# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND CAPITALISM IN THE FICTION OF DON DELILLO

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**Abstract**

This thesis seeks to understand more about the intersections between emotion and capitalism, to uncover how capitalism functions through emotional means. It does this in two ways: through analysis of the work of Don DeLillo during the period associated with neoliberal capitalism, and through exploration of cultural theory and philosophy that touches upon capitalism, emotion, or both. Using DeLillo's fictions as contextual artefacts that depict the experience of a particular time and place, the thesis explores the emotional lives of his characters in combination with cultural theory, to develop a novel mode of reading that reveals emotions to be the language of neoliberalism.

The project is split into three parts, with the first providing an overview of the functional nature of emotions within neoliberal capitalism, building on the work of Mark Fisher and Gilles Deleuze in particular. It asks how emotions functionally enable the reproduction of neoliberalism. The second part looks more closely at the emotional and affective structures that underpin neoliberalism, asking how we can understand affective infrastructure to work, and how facets of capitalism such as crisis impact on the emotional experience of individuals. The final part explores both the global spread of neoliberalism, as well as its potential future. It asks what the impact of globalisation is on emotions, and whether emotions can be part of resistance movements against capitalism.

The three parts rely on theoretical works to outline the fundamentals of the various approaches, but it is through the analysis of DeLillo's fiction that the nuances of these intersections between emotion and capitalism emerge. His works enable us to see where capitalism makes happiness a tool of manipulation, where it is an indicator of success and performance, and where it is something promised but never delivered. His work reveals the fleeting nature of happiness in contemporary America and how it is more common to find an interlocking mixture of fear and hope at the heart of the neoliberal emotional landscape.

**Contents**

# Introduction

## 'In the name of a future that will never actually arrive': Don DeLillo, emotion and neoliberalism

In Don DeLillo's 1985 novel *White Noise*, his protagonist Jack Gladney makes a rare comment on the nature of happiness. Speaking about the perceived follies of youth, the professor of Hitler studies says 'he thinks he's happy but it's just a nerve cell in his brain that's getting too much stimulation or too little stimulation'.[1] This is interesting because DeLillo rarely has his characters talk overtly on any emotion that is not fear. Although it is not an exceptionally complex thought, especially by the standards of the text, the idea opens up the possibility for studying DeLillo's work from the perspective of happiness. Gladney questions what happiness is, suggesting it is nothing more than a neuro-chemical reaction. In a novel that is obsessed with another emotion (fear), why would DeLillo have his character make a cynical comment about the existence of happiness? If Gladney believes that happiness can be just ascribed to stimulation, then the cause of that stimulation must be of interest to DeLillo scholars who are interested in emotion in his fiction.

This thesis does not agree with the belief that happiness is merely a neuro-chemical reaction, but it does suggest that this position is influenced by the consumerism typical of capitalist society. Zygmunt Bauman writes that, through consumerism, it is possible to 'add bright spots throughout the day', allowing individuals to be *stimulated* into happiness whenever they shop.[2] It is too early to say whether Gladney was referring to capitalist or consumer stimulation in his formulation of happiness, but to understand the emotion in this way is to understand it as capitalism asks for it to be understood. It is happiness as conceived by

[1] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 182.
[2] Zygmunt Bauman, *Consuming Life* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013), p. 19.

American capital. Gladney's colleague at the university is proud to be American because they 'still lead the world in stimuli', as if this is equivalent to leading the world in positive emotion.[3] Although DeLillo makes few authorial interventions defining his own philosophy of emotion, the way his characters instinctively link emotion to capitalism is telling. It forces the question as to why DeLillo's characters think that way; why they, as the written products of DeLillo's social context, *should* think that way. It is especially interesting since much contemporary thought links consumerism with *un*happiness rather than happiness.[4] Through analysing many of DeLillo's texts, and gathering contextual information at the archive in Austin, Texas, this thesis contends that happiness is an original and informative angle from which to approach DeLillo.

Often the only well explored emotion in DeLillo's work is fear, and this is usually understood in the context of postmodern anxiety or, since the millennium, terrorism. Rarely have academics considered the representation of emotions in DeLillo's work from any other perspective. Similarly, there has been a great deal of scholarly attention on DeLillo's fiction from the perspective of capitalism, with his novel *Cosmopolis* (2003) providing relevant subject matter. None of this work, however, focuses on the emotional impact of capitalism in DeLillo's fiction, although some scholars have come close to this territory and, as such, provide starting points for this thesis. Sanja Matković's work on identity within consumerism, for example, deals with concepts which are adjacent to emotion.[5] Some have also written on DeLillo in the context of affect theory, but much of it more interested in the postmodern aspects of this than how emotion might relate to capitalist production.[6]

[3] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 189.
[4] Robert Lane, *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 145.
[5] Sanja Matković, 'The construction of identity in a consumerist society: Delillo's Jack Gladney', *Anafora*, 2.01 (2016), 163-179.
[6] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 10.

This project looks at the way DeLillo's works explore emotion in conjunction with how they explore neoliberal capitalism, and what the points of contact and intersection are. How the supermarket in *White Noise* promises 'everything that is not food or love', like 'cures for cancer, the remedies for obesity' and how these promises play into fantasies that rely on positive emotion.[7] How, in *Cosmopolis*, the 'glow of cyber-capital' has enveloped the entirety of ordinary life until 'time is a corporate asset' and fear and confusion are commonplace through the speed of technology that renders human cognisance impotent.[8] Finally, how in *Zero K* (2016), DeLillo shows the present and future of neoliberal capital; how there are those who wish for simple things, like 'a life in which it is possible to pay cash' as opposed to using technologies of capital.[9] The future is on the horizon in *Zero K* and the possibilities of positive emotional change are real, but incompatible with the reality of neoliberalism as DeLillo presents it.

These three texts are the primary texts for analysis in this thesis. They present examples of DeLillo's work over a large proportion of the neoliberal period. *White Noise* presents early neoliberalism with the marketisation of the university and other aspects of Gladney's life, as well as the importance of consumerism and its emotional power. *Cosmopolis* deals with the financialisation of society around the turn of the millennium and focuses on the technical speed capitalism achieved during this period. It explores these facets of contemporary capitalism through a character obsessed with accumulation for its own sake. *Zero K* presents a perspective on the future of neoliberalism. It explores the potential of the technologies of capitalism and their impact on humanity. Each of the texts explores capital in different ways which pertain to the context in which they were written. Each of them also provides ways in which to approach the relationship between capital and emotion.

[7] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 326.
[8] Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 78.
[9] Don DeLillo, *Zero K* (London: Picador, 2016), p. 171.

These texts are not the sole literary focus of the thesis. It explores other DeLillo novels and short stories alongside these primary works, often with these secondary texts being the main focus of a chapter. Where relevance to the happiness/capitalism relationship, or the chapter-specific subject matter necessitates the use of additional fictional material, the comprehensiveness of this research will be demonstrated through exploration of a number of DeLillo texts in conjunction with robust theoretical analysis.

If this were a cultural studies thesis then the project would be concerned with developing new definitions of both neoliberalism and happiness and an understanding of their relationship. Rather, as a literary project, this thesis is able to develop new understandings of these key concepts through readings of DeLillo's work. Reading his texts as artefacts with a specific context enables differences to emerge between theoretical viewpoints and fiction, and these can not only allow new definitions and understandings to emerge, but can add enormously and uniquely to the body of critical work on DeLillo. By conducting the literary analysis in conjunction with a theoretical model that incorporates perspectives on happiness and neoliberalism (outlined below) this thesis presents a new method of reading DeLillo's fiction. The findings from this project will open up new avenues of literary study in the future, which will enable new perspectives to emerge on other writers, periods and literary movements.

**What is neoliberalism?**

It is clear that DeLillo's work relates to contemporary capitalism from its concern with the workings of an American society that is overwhelmingly influenced by capitalist practices, and his interest in individuals impacted by the same system. There are few, if any areas of

contemporary life that do not intersect with capitalism in some way. Nowhere is DeLillo's work more interested in capitalism than in *Cosmopolis*, a novel in which a multi-billionaire currency trader loses vast sums on the market while riding around in a bullet-proof limousine. Although the reception to the novel was lukewarm, it is still a text that 'can be understood to revolve around the convergence between a neoliberal fantasy of technology and the seductions of "transpoliticized" capital'.[10]

Emotions in the text are muted and, like much of his work, require reading through a context that understands the emotional reality of contemporary capitalism. The protagonist complains that he feels 'located totally nowhere',[11] a fact that 'appears to endorse the contemporary metaphorization of capital' in its precarious and crisis-ridden form, and is consistent with the destabilising effect of the overwhelmingness of capitalist technology.[12] If one reads DeLillo's work in a way that exposes emotions in political situations and politics in emotional situations it becomes a tool for understanding this most chaotic form of capitalism.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari write of capitalism that 'the more it breaks down, the more it schizo-phrenizes, the better it works', and it is this thesis' contention that this chaotic element of capital has a tremendous impact on emotions, with regards to the function of the chaos and its aftereffects.[13] Another reason DeLillo's work is useful for looking at neoliberalism is due to the length of time his oeuvre spans, predating neoliberalism as it is commonly understood, through to the present day. However, his work rarely mentions neoliberalism or capitalism by name, and for this reason it is important to have a working understanding of the concept, so that it can be recognised in the fiction.

Michel Foucault suggests that since the term neoliberalism first came into prominent use there has been great discord over its accepted meaning, its usefulness to academics and

[10] Alison Shonkwiler, 'Don DeLillo's Financial Sublime', *Contemporary Literature,* 51 (2010), 246-282, p. 250.
[11] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 23.
[12] Shonkwiler, 'Financial Sublime', p. 250.
[13] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p. 177.

society, and even its existence as a concept at all.[14] The term is used in this thesis because it correlates with the theoretical material on which the research is based, and because it provides as close to a definitive explanation of contemporary capitalism and its societal impact as possible. It is neoliberalism that recognises that 'all social phenomena [are] resulting from the economic calculations and investment decisions of individual actors' and that political economy is no longer just a separate sphere of society.[15] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term simply as:

> relating to, or characteristic of any various modified or revived forms of traditional liberalism based on belief in free market capitalism and the rights of the individual.[16]

However, even this definition comes with the caveat that 'the term has been applied variously to centrist, left-of-centre, and right-wing political standpoints at different points in time'. This section of the introduction defines the term according to a coherent set of theoretical perspectives in order to resolve some issues around its definition, and signpost how the term should be understood throughout the thesis.

