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**Cosmopolis: Riddled With Epiphanies
Ours and Eric Packer's
<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com>**

Cosmopolis is riddled with epiphanies. Eric Packer is encountering surprises all day on his journey to Samarkand. Each one changes him in a singular way. But the wide awake reader is also experiencing epiphanies. DeLillo has written a novel of epiphanies in a style that is more epiphanic than the epiphanies he is writing about.

The reviewers have mostly compared its structure to Joyce's Ulysses. A Day In The Life Of. Any seriously considered novelist who writes a novel taking place in one day has their novel read through Ulysses. Ian McEwan's Saturday is a recent one. An excellent novel BTW.

On my Cosmopolis blog I have been reading Cosmopolis in over seventy different ways, including Ulysses.

At some point I decided that there really could be no end of reading Cosmopolis through other eyes. Reading through Lacan I realized then that DeLillo had written a novel that itself was a "floating sign", resonating with readers in almost infinite ways of reading it.

It seems that when you are immersed in it everything else you read vibrates with it. Your past memories and experiences are right there for you again after years and years. Proust resonates with the cork lined Prousted limo.

It is a remarkable novel. It is an epiphanic novel. I have been reading it in various ways for almost a year and I don't see an end in sight.

DeLillo has been criticized for never drawing a political hero as a major character. And they have agreed that Eric Packer is another one who just doesn't make it either. A conspicuous consumer losing all his billions in one day. A loser who dies in the end.

This is where I part company with them. My reading of Eric Packer is that he fits into the (*unknown knowns* (Zizek-Reading Lacan) as a visionary - (as was Ayn Rand) - who ends cyber capital in one day. By default. He has destroyed the floating capital of the global circulating market of speculation.

He has driven the moneychangers from the temple. How's that for a political hero.

Reading Eric Packer through Jesus. and reading Jesus through Isaiah. Jesus was not on the career path to be the Messiah. Eric Packer was not on the career path to destroy cyber capital.

To defy the system with a gift to which it cannot respond save by its own collapse and death. Nothing, not even the system, can avoid the symbolic obligation, and it is in this trap that the only chance of a catastrophe for capital remains. ...For it is summoned to answer, if it is not to

lose face, to what can only be death. The system must itself commit suicide in response to the multiplied challenge of death and suicide. (Jean Baudrillard - Symbolic Exchange and Death 37)

It is the terrorist model to bring about an excess of reality, and have the system collapse beneath that excess. - Baudrillard

Capital stripped bare by Speculation itself, like the bride by her bachelors. What becomes of Capital once the veil of Profit is lifted? What becomes of Labour once the veil of Capital is lifted? (Baudrillard - Cool Memories II 38)

*Contrary to the historical slogan which says that the 'emancipation of the workers will be achieved by the workers themselves', **we have to accept that Capital will be put to death by Capital itself or (not at all).** (CM II 38)*

My idea was to end this era not over a period of weeks and months as happened, but in one day. - DeLillo /Krasny you tube interview

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Proposal For The DeLillo Society Symposium on DeLillo

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2012/01/proposal-for-delillo-society-symposium.html>

My main focus is on the character of Eric Packer who is seen as a self-destructive loser who loses, gambles away, all his money in one day. I see him as realizing immediately after the conversation with Kinski in the limo, that his actions can disappear her theory. There being no outside to the demonstrators (as we are watching with OWS) they cannot accomplish any change because their opposition is necessary to the system. This is Foucault and the Foucauldian Grid of power/knowledge/capital in which all opposition is inherent in the founding Discourse.

This is not to say that resistance is not necessary because it is. Very much so.

Baudrillard sees a way out in his book **Forget Foucault** and that is to push the system to extremes (Nietzsche) and it will implode. Originally he had no hope of this until 9-11, when the hijackers in action, showed how: Giving the Gift that must be returned, - the Counter-Gift - (not right away and it must be more so than the original gift - "potlatch by Maas"). This is what Packer does. He pushes the global circulating currency trading market to its extremes by borrowing - on margin of course - all the yen there is that he can get his hands on. Of course all his shadows, watchers, stalkers, etc in the currency markets are following him, as he is Eric Packer. The yen is driven to its extreme high because of the tenet of the capitalistic market place of demand and price.

The yen demand is so great that all other currencies collapse under its soaring price. (How many wheelbarrows of currency in Weimar Germany to buy a loaf of bread?) How many dollars to buy yen? So many the dollar becomes worthless as do all other currencies.

