is against the spirit of globalization as Giddens; Robertson; and Tilly defines globalization:

Globalization can. . .be defined as the intensification of world-wide social relations which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. This is a dialectical process because such local happenings may move in an observe direction from the very distanciated relations that shape them. Local transformation is as much a part of globalization as the lateral extension of social connections across time and space. (861)

Unlike DeLillo, Giddens; Robertson; and Tilly are focusing on world-wide relationship among countries where people can live each other freely by sharing their culture.

Cosmopolitanism is a product of globalization where people share friendship and each others' culture. The world is governed as a single nation and it boosts and increases different states. The decision and activities that are made around the world become one part of the world. The issue of globalization is heard everywhere in every country, that makes the world “global village” as said by Marshall McLuhan. The

term is widely used in the field of media, finance, communication, technology, economy, academia, and among critics and intellectuals that has made the world shrunk like a village. Therefore, it can be said that globalization is the process of growth in every dimensions of the global society. Society depends on shared values throughout the world.

Globalization means the acceleration of movements and exchanges of goods, human beings and services, capital, technologies or cultural practices. It encourages the developing countries for more developments in various fields like transportation, technology, communication, ideas, behavior and culture, and it also becomes helpful for raising the living standard of individuals. But, unfortunately, globalization is somehow operating as new imperialism and imposing its power upon minority groups-especially upon Middle East and Muslim countries.

Arjun Appadurai, one of the major theorists in globalization studies, puts forward the underlying structure for the cultural study of globalization. In *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai observes the current phenomenon of globalization which is portrayed by the twin forces of mass migration and electronic mediation. He asserts, “Yet today's world involves interactions of a new order and intensity. Cultural transactions between social groups in the past have generally been restricted” (27). Today's world is involving in exchanging the cultural artifacts to each other. People can move easily and start their living anywhere. According to Appadurai, the two main forces sustain the cultural interaction; warfare and religion of convergence. “In past few century America, Eurasia, Asia, and island southwest, pre-colonial Africa, the cultural gravity forced people to move to and fro around the world” (34). This is how global flow began. Such process was accelerated through the informational technology and the innovations of late eighteenth and nineteenth century. In this way,

Appadurai claims that human civilization began through the process of global flows. But the theoretical aspect of Appadurai and the views of Don DeLillo are just opposite. Though DeLillo has rendered cosmopolitan city as the setting, he is against this globalized city.

Appadurai writes, “The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization” (32). DeLillo is becoming worried that such global culture could be indigenous in American locality. DeLillo does not want both heterogenization as well as homogenization of culture. He thinks that because of this homogenization and heterogenization of culture, there has occurred even terroristic events in American society. In this way, DeLillo has failed to show the struggle of others' who are trying to achieve equity, recognition, and self-governance in conditions of extreme inequality. To show such situation Appadurai writes, “One man's imagined community is another man's political prison” (32). Here, DeLillo imagines about American society through American perspective, but he has totally become indifferent about the others'. He forwards his idea: “The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that can not any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery model ... The complexity of the current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjuncture between economy, culture, and politics. (32-33).

In this way, Appadurai claims that the world has now become a single system with a range of subsystems. And to show such disjunctures and the flow of globalization, he proposes five main “scapes” of global culture: “ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes” (33). And globalization happens through these five disjunctures. Furthermore, Appadurai believes that we now live in such globally imagined worlds and not simply in locally imagined

communities. We also live in a world in which deterritorialization, the breaking-down of existing territorial connections, is a major force.

*Cosmopolis* depicts every cultural flows, but majorly technoscapes and financescapes. The definition given by Arjun Appadurai is very relevant with the thematic aspect of this novel. Appadurai writes, “By technoscape, i mean the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (34). Technology pervades all aspects of this novel. Packer's limousine provides the setting for the majority of the novel, which is full of “spycams,” “visual display units,” “plasma screens,” and so on, because Packer knows the reality through the mediation of technology. Here, for Packer, the difference between technological virtuality and reality can not be differentiated because he is completely submerged in his technological surroundings. DeLillo writes, “He used to sit here in hand-held space but that was finished now. The context was nearly touchless. He could talk most systems into operation or wave a hand at a screen” (13).