David Harvey points towards the changed monetary policy, elections of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, and the resultant liberation of finance at the expense of labour as the origin of neoliberalism as we know it today.[17] He writes that

[14] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978-79* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan Limited, 2008), p. 130.
[15] Steven Shaviro, 'The "Bitter Necessity" of Debt: Neoliberal Finance and the Society of Control' *Concentric,* 37 (2010), 73-82, p. 76.
[16] *OED Online,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/245592?redirectedFrom=neoliberal#eid> [accessed 10 February 2020].
[17] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 1.

> neoliberalism is […] a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms [through] strong private property rights, free markets and free trade.[18]

Thus, one can define neoliberalism partly through its deference to enterprise on political matters that concern individuals. However, it is the 'deregulation, privatization, and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provisions' which Harvey highlights that adds more to a working definition, if that definition is to be used in looking at the impact of neoliberalism on the emotional lives of individuals subjected to it.[19]

According to Philip Mirowski, the shift towards deregulation from the late 1970s is a deliberate one, a 'playing out of a neoliberal script to produce a more efficient and vibrant capitalism'.[20] The dominance of this system can be explained by its ability, as Harvey suggests, to incorporate many aspects of contemporary life into market rationality. Even protesting against cruel practices, argues Mirowski, is part of capitalism, merely 'echoing scripts and pursuing an identity that has already been mapped out and optimized beforehand', and this activity, regardless of its resistant intention, 'permit[s] the market to evaluate and process knowledge about you'.[21] The shift towards a highly technically advanced society enables neoliberalism to further optimise its marketisation of the individual and society. With so much now measurable, neoliberal capital is able to collect more data and make more accurate projections about choices people will make, even influencing them into making the 'right choice' as Slavoj Žižek argues.[22]

[18] Harvey, *Brief History,* p. 2.
[19] Harvey, *Brief History,* p. 3.
[20] Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 63.
[21] Mirowski, *Serious Crisis,* p. 331.
[22] Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (London: Verso, 2012), p. 3.

We can also understand neoliberalism by looking to its origins, and what differentiates it from earlier forms of capitalism. For Maurizio Lazzarato this is debt. Debt is focused on in greater detail later in the introduction, but Lazzarato highlights an earlier time than Harvey. He writes that in 1971 'money got completely dematerialized [through the abandoning of the gold standard], that is to say that it "became debt"'.[23] This conception of neoliberalism as originating out of an alteration in the function and production of money is shared in other theoretical formulations (such as those of Steven Shaviro).[24] According to Lazzarato this made 'everyone a "debtor," accountable and guilty before capital'.[25] Although not in agreement about the date of the origin of neoliberalism, both Lazzarato's and Harvey's formulations explain similar phenomena that define the concept. For Lazzarato capital has become 'the Great Creditor' and combined with the increasing amount of data it is now able to collect on the indebted, its power in society becomes further entrenched.

Neoliberalism differs from the forms of capitalism that came before it, thus making it easier to underscore its defining properties. Lazzarato looks to Fordism to make a comparison, suggesting that in the earlier form of capitalist production there was a 'compromise between capital, labour (through unions) and the state',[26] and that the New Deal had 'neutralized the power of creditors'.[27] This compromise is nowhere to be seen in our contemporary form of capitalism, with labour bargaining power weakening and the state apparatus in many nations adopting stringent neoliberal agendas. This change is also evident in the emotional expectations put on individuals by the different systems, with Fordism requiring 'obedience' and neoliberalism requiring workers to be 'adaptable, flexible, versatile and "entrepreneurial"'.[28]

[23] Mathieu Charbonneau and Magnus Paulsen Hansen, 'Debt, Neoliberalism and Crisis: Interview with Maurizio Lazzarato on the Indebted Condition', *Sociology*, 48(5) (2014), 1039-1047, p. 1043.
[24] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 74.
[25] Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of Indebted Man* (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2011), p. 7.
[26] Charbonneau, 'Debt, Neoliberalism and Crisis', p. 1044.
[27] Charbonneau, 'Debt, Neoliberalism and Crisis', p. 1045.
[28] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 75.

Though obedience is nothing to be longed for, the emotional toll of taking entrepreneurial risks and unending flexibility under neoliberal systems is coming to be more widely recognised.

What Foucault called the disciplinary society in these earlier forms of capitalism has been 'inverted' by neoliberalism in the contemporary period.[29] Mark Fisher and Gilles Deleuze express ideas that explain in greater detail the impact of the policies of which neoliberalism is comprised. Their ideas are important in the first part of the thesis in the analysis of the fiction. Deleuze refers to a 'society of control' replacing that of discipline, in which the 'brashest rivalry' is used as a 'motivational force that opposes individuals against one another'.[30] This idea informs the thesis' understanding of neoliberalism being a system in which emotional involvement of its participants is required, as well as the lack of social cohesion that results from this. The latter part of this was famously summarised by Thatcher when she said 'there is no such thing as society'.[31] Fisher posits that neoliberalism is successful, in addition to these Deleuzian elements, as it is able to withstand resistance efforts, arguing that it 'is now impossible even to *imagine* a coherent alternative to it'.[32] While neoliberalism has no mind with which to think sentient thoughts, it utilises everything at its disposal to exert control over society; this comes about as an organic process which is inherent to the functioning of the neoliberal system.

Part of its ability to withstand resistance is due to the incoherence surrounding the term, with Foucault suggesting that the critical frameworks used to discuss the concepts are divisive and able to 'be turned into practically nothing at all'.[33] Outside of academia, Fisher calls this process capitalist realism, but it might easily be called naturalisation (the latter term is preferred in this thesis due to its narrower focus). In this idea, the effects and emotional impact of

[29] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 77.
[30] Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October* 59 (1992), 3-7, p. 5.
[31] 'Margaret Thatcher: A Life in Quotes', *The Guardian* (2013)
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/apr/08/margaret-thatcher-quotes> [accessed 14 November 2019]
[32] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: O Books, 2009), p. 2.
[33] Foucault, *Biopolitics*, p. 130.

neoliberal society, as well as the political, social and economic effects are presented as rational and without alternative. Both the naturalisation and society of control theories go some way to explaining how emotions are used in retaining neoliberal dominance.

One of the key neoliberal theorists is Friedrich von Hayek, and Harvey suggests that during the early genesis of neoliberal ideas, the label signalled 'their adherence to those free market principles of neoclassical economics'.[34] Neoliberalism generally attempts to create consensus, drawn from earlier forms of capital, that looking to the free market was best; that 'the market was the best device for mobilizing even the basest of human instincts such as gluttony, greed, and the desire for wealth and power for the benefit of all'.[35] However, this thesis must look beyond the 'belief in private property and the competitive market' for a fuller understanding of neoliberalism, since it is the emotional impact of these beliefs that are of interest. Jeremy Bentham saw the market as being able to deliver the greatest benefit for the most people, and Hayek's aims could be described as utopian. The creditor/debtor relationship argued for by Lazzarato is surely not the goal of the theorists at neoliberalism's origins, and yet it is in this way it has transpired. This thesis acknowledges the different aims of the neoliberals, but is primarily interested in the negative emotions and devastation that the system has caused.

Looking at the earliest origins of neoliberalism, one can see a very different political and economic climate. Milton Friedman, another early proponent of the neoliberal free market, suggested that 'there is still tendency to regard […] government intervention as desirable, to attribute all evils to the market'.[36] Today, however, the naturalisation process has progressed so much that the market has become the de-facto way to resolve the problems of society, with

[34] Harvey, *Brief History,* p. 20.
[35] Harvey, *Brief History,* p. 20.
[36] Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 197.

Mirowski suggesting that 'any problem, economic or otherwise, has a market solution, given sufficient ingenuity'.[37]

This thesis uses this working understanding of neoliberalism to explore the extent to which contemporary capitalism is involved in influencing and being influenced by emotions. By reading DeLillo's texts with this emotional understanding of neoliberalism, subtleties of the relationship will be revealed. Throughout the project the ideas in the texts consulted in this understanding are to be interrogated through literary analysis.

**What is happiness and why does it matter?**

Neoliberal capitalism has made relevant the literary study of emotions, specifically happiness and fear. The impact of policies associated with neoliberalism on the mental health of populations is well documented, with Fisher suggesting that the psychiatric disorders that spread 'since the onset of industrial capitalism' in the 1750s have 'reached a new level of acuteness in the last two decades'.[38] There is increasingly widespread belief in the impact of capital on emotion, with Fisher suggesting a 'deliberately cultivated depression', and it is the task of this thesis to explain the relationship through analysis of DeLillo's fiction.[39]

Happiness is the predominant focus of this thesis' analysis, but other emotions are explored as part of this process, often because they enable an understanding of happiness when it itself is absent. The concept of happiness is a difficult one to grasp and the thesis makes no claims on the ontology of the concept. It is content to adhere to common definitions, such as 'favoured by good fortune', 'showing a deep sense of pleasure or contentment' or simply being

[37] Mirowski, *Serious Crisis,* pp 64-65.
[38] Mark Fisher, *K-Punk*: *The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher* (London: Repeater, 2018), p. 435.
[39] Fisher, *K-Punk*, p. 749.

'joyous'.[40] Although there are many aspects to the concept of happiness, this project utilises the fact that it is hard to define. It is the subjectivity of happiness that makes it an interesting analytical tool. Nicholas White writes on the possibility for creating a definition of happiness:

> It might involve explaining what the role of each aim is in the best condition that a human being might be in […]. It would also make clear why aims whose fulfilment has no place in such a condition – according to some, certain grotesque pleasures – are excluded from it, and why other aims – like watching wrestling on television – have only a very limited place.[41]

The subjectivity makes it hard to define, and just as with White's wrestling analogy, the depictions of consumerism in DeLillo's work demonstrate the idiosyncratic things that produce happiness. Since different things will make different people happy, how can a system promise happiness on a wholesale basis, but also make 'satisfaction a menace' in order to engender further consumerism?[42] Happiness is a useful analytical tool in this project for the fact that everybody is trying to attain something subjectively different in a system that cannot offer individualised consumerism, and does not wish to deliver lasting contentment. What form can happiness take in such a system?

