"RELENTLESS GEOGRAPHY": YAMASHITA, DELILLO, AND THE SPACE OF GLOBALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

"Relentless Geography": Yamashita, DeLillo, and the Space of Globalization

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Throughout the 1990s, the phenomenon of globalization emerged as a dominant framework for assessing the post-Cold War order of international relations. Amidst the proliferation of globalization discourse, a group of prominent political and economic commentators made the case that advancements in communication and transportation technology had effectively brought about the "end of geography." In this thesis, I analyze how two American novels–Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997) and Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003)–take up, and ultimately reject, these claims about the "end of geography." Beginning with *Tropic of Orange*, I argue that Yamashita's rendering of the Tropic of Cancer latitudinal line as a mobile and materialized thread serves to underscore the novel's structure as a global network and to assert that the lines of connection linking the globalized world are not just virtual but material. Turning to *Cosmopolis,* I focus on the novel's protagonist, a twenty-eight-year-old multi-billionaire currency trader named Eric Michael Packer who possesses a desire to become unmoored from the realities of geography. As I argue, DeLillo stages Packer's failed bodily transcendence in order to reject the notion that digital finance has presently, or will someday, become untethered from physical reality. Concluding with a brief analysis of DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007)–his first novel written following the events of 9/11–I contend that the depiction of space in this novel is indicative of a broader discursive shift away from triumphalist claims about globalization which occurred after the attacks on that date and the ensuing "War on Terror." Ultimately, I demonstrate that these three novels offer nuanced and illuminating accounts of the hyperbolic–and indeed problematic–claims made by proponents of the "end of geography" discourse.

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In the second volume of his critical companion series to Marx's *Capital,* David Harvey (2013) predicts that if "the Suez Canal gets blocked," the circulation of goods and capital will be suspended on a global scale (p. 262). Not a decade later, Harvey's hypothesis was tested on March 23rd, 2021, when strong winds blew the *Ever Given* container ship ashore in the Suez Canal, thus blocking the transport route. The blockage threatened the stability of international trade just a year after the COVID-19 pandemic had all but halted international travel. Given that an estimated 12% of all global trade passes through the canal daily, the global economic impact of the blockage was substantial (Russon, 2021, par. 22). Before the ship was eventually dislodged on 29 March, it was calculated that roughly $10b of goods were being held up each day, causing shipping costs to nearly double during this time (Goodman, 2021). Faced with the symbolically rich image of a ship diagonally blocking one of the world's busiest passageways, media commentators were quick to conclude that the incident served as a "reminder that geography does matter" (Vock, 2021). In a globalized world in which technologies of communication and transportation have drastically reduced the barriers of distance, the *Ever Given* incident offered a surprising reminder that capitalism is still fixed within the bounds of material space.

That global commerce still takes place on the plane of material reality should be self-evident enough; however, just over two decades before the *Ever Given* incident, a group of business leaders, finance journalists, and even politicians collectively argued the opposite. After the conclusion of the Cold War, the phenomenon of globalization emerged as a dominant framework for assessing the new order of international relations. Amidst the proliferation of globalization discourse in the academy, in the popular press, and in international politics, a group of commentators made the case that advancements in communication and transportation

technology had permitted humans, information, and capital to transcend all boundaries of space and distance. As will be discussed in subsequent detail, these commentators announced our arrival into a borderless world (Ohmae, 1990), proclaimed both the "death of distance" (Cairncross, 1997) and the "end of geography" (O'Brien, 1992), and pointed to culprits such as developments in internet technologies and decreased financial regulations in the process. While these commentators made a range of claims based on a variety of evidence, it is clear that hyperbole and rhetorical bombast appeared to be a favoured strategy employed in the effort to represent the immensity and complexity of the globalization process.

As the prevailing spatial logic of its time, the discourse of globalization was taken up, and contested, in contemporaneous works of literature. In the American context, two notable examples include Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997) and Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003). Yamashita's sprawling, character-dense novel is set in the span of a week and follows a single orange as it is carried north from the Tropic of Cancer line of latitude up to the city of Los Angeles. Writing in the particular context of post-NAFTA North America and drawing on a range of literary genres including magical realism, Yamashita depicts the Tropic of Cancer latitude as a materialized "line–finer than the thread of a spiderweb" running through the titular orange (p. 14). As the orange is brought north, the latitudinal line is carried with it such that by the novel's conclusion the distance between Los Angeles and the Tropic of Cancer is effectively collapsed. As I will argue, the mobile and materialized tropic line functions both as a thread in the novel's structure as a global network, as well as a symbol which Yamashita uses to assert that the lines of connection linking the globalized world are not just virtual but material.

While DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* is set on a smaller temporal and geographical scale than *Tropic of Orange*, it is equally concerned with global interconnectivity. The novel takes place on

a single day in April 2000 and follows twenty-eight-year-old multi-billionaire currency trader

Eric Michael Packer as he travels across Manhattan in his limousine in order to get a haircut.

Throughout the novel, Packer harnesses communication and transport technology along with

instruments of finance to push beyond the parameters of physical space. Yet while Packer desires

to become like the yen he trades, that is to say disembodied, fluid, and unmoored from the

realities of geography, he nonetheless ends up waiting to die in "original space" at the novel's

conclusion (DeLillo, 2003, p. p. 209). As I will argue, DeLillo stages Packer's failed

transcendence in order to reject the notion that digital finance has presently, or will someday,

become untethered from physical reality.

While *Tropic of Orange* and *Cosmopolis* differ in their style and subject matter, it is my

contention that both novels engage in an attempt to give literary form to the process of

globalization. In the course of doing so, both novels push back against the hyperbolic and

reductive claims made by globalization theorists like Ohmae, O'Brien and Cairncross, and

ultimately refute the notion that we have entered a "time beyond geography" (DeLillo, 2003, p.

36). Concluding with a brief analysis of Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* (2007)–his first novel

written following the events of 9/11–I will contend that the depiction of space in this novel is

indicative of a larger discursive shift away from triumphalist claims about globalization which

occurred after the attacks on that date and the ensuing "War on Terror." Ultimately, I will show

that these three novels, shaped as they are by late-20th century globalization discourse, offer

nuanced and illuminating accounts of the problematic, and indeed pernicious, dimensions of this

discourse's hyperbolic claims.

<u>"The End of Geography": Spatial Logic and the Discourse of Globalization</u>

Before analyzing the representations of globalization in these novels, it is first necessary to contextualize the concept itself. This is of particular importance because, as with related terms such as "neoliberalism" and "postmodernism," globalization has been the subject of considerable theoretical and political contestation. In its broadest sense, globalization can be considered "a process through which interdependencies among geographically distant localities, places and territories are at once extended, deepened, and intensified (Brenner, 1999, p. 42). Geographer Paul F. Kelly (1999) offers slightly more specificity with his definition of the term as a "means by which to capture a sense of rapid time-space compression, connectivity, communication and circulation in diverse processes of cultural, economic, political and social change" (p. 379). Of course, as scholars such as David Harvey (1995) have noted, the process of globalization is by no means a recent phenomenon, and it can be traced back to Columbus' arrival in the Americas, if not earlier. Still, owing to a variety of factors, including the program of financial market deregulation pursued by the Reagan and Thatcher administrations during the 1980s, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the launching of the World Wide Web in the same year, the concept of globalization became a dominant analytical framework throughout the 1990s (Held et al., 1999, p. 483).[1] As a 1997 article in the *New Yorker* confirms, "'globalization' is the buzzword of the late twentieth century, on the lips of everybody from Jiang Zemin to Tony Blair" (Cassidy, p. 248).