Packer's reality shows him being part of the technology and a system. Didi Fancher, his bodyguard and lover, has to touch packer physically to ensure “he was here and real” (25), rather than him “... melting into the texture of everyday life” (104) along with the technology that assisted him to create his multi-billion dollar fortune. Packer can not be seperated from the technology, because he can not distinguish reality from virtuality; it is similar to Baudrillard's concept of “hyperreality” real has been replaced by “hyperreal state” (Baudrillard). Interestingly, Packer does not understand the disasters that are happening outside his limousine until these are viewed through technology. It is because of the television and information technology,



Packer becomes able to verify his first hand experiences that are initially in confusion, as DeLillo writes, “This made more sense on TV ... channeled through the dish antennas of TV trucks” (89). Here, technological devices become essential to Packer in understanding the real life events-and suffice it to say that, without media coverage, he would not be certain if any event really took place.

For Kinski, technology is personified, and has the ability to go in its own way as Packer's chief of theory, Vija Kinski, says that technology is, “crouched and undecidable. It can go either way” (95). Here, DeLillo might be saying that technology is, in fact, superior than human beings. We human beings have no authority over it because it can control its users now, and perhaps creating such setting is to show the contemporary American society's reliance upon such technological systems.

Eric Packer's seeking of immortality through technology is clearly seen as DeLillo writes, “Humans and computers merge ... And never-ending life begins ... Why die when you can live on a disk?” (105). Here, it seems like Packer wants his changeover from human to technology. Packer wants to live his life “on a disk” by being immortal and existing as both-bodily existence and computer simulation. It seems like Packer wants to blend his physical being with technology.

DeLillo writes about Eric upon the confrontation with his assassin Benno Levin, “He is dead inside the crystal of his watch but still alive in original space, waiting for the shot to sound” (209). This moment expresses both the deficiencies and successes of Packer's quest for immortality. Packer exists in-between of mortality and immortality. It seems technology has lured him into his own forthcoming death. Although Packer finds devices to be “vestigial and degenerate” (19), he fails to understand that technology itself has rendered him as a powerless victim. Packer is, in

the words of Kinski, “Out of control ... driven by thinking machines that we have no final authority over” (85). This is, in fact, opposite to Packer's thinking that he grasps the power over technology. Packer has an illusion that, “When he died he would not end. The world would end” (6). It shows that Packer could gain immortality through cyber-space. He feels he has the power to manipulate technology-but the fact is that technology is manipulating him, and being the cause for his self-destruction.

Therefore, this paper claims that DeLillo identifies the American cyber-capital as one of the culprits of such obsession on technology.

Similarly, the definition given by Appadurai regarding financescapes is also heavily suitable with the thematic aspect of this novel. Appadurai writes:

As the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units. (34-35)

*Cosmopolis* is devoted to expose the American financial market, the financial heart of global capital. Eric, the whole time, is pouring millions away in his bet against the yen. As he believes that the yen can not go higher, the yen continuous to climb and his millions waste. In this way, Eric bets against the yen because he believes that he-with his financial omniscience that has not failed yet-can see a pattern that no one else can see. Deep beneath, beyond detection through analysis, there must be a pattern in the chaos “a pattern latent in nature itself, a leap of pictorial language that went beyond the standard models of technical analysis and out-predicted even the arcane charting of his own followers in the field” (63). Eric tells his chief of finance Jane Melman that, “There is an order at some deep level,” “A pattern that wants to be seen” (86). Here,

Eric seems to have a hyper consciousness that sees the future in his security cameras before it occurs. But despite this hyper sensitivity, the yen challenges him. Eric tells his chief of finance that, “The yen can not go higher,” and his chief of finance replies, “That's true. That's right. Expect it just did” (40).