The relationship between happiness and capitalism is best expressed through consumerism, a part of capitalism in which the two concepts are fundamentally intertwined. The AMC drama *Mad Men* expresses the connection succinctly in its first episode. Don Draper, an advertising executive says:

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[40] *OED Online,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020) <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/84070?redirectedFrom=happiness#eid> [accessed 10 February 2020]
[41] Nicholas White, *A Brief History of Happiness* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 14.
[42] Bauman, *Consuming Life,* p. 98.

> Advertising is based on one thing: happiness. And do you know what happiness is? Happiness is the smell of a new car. Its *freedom from fear*. It's a billboard on the side of a road that screams with *reassurance* that whatever you're doing is ok. You are ok.[43]

This scene demonstrates capitalism's reliance on happiness, and emotions in general. Draper sells happiness because it is easy to sell, and it is easy to sell because it provides other emotional gratification: 'freedom from fear' and 'reassurance'. Neoliberal capitalism acknowledges that happiness is subjective and works to make emotional connections with near enough everything. For this reason, one can say that emotion is the language of neoliberalism; emotion is what sells products, and valorises capital.

Like the fictional Draper, DeLillo worked in advertising in New York City in the 1960s. The understanding of the proximity between happiness and capitalism is present throughout his work, from the way in which Gladney bolsters his self-esteem through shopping in *White Noise*, to the attempt at an inspiring sales pitch from the Convergence owners in *Zero K*. In each case (and many others) a convincing argument is made that something which valorises capital will also make an individual happy. This understanding on the part of DeLillo puts his work in a relatively unique position to approach this conceptual project.

William Davies in his book *The Happiness Industry* writes on the legacy of the 1960s, when Draper and DeLillo were working as ad-men, that 'to grow is to progress. Regardless of what one wants, desires, or believes, it is best to get as much of it as possible'.[44] His theory on happiness as an industry in itself explains the contemporary neoliberal use of emotion and the role played by subjectivity. Regardless of what one desires, capitalism teaches one to get as

[43] 'Smoke Gets in Your Eyes', dir. Alan Taylor, *Mad Men*, AMC, 19 July 2007. (emphasis mine).
[44] William Davies, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 146.

much of it as possible. Accumulation has, within the happiness industry, become equal to and often confused with happiness as an aim. It follows that individuals will no longer hunger for their individual desires, but for what an industry 'with nothing but private fulfilment as its overarching principle' asks them to desire.[45]

For Davies, neoliberalism has responded to Bentham's claim that happiness should be seen as a political end in itself, and that a free market can help to deliver it. He writes that 'one of the foundational neoliberal arguments in favour of the market was that it served as a vast sensory device, capturing millions of individual desires'.[46] Just as markets measure supply and demand, they can also measure happiness. There is the suggestion that a 'post-neoliberal' technological influx of 'happiness monitoring tools' may one day extend 'even further into our lives than markets'.[47] In the work of Davies and other theorists whose work is drawn upon in this thesis, happiness has obvious benefits for neoliberalism, as both a product and a tool. But neoliberalism as a system is not necessarily beneficial for individuals seeking happiness. Throughout this project there is a critical interrogation of what the processes that make up neoliberalism have done to the concept of happiness.

Capitalism is profoundly emotional, and it uses these emotions to valorise itself and increase its societal dominance. Fisher believes that capital 'is characterised by lurching between hyped-up mania […] and depressive come-down'.[48] This chaos, inherent to neoliberalism, makes emotions interesting tools for interrogating the way the system functions. Looking at DeLillo's fiction in order to see how emotions function within contemporary capitalism uncovers more details about the way many of the facets of the happiness/capitalism relationship work. There are many ways of reading texts in terms of happiness other than those discussed in this section of the introduction, and the theoretical model below outlines some of

[45] Davies, *Happiness Industry,* p. 147.
[46] Davies, *Happiness Industry,* p. 10.
[47] Davies, *Happiness Industry,* p. 11.
[48] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 436.

these and forms the basis for ongoing analysis in the chapters of the thesis. There is a relatively limited amount of scholarship on DeLillo from the perspective of emotions, and even less has been done on emotional capitalism. For this reason, this project represents a timely intervention into the fields of happiness, capitalism and DeLillo studies.

**The spiral of intensification**

This section of the introduction proposes a theoretically informed model that encourages a specific reading of literary texts. The model that arises from the theoretical perspectives discussed, defines the role of emotion in neoliberalism, enabling literary analysis that focuses on the relationship between the two concepts. The theory does not aim to reveal the 'meaning' of DeLillo's texts, but functions as a method of reading society through fiction, and of reading fiction through society. In this regard, Deleuze and Guattari write:

> We will ask what [a book] functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge.[49]

The thesis does not ask what DeLillo's texts mean, but rather in what sociological, economic and political contexts they work. In other words, with which aspects of a theoretical model that defines the emotional make-up of contemporary capitalism do DeLillo's texts engage and

[49] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p.2.

correlate and which do they dispute? Such a reading will improve understanding as to how literature can function as a tool for reading society.

This section does not contain direct analysis of DeLillo's work, but explains how the theoretical analysis that comprises the model is pertinent to the readings that take place in the main chapters of the thesis. The thesis conceives of DeLillo's work in machinic terms, following Deleuze who writes that 'types of machines are easily matched with each type of society – not that machines are determining, but because they express the social forms capable of generating them'.[50] In this respect, DeLillo's fictions are machines that express the social forms present in what Deleuze terms the society of control.[51] They are machines that have been produced in response to neoliberal society and have also, in certain ways, impacted upon neoliberal society.

This way of understanding fiction utilises the concept of the multiplicity to 'escape the abstract opposition between the multiple and the one, to escape dialectics, to succeed in conceiving the multiple in the pure state'.[52] It is not necessary to find concrete meaning in DeLillo's work, but only to understand how it functions as a socially constructed body of works that exist alongside and in communication with socio-economic contexts. His fictions are not works with a finite set of meanings and interpretations, but rhizomatic machines that connect with different aspects of the neoliberal capitalist system. This approach also serves to distance DeLillo as author from his works, enabling the intensities in his fictions to be read separately from the politics of the author. In this way his works are to be understood as cultural artefacts more than works of art.

The theoretical model describes a *spiral of intensification*, which refers to the way neoliberal capitalism ensures its continued valorisation through the use of techniques which

[50] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.6.
[51] Deleuze, 'Postscript'.
[52] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus,* p. 37.

intensify emotional reaction from individuals. The spiral comprises a number of different theoretical perspectives that, when read in conjunction with one another, reveal an intensifying pattern of emotional reaction. It is conceived of as a way of bringing together cultural, political and economic ideas that explain how a society such as the one envisioned by Deleuze is able to come into existence. These intensified emotional reactions ensure the continued success of techniques which limit the scope of accepted action in society to actions which are adherent to neoliberal aims. It is in this way that neoliberal control is possible without a thinking mind making the decisions. This spiral is possible due to the implementation of policy and the altering of societal beliefs, giving precedence to this form of capitalist production. As issues such as debt become worse for individuals, the dominance of capital is strengthened through the capitalistic utilisation of emotions such as fear, hope and happiness. As the model demonstrates, happiness is intrinsically linked with neoliberalism and, in many ways, this emotion influences the actions of individuals in a way beneficial to capital.

## The pleasure of debt

Throughout the history of capitalism, credit and debt have been crucial to the functioning of various economies, and credit and debt are ubiquitous in contemporary society. It is not only *common* for nations and individuals to be indebted, it is *expected* that they will be. Costas Douzinas argues that as a direct result of neoliberalism 'debt has become integral to life' going on to add that 'it is the necessary lubricant in the economy of services'.[53] The necessity of debt, for Douzinas, is heightened in neoliberal societies that focus on services over manufacturing. He is critical of this in his work, but recognises that the current capitalist system could not work without such high levels of indebtedness. Indeed, debt is one of the primary ways many

[53] Costas Douzinas, 'Notes Towards an Analytics of Resistance', *New Formations*, (83) 2014, 79-99, p. 87. (As a result of this relation between society and debt, levels are necessarily high).

individuals are able to afford the comforts of contemporary life. The first aspect of the spiral of intensification is indebtedness because its centrality to the neoliberal capitalist model ensures that it is essentially demanded of all individuals (and organisations, nations, etc.) in some way for their safe passage through life. If they are to be a part of society there will be some debt for most. Under neoliberalism debt is also the first limitation on choice that occurs, in that for many individuals to become indebted is no choice at all. Debt is also the aspect of the theoretical model that most closely aligns with the spiral shape itself, as is explored below, the debt process does not close off as in a circle, but can be conceptualised as travelling further outwards as debt increases.

The emotional quality of the debt cycle is captured by Friedrich Nietzsche who writes 'the creditor is granted by way of repayment and compensation a certain *pleasure* […] – the satisfaction of being able to wield, without scruple, his power over one who is powerless'.[54] The debt mechanism of capital involves the use of power (of many different kinds) on the part of the creditor, and it also results in an entitlement to positive emotion not granted to the indebted party. There is no pleasure for the debtor, since this kind of positive emotion comes only to the wealthy under capitalism: the creditors. Indebtedness then, which we saw from Douzinas is the de-facto state in neoliberal capitalism, is inherently a negative emotional experience. Nietzsche goes further, comparing debt with physical pain. He argues that the debtor's pain can be sufficient payment because of the emotional pleasure this grants the creditor. The suffering on the part of the debtor can be a 'real *feast*' for the creditor.[55] Though not necessarily suggesting a sadistic tendency in the creditors, the emotional pleasure felt can be ascribed to the acknowledgement of one's power over another: the ability to give or remove pain at will. As with debt itself, the emotional turmoil caused by the process of becoming indebted functions in a spiral shape, logically following the worsening of debt. As one becomes

[54] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), p. 50.
[55] Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, p. 50.

more indebted, spiralling out from a financially secure centre, so too will negative emotional reactions worsen. Nietzsche's pain increases as debt increases, rather than reaching a certain level and remaining there.