“You have to understand.”

He said, “What?”

“The more visionary the idea, the more people it leaves behind. This is what the protest is all about. Visions of technology and wealth. The force of cyber-capital that will send people into the gutter to retch and die. What is the flaw of human rationality?”

He said, “What?”

“It pretends not to see the horror and death at the end of the schemes it builds. This is a protest against the future. They want to hold off the future. They want to normalize it, keep it from overwhelming the present.....

“This is why the future fails. It always fails. It can never be the cruel happy place we want to make it. ...”

“How will we know when the global era officially ends?”

He waited.

“When stretch limousines begin to disappear from the streets of Manhattan.... “(C. 90-91)

“A RAT BECAME THE UNIT OF CURRENCY

It took him a moment to absorb the words and identify the line. He knew the line of course. It was out of a poem he’d been reading lately, one of the few longer poems he’d chosen to investigate, a line, half a line from the chronicle of a city under siege.

It was exhilarating, his head in the fumes, to see the struggle and ruin around him, the gassed men and women in their defiance, waving looted Nasdaq T-shirts, and to realize they’d been reading the same poetry he’s been reading.”

Here Eric Packer’s epiphany begins.

He sat down long enough to take a web phone out of a slot and execute an order for ore yen. He borrowed yen in dumbfounding amounts. He wanted all the yen there was.(96-97)

Is this the action of a man who loses all his money in one day? How is “lose” being defined by DeLillo? Is throwing all your money away in a spontaneous gesture losing all your money? Is this gesture a loss? Or a wild wild tossing away? A personal potlatch following Maas?

It is then Eric Packer sees the Burning Man. Is this a reference to the Burning Man yearly festival in the desert? Or to monks who burned themselves in protest over the Viet Nam war? Or

both? Or to **Kathy Change?**(see wiki)

He thought Kinski was right when she said this was a market fantasy. There was a shadow of transaction (Baudrillardian complicity) between the demonstrators and the state. The protest was a form of systemic hygiene, purging and lubricating. It attested again, for the ten thousandth time, to the market culture's innovative brilliance, its ability to shape itself to its own flexible ends, absorbing everything around it.

Here we have a restatement of Marcuse's Pac-Man metaphor.

*Now look. A man in flames. Behind Eric all the screens were pulsing with it. And all action was at a pause, the protesters and riot police milling about and only the cameras jostling. **What did this change? Everything, he thought.** Kinski had been wrong. The market was not total. It could not claim this man or assimilate his act. Not such starkness and horror. This was a thing outside its reach. (c 100)*

Maybe today is the day when everything happens, for better or worse, ka-boom, like that." (c 106)

But it was the threat of death at the brink of night that spoke to him most surely about some principle of fate he'd always known would come clear in time.

Now he could begin the business of living."(C 107)

The stun gun probably helped. The voltage had jellified his musculature for ten or fifteen minutes and he'd rolled about on the hotel rug, electroconvulsive and strangely elated, deprived of his faculties of reason.

But he could think now, well enough to understand what was happening. There were currencies tumbling everywhere. Bank failures were spreading. He found the humidor and lit a cigar. Strategists could not explain the speed and depth of the fall. They opened their mouths and words came out. He knew it was the yen. His actions regarding the yen were causing storms of disorder. He was so leveraged, his firm's portfolio large and spreading, linked crucially to the affairs of so many key institutions, all reciprocally vulnerable that the whole system was in danger.

!!IMPLOSION! - Baudrillard through Nietzsche

He smoked and watched, feeling strong, proud, stupid and superior.He thought it would end in a day or two" (C 116)

After seeing Elise outside the theater:

He knew he was going in. But first he had to lose more money. ...Then he went about losing the money, spreading it systematically in the smoke of rumbling markets. He did this to make certain he could not accept her offer of financial help.but it was necessary to resist, of course, or die in his soul....He was making a gesture of his own, a sign of ironic final binding. Let it all come down. Let them see each other pure and lorn.

This was the individual's revenge on the mythical couple.The number seemed puny....But it was all air anyway. It was air that flows from the mouth when words are spoken. It was lines of code that interact in simulated space.

Great financiers know that money does not exist.
The Jesuits know that God does not exist.- Baudrillard

Let them see each other in killing light. (C 124)

The modern money changers have been driven from the temple.