During this time, assessments of globalization abounded in the academy, in the popular press, and in international political discourse. As the "buzzword" of its time, the debate around

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[1] Conceptualizations of globalization predate the popularization of the term in the 1990s, with notable examples such as Marshall McLuhan's image of the "global village" dating back to the 1960s. As Jagoda (2016) argues, however, analysis of increasing global interconnectivity from the 1960s were "prescriptive" whereas by the 1990s they had become "descriptive" (p. 10).

globalization proved divisive. To summarize positions briefly, proponents claimed that the

process of globalization would reduce global poverty (Dale, 1996) and usher in greater peace

between nations, for, as Thomas Friedman (1996) reasoned, "no two countries that both have a

McDonald's have ever fought a war against each other" (par. 1). Conversely, to critics of

globalization, the process would exacerbate global income inequality (Birdsall, 1999), allow

global elites to consolidate their wealth and power (Chomsky, 1993), and lead to cultural

homogenization and the loss of the languages and traditions of small, often Indigenous, cultures

(Kirsch, 2001). The contentious nature of the debate manifested in a number of anti-globalization

protests, most notably at the meeting of World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999.

Despite the ubiquity of the term during this time, identifying exactly what "globalization"

referred to was also a point of serious contestation. Even to proponents of increased global

interconnectivity, such as *Financial Times* editor Martin Wolf (2004), "globalization is a hideous

word of obscure meaning" (p. 13). Evidently, it is no small task to clarify the meanings and

connotations of such a broad term. To assist in this endeavor, several scholars have drawn a

distinction between globalization as a discourse and as a real-world process (Brown, 1999; Fiss

& Hirsch, 2005). For the purposes of this paper, "globalization" will be presented as a discourse

of a particularly *spatial* nature. That is to say, the "hideous word" serves as a means by which to

conceptualize, and discuss, the links and flows across and between places in the world. If

"globalization" implies a process of change, this change occurs in the relations among people,

goods, capital, ideas, and *space*.[2] Even the term itself conjures up a particular scale of

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[2] Space is the subject of numerous, often incompatible definitions. As Martin Kent (2003) puts it bluntly,
"geographers are poor at defining space" (p. 109). For the purposes of this paper, "space" will be understood
uncomplicatedly as the material plane of existence. "Place," "distance, and "geography," although distinct
categories, will be regarded as corollaries of "space."

geographical reference to the effect of downplaying the importance of fixed, local places. In other words, whether explicitly or not, to talk about globalization is to talk about space. Thus, given its status as the "buzzword" of the late twentieth century, "globalization" can be seen to denote the dominant spatial logic of the period.

Within the academy, the period of globalization corresponded to a resurgent interest in geographical concepts like "space," "place" and "scale," giving credence to Foucault's prediction in 1967 that "the present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space" (p. 22). This so-called "spatial turn" saw theorists far beyond the discipline of geography incorporating spatial analysis into their work, reversing the long-standing subordination of spatial analysis to temporal analysis in the social sciences (Warf and Arias, 2008). In the introduction to their volume, *The Spatial Turn* (2008), geographers Barney Warf and Santa Arias draw an explicit link between globalization and this increased interest in geographical concepts, along with the increasing severity of environmental issues on a global scale (p. 6). So, although it was acknowledged that globalization was profoundly altering the status of space and the nature of human interaction with the world at large, participants in the Spatial Turn continued to analyze these changes through an explicitly *spatial* framework.

While scholars in the social sciences were working with spatial categories to a hitherto unprecedented extent, the status of space as the primary interpretive matrix in the era of globalization was far from universally accepted. During this time, a competing discourse was developed by a number of business leaders and media figures who seemed to have taken notes from Frances Fukuyama, whose provocative "end of history" thesis had reached a considerable audience when first published in 1989. Just as Fukuyama had celebrated the death of history, these figures argued that the instruments of globalization, such as communication and

transportation technology, had not only made the world more interconnected but had gone so far as to permit humans, information, and capital to transcend all boundaries of space and distance. Rather than academic journals, these commentators found platforms for their views in publications such as *The Economist, Foreign Policy,* and *The New York Times*. Kenichi Ohmae, a former partner with the McKinsey Global Consulting firm, made a notable contribution to this argument with his 1990 book, *The Borderless World*. In the book, Ohmae makes the case that national borders have been rendered irrelevant as a result of the deregulation of financial markets, and he espouses his belief that "in both the political and economic arena…the people– as consumers and as citizens–will no longer tolerate the antiquated role of government" (p. x). Two years later, Richard O'Brien, a former executive at American Express, published *Global Financial Integration: The End of Geography* (1992). In his book, O'Brien stridently claims that as a result of the computerization of the stock market, amongst other factors, "geographical location no longer matters in finance" (p. 1). As with Ohmae, O'Brien also credits this spatial transcendence to the declining power of regulatory bodies, which both authors view as a favorable development. Following Ohmae and O'Brien, *Economist* writer and future editor Frances Cairncross contributed to the discourse with her book, *The Death of Distance: How the Communications Revolution Is Changing our Lives* (1997). In a piece written for *The Economist* two years prior, Cairncross (1995) claims that "the death of distance as a determinant of the cost of communications will probably be the single most important economic force shaping society in the first half of the next century" (par. 3). Thus, while differing slightly in their approaches, Ohmae, O'Brien, and Cairncross are united in their belief that the process of globalization is tantamount to the reduction–if not outright elimination–of the significance of space.

It must be acknowledged that all of these claims about the "end of geography" rely heavily on the use of hyperbole as a rhetorical strategy. At the same time, this sense of hyperbole and sensationalism is characteristic of the general globalization discourse that developed during this time. The facets of globalization such as the rapid development of internet technologies almost necessitated an exaggerated and evocative way of representing the process in language. For example, Al Gore famously referred to the nascent internet as an "information superhighway that can save lives, create jobs and give every American, young and old, the chance for the best education available to anyone, anywhere" (as cited in Press, 1994, par. 1). Gore's infrastructural metaphor was then taken up by Bill Gates, who argues in his 1995 book, *The Road Ahead,* that "the information highway will be largely friction free" and that this, in turn, will bring about "friction-free capitalism" (p. 120; p. 174). While underscoring the extent to which the internet and globalization more broadly were lauded for the benefits they presented to global commerce, Gates' focus on the reduction of friction allies him with the commentators who proclaimed the "end of geography" more explicitly.

The rhetorical grandiosity of these claims about globalization effectively illustrates the difficulties of conceptualizing and describing a phenomenon of such scale, complexity, and speed. At the same time, these writers had good reason to remark upon the substantial reduction of geographical barriers in global trade. As integral facets of the turn towards neoliberalism, the suite of market deregulations crafted throughout the 1980s had significantly eased restrictions on the flow of capital across and within borders (Funke, 2020, p. 171). After 1986, the trade of currency surpassed that of material goods, further circumventing many of the obstacles presented by shipping and transportation logistics and trade tariffs (Inoguchi, 2001, p. 45). This financial turn, coupled with the rise in computerization and concomitant communication technology

facilitated what Harvey (1989) calls the "instantaneous international co-ordination of financial flows" (p. 161). In fact, financial services firms were key players in the development of the fibre networks that would allow them and their clients to trade faster and more frequently (Warf, 2008, p.184). Coupling the deregulation with these technological developments, the stage was set for the proliferation of digitalized finance capitalism. Even to onlookers critical of global capitalism, it was clear that this new form of finance represented a "time-space compression of unprecedented intensity (Gregory, 1994, p. 184).

Nonetheless, scholars participating in the ongoing Spatial Turn were quick to critique what Tuathail (1998) labels the "systematizing hyperbole that often accompanies globalization" (p. 98) Yet even scholars critical of this discourse acknowledged that it was not without material ramifications. Geographer Doreen Massey (1999) offers a particularly forceful critique of both the strategy and the impact of this "aspatial view of globalization" as espoused by O'Brien, Ohmae and Cairncross. For Massey, this "aspatial view" not only undermines the differences between disparate places but also endows the process with a sense of inevitability. The notion that globalization is less the result of human action than an inevitable and natural development is demonstrated by the claim from President Clinton–who had signed the North American Free Trade Agreement into effect and supported the creation of the World Trade Organization as well as the implementation of "shock therapy" privatizations and liberalizations devised by the International Monetary Foundation (Steger & Roy, 2010)–that globalization "is the economic equivalent of a force of nature–like wind or water" (as cited in Schwenkel, 2009, p. 3). For Massey, this discourse of globalization as an aspatial and thus inevitable process has the further effect of producing the very conditions that it names. In her words:

> the constant talking about it, the endless describing it in a particular form, is part of the active project of its production. The discourse becomes the basis for decisions precisely

to implement it. The signing of the Uruguay round of GATT pushed it a step further, the World Trade Organization is committed to producing it, Mrs. Thatcher in one of her first acts on becoming Prime Minister in 1979 abolished financial/currency controls. It is an extraordinary demonstration of the utter intermingling of 'representation' and 'action' in the (project of) production of a particular spatiality (p. 35).