The process takes the form of a spiral because under capital, which allows capital in the form of the creditor to retain power, indebtedness logically leads to further (and worse) indebtedness. Nietzsche's idea that the 'infliction of suffering' produces 'supreme pleasure' correlates with the suffering experienced in many parts of society as a result of debt.[56] Fines, criminal convictions, increased interest payments are all possibilities of being indebted, and will lead to increased debt and take one away from the attainment of happiness. The supreme pleasure Nietzsche writes about reflects the economic pleasure of the creditor first and foremost, and secondly the happiness at the affirmation of their own power. The salient point here, however, is that emotional suffering is a logical consequence of the debt spiral, a spiral that is difficult to avoid.

What makes this process of indebtedness distinctly neoliberal is the reliance of the modern society on financial mechanisms, with Steven Shaviro suggesting that 'the financialization of human life means that market competition, with its calculus of credit and debt, is forcibly built into all situations, and made into a necessary precondition for all potential actions'.[57] He is in accordance with Nietzsche's view of the all-encompassing nature of indebtedness but he argues that Nietzsche's debt 'traced the transformation of a primordial indebtedness into such things as interiority and guilt',[58] as opposed to the contemporary condition where emotions such as guilt 'like everything else' have become 'part of our universal condition'.[59] This neoliberalisation of debt implies that, unlike in Nietzsche's formulation, the condition of the debtor in the contemporary moment is not merely a negative

[56] Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, p. 51.
[57] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 81.
[58] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 81.
[59] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 81.

emotional state standing in opposition to the creditor, but an emotional state that is ubiquitous in society. This valorisation of capital and limitation on choice is distinct from earlier forms of debt in capitalism, in that it functions as *the* driving force of the economy, rather than merely as one aspect of financial mechanisms.

Lazzarato's work broadly aligns with Nietzsche's perspective, and makes contemporary the concept of indebtedness for the neoliberal period. Like Shaviro, he suggests that the problem of debt is all encompassing and that 'entire societies become indebted'.[60] The wide-reaching impact of debt demonstrates capital's ability to reach into every element of life, and the Nietzschean 'pain' associated with debt will result in negative emotional states throughout society. The emotional ramifications being almost entirely negative point towards a 'destruction of civil society in the form of unfettered economic competition'.[61] Thatcher's famous dictum about society is realised through debt, when the indebted must fight with each other over every economic advantage. With a dwindling society and increased market rule there are only indebted individuals turning to further indebtedness to maintain their lives.

Lazzarato acknowledges the existence of debt prior to neoliberalism, but suggests that the ostensible benefits of contemporary capitalism are directly responsible for the increased indebtedness, and the intensification of negative emotion:

> The series of financial crises has violently revealed a subjective figure that, while already present, now occupies the entirety of public space: the "indebted man." The subjective achievements neoliberalism had promised ("everyone a shareholder, everyone an owner, everyone an entrepreneur")

[60] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 8.
[61] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 78.

> have plunged us into the existential condition of the indebted man, at once responsible and guilty for his particular fate.[62]

The emotional reality of neoliberalism emerges through the way blame is assigned to the indebted, despite their lack of choice, which furthers the pain of the situation. Individuals are told that everyone can succeed by a system that ensures indebtedness, and then blamed when they fail to gain wealth. The risk is transferred to the individual along with the blame for failure, and the rewards and valorisation are transferred to capital and corporations, along with increased societal power. Deleuze also argues that contemporary society aims to transfer all sorts of power and responsibility to the corporation.[63] It follows then that the risks once assigned to corporate power over the economic lives of individuals are given over to those same individuals. These risks also represent the Nietzschean pain, and are far more damaging to the indebted than they once were to the creditor, as they can only lead to intensified levels of debt.

This debt and assurance of future indebtedness is a primary source of fear, anxiety and other negative affect in contemporary society, and is a useful tool for ensuring that the spiral of intensification is effective, as debt begets worse debt. With the individual made to feel responsible for the failure represented by their debt there is no room for the alleviation of anxiety or fear. In this way, neoliberal power is consolidated 'by theft, violence, and usurpation' rather than direct democratic consent.[64] These theories that explore debt as an element of the spiral of intensification enable readings of fictional accounts of debt and contextualise them. The fictions can then be understood as cultural artefacts that critique and engage with narratives of debt and emotion. Nuances in characterisation when concerned with

[62] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, pp. 8-9.
[63] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 5.
[64] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 44.

debt can also go toward an understanding of the emotional impact of debt. While DeLillo's work often involves characters who are not overtly indebted, this aspect of the spiral of intensification is explored through characters such as Eric Packer and Jack Gladney who are comfortably wealthy and yet are still impacted by debt. Chapter Two deals with the functioning of debt itself, and Chapter Six examines indebted characters such as Richard Sheets and his options in terms of living as an indebted man.

Naturalisation and society

For Lazzarato, Nietzsche's formulation of the creditor/debtor mechanism becomes, in contemporary neoliberalism, 'a security-state technique of government aimed at reducing the uncertainty of the behaviour of the governed'.[65] It follows that the mechanisms underpinning neoliberalism effectively control the behaviour of individuals, and limit their actions primarily through the emotions associated with increased indebtedness. The spiral of debt intensifies due to the way debt ensures further debt due to the ineffectual nature of resistance, and the widespread fear of further indebtedness which reduces the ability to act in the interest of the debtors. The system is accepted because there are no alternatives that are seen as viable. Fisher summarises this situation by suggesting that 'our widespread ritualistic compliance' with the terminologies of neoliberal logic 'has served to naturalise the dominance of capital and help to neutralise any opposition to it'.[66]

This naturalisation process ensures capitalist dominance through altering perceptions and emotions. It is expressed in other terms by Deleuze in his 'Postscript on the Societies of Control' where he agrees with the main debt hypothesis of this thesis. He writes that, unlike

[65] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 45.
[66] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 462.

earlier capitalist societies 'of discipline', 'man is no longer man enclosed but man in debt'.[67] As enclosure once kept societies subservient, debt now fulfils this function. The usefulness of debt for capital is exemplified by the image of a spiral of intensification, which spirals downwards with time, in the case of individual indebtedness, and upwards in the case of the increasing societal power wielded by creditors/capital. The sites of enclosure in former capitalist societies of discipline are antiquated as the 'floating' society of control has no fixed boundaries, and yet boundaries exist everywhere. In short, the indebted man needs no discipline because he is predictable; his negative emotional state prevents him from acting against capital. Deleuze writes that 'control is short-term and of rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit'.[68] It is this rapidity and the floating nature of the contemporary society that highlights emotion as a crucial aspect for understanding the success of neoliberalism.

The society of control is made possible through the rapidity of neoliberal capitalism, partly due to the overwhelmingness technological advancement enables. Deleuze acknowledges Paul Virilio on the 'ultrarapid forms of free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines', and suggests that it is through speed that this type of control is made possible.[69] The speed of capital in the contemporary age is fundamentally incompatible with the cognitive powers of humanity, instead producing a 'diffuse sense of panic, as individuals are subjected to an unmanageable data-blitz'.[70] This alteration in the structure of time and speed, and the negative emotions associated with such alteration stem from the replacement of work-time or capitalist-time with a constant expectation to be involved in the neoliberal system with, as Fisher suggests, 'no outside where one can recuperate'.[71] Although Fisher's comments relate to the workplace, the speed at which capitalist technologies have moved towards creating

[67] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 6.
[68] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 6.
[69] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.
[70] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 465.
[71] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 466.

'automatic chains of behaviour' explains in part why the naturalisation of capitalist dominance is possible.[72] The indebted man has no time to think, or question, and such thinking becomes automatic, and these systems which render 'the density and the speed of information [as] too high for conscious elaboration' tend to 'reinforce patterns that produced the disruption'.[73]

This last suggestion from "Bifo" Berardi points towards speed as a crucial element in the ability for capital to disrupt thought and reinforce its dominance, through what Fisher would term capitalist realism (naturalisation). The way it uses a system of force that is so passive follows the logic of Deleuze's society of control. Speed therefore enables dominance and reduces resistance because it ensures that naturalisation occurs due to there being no alternative that can emerge in the rapid, free-floating environment. For individuals in this time of unpredictable speed, where they require work more than capital requires labour (due to technological advancements) negative emotions abound. One 'must develop a capacity to respond to unforeseen events, [one] must learn to live in conditions of total instability'.[74] Therefore, it can be understood that the negative emotions that render individuals incapable of action are caused by both indebtedness and speed, and these make the society of control possible.

This thesis contends that the naturalisation process and the society of control, both of which incorporate speed into their mechanism for ensuring neoliberal dominance, are inherently related to debt in the way Nietzsche and later Lazzarato have formulated it. Lazzarato argues that debt relates to time, in that the 'creditor-debtor relationship rests on a promise of future reimbursement; Nietzsche suggests that debt faces temporal indeterminacy and unpredictability'.[75] The unpredictability of the future, especially one as rapidly advancing as our own, nullifies the ability of the individual to raise themselves beyond the creditor-debtor

[72] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End* (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2015), p. 29.
[73] Berardi, *And*, p. 229.
[74] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 434.
[75] Charbonneau, 'Debt, Neoliberalism and Crisis', p. 1042.

relationship. Lazzarato talks of the requirement for 'the debtor to stand as self-guarantor' due to this unpredictability.[76]

This formulation mirrors the role of debt and speed/time in society as outlined by both Fisher and Deleuze, in that the requirement to bare the risk is placed onto the individual, and the safeguarding against those risks requires continued indebtedness. The debtor as self-guarantor premise demonstrates the precarity that is accepted as normal within neoliberalism. This method of control is brought about through policy that enables these neoliberal tendencies to flourish and to remove safety nets for individuals. It is a 'highly efficient mechanism of control and capture' according to Lazzarato, and one that is 'more efficient than the modes of resistance put in place by workers' movements'.[77] The inability to resist is obvious when society controls through passivity and naturalisation, and this practice contributes to the intensification of the spiral.