Packer begins the day in the dialectic, desiring balance not asymmetry. The global circulating speculative market "*rises and sets with the sun*" - Baudrillard - and like all planets and satellites has an asymmetrical orbit. As Benno tells him asymmetry was the key.

Reading Jesus through Isaiah, following his destiny, not the career choice of being the Messiah, his last major action of overturning the tables of the money changers in the temple, was so outrageous that he could no longer be ignored. (He pushes the limit boundaries to excess.- Nietzsche and Baudrillard) His capture and death was desired. This was the Gift to which the system could not respond.

Pontious Pilate: Then you're a King?

Jesus: It's you who say I am! I know the truth, and find that I get damned!

Pontious Pilate: But what IS truth? Not easy to define! We both have truths! Are yours the same as mine?

Since DeLillo was brought up Catholic, and has said he believes in the power of narrative transcendence - which Baudrillard and Foucault do not - DeLillo has made Kinski speak Baudrillard speak, and has made Packer throw the challenge in action to Baudrillard, who liked to think of himself as an "intellectual terrorist", and implode the currency market just because he could! Because he felt like it at the decisive moment, his moment of *kairos*.

Did Jesus contemplate his actions in the Temple that day? Can we consider this his decisive moment, his *kairos*, ? Goya mediated on it for forty years with various variations on this final flamboyant action of Jesus. Refusing defense in the Garden of Gethsemane he is letting the "world will him". Packer throws away the gun. He does not defend himself later, firing aimlessly, and does not hide behind the dumpster barrier. His assassin, the object, the fatal attractor, draws him towards his death. The bicyclist rides by, hands free and extended, the "Winged Mercury" messenger from the gods.

Packer shoots himself in the palm. The place of the stigmata of the bleeding Christ. The torture he feels in order to "feel" it. (Nietzsche - The Genealogy of Morals)

I come back to the proposition from which I started out when I was working on the object: it's the world which thinks us, it's the object which thinks us. (Baudrillard; Fragments 101)

We can say he felt an affinity with the demonstrators that they were objects of fatal attraction, because of Zbigniew Herbert's Report From A Besieged City's poem (A rat became the unit of

currency), and was drawn to them. Just as the Twin Towers were fatal attractors before 9-11.

I think DeLillo has created a political visionary for the post modern world we are living in. A model following Nietzsche and Baudrillard. Our fast movement into simulation is dizzying. Total simulated reality becomes Virtual Reality and from that there is no escape. Baudrillard is proposing the Symbolic Order of Seduction to reverse our willing slide down the slope. DeLillo has created Eric Packer to show us one way out. Genet and Burroughs have emphasized the power and responsibility of the writer in creating reality, and here IMO is where DeLillo is.

We have seen **Margin Call** and how that debacle was started. Interesting. And of course the 2008 derivative meltdown, which I consider the clairvoyant event intuited by DeLillo, rather than the dot com bursting bubble of early 2000, which was not as comprehensive, dizzying and total as the 2008 derivative meltdown.

For comments on this posting see:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2012/01/proposal-for-delillo-society-symposium.html>

Reading Eric Packer Through Ayn Rand :

<http://aynrand2.blogspot.com/2012/03/reading-eric-packer-through-ayn-rand.html>

Rob Pattinson as Eric Packer For posting and comments see:

*He tried to read his way into sleep but only grew more wakeful. He read science and poetry. He liked spare poems cited minutely in white space, ranks of alphabetic strokes burnt into paper. Poems made him conscious of his breathing. A poem bared the moment to things he was not normally prepared to notice. This was the nuance of every poem, at least for him, at night, these long weeks, one breath after another, **in the rotating room at the top of the triplex.** (C p. 5 the first page)*

Eric Packer's bedroom is circular, in perpetual orbit, going round like the barber chair and his chair in the limo, like the circulating currency of the cyber- markets. Gail Wynand in The Fountainhead has his bedroom at the top of his penthouse where it is glassed all around. The world can watch him fuck women. A little bit of trivia that DeLillo throws in for Ayn Rand intelligentsia?. A "floating sign"?

"When she entered his bedroom, she found it was not the place she had seen photographed in countless magazines. The glass cage had been demolished. The room built in its place was a solid vault without a single window. It was lighted and air-conditioned, but neither light nor air came from the outside.-Fountainhead

He bypassed sleep and rounded into counterpoise, a moonless calm in which every force is balanced by another. This was the briefest of easings, a small pause in the stir of restless identities. (C p.5-6)

The dialectic is stilled, balanced, the see-saw is even, straight across. It's not charting. The line is flat. Like a brain-dead flatline on the oscilloscope.