Eric is crazy with information. He and his chief of theory Vija Kinski emerge from his limo to watch “data roll” on the “electronic tickers”-too fast to read, too fast to absorb-and to be with information's glow: “We are not witnessing the flow of information as much as pure spectacle, or information made sacred, ritually unreadable” (80). It is the hidden knowledge that Eric seeks. He wants to read the unreadable, and wants to analyze what challenges him. He believes that he knows, but if he really knows, he has to act. So, he acts, but his financial forces act beyond his control. Knowledge is out of his reach and when he tries to grasp it he fails. His chief of theory tells him he may seek a pattern but he can not control frenzied forces that act on their own:

You apply mathematics and other disciplines, yes. But in the end you're dealing with a system that's out of control. Hysteria at high speeds, day to day, minute to minute. People in free societies don't have to fear the pathology of the state. We create our own frenzy, our own mass convulsions, driven by thinking machines that we have no final authority over. The frenzy is barely noticeable most of the time. It's simply how we live. (85)

This is where the novel reverberates so deeply. We finally feel the market forces and our helplessness to control it, which acts beyond our authority. But interestingly, Eric is so obsessed with finance that he is exhilarated by his own destruction. As his assassin tells him when they meet, “Even when you self-destruct, you want to fail more, lose more, die more than others” (193).

His search of immortality is again traceable here because he believes that through information, he can live forever. Eric's chief of theory tells him, "People will not die. Isn't this the creed of new culture?" (104). But then he realizes the pain he feels in his wounded hand, the ache in his knee, the wart on his thigh, can not be transferred into a chip of data. Therefore, this paper claims that Eric realizes the impossibility of immortality through information. His search of immortality in information might be that he finds contemporary American society timorous to live.

The idea of Appadurai and DeLillo's concern appear just opposite. Appadurai argues, "globalization is itself and even localizing process" (17), while DeLillo does not want it as his writing suggests. For Appadurai, there must be the interrogation among culture, politics, communication, history, and so on. Therefore, localizing or homogenizing of the global culture throughout the world is a ground promise of globalization. Appadurai asserts, "As groups migrate, regroup in new locations, reconstruct their histories, and reconfigure their ethnic projects" (48). But the world is not going according to Appadurai. He adds, "The landscapes of group identity-the ethnoscapes-around the world are no longer familiar anthropological objects, insofar as groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogeneous" (48). It means to say that people throughout the world are deterritorialized spatially, and are connected each other everywhere. World is like a village as McLuhan said, but DeLillo has a kind of objection towards McLuhan's idea of "global village".

Sashi Tharoor, an Indian renowned scholar, has defined globalization at Harvard University which is also in the line of Appadurai. In his speech, he even used the term "post globalization" to support the process of globalization (Sashi Tharoor). The term deterritorialization by Appadurai and Tharoor's argument on globalization

are somehow similar as they both favour the process of globalization and deterritorialization. He asserts, “One such truth concerns the link between space, stability, and cultural reproduction. There is an urgent need to focus on the cultural dynamics of what is now called deterritorialization” (62). Similarly, Tharoor speaks:

An English princess with a Welsh title leaves a French hotel with an Egyptian companion who has supplanted a Pakistani; she gets into a German car with a Dutch engine that is driven by a Belgian chauffeur full of Scottish whiskey. They are then chased by Italian paparazzi on Japanese scooters and mobikes into a Swiss built tunnel, where they crash. A rescue is briefly attempted by an American doctor using Brazilian medicines. And the whole story is told to you in Boston by the Indian MP from Thiruvananthapuram. THAT'S GLOBALITATION! (YouTube)

Here, Tharoor has given the definition of inclusive globalization. But the novel *Cosmopolis* demonstrates a kind of objection towards globalization from the very beginning, and seems to be advocating for exclusive type of globalization.

In this novel, there is ironic impact of September 9/11 on culture as well. Although DeLillo, in this post- 9/11 novel *Cosmopolis*, does not directly addresses the terrorists events, when we read the text, we come to know that he is in a way addressing terrorism. Even though DeLillo tries to hide the event 9/11, the novel has a lot to do with the event. The novel was set in 2000; therefore, it seems there was no apparent connection to the terrorist events, but this fails to win the readers, and attracts criticism. It was written before the event and in this sense, the prophetic nature of DeLillo's analysis can not be neglected. In *Cosmopolis*, DeLillo becomes prophetic in the context of revealing a disastrous condition between time and technology. In December 2001, after 9/11 attack, DeLillo published an essay entitled

“In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September” providing an insightful observation of the chaos of the country. He writes, “It is the high gross of our modernity. It is the thrust of our technology. . .It is the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, every home, life and mind” (33).