Although Shaviro points out that 'we do not yet entirely know just how the control society is changing our postures, our gestures, and our perceptions' it seems clear that neoliberalism is having an emotional impact.[78] The technological aspects of the control society, for example, the 'proliferation of screens and data access points throughout private and public space' are changing the way in which individuals perceive and make the world around them.[79] The prevalence of digital media in DeLillo's work, such as television and computer screens, is partly how this thesis will use fiction to interrogate the cultural theory of Shaviro, Lazzarato, Deleuze, Fisher and others. It enables an exploration on how far art and fiction can identify the changes that neoliberalism has brought about in the context of emotion, through analysis of the perceptions of characters and politics in his work.

[76] Charbonneau, 'Debt, Neoliberalism and Crisis', p. 1042.
[77] Charbonneau, 'Debt, Neoliberalism and Crisis', p. 1042.
[78] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 74.
[79] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 74.

DeLillo's work on the precarity faced by individuals in a technological world forged by the credit/debt relationship of contemporary capital presents a fictional representation of Shaviro's idea of the problem with capitalist debt: 'It ravages the present in the name of a future that will never actually arrive'.[80] For Shaviro, the logical conclusion of the debt cycle, the society of control and naturalisation, is that 'it depletes our hopes for, and imaginings of, the future by turning it into nothing but a projection and endless repetition of the present', but by examining this aspect of the spiral of intensification through fiction, one can see how far hope remains, and by what measure that which is hoped for can be realised.[81] This particular aspect of the spiral model is explored in detail throughout the thesis, but is primarily focused on in Part 1, where naturalisation theory is expanded on and the controlling and imprisoning nature of debt are explored in conjunction with Deleuze and Foucault's work on control. The worsening and expansion outwards inherent in the spiral model are useful for understanding how intensified emotions can be used for structures of control within neoliberal capitalism.

The hope of the exploited

The spiral of intensification thus far has been shown to involve the negative affect and emotion that stems from indebtedness and the resultant dominance of capital over the indebted. The emotional aspect of the spiral is, however, the most crucial aspect for interrogating the work of writers such as DeLillo and, indeed, understanding how his fictions function as products of the society in which they were written. The mechanisms capital uses to control are the input functions of the spiral, and the emotions that result as output intensify the spiral. Fisher has argued that 'capitalism both feeds on and reproduces the moods of populations' and, in this regard, one sees the process of intensification as being the natural state of neoliberal

[80] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 82.
[81] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 82.

capitalism.[82] As situations worsen for individuals (or, indeed, improve) capital is able to heighten these moods and emotions, increasing them in much the same way that profit increases more quickly when one has more capital. It is for this reason that this thesis makes the suggestion that the language of neoliberalism is emotion, as it is through emotion that the processes that allow for capital's naturalisation take place.

Emotions and indebtedness are obviously connected when one considers consumerism, which Bauman points out is a 'choice presented as the opposite of constraint'.[83] To think of it in this manner reveals the three most important emotions for the spiral of intensification: happiness, hope and fear. Fear has already been explored as a result of the processes that make neoliberalism possible, but hope and happiness are, according to Bauman, presented as achievable through the consumerist practices of capitalism. One can purchase their way to happiness and, more importantly, to that hoped for freedom from indebtedness and fear. Consumerism is the ostensible escape-hatch from the credit and debt cycle.

Happiness is the imagined future beyond indebtedness, powerlessness and fear, and must be hoped for. However, through hope, the spiral is simply intensified further as the routes to happiness offered by neoliberal capital do not necessarily allow for its achievement. Much like debt, happiness is something that is required of individuals in neoliberal society, rather than something which can be attained after hard work. Sara Ahmed argues for this, suggesting that 'happiness is the ultimate performance indicator'.[84] Individuals by this logic are required to appear happy if they are to appear successful. This is an inversion of a more common belief that happiness would follow success and typifies what Fisher notes as 'a notorious shift toward affective labour in the Global North'.[85] This affective labour, for Ahmed and Fisher, suggests that the worker is required to be happy in order to maintain their position, which illustrates the

[82] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 436.
[83] Bauman *Consuming Life,* p. 62.
[84] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 4.
[85] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 536.

importance of emotion and affect for capitalist valorisation. As was argued earlier, neoliberalism does not demand obedience, but forces affective and subjective compliance from the people involved. However, it is worth noting that genuine emotion is subjugated somewhat, since it is only a performative version of happiness that is required and that 'suffering with a smile' is permitted.[86]

Just as in Lazzarato's depiction of debt, Ahmed's vision of happiness punishes the unhappy for being unhappy. The failure to appear happy is blamed on the individual rather than the society or system in which the individual lives. Fisher goes as far as to suggest that 'depression is the shadow side of entrepreneurial culture' and argues that the belief that everybody can be a success results in worsened emotional states when mixed with the obviously limited opportunities for success that exist.[87] This emotional state is then intensified through the guilt associated with being unhappy. The fundamental pressure to appear happy, and the failure to achieve this, increase the anxiety and fear already persisting in the individual. The work of affect theorists such as Ahmed demonstrate again the spiral shape in action in this contemporary emotional landscape; the pressure to appear happy intensifies (in much the same way as debt) and worsens the more negative emotion one feels.

Lauren Berlant also points towards the importance of emotion for understanding the way capitalism naturally constructs its methods of control. She writes of the 'ordinariness of suffering' which is similar to Fisher's suffering with a smile but expands on the concept.[88] For suffering to be the ordinary state of life under neoliberalism is, for many individuals, no exaggeration. It suggests that happiness is nothing more than a distant imagining. While there may be no physical pain, there is the emotional pain associated with the creditor/debtor relationship and happiness must still be presented outwardly, because 'who wants to listen to

[86] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 535.
[87] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 535.
[88] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 28.

a depressed call centre worker, to be served by a sad waiter?'.[89] The negative emotion that exists as part of ordinary life under contemporary capitalism ensures continued effort to relieve it through the hoped-for happiness.

Berlant believes that the current system exploits workers but not in a traditional sense. Rather, she sees that 'if you're lucky you get to be exploited'.[90] This returns us to Deleuze's society of control, where man is expected to be 'undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network'.[91] Berlant's belief is also typical of Fisher's capitalist realism, and such is the success of the naturalisation process that the society of control is able to exist in the first place. What enables the control to take place is the belief in society that individuals are lucky to work, rather than that capital is lucky to have them as workers. Man is expected to live in suffering, to be continuously prepared, and it then follows that the individual is lucky if they are able to work to relieve some of their debt. Resistance is nullified as Shaviro suggests, because 'economic competition as an endless war of all against all thus entirely displaces class antagonism'.[92] With so few opportunities, the lucky and exploited individual must work towards valorising capital as this is the least bad option.

Capital requires that an appearance of happiness exists in society contemporaneously with suffering. These are the two emotional states that ensure the cycle continues. Initially, cycles of debt occur which lead to negative affect such as fear and anxiety, which in turn limit the autonomy of the individual to act and change their situation. These fears are partly alleviated by the promise of happiness through the market, but this happiness is difficult to achieve, while also being required for the appearance of success. The failure to achieve this appearance of happiness, a neoliberal convention, may lead to further indebtedness through the intensifying nature of the spiral.

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[89] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 536.
[90] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 171.
[91] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 6.
[92] Shaviro, 'Bitter Necessity', p. 79.

Fisher brings the emotional aspect of the spiral of intensification back to the pleasure and pain principle from Nietzsche. He writes:

> The subjugatory libidinal forces that draw enjoyment from the current cult of work don't want us to entirely conceal our misery. For what enjoyment is there to be had from exploiting a worker who actually delights in their work?[93]

Here one can see that the society of control that makes the exploited individual the lucky individual is rooted in an emotional concern. Just as the creditor takes pleasure over the indebted, so too does capital take pleasure over the miserable worker, as it ensures the work continues. The dominance of capital continues as long as there is hope for happiness.

Exploring the dominant emotions that are shown in this model to worsen and spiral outwards as a result of capitalist practices is particularly useful for Part Two of this thesis. In these two chapters, DeLillo's work is examined in the context of feelings and emotions more overtly than when considered solely in the context of capitalism. The spiral model is useful as it enables an understanding of how suffering that is experienced by many within neoliberalism directly results in emotional states such as hope and fear, and the model enables these chapters to explore how emotions function in terms of lived experience of DeLillo's characters.

As at the start of this theoretical model, DeLillo's works are considered in Deleuzian terms, as machines that are derived from the system in which they are produced. They are influenced by that system, as well as reflecting it and in some cases influencing it. The thesis as a whole utilises the combination of theoretical perspectives in this model to understand how emotion works in neoliberalism, and it does this through reading DeLillo's fiction machines in

[93] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 536.

the context of this theory and other related concepts. Looking at how happiness, hope and fear are presented in the fiction enables an understanding of how far these theories accurately reflect the emotionality of neoliberalism. It explores how capitalism works and how it can be represented and even challenged in literature.

**Approaches to the fiction**

This section explains the objectives of the project by setting out the focus of the individual chapters. Each chapter contributes to an understanding of DeLillo's work and its treatment of happiness, other emotions, and capitalism. It does this by utilising different theoretical and conceptual perspectives as the subject of focus in the chapter. The spiral of intensification provides a background for the analysis of the fiction, enabling theory to deliver unique readings of DeLillo's work in its role as a 'machine' that has been created by its society. Definitions of happiness and neoliberalism as outlined in this introduction remain the same throughout the thesis unless otherwise noted for a specific purpose.

The thesis is split into three parts, each with two chapters. The first part 'Capitalism and Control' explores the use of emotion in neoliberalism's dominance over the political and economic spheres. The second part, 'Hope for the Century', looks at how there is an identifiable emotional structure that enables an understanding of how emotions actually function within capitalism, and how this structure is dynamic and responds to various events and crises. Finally, 'The World and the Future' looks at neoliberalism as figured on a global stage, as well as what efforts to resist the neoliberal way of figuring emotions might look like.

In the first chapter, DeLillo's *Underworld* provides the literary source material for analysis of the process of naturalisation, which is able to take place in society through

emotional means.[94] It explores the way in which this process utilises emotions such as happiness, fear and hope as tools of capital which ensures further valorisation through the normalisation of exploitative capitalist practices. In conducting analysis of this nature, the chapter demonstrates the validity of the spiral of intensification as a mode of understanding contemporary culture. The chapter ascertains whether naturalisation is a reasonable way in which to understand the natural ability of neoliberalism to control society.