Every act he performed was self-haunted and synthetic. The palest thought carried an anxious shadow. (c p.6)

The appearance of the Double, just barely sensed, like a shadow. *Restless identities stirring.* Death enters the novel quietly, on the first two pages, like a shadow, with the appearance of the Double, for the appearance of the Double heralds Death.

DeLillo writes in this way: He types a paragraph on one sheet of white paper, edits it, retypes it again on another white sheet of paper, re-edits it, etc until it reads the way he wants it to read. There is always plenty of white around the paragraph.

Eric Packer:

When he died he would not end. The world would end. (C p.6)

Freud is finished. (dead). Einstein is next. (to die) Their worlds are dead.(C p.6)

On reading Ayn Rand and the World She Made by Anne Heller:
On the last page:

"It is not I who will die, it is the world that will end," Ayn Rand liked to say. It is a favorite quote of hers her fans like so much.

DeLillo is challenging Baudrillard on ending global capitalism through narrative transcendence, is he also challenging Rand and her moral defense of capital? Does DeLillo suspect her ***unknown knows?***

Although Heller's book was published after Cosmopolis, it seems prescient that this quote is on the first page of Cosmopolis and the almost identical quote is on the last page of Heller's biography of Rand. DeLillo's self chosen book cover for Underworld seems also prescient in its eerie image of the coming 9-11. And Cosmopolis is clairvoyant about the 2008 meltdown. And the coming 9-11, as the manuscript for Cosmopolis was almost completely finished before 9-11.

"You live in a tower that soars to heaven and goes unpunished by God."

She found this amusing.

"And you bought an airplane. I'd nearly forgotten this. Soviet or ex-Soviet. A strategic bomber. Capable of knocking out a small city. Is this right?"

..."But they wouldn't let you fly it. ..."

"Could and did. They wouldn't let me fly it armed."

"Who wouldn't?"

“The State Department. The Pentagon. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.”

Now I feel that DeLillo's ghost is following me as I am reading *Cosmopolis* through *Atlas Shrugged* but even more through Rand herself. I am coming to believe that she is the great unacknowledged post modern philosopher her rather poorly educated disciples have always thought her to be, but not for the same reasons as they. I believe she is Nietzsche's heir, more than Foucault and Baudrillard, and taking into consideration that she disavowed Nietzsche early on, stopped writing in her journals about him so much, all his thought embedded in her mind, went underground. Until Baudrillard came along and blasted it up in my face without even knowing about her.

During the Hickman event :

*So she is (Adela Rogers St. Johns) is afraid of men being too good or too bad? I think of the man who said: “Oh, that their best is so very small! Oh, that their worst is so very small! And oh, how horrid it is to be small! This is what my book is going to say. **Extremist beyond all extremes is what we need!**”* (Journals of Ayn Rand p 41-42)

...I raised a hue and cry of wrath over what among them is great and small, and that their best is still so small. And that their greatest evil too is still so small - at that I laughed. (Kaufmann: Thus Spake Zarathustra p. 197)

Does DeLillo intend to just blast her for her defense of capital? Or is DeLillo somehow divining her **unknown knowns**, her catastrophic collision with capital via Greenspan in the 2008 meltdown. As a defender of capital on a moral foundation of self-interest, this is the flaw Greenspan told Congress he had found in his thinking.

Under questioning from Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), the committee chairman, Greenspan acknowledged that the failure of that expected self-regulation represented "a flaw in the model" he used to analyze economics. "I was going for 40 years or more on the perception that it was working well."

The flaw is Rand's rational self-interest.

Why would these financiers destroy their financial empires? Well, Mr. Greenspan, you should have known that in 1968. Rand destroyed her lucratively financial, philosophical empire of Objectivism that Nathaniel Branden had built for her, his lover, because he didn't want to fuck her anymore. She wanted to punish him, destroy him, kill him for choosing a beautiful young woman instead of an old brilliant frumpet.