After 9/11 attack, many American writers addressed the traumatic event in different ways. Don DeLillo is also one of such writers whose pre and post 9/11 fiction has a lot to do with terrorism. The September 11 event, nevertheless, seems to have had an ironic impact upon DeLillo's fiction. For instance, the very twin towers become one of the dominant images frequently appearing in DeLillo's novels. Here, in this fiction, he has talked about a huge apartment, and, perhaps, that signals the very twin tower as he writes “It was nine hundred feet high, the tallest residential tower in the world” (8). Thus, it seems like DeLillo is blaming American cosmopolitanism or globalization for such terrorist attacks. And it creates the binary of Christianity versus Islam where American people take Islamic religion as a cause of terrorism. And to show it, DeLillo has created Arab origin characters, and this act of creating Arab origin characters, perhaps, has not happened by chance; rather, it is his deliberate action as Walter Kim in his article writes, “*Cosmopolis* is an intellectual turkey shoot, sending up a succession of fat targets just in time for its to aim and fire the rounds he loaded before he started writing” (8).

On the one hand, DeLillo places the protagonist, Eric Packer as the soul of America, the body of the nation, but on the other hand, the characters like Ibrahim and Anthony are given minor roles. Further, DeLillo has created Orient characters in his other novels as well. As such, DeLillo's novels are, in one way or another, related to Islamic fundamentalism. And when we talk about Islamic fundamentalism, it obviously meets terrorism as Peter Boxell writes, “Kinski tells Eric that ‘something

will happen soon, may be today' that will correct the acceleration of time. It is difficult to read this line, in a novel published in 2003, without aligning Kinski's something with the terrorist attacks that occurred in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001" (229). Similarly, by creating American origin characters and Arab origin characters at the same time, DeLillo exposes the issue of us and them. It gets reflected in the saying of Eric Packer, as he says about drivers, "They come from horror and despair" (16). It means that although Arab origin characters have become American citizen, they are still taken as coming from horror and despair-they are still not taken utterly as American citizen. It shows American people's eye view upon others: thus as terrorist. Palestinian American academic Edward Said, in his essay "Islam as News", states, "Islam has entered the conscious of most Americans-even of academic and general intellectuals who know a great deal about Europe and Latin America-principally if not exclusively because it has been connected to news worthy issues like oil, Iran and Afghanistan, or terrorism" (192). Too, Keith Green and Jill Lebihan argue, "Race, ethnicity or culture are not universal or fixed; they are concepts that have variable definitions" (285). It means everything is changeable; nothing is absolute in this world, but seeing only as terrorist is unsettled kind of culture. Therefore, taking Islamic people always as terrorist is an intimation of unsettled cultural binary.

DeLillo has emphasized the American multiculturalism. The terrorist event of 9/11 had a huge impact upon multiculturalism in the American society. It particularly refreshed the old dispute over advantages and disadvantages of multiculturalism, while promoting national history and patriotism over diversity. In this way, DeLillo seems to be advocating for lowering the position of Islamic minorities (as well as other minorities) in western countries. And DeLillo has taken the very presence of

Muslims and the Arabs in American society as a threat, as Eric is always aware of his security issues, “But there were security issues” (15). Moreover, the novel is full of vastly different events taking place in the borough, including a wandering anarchist protest, who use dead rats as their symbol of protest. Similarly, Packer learns that someone is trying to kill him, but who and for what reason he does not know.

Therefore, such incidents show the situation of American cosmopolitanism, as Torval says to Eric Packer that “No need to go cross-town. The situation isn't stable” (20).

And these things are happening because of heterogeneous ethnicities living in American society as a host community. DeLillo, perhaps, is inconsolable because even Arab origin people are treated as equally as the American people and have full access to all modern technologies available to American citizens DeLillo, thus, seems to be taking American multiculturalism negatively.