The objectives behind the rhetorical devaluation of space and geography mounted by Ohmae (a management consultant), O'Brien (a banking executive), and Cairncross (a writer at a publication with a favourable disposition towards economic liberalism) should hardly seem obscure; as geographer Henry Wai-chung Yeung (1998) observes, the discursive fashioning of a world devoid of barriers for the free movement of goods and capital was a tactic to both prompt and justify the increased liberalization of global financial markets.[3]

Surely, it would be preposterous to attribute a process as broad and nebulous as globalization to the writings of a few business executives and journalists; however, it is important to remain attentive to theories of "imagined geographies" and "geographical imaginaries" proposed by Edward Said and later developed by geographers such as Derek Gregory. That is to say, it must be acknowledged that spatial discourses like that of globalization play an active role in the way in which space is conceptualized and experienced by people at a given time (Cooper, 1994, p. 93). Therefore, even geographers hostile to hyperbolic claims about the end of geography, such as Paul F. Kelly (1999), admit that the work of figures like Ohmae "forms the basis of popular understandings of globalization" (p. 382). These non-fiction accounts are not the only forces that play a role in shaping the imagination, and understanding, of

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[3] It is worth noting that it was not just members of the international business elite who were prepared to trumpet the increasing obsolescence of space. In a compelling article on French sociologist Jean Baudrillard and his conceptions of geography, Richard G. Smith (1997) illustrates that Baudrillard believed "late capitalism has annihilated geography in favour of spaces of simulation" (p. 307). Fellow Frenchman Paul Virilio likewise claims in a 2009 interview with media theorist John Armitage that "speed, for instance, not only signals a form of power, a form of political economy, but also the end of geography" (p.101).

globalization: in *Orientalism* (1978)*,* Edward Said references the work of Melville, Conrad, and Benjamin Disraeli in order to argue that novels are also instrumental in shaping popular imagination of space and geography. Analyzing Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* and DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* in relation to the discourse of globalization–and claims about the "end of geography" in particular–it becomes evident that the novel can also serve as an instrument with which to critique these very imaginations.

"'What are These Goddam Lines Anyways'": the Moveable Tropic and the Network Imaginary of Globalization in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange*

In an early scene in Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange,* the character Manzanar Murakami stands on a highway overpass in Los Angeles and studies a car crash that has piled up across the lanes beneath him. Having quite literally walked away from his job as a surgeon decades prior, Murakami spends his days "conducting" the sounds of the Los Angeles transportation network, which he regards as "nothing less than the greatest orchestra on Earth" (p. 35). Manzanar's dedication to this pursuit might seem obscure, yet Yamashita reiterates the soundness of his mental faculties and explains that "the complexity of human adventures of lines of transit [fascinate] him" (p. 51). While the Los Angeles highway system is an integral presence in the novel, it is just one example of the "lines of transit" that Yamashita maps out over the course of the novel. In her attempt to craft a literary representation of globalization, Yamashita remains equally attentive to the "telephone cables [and] electric lines" along with the highway system which underpins and facilitates the process (p. 14-15). In addition to these infrastructural "lines of transit," Yamashita also includes a materialization of the Tropic of Orange latitudinal line which runs through the titular orange grown on the vacation property of the novel's protagonist, Gabriel. Throughout the novel, Yamashita plots the movement of the orange and the tropic line as they are transported up to Los Angeles. Drawing on the work of media theorist

Patrick Jagoda, I will argue that the mobile and materialized tropic line functions both as an integral thread in Yamashita's figuration of the novel and of globalization more broadly as a networked process. By presenting the tropic line as a presence which is at once immaterial and material, Yamashita is able to account for the ways in which the network of globalization is at once virtual and tangible.

For a novel of just over 200 pages, Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* contains an almost dizzying set of events, characters, and geographical settings. Fortunately, a chart titled "HyperContexts" lays out the structure of the novel in the first pages of the book. According to the chart, the novel follows seven main characters over a week-long period. Each chapter listed on the chart features not only a title but a rough geographical coordinate, revealing that the action of the novel occurs largely around Los Angeles, but also in Mexican locations such as Tijuana and Mazatlán as well as in digital spaces such as the "World Wide Web." As each character is introduced on the Monday on which the novel begins, it becomes clear that Yamashita is attempting to represent the racial and cultural diversity of Los Angeles: in addition to Manzanar, there is Gabriel, a Latino journalist and the novel's first-person protagonist; his girlfriend Emi, a Japanese-American television producer; Buzzworm, a Black recovering addict who offers counseling services within his community and provides news tips to Gabriel; Bobby, a Chinese-American owner of a cleaning company who grew up in Singapore but immigrated to the United States as a young boy by pretending to be a Vietnamese refugee; his estranged Mexican-American wife, Rafaela, who spends much of the novel caretaking Gabriel's vacation property near Mazatlán with her son, Sol; and Arcangel, a mythical winged figure who has been alive since the beginning of the colonization of the Americas and who makes a living as a "one-man circus performer" while traveling northward over the course of several centuries (p. 43).

Over the course of the novel, the characters becomes linked to one another through a complex series of events. In short, a spate of accidental deaths occurs when a shipment of oranges infused with cocaine is crossed with a shipment of untampered oranges. After a driver on the Harbor Freeway in Los Angeles unknowingly eats a toxic orange, he crashes and initiates an "entire mile of cars trapped between two dead semis, not to mention two craters, fires, and the debris from the blasts" (p. 98). When the resulting fire threatens to destroy a homeless encampment beside the highway, the displaced people develop a vibrant community in the wreckage, which Manzanar surveils from a nearby overpass. Meanwhile, across the border to the south, Rafaela flees from Gabriel's property with Sol after discovering that her neighbour's son, Hernandez, is involved in an organ trafficking ring and is eying Sol as a target. They are soon joined by Arcangel, who carries an orange that has fallen from a tree on Gabriel's vacation property, while Hernandez trails closely behind. During a stop on their journey, Rafaela is apprehended by Hernandez, leaving Arcangel with Sol and the orange in his care. Rafaela is then brutalized and left on the side of the highway, where Gabriel finds her as he returns from a trip to report on the Zapatistas in Mexico City. At the novel's conclusion, the orange arrives at the "Pacific Rim Auditorium," where Rafaela, Bobby, and Sol are reunited in time to watch Arcangel, dressed in character as "El Gran Mojado," engage in a wrestling match against his opponent, "SUPERNAFTA." This joyful family reunion is offset by the death of Arcangel, who after his centuries-long trek through the Americas, is killed along with his adversary in the wrestling ring in the novel's fiery conclusion.

With this sprawling plot and diverse cast of characters, Yamashita endeavours to represent globalization in literary form. More precisely, she structures both her novel, and the phenomenon of globalization, using the model of a network. In his 2016 book, *Network*

Aesthetics, Jagoda sets off from the claim that "the problem of global connectedness cannot be understood, in our historical present, independently of the formal features of a network imaginary" (p. 3). As he explains, the "network imaginary" is "the complex of material infrastructures and metaphorical figures that inform our experience with and our thinking about the contemporary social world" (p. 3). While Jagoda acknowledges that the conceptions of networks as an organizational framework have shifted over time–and have become so pervasive as to be almost clichéd–he offers a capacious definition of a network as "a complex and interconnected structure made up of groups of 'nodes' that are interconnected by 'links'" that is characterized by "openness, flexibility, extensibility, complexity, internal asymmetry, and an interdependence of individual parts" (p. 8).