The second chapter looks at autonomy and behaviour in DeLillo's work alongside a reading of the Deleuzian notion of a society of control. It draws upon and builds on the theoretical model from this introduction, to understand how emotion is particularly useful for neoliberalism when it comes to securing control over large populations. Through close readings of *White Noise, Cosmopolis* and the short story 'Hammer and Sickle' the chapter explores Deleuze's ideas in order to understand whether DeLillo's work reveals a specific and crucial role for emotion in the formation of contemporary society.

The third chapter expands on the spiral of intensification by exploring affect theory as it can be applied to readings of DeLillo. Building on work from Ahmed and Berlant, and incorporating the work of Frederick Jameson and Raymond Williams, the chapter looks to identify an underlying structure of feeling for neoliberalism. It uses DeLillo's work as contextual artefacts in order to identify what specific functions emotions serve within the neoliberal system, and asks how understanding affect theory and how emotions function within society can add to both a literary understanding and a more robust analysis of capitalism.

Chapter four takes one of the major themes of DeLillo's work and explores it in terms of emotions and capitalism. It looks at how crises occur and what their impact is on individuals and on society, incorporating an understanding of the structure of feeling from chapter three. It uses texts such as *Falling Man* to enquire about capitalism's ability to profit from crisis, both

[94] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism.*

economic and natural, and asks to what extent is this ability connected with happiness and emotion. The chapter also compares the Airborne Toxic Event section of *White Noise* with the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, asking how emotional responses to crisis can inform an understanding of neoliberalism's ability to profit in times of chaos.

Chapter five considers the global nature of neoliberal development from an emotional perspective, looking at *The Names* as a way of understanding distinctly American notions of the global. The chapter builds on this understanding of globalisation to explore the role of the nation and of space and place more generally within DeLillo's work. It asks how the nation works in a time of boundaryless capitalism, and what DeLillo's work can tell us about the emotional ramifications of this. To what extent are emotions like fear which are seen in a work like *Zero K* illustrative of the changing nature of space?

The final chapter focuses on questions of art, the body and resistance, and in a sense returns to some of the themes in 'Capitalism and Control' regarding naturalisation and the society of control. In what sense do novels like *Mao II*, *Cosmopolis* and *Zero K* posit futures in which alternatives to the emotional reality of neoliberalism could be possible? As well as questioning the function of art and protest to make changes in society and to the possibility for individuals to be happy, it also incorporates contemporary theory on utopian resistance, and DeLillo's work serves as a tool for interrogating the hypotheticals that are posited by this theory.

The thesis takes the above approaches as its method for answering the overall question as to what the nature of the relationship between happiness, capitalism and fiction is. It does this through critical analysis of DeLillo's work from the 1980s to the present day. Incorporating this much material allows for a demonstration of the robustness of the theories which are to be used in the analysis. As well as answering individual questions posed by the chapters, there are

other, more general lines of enquiry which relate to DeLillo's work on happiness and capitalism.

In *Mao II* DeLillo voices a persistent concern over the role of the writer in the contemporary world, believing the power of writing has diminished in its ability to alter the consciousness of culture.[95] This thesis contributes an answer to this dilemma by proposing that, while the role of writers themselves may be of limited use, the role of the novel is found in its ability to offer understanding and representation to the many facets of neoliberalism and emotion that go unchallenged and unexplored. DeLillo may be as unsure as the protagonist in *Mao II* finds himself, but this thesis argues that DeLillo's work influences, is influenced by, and offers a genuine representation of the culture. His work offers a fictional interrogation of many of the philosophies that allow an understanding of contemporary society, and they come as artworks that are both a part of and seek to be apart from that culture.

[95] Don DeLillo, *Mao II*, (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 41.

# Part One

# Capitalism and Control

## Chapter One

### ‘There’s a shine in his eye that’s halfway hopeful’: The naturalisation of capitalist control

This chapter focuses on DeLillo’s work to explore how capitalism and control are formulated in the neoliberal period. How emotion is depicted in his work will aid this understanding. This chapter and the subsequent chapter will focus on the idea of control from perspectives that were highlighted in the spiral of intensification. This chapter looks at DeLillo’s work in the context of the naturalisation process formulated by Mark Fisher and referred to by him as capitalist realism, and how it allows the neoliberal system to gain control over society without this being widely acknowledged. It expands on the process identified in the introductory theoretical model, taking as a basis the way in which naturalisation is one of many processes that spiral outwards and intensifies emotions for certain ends.

Fisher gives the name capitalist realism to the concept that this thesis interprets as naturalisation. It can be understood as ‘the widespread belief that there is no alternative to capitalism’.[1] He writes that:

> however much individuals or groups may have disdained or ironised the language of competition, entrepreneurialism and consumerism […], our widespread ritualistic compliance with this terminology has served to *naturalise* the dominance of capital and help to neutralise any opposition to it.[2]

[1] Mark Fisher, *K-Punk*: *The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher* (London: Repeater, 2018), p. 462.
[2] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 462. (emphasis mine).

For Fisher, capitalism has had much of its success through this process of naturalisation, since it has been able to turn anti-capitalist voices into voices that speak in the language of capital. The naturalisation process is arguably why it is so common to see neoliberal economic ideas applied to other areas of life, such as higher education or healthcare. Considering neoliberalism as an ideology, Fisher argues that it has achieved 'invisibility' which is why the idea that there is no alternative to capitalism has reached such consensus.

Coming at this concept with an interest in emotions, one sees that naturalisation nullifies resistance in favour of simple appeals to positive emotion. In his text on capitalist realism, Fisher argues that in the current neoliberal climate 'action is pointless' and that 'only senseless hope makes sense'.[3] Part of what makes the naturalisation process work is the way in which emotions are a fundamental part of its mechanism: it is able to promise happiness, the hope for which serves to nullify the resentment which could cause resistance.

DeLillo's work enables this chapter to explore the naturalisation process as it has been depicted in fictional accounts from different periods of neoliberalism. As the texts in question are fiction, they allow for observations and analysis that reveal the impact of naturalisation on society and its representations; how DeLillo chooses to depict a society may not be the *truth* of that society, but the reason behind the choices can still be illuminating. The chapter aims to learn about how emotions are crucial to this aspect of neoliberal control through the way DeLillo depicts emotion in *Underworld, White Noise* and *Cosmopolis*.

The chapter asks whether there is evidence of the naturalisation process in DeLillo's work, and examines what the emotional aspects of this process are. It draws conclusions as to what his fiction is able to reveal about the process. Finally given the scope of *Underworld*, there is the opportunity to think about how the naturalisation process may have been conceived of differently in pre-neoliberal era capitalism.

[3] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 3.

**Underworld and naturalisation**

This section looks at DeLillo's *Underworld* and Fisher's *Capitalist Realism* in order to understand the naturalisation process further, with particular emphasis on the way that process is rendered in fiction. It looks at naturalisation as a neoliberal experience and considers similarities between its methods and emotional mechanisms existing prior to neoliberalism. This reading goes toward an examination of the robustness of the naturalisation theory, as well as how far using DeLillo's work as a literary machine works as a method for comprehension of contemporary cultural phenomena.

DeLillo's texts reveal the ubiquity of the capitalist system in contemporary society through the way his characters think and feel, and the impact capitalist processes have on their lives. Nick Shay, the protagonist of *Underworld* is, like many DeLillo characters, a well-remunerated middle-class male, and as such there might be little surprise at his perspective on neoliberal capital:

> The corporation is supposed to take us outside ourselves. We design these organised bodies to respond to the market, face foursquare into the world. But things tend to drift dimly inward. Gossip, rumor, promotions, personalities, it's only natural isn't it – all the human lapses that take up space in the company soul.[4]

[4] Don DeLillo, *Underworld* (London: Picador, 1999), p. 89.

Depending on which way one reads this, Shay is either an adoring advocate of contemporary capitalism or he laments the way in which it impacts the non-economic elements of life. In both cases it is either joy or resignation, not a sense that there could be an alternative way of structuring society. In the former reading, he finds solace in the way in which the corporation is able to organise his life so that it expands his individuality, and recognises that responding to the market is of the utmost importance. He finds frustration in the human lapses that occur and impede the economic progress of the company. Reading Shay in this way correlates with Fisher's work, in that the naturalisation process has 'installed a 'business ontology' in which it is *simply obvious* that everything in society, including healthcare and education, should be run as a business'.[5]

Shay's adherence to business ontology is seen in the way he negates criticism of neoliberalism, specifically the technological advances. DeLillo's text reads 'bemoan technology all you want. It expands your self-esteem and connects you in your well-pressed suit to the things that slip through the world otherwise unperceived'.[6] Shay reveals the common response to what is sometimes perceived as 'naïve utopianism'.[7] His perception that capitalism improves self-esteem goes against much contemporary thought on the subject of mental health, such as the work of Laura Hyman, who implies a link between capitalism and alienation.[8] Shay's viewpoint is coherent with the naturalisation process which ensures the continued belief in capital as a system, and where even 'emphasizing the ways in which [capitalism] leads to suffering […] reinforces capitalist realism'.[9] Shay's attitude shows the effect of the naturalisation process, in which humane concerns such as mental health are pushed back, not

[5] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 17.
[6] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 89.
[7] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 16.
[8] Laura Hyman, 'Happiness and Memory: Some Sociological Reflections', *Sociological Research Online* 19(2)3 (2014) p. 5.
[9] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 16.

necessarily because they are unimportant, but because there is nothing to be done to change things.

One could read Shay's thoughts with typical DeLillian irony, and argue that he is critical of the naturalisation of capitalist practices. As Fisher points out, however, even these criticisms may tend toward the reinforcement of capitalist realism. One such reason for this reinforcement might be the fact that revealing problems highlights the distinct lack of workable solutions, such is the extent to which neoliberalism has permeated social life. Throughout *Underworld,* DeLillo's characters do criticise their capitalist influenced lives, with an order of nuns, for example, discussing 'how the last decade of the century looks worse than the first in some respects'.[10] Fisher's work suggests this kind of observation is typical of the naturalisation process. The current forms of criticism and resistance are 'so hopeless and impotent' in the face of capitalist realism which is 'seamless'.[11]

The sections of the novel set in the 1990s show Shay as a character completely comfortable speaking the language of neoliberal capitalism. He is somebody who has internalised the logic of naturalisation, largely due to societal beliefs and the function he serves in the neoliberal system. He describes his Lexus rental car in a way that shows reverence for capital as an absolute good. DeLillo writes:

> This is a car assembled in a work area that's completely free of human presence. Not a spot of mortal sweat except, okay, for the guys who drive the product out of the plant […]. The system flows forever onward, automated to priestly nuance, every gliding movement back-referenced for prime performance.[12]

[10] DeLillo, *Underworld*, p. 811.
[11] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 16.
[12] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 63.