Likewise, DeLillo has tried to emphasize America as Cosmopolis in his other novels as well. For instance, *Mao II* and *Falling Man* have to do a lot with the discourses of American globalization as well as the globalized America. In *Mao II*, DeLillo pays particular attention to the west's capitalist globalization as being responsible for providing the others with modern technologies. And he exposes that this American global capitalism has provided the East, or rather the Middle East, the very modern technologies and with which their (American people's) life is under threat as Kauffman notes, “In the Persian Gulf War, for instance video technology made the war abstract with cyberspace targets and the military euphemisms like “collateral damage.” But on September 11, the abstract became concrete. Using our own planes as missiles, al Qaeda turned our technology against us. It hit home.” (357). Also, Eric, again and again, listens the shot of gun, “Then there was shot” (180). And it is against the promise of globalization. Globalization favors capitalism or free trade



by arguing that developed countries invest a lot on research and developments and are hub of the most of the inventions. And with the help of globalization, same thing (that the developed countries use) is available to the masses across the world at the same time. But here, in the text, Don DeLillo is against capitalism as he writes “A specter is hunting the world-the specter of capitalism” (96). In *Mao II*, the character named Karen epitomizes the vulnerability of American society towards the Others' voices and counter narratives. Furthermore, in *Falling Man*, the character named Hammad also play with American modern technologies. He even uses the banality of American everyday life.

In *Cosmopolis*, “rat” symbolizes the brutal and absurd nature of capitalism, and it substitutes many kinds of currencies and is a metaphor of irrationality in the global financial market. It echoes the “Spector is hunting the world...the Spector of capitalism” (96). In this way, he satirizes the capitalism. Capitalism has become much bigger issue now in the 21th century. Capitalism treats everything as an object to invest on, to make profit from, and to exploit. People are no longer considering about feelings or any other subjects that actually make them as human being. This novel also shows how a person can be affected by it in his thinking and working. Here, Capitalism is shown through the protagonist's life-he has a vast wealth but he does not realize that he has been controlled by the capitalism's effects within him. In this way, “rat” becomes an unsettling symbol of both capitalism and the malcontents of a capitalistic society. DeLillo quotes Zbigniew Herbert's poem “Report from the Besieged City” as an apocalyptic illustration of the future brought about by capitalism and globalization, “monday: empty storehouses a rat became the unit of currency” (PoemHunter.com).

In *Cosmopolis*, American culture spreads everywhere. The two incidents

dramatize this issue very clearly. The first is the coincidental meeting between Eric and the funeral of his favorite celebrity “rapper,” Brutha Fez, a man of mixed origins whose reputation is in “mixing languages, tempos, and themes” (134) from a wide variety of cultures. “...adaptations of Ancient Sufi music, rapping in Punjabi and Urdu and in the black swagger English of the street,” (133) is what makes him a “singular” rapper in American culture. But the narrator takes him as the product of American cultural cosmopolitanism.

The setting of the novel is Manhattan, New York. Manhattan is commonly referred to as the city by locals and is the most densely populated of the five New York City boroughs. Also, Manhattan is commonly described as the financial, cultural, media, and entertainment capital of the world; with the title of the most economically powerful city and the number one leading financial center in the world. Thus, DeLillo has tried to show this city as very crowded, liberal, and also full of other heterogeneous ethnicities as he writes, “There were Irish nannies. . .Swiss or something”(17), “a Greek from Samos” (19), “Israeli bank on the north-east corner” (53), “the old Chinese stood erect” (83), “and others spilling off the sidewalks” (86), “all those Vietnamese monks” (100), “Eric looked out the window and saw a crack in the wall called Little Tokyo” (117), “the car moved past the Spanish church. . .he saw it was Ethiopian” (140), “I am surrounded by other people” (195) etc. where spirituality has almost lost like Alan J. Gravano writes in his article “New York was like a vast and complex country in itself, a synecdoche of the American nation to which the immigrants had come” (181). Eric Packer begins the story with a mindset for a haircut across the town. Throughout this one- day- long journey, he witnesses some momentous happenings such as watching the assassination of his economical rivals in Korea and Russia, losing billions of Japanese Yen, coming funeral

procession of his favorite singer, Brutha Fez. Interestingly, Fez's funeral coincides with the U. S. President's crossing the town. Thinking about these two incidents, the former represents the popular and the later the official voice. In this way, DeLillo emphasizes the “fluidity” of cultural, ethnic, racial and even social borders in American society.