Following this introduction, Jagoda turns his attention to the presence and function of networks across various media, including television and video games. He begins with an analysis of what he terms "network novels," a genre which he sees emerging in the late-twentieth century as a result of the proliferation of transportation and communication networks, particularly during the shift towards a post-Fordist information economy (p. 43). In a survey of the common features of these novels, Jagoda notes that "network novels" tend towards maximalism and are able to narrativize "*processes of mapping* networks across space and time" unlike static data visualizations or maps (p. 44). Jagoda argues that, more than simply offering up representations of various networks, these narratives "find their fundamental aesthetic raison d'être in the paradigm shift of the network society that they interrogate and intensify through metaphor and technological imaginaries" (p. 44). Yet while Jagoda identifies the 1990s as the heyday of the "network novel," and argues that during this decade the concept of the network as an organizing framework was popularized "as the principal architecture and most resonant metaphor of the

globalizing world," the process of globalization is largely absent from his analysis (p. 3). *Tropic of Orange* is a work that clearly fits Jagoda's description of a "network novel," yet it also offers a more comprehensive picture of the connections between networks and globalization.

In order to represent the complex network of relations that constitute globalization, Yamashita employs a number of formal strategies. As Robin Blyn (2016) argues, the structure of the novel is "modeled on the World Wide Web," a technology which, as has previously been discussed, was widely regarded as an operative force in the process of global integration at the time of the novel's publication (p. 192). The use of the then-burgeoning internet as a structuring device in the novel is indicated by the title of the "Hyperlinks" chart at the beginning of the novel. By delineating the action of the novel across seven days and granting each main character a chapter on each day, Yamashita forges a clear connection between her characters in a shared time and space. In so doing, she grants her reader an awareness of the whereabouts of multiple characters at a given time. Thus, while Gabriel is positioned as the first-person speaker in the network of the novel, Yamashita's use of the omniscient third-person perspective elsewhere evinces what Jagoda (2016) terms the "departure from an individualistic paradigm and an embrace of a worldview organized around distributed agency" that is characteristics of network novels (p. 23). In this way, Yamashita is able to advance the novel's plot from multiple perspectives at once such that the relationality of each character to the broader network is always made apparent.[4]

In terms of content, Yamashita's objective to map out a network of globalization manifests most obviously in the attention she devotes to the geographical origins of each of her

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[4] While of a slightly different nature, Yamashita's blend of magical realism–a tradition widely associated with Latin American writers such as Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez –and noir–a genre originating in the United States and associated specifically with Los Angeles–can also be regarded as an inventive method of formal transnationalism, in a way that establishes a sense of relation between the two literary and cultural traditions.

characters. For example, in the opening pages of the novel, Yamashita notes that Gabriel's "grandfather had fought with Pancho Villa and ended up in Los Angeles" (p. 9). Likewise, Rafaela explains that her family had migrated north from the Yucatan region because "'one day the weaving stopped. The looms were old. The work was slow" (p. 11). Shortly after, in the first chapter following Bobby, Yamashita highlights the fact that his appearance is racially ambiguous to the point that "you figure it's one of those Chinese from Peru. Or maybe Korean from Brazil. Or Chinamex" (p. 16). She then proceeds to detail the "long story" of his immigration to the United States at the age of twelve which occurred after he and his brother spent days "looking like orphans" in a Vietnamese refugee camp, despite the fact that they were from Singapore and had a father (p. 16-17). A similar tracing of origins serves as a prominent component in the exposition of each character in the novel. Importantly, Yamashita does not present the migration of these characters or their ancestors to Los Angeles as an event which occurred solely in the past, but rather as events which act as the impetus for ongoing connections across space. Thus, just as Gabriel buys his vacation property to reify a connection to his ancestry and culture, Bobby sends remittances to his father in Singapore. In this way, Yamashita traces out numerous "links" to the novel's "node" in Los Angeles, and in so doing performs what Jagoda (2016) terms the "*processes of mapping* networks across space and time" (p. 44).

In the course of mapping out the origins of her characters, Yamashita lodges a critique against the role of American political and economic actors in the globalization process. For example, she notes that Bobby's father encouraged him to leave Singapore for the United States after an "American bicycle company put up a factory" and ran his own operation out of business (p. 19). Similarly, she indicates that Margarita, a fruit seller who dies after eating one of the toxic oranges, "got her boys out of El Salvador to escape the mana blanco death squad" (this is likely

an erroneous reference to the far-right paramilitary group of the same name which operated in

Guatemala with the tacit support of the American Central Intelligence Agency in the 1970s) (p.

74). Here, Yamashita gestures towards the involvement of the American security apparatus in

widespread anti-Communist repression throughout Latin America during this time which in turn,

contributed to immigration from the region to the United States (Lauria-Santiago, 2005).[5] In this

way, Yamashita remains attentive to the vastly unequal distribution of power operating in the

network of globalization, and demonstrates an awareness of the fact that, as Jagoda (2016)

writes, "the proliferation of the network concept is connected closely to the expansion of US

neoliberalism and finance capitalism, as well as resistances to it" (p. 13).

The forces of "US neoliberalism and finance capitalism" referenced by Jagoda (2016)

play a dominant role in the construction of Yamashita's "network imaginary" (p. 13). In the

novel, Yamashita makes repeated references to the legislative agreements which liberalized

global financial markets. In particular, she situates the novel in the context of post-NAFTA

North America, a period during which Hendrickson (1995) identifies a shift from "from a nation-

centered system of capitalism to a transnational, globalized world" (p. 7). Yamashita's

incorporation of the trade agreement into the text–through passing jokes to "'the benefits

NAFTA'" and through Arcangel's conspicuously symbolic fight against SUPERNAFTA

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[5] In an extension of her critique of the actions which have resulted in the increased diversity of places like Los Angeles, Yamashita also voices a skepticism towards uncritical celebrations of multiculturalism. This critique of multiculturalism, or cultural globalization, is expressed most directly through the character of Emi. In one scene, Emi and Gabriel eat at a sushi restaurant, where Emi loudly declares that "cultural diversity is bullshit… it's a white guy wearing a Nirvana t-shirt with dreads" (p. 111). After a nearby white diner, who is wearing chopsticks in her hair and speaking patronizingly to the sushi chef, expresses her frustration with Emi's behaviour, Emi further declares that diversity is nothing more than "tea, ginger, raw fish, and a credit card" (p. 111). Of course, Yamashita is not depicting this interaction so as to dismiss the value of cultural diversity outright. Instead, she suggests that in addition to being commercialized, the celebration of multiculturalism is often used to paper over the forms of racial injustice and prejudice that she highlights throughout the novel. For this reason, Sue-Im Lee (2007) refers to McLuhan's image of the "global village" to make the important the distinction that in the novel "the subject under indictment is not globalization per se, but a particular view of globalization—the view that globalization results in the economic, political, and cultural intimacy and shared fate of a primordialist village" (p. 503).

(Yamashita, 1997, p. 80)–was highly topical at the time of the novel's publication, as the agreement had provoked considerable controversy in the years prior.[6] In brief, a coalition spanning the political spectrum gathered in opposition to the agreement during its negotiation in the first years of the 1990s. Environmental activists were concerned about the lack of emissions regulations and feared that the agreement would make it easier for companies to relocate their operations to jurisdictions with slacker environmental policies, particularly in Mexico (Mann, 2000). Similarly, labor organizations noted that it would permit companies to relocate to locations with lower minimum wages and weaker labor standards, again predominantly in Mexico (Hendrickson, 1995). As a testament to this general discord, the agreement proved to be a divisive issue in the American presidential election in 1992. In a televised debate a month before the election, third-party candidate Ross Perot famously claimed that if the agreement were implemented it would lead to "a giant sucking sound going south" ("Transcript of 2nd TV Debate," 1992). Perot's stance on NAFTA proved relatively effective with voters, who backed him more than any other third-party candidate in eighty years (Bardwell, 2000). Clinton, however, was a vocal supporter of the agreement and, after his election, it passed votes in the House and Senate–albeit with more support coming from the Republicans than Clinton's own Democrats–before coming into effect on January 1st, 1994 (Bardwell, 2000).