Although not an everyman character by any means, Shay's beliefs demonstrate that he is perfectly in conjunction with standard neoliberal thought. Owing to the naturalisation process, the automation and inhumanity of the motor-vehicle industry is seen as a good thing where many people would regard them as downsides. With these downsides effectively disregarded, Shay's is a perspective akin to the religiosity observed by William Davies, likening it to a 'pro-business, free-market *creed* [that has] taken hold'.[13] The naturalisation process has revealed capital's dominance through its ability to engender positive emotion in many, and as Fisher would argue, it also nullifies negative emotion in dissenters.

Side effects of capital are acknowledged by Shay but he frames them in a positive way, suggesting that the mode of production has worked out kinks. He describes the solidity of the car by alluding to mental health: 'There's nobody on the line with caffeine nerves or a history of clinical depression'.[14] Obviously there are other causes of mental ill-health than the side-effects of neoliberalism, but for Fisher and the naturalisation process it is fundamentally important. He argues that 'many have simply buckled under the terrifyingly unstable conditions of post-Fordism'.[15] This aspect is, however, not what provides clarity as to the presence of naturalisation in this section of *Underworld*. Instead it is the flippancy with which Shay talks of mental illness as something which is merely a hinderance to production, rather than a problem with a societal cause that should be solved at its root. Advocates of neoliberalism acknowledge mental ill-health but seek to put the blame on the individual for not being happy.

This is naturalisation in action. It is a process of naturalising the damaging emotional and societal effects of capitalism, and where possible turning them into positive emotion. Shay accepts the neoliberal perspective that 'denies any possibility of a social causation of mental

[13] Davies, *Happiness Industry*, p. 140. (emphasis mine).
[14] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 63.
[15] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 37.

illness' and instead turns the blame onto the individual in question, 'reinforc[ing] Capital's drive toward atomistic individualization'.[16] With the profit motive as neoliberalism's main aim, it is simply logical that capital would want robotic automatization where possible, and would gladly accept human negative emotions as a side effect. Shay's acceptance and enjoyment of this fact implies a wider societal attitude towards these issues.

Some of the work done on Fisher's ideas reveals the robustness of the naturalisation process as a theory for understanding capitalist control. Michael E. Gardiner points towards the ubiquity of neoliberalism in the formation of individual emotions. He writes 'what we typically think of as dissociated moods, desires and psychological affectations are anything but random or inconsequential'.[17] For Gardiner, all emotions have become intertwined within the processes of neoliberalism, and capital has sought out ways in which to influence emotions further. In *Underworld* we see Brian Glassic, a friend of Shay's, demonstrate his 'boyish forays' when he gets over-excited about a condom shop. 'The whole place was condoms, shelves filled with a hundred kinds of protections […] and T-shirts of course, and baseball caps with condom logos'.[18] This demonstrates what Gardiner refers to as 'the inability to seek anything but an immediacy of pleasure' which is typical of capitalist realism's naturalisation process.[19] More interestingly, however, it reveals the extent to which the neoliberal era (in this case, the 1990s) ushered in a system which 'needs our complicity on some level and [can] not operate without it'.[20]

Glassic's excitement reflects how the naturalisation process ensures complicity with the system. It does this by revealing the impact that capital is able to have on happiness and emotion, since Glassic's joy comes directly from a commercial enterprise. *Underworld* shows

[16] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 37.
[17] Michael Gardiner, 'The Multitude Strikes Back? Boredom in an Age of Semiocapitalism', *New Formations* 82 (2014), 29-46, p. 30.
[18] DeLillo, *Underworld,* pp. 108-109.
[19] Gardiner, 'Multitude Strikes Back', pp. 37-38.
[20] Gardiner, 'Multitude Strikes Back', p. 38.

that neoliberal capitalism is adept at garnering the emotional engagement that it requires, and Glassic even refers to the location of the shop with similar excitement.[21] While some theorists, such as Jodi Dean, counter capitalism's ability to remain in control, arguing that government could, if it wished, simply 'abolish' elements of neoliberalism it found objectionable, Glassic's reaction suggests that this belief is misguided, and that naturalisation has ensured belief in capital (whether one *agrees* with it or not), has become so advanced that objectionable elements are no longer objected to, or are part of a process of acquiescence typified by Fisher's 'senseless hope'.[22] Dean's idea seems to go against Jeremy Gilbert's suggestion that 'government [as] simply a neutral instrument' is a fantasy, since government, like many aspects of neoliberal society, has become part of the naturalisation process.[23]

*Underworld* is a useful text for understanding these ideas due to its depiction of capitalism in the 1990s. The decade appears to be a crucial one for understanding the changes that occurred in neoliberalism that meant an individual's emotional engagement was ever more important for valorisation. The 1990s were a time in which ideas such as Francis Fukuyama's 'End of History' gained a great deal of traction, and these sorts of pro-capitalist and *what else could there be* ideas depicted in *Underworld* lend support for the robustness of the naturalisation theory. Fisher even suggests that the 'idea of the post-political and post-ideological' as Fukuyama proposed, 'was always a cover for neoliberal hegemony'.[24] He suggests that this 'cover' became more pronounced in the last few decades, but DeLillo's novel seems already to be dealing with some of these ideas as far back as the 1990s.

With that being said, much of *Underworld* poses a problem for the idea that naturalisation is merely a neoliberal entity. A large quanitity of the text is focused on time

[21] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 109.
[22] Jodi Dean, 'Complexity as Capture – Neoliberalism and the Loop of Drive', *New Formations* 80 (2013), 138-154, p. 151.
[23] Mark Fisher and Jeremy Gilbert, 'Capitalist Realism and Neoliberal Hegemony: A Dialogue', *New Formations* 80 (2013), 89-101, p. 96.
[24] Fisher, 'A Dialogue', p. 90.

periods prior to neoliberalism, starting in the 1950s, in which the Cold War provides a backdrop which is that of 'a culture suffused throughout by the struggle between communism and capitalism'.[25] Much of what Fisher describes as elements of naturalisation are also present as a result of the Cold War, which causes a swell of pro-capitalist sentiment in the characters.

> In a country that's in a hurry to make the future, the names attached to the products are an enduring reassurance. Johnson & Johnson and Quaker State and RCA Victor and Burlington Mills and Bristol-Meyers and General Motors. These are the venerated emblems of the burgeoning economy, easier to identify than the names of battlefields or dead presidents.[26]

This section demonstrates a common celebration of 1950s corporate America. If these comments were made in the contemporary period, they would speak of the naturalisation process and the veneration of neoliberalism, but in this case they are a product of the Cold War. DeLillo shows that this type of economics-based nationalism was essentially required for the anti-communism of the time. Although there are similarities between neoliberal society's pro-capitalist rhetoric and this earlier period, they served different purposes.

Despite the presence of the 1950s in *Underworld*, the text remains relevant for an investigation into neoliberal naturalisation. As Thomas Schaub argues, '*Underworld* is not a Cold War narrative'.[27] It fluctuates between depictions of the pre and post neoliberal era, but when exploring the earlier period it is not doing so in a way that 'aspires to the romance genre', nor to the narrative dominated by extinction fears of Cold War tensions.[28] The novel instead

[25] Thomas Hill Schaub, 'Underworld, Memory, and the Recycling of Cold War Narrative', in *Don DeLillo: Mao II, Underworld, Falling Man*, ed. by Stacey Olster (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 69.
[26] DeLillo, *Underworld*, p. 39.
[27] Schaub, 'Recycling', p. 71.
[28] Schaub, 'Recycling', p. 71.

utilises the past of Shay's character (and other characters) in order to 'launch […] a psychological history that [Shay] is still contending with'.[29] The 1950s passages of the text refer to the present; they are being used to add context to the 1990s passages. Although *Underworld* often depicts this earlier period, it remains a text of the 1990s and it therefore reflects this context in a more immediate manner.

This is not to say that the novel has nothing reliable to say about the earlier, pre-neoliberal period. The representation of the 1950s in the text, along with the same techniques and language of naturalisation suggest that Fisher's theories do not speak only of a contemporary phenomenon, and that they have been present in earlier forms of capital. When reading these 1950s parts of the novel it is clear that these are both pertinent to understandings of the 1950s and the 1990s. That while Shaub is correct and *Underworld* is not a Cold War narrative in itself, it nonetheless reveals things about that period, despite the fact that the earlier decade is viewed through the lens of neoliberalism.

This understanding of the two decades may be aided through Peter Boxall's reading of the text. He writes on the concept of waste that the novel deals with the 'recycling of that which is rejected' and ties this together with death and other themes of the text.[30] The 'endless capacity of the waste product to return itself to the heart of the culture which seeks to eliminate it' is also applicable to the naturalisation processes seen in both decades.[31] The language of the 1950s which mirrors the naturalisation language of contemporary neoliberalism suggests, like the novel itself, that 'everything is connected'.[32] The way Shay's contemporary language mirrors so much of the pro-capitalist language of the earlier period points to the integral position of emotions within capital. The text suggests that earlier forms of capitalism required

[29] Schaub, 'Recycling', p. 71.
[30] Peter Boxall, *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 196.
[31] Boxall, *Possibility,* p. 196.
[32] Boxall, *Possibility,* p. 196.

emotional engagement and the self-policing of belief that are typical of the naturalisation 'regime of self-surveillance'.[33]

The novel opens in the 1950s, an era before the neoliberal deregulation that provides the context of much of *Underworld*'s contemporary setting. However, from this earliest passage of text, elements of the naturalisation process are already evident in DeLillo's writing. The character to whom the reader is first introduced is described in the following way: 'He speaks in your voice, American, and there's a shine in his eye that's halfway hopeful'.[34] This halfway hopefulness is derived from both DeLillo's depiction of the past as a nostalgic place, and the halfway hopefulness of the contemporary moment. *Underworld* demonstrates that the naturalisation process operates with many of the same techniques used by other forms of capital for other reasons, but it reveals the inherent emotional qualities to these techniques. Just as Shay needs to be engaged in corporate admiration about his Lexus and Glassic must be excited about the success of a commercial enterprise, characters from the earlier period in the text have internalised and naturalised socially validated emotions. Like all Americans in DeLillo's text, they must be halfway hopeful in order to normalise and accept the system in which they live. Using *Underworld* as a literary machine to explore naturalisation techniques reveals their presence in the neoliberal period, but also their unexpected appearance in DeLillo's depiction of the 1950s. This earlier form of naturalisation is under discussion in the next section, questioning how emotions highlighted in this section make both time periods relevant for a study of how capitalism and control work together.