Eric Packer expects his own death as an impending event as his friend Kozmo Thomas says to Eric that, “this was the day, was it not, for influential men to come to sudden messy ends” (132). Throughout the day, Eric receives many warnings about the safety of various public figures, watches the broadcasts of violent deaths of two leaders of the financial world, and receives alerts from security system which symbolizes the warnings of a serious threat to his life. This sense of danger is strengthened when Packer finds himself in the middle of an anti-globalist riot, and reaches its climax when he is actually attacked. The interesting thing is that the attack is in fact harmless, a celebrity pie-attack. May be, it was designed to attack the globalized American societies and capitalism. The attacker claims, “This is my mission worldwide. To sabotage power and wealth” (142) by throwing “creme pies” and “quiches” in the faces of world leaders and celebrities. And eventually, Packer is reminded of the actual threat and continuous to pursue death till at the end of the day, and he finds it at the hands of his ex-employee, Richard Sheets, who renames himself Benno Levin. Furthermore, Torval, Eric's chief of security, gives him information that “the state of chaos” he finds in the city-the “flood conditions in the streets ahead” (65). It seems like DeLillo is appealing for security like Johannes Voelz writes, “DeLillo confronts the time of risk with a different temporal order, which I call the time of security” (517).

Eric becomes “disappointed” with the death of his favorite singer Brutha Fez

revealed by his friend Kozmo Thomas as they talk,

“Why are we here?”

“You ain’t heard?”

Eric said, “What?”

“Brutha Fez.”

“What?”

“Dead.”

“Hope you are not Disappointed.”

“Disappointed.” (131-32)

Interestingly, the singer, Brutha Fez, is demonstrated as gathering people together from various races and cross-cultural backgrounds. And with this ritual, DeLillo has showed ideal cosmopolitanism with cross-cultural populations. Likewise, the narrator's description of the scene shows a carnivallike sense of races, and cultures:

First the squad of motorcycles, city police in wedge formation. Two private security vans followed, flanking a police cruiser...Then came the flower cars, ten of them, banked with white roses rippling in the breeze. The hearse came next, an open car with Fez lying in state at the rear in a coffin angled upward to make the body visible, asphodels everywhere. (131- 32)

Perhaps, DeLillo has shown such ideal scene because Brutha Fez had completely submerged himself in American culture. He had completely accepted the American way of life as Timothy Brennan asserts, “Most of the features said to characterize globalization are American and they are coercively imposed on others as a universal norm” (882). Also, Brennan asserts that “globalization is seen as a threat” (882), but this threat is for others who are facing globalization as a neo-imperialism. In this sense, Timothy Brennan declares that “globalization does not exist” (876). For

Brennan, the discourse over globalization is debatable, and to show it, he mentions five basic moves: political ideal, utopia and dystopia, Americanization, western imperialism, and being purely speculative. Here, Brennan is talking about globalization that is working as an American imperialism to others, but DeLillo is completely unaware about it and instead tries to focus exclusive type of globalization.

Like Brennan, Marxist critic Shaobo Xie also criticizes globalization as “another name for the capitalist Americanization,” and “postmodern imperialism” (888). Shaobo Xie argues, “The biggest imperial centre is none other than the USA, whose economic power increasingly controls the world” (892). Interestingly, DeLillo is also criticizing globalization but he has become unaware about the domination of America throughout the world. Maybe, DeLillo is worried about the loss of previous original state due to global flows as Xie says, “Global flows of commodity, information, finance, and the world-wide diffusion of technology have made metropolises lose their previous centrality” (894), but he is worried only about the America. DeLillo has become so selfish and specific, while Shaobo Xie is talking as a whole. DeLillo is, in a way, in the line of Trump's policy of making wall at the border. People migrate to other countries in the search of better life, but DeLillo is treating them as terrorists, and feels a kind of threat with others.

The fluidity is also emphasized in the last part of the novel. This time, however, DeLillo focuses on the presence of an Orient, Ibrahim Hamadou-Ibrahim is Eric's personal driver. His role is limited only in few pages, and he is described from the eye view of Eric along with Anthony, the barber who once had been a driver for Packer, too. DeLillo's selection of Arab origin characters is, of course, far from happened by chance. The Arabic name Ibrahim hints Orientalist suppositions, and he may have used this name to highlight the passability of American heterogeneous