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[6] To provide a more thorough history, negotiations for a free trade block between Mexico, the United States, and Canada commenced in 1990. Over the previous decade, Mexico had experienced significant economic turbulence, including an inflation crisis in 1982 which caused the peso to lose value precipitously and the federal government to default on significant loans borrowed from American institutions (Sinykin, 2020). In order to recoup the now-defaulted loans American financial institutions pressured both the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to force structural adjustments onto Mexico. These adjustments included market deregulations, the sale of government assets, and the transfer of farmland previously held in common to private ownership (Fernandez-Kelly & Massy, 2007). In *Tropic of Orange,* Yamashita traces this prehistory of NAFTA through the "political poetry" performed by Arcangel (p. 127). In one scene, he works alongside a bricklayer while chanting, "*IMF debts. / Loans and Defaults. / A twenty-eight billion dollar trade deficit? / Devaluate the peso / A miracle! / No more debt for the country. Instead / personal debt for all its people. Free trade*" (p. 127).

Contrary to Perot's warning, the post-NAFTA movement of goods, people and capital that is depicted in *Tropic of Orange* flows overwhelmingly northward. Throughout the novel, Yamashita maps out various forms of trade that transport goods across the border into the United States. This includes sanctioned forms of importation, such as oranges, but also the illicit trafficking of human organs and drugs, which, as Yamashita writes, "all goes north to the gringos" (p. 127). In addition to these material goods, Yamashita describes the efforts of characters like Rafaela and her brother Pepe to cross the U.S.-Mexico border as part of her broader commentary on the experiences of Latin Americans–both documented and otherwise– who head north in hopes of securing a higher quality of life. Through this convergence of goods and peoples, Yamashita positions Los Angeles as a node at both the center of the novel and of her rendering of globalization as a network more broadly.

Amidst the novel's general northward trajectory, Yamashita focuses most closely on the movements of a materialization of the Tropic of Cancer latitudinal line that runs through an orange tree grown on Gabriel's vacation property. In an extended passage at the beginning of the novel, Yamashita explains that Gabriel has a penchant for landscaping with non-native trees and had brought two navel orange trees from California to mark the fact that the "Tropic ran through his place like a good metaphor" (p. 8). While one of the trees soon dies, a single blossom survives on the other, and Rafaela soon notices that the growing orange is run through by "something like a thin laser beam or light passing through an optic fibre" (p. 14). Although Rafaela had not previously considered the significance of what she regarded as an "imaginary line," the thin thread makes it clear that the line is anything but imaginary. After Rafaela admires the line and contemplates its significance for several days, however, a stiff wind blows the

orange off Gabriel's property and takes the line with it, effectively setting the plot of the novel in motion.

From this opening scene, the connection between the orange, the tropic line, and globalization is made apparent. In his reading of the novel, Mitchum Huehls (2016) observes that the "orange itself is a product of globalization: global warming prompts an early blossom that some over-industrious African bees pollinate to yield the 'small growing globe' that slowly ripens into an orange" (p. 72). More than simply being a product of globalization, however, the orange and its attendant tropic line come to stand in as an image of globalization itself. In a novel that attentively traces movements across space–from Bobby's upbringing in Singapore to the United States, to the movement of the shipment of toxic oranges from "Brazil…to Honduras. Honduras to Guatemala. Guatemala to Mexico, and Mexico to the United States," to name just two examples (p.209-210)–the tropic line becomes a singular rendering of the processes which have been credited with shrinking the world down to a "small…globe" (p 14). In other words, the tropic line in its materialized form as a thread functions so as to give shape to the novel's structure as a web or a network, just as Yamashita's tracking of the movement of the orange towards the node of Los Angeles is a demonstration of this network in action.

In a sense, the presence of the mobile tropic line in the construction of Yamashita's "network imaginary" bears a resemblance to the kinds of fantastical imagery and hyperbole employed by the aforementioned theorists of globalization. For example, the materialization of the tropic line operates on a similar register of imagery as, for example, Gore's "information superhighway," and the literal transportation of the Tropic of Cancer up to Los Angeles seems to illustrate Cairncross' claims about the "end of distance." To this point, Sheryl Vint (2012) argues that "the novel's fusion of realist and speculative modes implies the need for modes that exceed

realism" in order to represent a phenomenon as complex as the network of globalization (p. 412).

At the same time, Yamashita departs from this camp of hyperbolic globalization theorists in the

attention that she draws to the material and spatial dimensions of globalization as a network.

Indeed, throughout the novel, Yamashita draws attention to the tangible components

underpinning the process of globalization, which she relates to the symbol of the materialized

tropic line. Beginning with the comparison of the line to "light passing through an optic fibre,"

Yamashita further notes that the line casts a shadow comparable to that of "telephone cables or

electric lines" (p. 14-15). Through this reference to "optic fibre" and "telephone cables,"

Yamashita establishes the fact that the various forms of communication that occur in the novel

are entirely dependent upon such physical infrastructure. Thus, while Emi and Gabriel become

enamoured with the power of virtual, or "on-line" communication, Yamashita insists that we

notice how the seemingly wireless network is dependent upon optic fibre, telephone cables, and

power lines.

Just as Yamashita mobilizes the symbol of the tropic line to emphasize the physical

substratum of "wireless" communication networks, she also gestures towards the materiality of

the transportation infrastructure featured in the novel. Here, the materialized tropic line bears a

likeness to the "lines of transit" that Manzanar studies from his vantage on the overpasses of the

Los Angeles freeway system.[7] Indeed, the transportation infrastructure both within and beyond

Los Angeles plays a central role in the formation of Yamashita's "network imaginary." As she

plots the transportation of goods and people towards the narrative node of Los Angeles, she

draws attention to the physical infrastructure which makes this movement possible. In addition to

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[7] The connection between the tropic line and transportation infrastructure is rendered clearly on the cover of the 2017 republication of the novel by Coffee House Press, which features a translucent orange orb placed in front of a photograph of the Los Angeles highway system.

Manzanar's descriptive observations of "the din of traffic and the commerce of dense humanity and the freeway," Yamashita charts the course of the titular orange from Mazatlán to Los Angeles and foregrounds the materiality of the freeway. In this way, the "network imaginary" of the novel is not one of aspatial and instantaneous flows, but rather of laborious travel across great distances. By comparing the highway system to "a transportation artery," Yamashita illustrates the susceptibility of the material network of globalization to blockage and disruption, which she likens to "a big-time thrombosis. Massive stroke. [or a] Heart attack" (p. 187). Through her depiction of the car crash and ensuing highway jam, Yamashita effectively dispenses with the notion that we have reached the "end of distance."

In his reading of Neal Stephenson's novel, *Cryptonomicon,* Jagoda (2016) argues that the global scale of the novel's narrative is "figured…as an intersecting network of 'threads'… inaccessible to any single person" (p. 70). By and large, this same insight could be applied to *Tropic of Orange.* In Yamashita's novel, a similar "network of threads" is marshalled in order to represent the phenomenon of globalization. At the centre of this network is the literal thread that grows through the orange. Crucially, Yamashita never definitively describes the nature of the thread: it is sometimes visible and sometimes only barely perceptible; it is similar both to "a thin laser bream" and "telephone cables" (p. 14-15). In other words, it is at once material and immaterial. As the novel's operative symbol of the network of globalization, it is equally comparable to both the "information superhighway" and the actual highway. Through the inherent doubleness, or multiplicity, of the tropic line, Yamashita is able to construct a rendering of globalization as a network with both tangible and virtual components. Thus, while late in the novel Gabriel is inaugurated into the world of "digital connections. Digital manipulations" he nonetheless remains cognizant that "commerce was on the ground" (p. 210-211).