And OMG I believe she was following Nietzsche all this time. Taking every single premise she had and carrying it to the extreme. And every goddamn one of them from sex, to friendship, to love, to her writing, all of it, to the extreme, to excess. What is *Atlas Shrugged* as a novel, but a novel that is more a novel than a novel, a hyper-novel, an excessive novel, a novel that is "worse" as Nietzsche would say. All the way to Death as Canetti would say. Being more a capitalist than a capitalist. More so. Worse as Nietzsche advocates to bring something down. To destroy it. This is where Baudrillard kills Foucault in **Forget Foucault**. This is where Rand does

it in reality through Greenspan instead of advocating or writing about it. She is a major philosopher by default. She didn't know she knew. The *unknown knowns* Zizek analyses in *Reading Lacan. Eyes Wide Shut*.

Is this not what Eric Packer does with his fortune?

Does DeLillo know that she knew without knowing that she knew?

To defy the system with a gift to which it cannot respond save by its own collapse and death. Nothing, not even the system, can avoid the symbolic obligation, and it is in this trap that the only chance of a catastrophe for capital remains. ...For it is summoned to answer, if it is not to lose face, to what can only be death. The system must itself commit suicide in response to the multiplied challenge of death and suicide. (Jean Baudrillard - Symbolic Exchange and Death 37)

In the [DeLillo and Krasny](#) you tube interview DeLillo says, *My idea was to end this era not over a period of weeks and months as happened, but in one day.*

Here DeLillo is talking about the stock market crash in 2001. His clairvoyance really is applicable to the derivative meltdown that did happen over a few days and which the government bailed out banks and major finance centers, allowing some to collapse. Rand would have let them all hit bottom. **This is what Packer does all by himself.** Was there a person in 2008 poised to start the derivative slide?

For better format, images and comments:

Reading Eric Packer As Dangerous: A Dangerous Seer; Visionary; Prophet:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/06/reading-eric-packer-as-dangerous.html>

Forget Foucault! Forget Baudrillard! DeLillo Weighs In and Wins the Game!:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/05/forget-foucault-forget-baudrillard.html>

Reading Eric Packer As Baudrillardian Seer:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/05/samantha-morton-as-vija-it-was.html>

Reading Eric Packer Through Baudrillard and Jesus :

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/05/samantha-morton-as-vija-it-was.html>

Was DeLillo Reading Baudrillard? He Won't Say Anything About Post Modernism When Asked.:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/05/was-delillo-reading-baudrillard-he-wont.html>

Reading Rob Pattinson, Baudrillard and Rand Through Nietzsche:

<http://aynrand2.blogspot.com/2012/03/reading-rob-pattinson-baudrillard-and.html>

Baudrillard Reading Himself - And Rand - Through Nietzsche:

<http://aynrand2.blogspot.com/2012/03/baudrillard-reading-himself-and-rand.html>

Reading Eric Packer As DeLillo's Political Visionary Prophet:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/05/reading-eric-packer-as-chaos-creating.html>

Money Changers In The Temple-Eric Packer Is A Currency Trader-Currency Traders Are Money Changers:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/05/money-changers-in-temple-eric-packer-is.html>

The Wall Street Demonstration Feeds Into What It Opposes - Vija Kinski:

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2011/09/httpcosmopolisfilm2.html>

A Reply To Catherine Landry With a Reading Through Zizek About Occupy Wall Street

<https://docs.Cgoogle.com/document/d/15vo5qN5WjD-WwcDp94OPtH60bh7ZX-PHM0d17QYi9NU/edit>

.Slavoj Zizek Speaks At Occupy Wall Street

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2012/04/slavoj-zizek-speaks-at-occupy-wall.html>

Ayn Rand:A Great Post Modern Philosopher and Nietzsche's Heir:

<http://guerrillablog2.blogspot.com/2011/09/ayn-randa-great-post-modern-philosopher.html>

On the London Riots:

Reading the UK Riots:5 Books That Told Us What Was Coming

<http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8630315581203729915#editor/target=post;postID=7016269299471823585>

DeLillo strikes again!

My Replies to Cornelius Collins

Whom Did DeLillo Name Benno Levin After?

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2012/04/whom-did-delillo-name-benno-levin-after.html>

Reading Eric Packer Through Rudolf Steiner and Kolisko

<http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8630315581203729915#editor/target=post;postID=3462851606280615598>

DeLillo - Krasny Cosmopolis Publication Interview

<http://cosmopolisfilm2.blogspot.com/2012/04/delillo-krasny-cosmopolis-publication.html>

There are many more if you care to read more of them.