culture and its “consequent perils.” Therefore, Muslim fundamentalism is traceable in the representation of Ibrahim: “The voice was mild. The driver was a mild figure in a suit and tie, sitting with cake in his outstretched hand, and his comments were clearly personal, extending beyond this city, these streets, the circumstances under discussion” (167). Also, “He spoke quietly. There was a faint sheen of perspiration on Ibrahim's face. He looked wary and prepared, a disposition he'd learned on some sand plain seven hundred years before he was born” (168). This passage shows the binary between savagery and civilization. Ibrahim is described as a man of medieval times. But, fortunately, it seems like Ibrahim has crossed the stage of savagery because of western modern technologies. But the sad thing is that Ibrahim is demonstrated with some Orientalist motifs like being passionate, being silent, and being treacherous etc., and Ibrahim has become an object of Eric's gaze in this novel. It also exposes the Orientalist identity. Here, Eric Packer's representation of Ibrahim is: “He tried to read the man's ravaged eye, the bloodshot strip beneath the hooded lid. He respected the eye. There was a story there, a brooding folklore of time and fate” (170). It portrays the negative image of Orientals.

Eric Packer treats “Others” as his “subjects”, takes himself as the lord of this Cosmopolis. “The self- totality” of Packer's worldview brings a kind of master versus slave relation with others like Torval (his chief of security), Shiner (his chief of technology), Michael Chin (his currency analyst), Jane Melman (his chief of finance), Dr. Ingram (his temporary physician), Elise Shifrin, “ his wife of twenty- two days” (15), Kendra Hays (his bodyguard and lover), Didi Fancher (his dealer and executor), and Benno Levin, his ex- employee who ultimately revenges by murdering his master. Furthermore, DeLillo's inanimate object, the limousine, as something which “feels and speaks”, but Ibrahim is hardly seen by Eric. It shows the binary relationship of the

master and the wage-slave as Sanjog and Sagar in their book *Literary Theories, Criticism and Literary Applications* argue that “...there is no such opposition or inequality, but hierarchy” (209). Moreover, DeLillo exposes Eric's symbolic blindness. For instance, when Benno Levin asks Eric to “recognize” him, Eric replies: “I can't see you clearly” (87). Therefore, Eric's difficulty in seeing others might be a kind of rage towards others.

The most interesting thing about the book is Eric Packer's journey towards the past from present to get his haircut, where his father Mike Packer used to go for his haircut as well. Reviewer Sven Philipp has written about this idea so meaningfully in his review:

But little by little DeLillo's ostentatious limousine ride into a hair cut deepens and becomes a journey into the past, an attempt to reconnect with a more original culture. When the suddenly penniless Packer finally arrives at the old barbershop, a momentum of authenticity and mortality, he finally manages to fall asleep. ““His father had grown up here” (159), we learn, and only then are we given the human touch, when we come to understand that what packer really wants from the old barber is not a haircut but the comfort of “The same words. The oil company calendar on the wall. The mirror that needed silvering. (161)

Here, Eric Packer's journey towards the past may symbolize that DeLillo is in the search of comfort where he can solace his mind, and find his original culture again. Because it seems like DeLillo is not satisfied with the present contemporary American society which is full of “others” due to globalization. And, perhaps, DeLillo does not want the future because future is already in the present due to highly developed modern technologies.

In essence, DeLillo has tried to demonstrate the deficiencies that are inherent in the contemporary American society due to globalization or global capitalism. DeLillo is troubled with the others who enter in America, and become able to live as a host community. And because of this, for DeLillo, America is under threat. To show it, DeLillo has created his central character Eric Packer, who is worried about the security issues all the time-and as a result, he kills his own security guard, Torval. Eric's symbolic journey towards the past and his seeking a refuge in technology for immortality show the chaotic state of the present. In this way, he creates the discourse of terrorism and exposes the terrorists' violence. Therefore, due to DeLillo's protest against the process of globalization, there occur some unsettling cultural issues.

The novel delineates DeLillo's fear towards the changing state of contemporary American society caused by globalization. DeLillo is worried about the contemporary world of rapidly developing technology and language which fails to save the originality of American culture. DeLillo's characters are powerless in front of the technologies-DeLillo might have created such plot to critique global capitalism through which other people are also becoming able to use the very technologies like the native ones. But the interesting thing is that DeLillo has become completely unaware about the process of globalization, which is working as “capitalist Americanization” (Shaobo Xie). Now the question occurs whether DeLillo's novel victimizes the others in the name of protecting ourselves, or demands a critical re-evaluation for the very idea of American cosmopolitanism?



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