After the tropic line, the orange, and Arcangel reaches their final destination, the Pacific Rim Auditorium in Los Angeles, Yamashita provides a measure of narrative resolution with the reunion of Bobby and his family. At the same time, she remains aware that all the lines she has followed throughout the novel cannot be neatly tied up. To make this point, she mobilizes the materialized tropic line one last time. As Bobby arrives at the Pacific Rim Auditorium as Arcangel's wrestling match reaches its climax, he sees not only Rafaela and Sol but also "the line where it gets cut through the orange" (p. 229). Grabbing both ends of the line, Bobby wonders, "what are these goddam lines anyway? What do they connect? What do they divide?" (p. 229-230). In a sense, the entire novel is an attempt to answer these questions. As Yamashita illustrates, the lines comprising the network of globalization are cultural and economic; they are material and imagined; they connect people like optic fibre cables and divide them like borders. Bobby's befuddlement is well-warranted, for as Jagoda argues, "networks exceed rational description or mapping" both for the individual and for the form of the novel (p. 3). Nevertheless, *Tropic of Orange* offers formidable proof for Jagoda's claim "that we *do* in fact have the language for grappling with crucial experiences of (if not the totality of) finance capital, control societies, and network form" even at a global scale (p. 27). In the act of critiquing the structures of inequality created by this network, Yamashita uses the novel to suggest that before globalization can be meaningfully opposed, we must first find ways of representing it. By highlighting the materiality and indeed spatiality, of the globalized network, Yamashita offers an alternative to the hyperbolic and reductionist claims made by Ohmae and his peers, who obfuscate potential spaces of resistance through their diminishment of physical space altogether. Yet while Yamashita gestures towards forces of resistance like the Zapatista movement, she is ultimately clear-eyed in her assessment of globalization as a lasting and likely indomitable

phenomenon. In light of this fact, she suggests we are left with no option but to "embrace" the

paradigm of globalization in all of its complexity, just like Bobby who, in the final image of the

novel, "lets the lines slither around his wrists, past his palms" [and] through his fingers" (p. 230).

"A Time Beyond Geography": The Rejection of Spatial Transcendence in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*

In her essay, "The Contemporary American Novel as World Literature," Martina Sciolino

(2015) observes that "theorizations of globalization in the popular press…inform *Cosmopolis*"

(p. 236). Thus, like *Tropic of Orange,* DeLillo's novel reads as an engagement with–and critique

of–the hyperbolic discourses of globalization which circulated during the time both novels were

written. In a sense, *Cosmopolis* is scaled down from *Tropic of Orange:* instead of seven primary

characters, the novel features a single protagonist, Eric Michael Packer; rather than spanning a

week, *Cosmopolis* follows Packer on a single day in April 2000; compared to the geographical

sprawl of *Tropic of Orange,* Packer's movements are confined to Manhattan. Despite these

scalar differences, both *Tropic of Orange* and *Cosmopolis* are equally global in their purviews.

Where Yamashita performs her evaluation of globalization through the materialization and

mobilization of the tropic line, DeLillo undertakes his analysis by focusing on digital finance

capitalism. Whereas Yamashita underscores the extent to which globalization is a network with

both material and virtual components, DeLillo employs his protagonist to counter the notion that

cybercapitalism has presently, or will someday, become untethered from physical reality.

From the outset of *Cosmopolis,* Packer is rendered as the exemplar of the "death of

geography." For starters, he inhabits the world's tallest residential building, "'a tower that soars

to heaven,'" and, thus, lives more distanced from the ground than any other human (DeLillo,

2003, p. 8). Moreover, he expresses a desire to put a helicopter landing pad on the roof so he can

commute without ever interacting with the obstacles of grounded space (p. 17). Without the

proper "zoning variance," however, Packer is still bound to the streets, through which he travels in a state-of-the-art limousine (p. 18). The limousine, which plays a significant role in the novel, can be read as an instrument of spatial defiance. As it wends its way through the busy streets of New York, Packer's staff comes to meet him wherever the limousine happens to be. In this sense, Packer is able to offload the burdens of distance onto his subordinates. Furthermore, the limousine functions not only as a means of transportation but as a doctor's examining room, a restroom, an office, and a cigar lounge, thereby shrinking the scale of the world to fit it within Packer's car doors. By collapsing the distinctions between these places and then rendering them all mobile, Packer can circulate through the city with as little interruption to his schedule as humanly possible. As with the movement capital following the liberalization of financial markets, Packer has effectively untethered himself from site-specific connections and obligations in favor of free movement.[8] Thus, when Packer's "chief of technology" asks "any special reason we're in the car instead of the office?" Packer responds, with good reason, "how do you know we're not in the car instead of the office?" (p. 15). In this way, DeLillo has his protagonist confirm O'Brien's claim that "geographical location no longer matters in finance" (O'Brien, 1992, p. 1).

Beyond the confines of the limousine, however, *Cosmopolis* is an intensely geographical novel. As the car makes its way across the city, its location is routinely indicated, and its speed and direction are similarly documented. Moreover, DeLillo notes the frequent stopping and starting of the vehicle, often multiple times on the same page. Regardless of the heavy traffic, which DeLillo describes to an almost comic effect, Packer is able to conduct his affairs without

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[8] The composition of Packer's apartment similarly defies the distinction between public and private spaces of business and leisure. In addition to a gymnasium, a swimming pool, a theatre, and a card parlor it also contains an "annex, where there were currencies to track and research reports to examine" (p. 7).

any hindrance. Indeed, he is able to have his prostate examined in the middle of midday traffic. For this reason, Laist (2010) argues that Packer "can drift through the city–through poverty, riots, and otherness of every stripe–without actually entering the scene in any existential way" (p. 265). To this point, DeLillo appears to reference the work of sociologist Manuel Castells (1999)– who famously coined the term "the space of flows" to characterize the movement of capital and information in the digital age–when he describes the automobile as operating "in the flow of space" unencumbered by the surrounding world (DeLillo, 2003, p. 179).

Yet despite Packer's tenuous connection to his surroundings, DeLillo repeatedly references real-world coordinates in a manner similar to the "Hypercontexts" of Yamashita's novel. In effect, *Cosmopolis* is a literary cartography of New York City, to the extent that one could walk the same path that the novel takes. By this measure, DeLillo, also like Yamashita, has responded to the "end of geography" discourse by publishing a distinctly geographical novel. As Packer progresses along the route, DeLillo provides vivid descriptions of places and the ethnically and racially marked pedestrians, and thus pays keen attention to the globalized nature of New York City. For example, he writes that "the disposition of this end of 47th Street [features] dark women in ivory robes walking in the wind toward the UN secretariat [and] apartment towers called L'Ecole and Octavia." (DeLillo, 2003, p. 17). Here, and elsewhere in the novel, DeLillo references the social and cultural diversity of New York. As Esteve (2007) notes, the novel references "ethnicized – more precisely, ethno-nationalized – particulars at every turn: Greek and Ethiopian restaurants, Czech weaponry, a Chinese currency analyst, Swedish tourists, an Israeli bank, a Spanish-speaking waiter, a Russian media conglomerate, South Asian taxi drivers [and] a Slavic economic theorist…" (p. 255). Again, like Yamashita, DeLillo directs particular attention to the ethnic and national origins of his characters in order to demonstrate

that the process of globalization is not cohesive or uniform but rather the result of myriad interdependent geopolitical and geographical actualities. Indeed, just as Packer's wife admits that she was "never good at geography," she confirms that "one learns about these countries where unrest is occurring by riding the taxis here" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 16). These encounters with social and geopolitical difference not only emphasize the ease with which Packer moves through the city but also reiterate how the very global-ness of New York is predicated upon a whole world of spatial realities– often those of "horror and despair"–which and be linked to the actions of powerful agents like Packer (p. 16).

Throughout the novel, DeLillo positions Packer at once within, and beyond, the situated space of New York City. This scalar imbrication is contained within the title of the novel itself: *cosmo* meaning "world" and *polis* "city" in Greek (Hwang, 2018, p. 28). As a result of the technological capabilities of the limousine, Packer is able to inhabit the liminal space between the *cosmo* and the *polis.* The vehicle is outfitted with a camera and computer system that "videostreamed [him] worldwide" until security issues made it unsafe to do so (DeLillo, 2003, p. 15). As Andrew Strombeck (2017) notes in a perceptive article on the role of the limousine in the novel, "DeLillo's use of the limousine ensures that much of the novel occurs on a very small scale… to contrast with the vast world of cybercapitalism" (p. 156). By having the car "prousted," or lined with cork to cut out external noises, however, Packer attempts to place himself beyond the scale of the street and thus more assuredly in the *cosmos* of global cybercapitalism (DeLillo, 2003, p. 70). While the cork-lining is ultimately unsuccessful in shutting out the surrounding city, Packer acknowledges that "the important thing is that it's there" as a symbol of his place outside, or above, the confines of the *polis* (p. 71).

Packer's relationship to the spaces beyond New York is defined by his relationship to capital, particularly through his role as a currency trader. As David Harvey (1989) observes, "since 1973, money has been 'de-materialized' in the sense that it no longer has a formal or tangible link to precious metals… or for that matter to any other tangible commodity" (p. 297). In other words, the yen that Packer trades has no material, or spatial referent; he can trade billions of units of yen electronically without ever holding a piece of hard currency in his hands. Similarly, Packer is able to severely impact the economy of Japan without ever visiting the country in a way that lends credence to Cairncross' theory of "the death of distance." Unimpeded by the particularities of place and the obstacles of distance, DeLillo indicates that Packer has "traded in currencies from every sort of territorial entity, modern democratic nation and sultanates, paranoid people's republics, hellhole rebel states run by stoned boys" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 76). By the same measure, Packer is permitted to destroy value–which is at once material and entirely virtual–with equal ease: when he decides to eviscerate his wife's family fortune in "a sign of ironic final binding," all it takes is a few taps of his watch (p. 123). Although she is worth over seven hundred million dollars, Packer reasons that "it was all air anyway… lines of code that interact in simulated space" (p. 124). Referring again to Harvey (1989) who in turn invokes Marx, it is clear that "the sense that 'all that is solid melts into air' has rarely been more pervasive" (p. 285-286).

In the novel, it soon becomes clear that for Packer it is not enough that his capital has become aspatial; he wishes to become disembodied himself, in what Merola (2013) describes as his "flawed desire for a utopian space of postcorporeality" (p. 834). In DeLillo's words, Packer's body is a "structure he [wants] to dismiss in theory even when he [is] shaping it under the measured effects of barbells and weights" and something he regards as "redundant and

transferable" (DeLillo, p. 2003, p. 60). He wishes, instead, to "become quantum dust, transcending the body mass, the soft tissue over the bones, the muscle and fat" (p. 206). For Alison Shonkwiler (2010), this amounts to the desire for "the dissolution of the self in a joyous death drive toward a disembodied future of information" (p. 266). As previously demonstrated, Packer engages the technologies of the limousine and the currency market to facilitate this "dissolution" of his situated, embodied spatiality, but he also turns to other, more antiquated, techniques of self-transcendence such as meditation. In the confines of a "meditation cell" in his apartment, Packer meditates "for hours sometimes" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 205). With methods both futuristic and atavistic, Packer attempts to remove himself from situated spatiality, and, as a result, to efface himself in the process. His efforts appear to be at least marginally successful, as one of his lovers feels compelled to place her hand on his chest in order "to determine [that] he [is] here and real" (p. 25). So, while Walter Kirn (2003) excoriates the novel in his review for the *New York Times* for being filled with "barely corporeal cerebral entities," he seems to miss DeLillo's intention entirely (par. 1).

An essential component of DeLillo's characterization of Packer is inner conflict and contradiction, for along with his drive for disembodiment, Packer also expresses a desire for sensation, satiety, and a general feeling of embodiment. At several points in the novel, Packer engages in extreme sexual behaviour and even demands, post-coital, that his security guard shock him with her stun gun. When she consents, he rolls "about on the hotel rug, electroconvulsive and strangely elated" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 15). Later, he admits that sometimes he wishes to "talk to people's faces [and] live in meat space" instead of the constant stream of data and information that usually occupies his days (p. 25). Packer's investment in this "meat space" is evidenced by the fact that he receives daily doctor's exams and feels concerned about

his "asymmetrical" prostate (p. 8). Indeed, the whole premise for the novel is that Packer wants a haircut, and, in this way, he remains fundamentally committed to the very corporeal form he ostensibly wants to abandon. Here, we begin to see that Packer's drive to ruin himself financially is the expression of a desire to feel situated within his body. After losing both his and his wife's fortunes, Packer stumbles across a film set where a heap of bodies lie naked on the street. Packer joins in on the Baudrillardian space of simulations and finds himself awash in the sensation of "the presence of the bodies, all of them, the body breath, the heat and running blood, people unlike each other who were now alike, amassed, heaped in away, alive and dead together" (p. 174). Paradoxically, left with all but nothing Packer finally becomes *somebody.*

So, there are two spatial registers that operate within the novel and Packer fluctuates between them. There is, to draw again upon Manuel Castells (1999), the "space of "flows" in the globalized transit of information and capital, and "the space of places" in the localized city. In *Cosmopolis,* DeLillo assigns a distinct temporality to each form of spatiality. That is to say, the past is spatial while the future–in accordance with the tenets of the "end of geography" discourse–is what DeLillo calls "a time beyond geography" (DeLillo 2003 p. 36). Throughout the novel, DeLillo gestures toward scenes and objects which, in Packer's opinion, are entirely anachronistic. For example, midway through the day's journey, the limousine passes through the Manhattan Diamond District. Noticing a lively street filled with Hasidim engaged in the diamond trade, Packer thinks of "the Lower East Side of the 1920s and the diamond centers of Europe before the second war, Amsterdam and Antwerp" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 65). More than simply an image evoking the past, the existence of material commerce as represented by the diamond trade is, to Packer, "an offense to the truth of the future" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 65). Thus, to Packer, the world is filled with the tangible objects of a past that refuses to disappear: prostitution is an

"archaic business," automated bank teller machines are "anti-futuristic," and cellphones are "already vestigial (p. 6; p. 54 p. 54). It does not matter whether the object in question is as old as a diamond or as new as a cellphone because for Packer anything material is already antiquated.

By comparison, the future projected in the novel resembles a formless and "fluid reality" in which space is rendered irrelevant after "humans and computers merge" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 83; p. 104). According to Vija Kinski, who is staffed as Packer's "chief of theory," "it's cyber-capital that creates [this] future" (p. 79). Given that Packer is presented throughout the novel as "the very avatar of cyber-capital," he is accordingly positioned as the personification of this coming future (Conte, 2008, p. 182). Packer's futurity is perceptible to others, including his killer, Richard Sheets, who adopts the pseudonym Benno Levin, and writes that Packer "is always ahead, thinking past what is new … He wants to be one civilization ahead of this one" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 9). In his perceptive reading of the temporal dynamics of the novel, Li (2016) connects Packer's bond with the future to his role as a trader and observes that "Packer's financial empire depends on his ability to calculate future prices and profits and to place the right bets on future trades" (p. 264). So, just as "cyber-capital… creates the future" it also orients Packer towards that future (DeLillo, 2003, p. 79). Packer also possesses gadgetry that allows him to extend beyond the present. Just as his limousine allows him to defy the boundaries of space, his watch displays events seconds, minutes, and hours before they will occur. In effect, Packer serves as a testament to the assertion popularized by science fiction author William Gibson that "the future is already here — it's just not very evenly distributed" (as cited in Gladstone & Gibson, 1999).

By the end of the novel, however, DeLillo decidedly forecloses upon any possibility of a post-spatial future. After Packer has lost his fortune and killed his security guard, Packer travels to the apartment block where a disgruntled former employee, Richard Sheets, has been squatting. Armed with a handgun and the knowledge that Sheets presents a "credible threat" to his life, Packer intentionally exposes himself to the very kind of risk he has previously been protected from. Upon meeting Sheets, Packer inexplicably shoots himself in the hand. The extreme pain has the effect of both situating Packer within his body, and "making him smaller…reducing him in size, person and value" (p. 198). In a conversation between Sheets and the wounded Packer, Sheets asserts that Packer is "a figure whose thoughts and actions affect everybody, people, everywhere" and that Packer's limousine "displaces the air that people need to breathe in Bangladesh" (p. 202). In this instance, Packer is forced to recognize that his actions have had material consequences in such a way that, as Merola (2013) argues, DeLillo is able to "promote the recovery of immanence, immediate presence, and proximally shared, coterminous material sociological space and relations" (Merola, 2013, 840). As a result of this conversation, Packer finally becomes grounded in his bodily form and comes to realize that "the things that made him who he was could hardly be identified much less converted to data" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 207). Ultimately, his faith in what Thu Nguyen and Alexander (1997) refer to as "the illusion of an eternal and immaterial electronic world" is simply that: an illusion (p. 17). While his watch affords him a view of his impending death, the novels ends with him "in original space, waiting for the shot to sound" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 209). An earlier section of the novel, titled "The Confessions of Benno Levin," has revealed that Packer "is dead, word for word" (p. 55). Lying dead on the floor of Sheets' squatted apartment—wrenched

apart from the flows of data and capital—Packer finally becomes fixed in a situated reality. In this sense, the post-spatial futurity has failed to materialize, or, more accurately, dematerialize. Thus, while *Cosmopolis* is an incisive analysis of the ways in which the technologies of the globalized and financialized world have profoundly altered the relationship between humans and space, DeLillo is ultimately insistent on the insurmountability of the "original space" of material existence (p. 209).

Conclusion: Reading the "Revenge of Geography" in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*

As a reflection–and indeed, rejection–of the space-defying discourse of globalization with which *Tropic of Orange* and *Cosmopolis* engage, both novels portray characters who desire to transcend material reality. Crucially, both characters die with no prospect of their wishes being fulfilled. In *Cosmopolis,* Packer is shot by Richard Sheets, while in *Tropic of Orange* Emi is hit with a stray bullet as the police swarm a homeless encampment that has amassed on the highway. As Emi bleeds out in Buzzworm's arms, she rambles, "maybe the big sleep is a big digital wet dream. And life is just a commercial break. Maybe [Gabriel] can call me up in cyber, and we can do it in my sleep…interactive-like" (p. 216). Yet, as though she were a malfunctioning device, her last words are "Abort. Retry. Ignore. Fail…" (p. 216). In this way, Yamashita, like DeLillo, engages with the sort of techno-utopian hyperbole espoused by the theorists of globalization like Cairncross and Ohmae, only to ultimately assert the insurmountability of what she terms "relentless geography" (p. 197). In so doing, both Yamashita and DeLillo gesture towards the inherent unsustainability of such space-defying rhetoric and, by extension, suggest the impending arrival of a recalibrated and geography-bound paradigm of spatial discourse.

The events, and aftermath, of 9/11 presented a formidable challenge to the notion of a frictionless and borderless world. To many, the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was regarded as a violent response to both the actions of American power on the global stage and against the process of globalization more broadly (Brainard 2001, par. 1). Indeed, in the estimation of American foreign policy expert Walter LaFeber (2002), "the September 11 attacks with horrible symbolism utilized some of the technologies of globalization to climax a decade of rapid globalization and as a consequence threatened to bring globalization to a standstill, if not throw it into retreat" (p. 9). It goes without saying that globalization did not end on 9/11; however, the events of that day and the ensuing "War on Terror" did present a serious rebuttal to prior claims about the "end of geography" while ushering in a profoundly altered discourse of global space. In the months following the attacks–and in the years since–the proliferation of border security measures and screening protocols seemed to put to rest any claims about the irrelevance of borders. In a different, but related sense, American neorealist political strategist Robert D. Kaplan (2012) argues that "the decade since 9/11... can't be understood apart from the mountains and deserts of Afghanistan and Iraq" and therefore the notion that "geography has supposedly been eclipsed by economics, globalization and electronic communications... is nonsense" (par. 3-4; par. 6). This proved true to the extent that *The Economist,* which had previously amplified editor Frances Cairncross' claims about the "death of distance," reversed course and admitted that "it was naïve to imagine that the global reach of the internet would make geography irrelevant" ("The Revenge of Geography," par. 1). By this measure, the deaths of Packer and Emi, then, just like the fall of the Twin Towers, can be seen to signal the downfall of triumphalist narratives of globalization, as well as the ultimate unrealizability of the post-spatial futurity and the resultant "revenge of geography."

A reconfigured conception of space in the post-9/11 era is visible in *Falling Man* (2007), DeLillo's first novel written entirely in the aftermath of the attacks. The novel begins in the chaos of Ground Zero–a setting so conspicuously different from Packer's limousine–and the violent return of space is underscored in the opening sentence of the novel: "it was not a street anymore, but a time and space of falling ash and near night" (DeLillo, 2007, p. 3). The novel's protagonist, a real estate lawyer named Keith Neudecker, has injured his arm while escaping from one of the towers. In a state of confusion, he asks for a ride from a passing plumber to the apartment of his estranged wife, Lianne. In the days following 9/11, the two settle back into married life. While the circumstances of their reunion seem strange to them both, they decide to stay together–in what should appear as a stark contrast to Packer's interpersonal relations in *Cosmopolis*–because "she wanted contact and so did he" and because "she liked the spaces he made" (p. 35; p. 18).

The subsequent narrative details the Neudeckers' movements through the altered city-space of New York. In another contrast to *Cosmopolis,* both Lianne and Keith travel largely on foot due to disruptions in the New York transportation system after the attacks, and because Lianne has become afraid of riding the subway. As DeLillo makes clear, their experience of the city has been significantly impacted by site-specific anxieties resulting from the attacks. In particular, Lianne begins "noticing the concrete bulwarks outside train stations and other possible targets," while her and Keith's son, Justin, takes to monitoring the sky with binoculars for further attacks by "Bill Lawton" – a mishearing of bin Laden which circulates amongst his group of friends (p. 235). Their fears are exacerbated by the drastic increase in security measures across the city. In one scene, Lianne enters Grand Central Station and feels a sense of shock because "she hadn't been there lately and was not accustomed to the sight of police and state

troopers in tight clusters or guardsman with dogs" (p. 32). In another scene, Keith makes his way back to his apartment near Ground Zero which he had taken after splitting with Lianne. In order to reach it, he must work "his way through the frozen zone, south and west, passing through smaller checkpoints and detouring around others" (p. 24). While *Cosmopolis* and *Falling Man* are set in roughly the same area of Manhattan just 17 months apart, they feature profoundly different depictions of the interaction between their main characters and the city-space around them. That is to say, Packer's pursuit of total transcendence and dematerialization bears the influence of an epoch of space that will be supplanted by the anxious, securitized post-9/11 paradigm depicted in *Falling Man.* As this small case study illustrates, the depiction of space in novels with a commitment to realism is not static but may be acutely responsive to their discursive contexts.

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting that both *Tropic of Orange* and *Cosmopolis* feature blocked transportation routes. In *Tropic of Orange*, the highway crash causes a traffic buildup stretching several miles, whereas in *Cosmopolis,* a presidential motorcade and the funeral procession for a rapper named Brutha Fez bring traffic in Manhattan to a standstill. While this commonality might seem merely coincidental, attentiveness to contemporaneous discourses about space and globalization suggests otherwise. After reading both novels in relation to the hyperbolic discourses which portrayed globalization as a frictionless, borderless process that had brought about the "end of geography," these traffic jams appear as compelling counterexamples. Indeed, much like in the case of the *Ever Given* incident, the blocked transportation routes in both novels serve as a "reminder that geography does matter" (Vock, 2021). Therefore, it is through an awareness of the claims about the "end of history" and the "death of geography" which circulated during the time in which both novels were written that one is able to more fully

understand the significance of the clearly delineated timeframes and meticulously mapped settings of both novels. Evidently, these novels–as sites of mediation, representation, and indeed contestation–exist in relation both to the real world and to the forms of discourse that are developed in an effort to make sense of this world. Yet while an understanding of the discourse surrounding globalization illuminates our understanding of these novels, it is equally true that these novels identify the elisions and overstatements produced within this discourse, where hyperbole often underpins a political agenda. In so doing, these novels offer a more nuanced, and comprehensive account of the lived experience of space during the period of heightened discursive fantasies of the promise of globalization. As *Tropic of Orange* and *Cosmopolis* effectively demonstrate, the novel remains a powerful venue in which to examine, and question, the relationship between humans and the "relentless geography" of the globalized world (Yamashita, 1997, p. 1997).

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