**Pre-neoliberal naturalisation**

[33] Fisher, 'Dialogue', p. 91.
[34] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 11.

This section continues analysis of *Underworld* to understand more about the emotional aspects of the naturalisation process. It looks at a section of the novel not involving the main protagonists which explores how crucial emotional engagement is for capitalism. It also shows what specific functions emotions serve and what forms they take. In order to learn more about the naturalisation process this section explores whether DeLillo's work corresponds with Fisher's theoretical approach, or whether it differs. This section also uses the multiple-time-period setting of *Underworld* to explore how pre-neoliberal forms of capitalism used similar techniques to naturalisation in order to control and manage populations.

The Deming family, Eric, Erica and Rick, take up only a small amount of *Underworld*, but their section of the text is illuminating for the description of their life in the 1950s, as well as the things they find stimulating and enjoyable. This is especially interesting given DeLillo is writing retrospectively from the 1990s. The episode contains few paragraphs that do not in some way narrate the influence of capitalism over their lives. This is seen in the repeated citing of brand names and the way certain products heighten their users' emotions. However, capital interjects most prominently into their lives through stand-alone paragraphs which DeLillo employs throughout the section which appear to refer to nothing in particular, and read like product warning labels: 'Prolonged exposure to sun may cause bursting', 'If swallowed, induce vomiting at once', 'Danger. Contents under pressure', 'To avoid suffocation keep out of reach of small children', 'Do not puncture or incinerate', 'Flush eyes with water and call physician at once' and 'Do not use in enclosed space'.[35] The presence of these phrases illustrates the overwhelming presence of capital in the life of Americans, as rarely a thought or action takes place without one of these phrases appearing. Despite the text being full of positive emotion, brought about by products ('Doing things with Jell-O was just about the best way to improve

[35] DeLillo, *Underworld,* pp. 513-520.

her mood' and 'This was something, basically, he could do forever'), these disconcerting warnings continue to appear.[36]

These warnings serve as a reminder of the background anxiety that besets the Demings' supposedly happy consumerism. Molly Wallace suggests that these phrases 'interrupt the flow of the Demings' vacuous lives', and this interruption to the 'flow' serves as a constant reminder that their lives of middling wealth and privilege are only ever a short way from the danger of which the phrases warn.[37] This part of the text could be read as a critique of aspects of the naturalisation process, in that capitalist artefacts which are supposed to bring happiness often actually manifest in discontent and anxiety. This imminent danger does not undermine naturalisation, as it does not suggest a better alternative than capitalism, but it does suggest that the benevolence of capital felt by the Demings is not necessarily justified. The Demings' assumptions are questioned: if the positive feelings that products give them are ascribed to capitalism, so too must the life-threatening warnings that come with them.

DeLillo approaches these assumptions in another way. Despite enjoying making things from Jell-O, Erica is unhappy while using it; her mood was 'oddly gloomy today – she couldn't figure out why'.[38] This passage of the text takes place during the 1950s, and a reader might assume that her mood was low because of Cold War tensions, an assumption DeLillo allows for, writing: 'there was one mold Erica had never used, sort of guided missile-like, because it made her feel uneasy somehow'.[39] This implies that her emotional response is shaped by the threat posed to her family and her material comforts by international hostility.

Although they are related to the Cold War, Erica's negative emotions come from something slightly different. The satellite that the Russians had put into space made her feel 'a

[36] DeLillo, *Underworld*, pp. 515-516.
[37] Molly Wallace, '"Venerated Emblems": DeLillo's Underworld and the History-Commodity', *Critique* 42 (2001), 367-383, p. 7
[38] DeLillo, *Underworld*, p. 514.
[39] DeLillo, *Underworld*, p. 515.

twisted sort of disappointment', DeLillo writes, 'It was theirs, not ours. It flew at an amazing rate of speed over the North Pole, *beep beep beep*, passing just above us, evidently, at certain times'.[40] This potential threat is not only what makes Erica unhappy. It is also the failure of a system she had been assured was correct and had wholeheartedly come to believe in. The fact that the Russians had achieved it first puts doubt on the commonly held notion that communism was not a viable alternative to capitalism. Wallace writes that 'in the face of an enemy defined primarily by its different economic system, celebration of the American economy was virtually mandatory'.[41] This mandatory celebration of capitalism speaks to early forms of naturalisation taking place well before the neoliberal era. The mental and emotional difficulty an individual would face when realising that things were not necessarily as clear as they had been made to believe would lead to the kinds of disquieting reactions felt by Erica. This questioning represents an emotional breakdown based on the inversion of naturalisation techniques that *Underworld* shows to be employed well before the neoliberal era.

Many of naturalisation's emotional components can be seen in this description of pre-neoliberal America. Erica is emotionally engaged in the success of capitalism, and her happiness and unhappiness are both tied to the fact of there being no viable alternative. The fact she venerates her material goods speaks to the proof she feels she has of capital's superiority. When the Russians succeeded where the Americans had not it opens a space for a previously unseen doubt. Just as in modern neoliberal naturalisation, the Cold War evidently taught that there was simply no alternative, and the impact on emotions is mirrored between the two cases. Had she believed in the superiority of capital over communism based solely on her own subjective opinions and economic knowledge, then frustration would have been a more logical response than disquiet and unease. Her unease shows that more than subjective individual belief was required to cement capital's dominance in the 1950s. This finds

[40] DeLillo, *Underworld*, p. 518.
[41] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 368.

expression in the formulation of naturalisation in its 'invisibility', which Fisher argues allows for neoliberal ideology to proceed as if it was not there at all.[42] Both DeLillo's exploration of the 1950s and contemporary theory support the idea that naturalisation works because people are unaware that it is happening.

The way these negative aspects of capital are hidden is important for how the system appears to only engender happiness and positive emotion. Disregarding the fact that a 'rubberoid' material surrounds them in their home and the inhuman, synthetic argument that could be made about that, Erica has some rubber gloves which make her happy for many reasons. Not only do they serve a simple function, but they come to represent the successes of the capitalist system that she feels make her country better than any other. She loves her gloves because the material from which they are made provides insulation from danger in both a metaphorical and a literal sense. Seeing the same capitalist success in so many products reveals the importance of consumerism for the impact of naturalisation processes. As well as its functional uses, Erica surrounds herself with this material because it shows capitalism's dominance over other systems, which reaffirms her happiness. DeLillo goes further and suggests her character experiences some emotional desperation: the 'gloves were *important* to her'.[43] The system in which she lives relies not just on people enjoying the products of consumerism, but finding something fundamentally and emotionally engaging in them. Indeed, Wallace argues that commodity culture played a very important role in 1950s America in building national identity.[44] So much so that Erica finds the gloves important 'despite the way they felt, clammy but also dry, a feeling that defied innate contradiction'.[45] Their downsides are exculpated due to the fact that they represent the triumph of American capital.

[42] Fisher, *K-Punk,* p. 462.
[43] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 520. (emphasis mine).
[44] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 378.
[45] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 520.

Erica finds her only solace from anxiety and desperation in these mundane products of consumer culture, even relying on her gloves to shield her from bodily contact with her son.[46] Although one could pity this kind of outlook, it is connected to a naturalisation technique that relies on emotional engagement with capitalist production. If a system seeks to ensure unwavering belief (even if not outright support) then it must ensure that individuals not only find the system useful enough to seek no alternative, but must be attached to and affected by it. The system in the 1950s had become socially ingrained due to the importance of capital for American national identity, but ultimately the methods are of a similar nature to neoliberal naturalisation.

Neoliberal capitalism is typified by a religiosity of capitalism, a 'creed' according to Davies, and this can also be seen in the importance of materialism in DeLillo's depiction of the 1950s. All the things around Erica are important. 'Things and words. Words to believe in and live by'.[47] DeLillo then lists the words 'Breezeway', 'Crisper', 'Stacking chairs', 'Fruit juicer' and a number of others. The consumerist practices take on a spirituality, being not just tools but things to live by and believe in, and their names a mantra for positive emotion. Just as neoliberal capital requires people to believe in the happiness that comes from consumerism, the same veneration of material objects was practiced in the 1950s.

Erica believes these items make her feel better, but ultimately the emotional engagement is one-sided. Her enjoyment is a façade, since the using of these products frequently makes her 'mood worse', such as when her 'satellite-shaped vacuum cleaner' evokes Sputnik.[48] Her emotional engagement, however, serves not only to valorise capital (through consumerism) but it serves to further the impact of naturalisation through a repeated and dogmatic belief that these items do make her happy, even if there is no real evidence of it.

[46] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 520.
[47] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 520.
[48] DeLillo, *Underworld,* p. 520.

This is partly why the satellite-shaped items she owns make her feel uneasy, as they provide a reminder that perhaps the whole of her emotional outlook is based on untruths.

Gilbert's views on what constitutes capitalist realism correlate closely with the revelation found in *Underworld* that the same techniques of naturalisation occur in pre-neoliberal forms of capitalism, as well as in the contemporary moment. He views the concept as essentially designating 'both the conviction that there is no alternative to capitalism as a paradigm for social organisation, and the mechanisms which are used to disseminate and reproduce that conviction amongst large populations'.[49] As one can see, Gilbert makes no attempt to define capitalist realism as a neoliberal phenomenon as Fisher does; he defines it in terms of its function within society. Therefore, one can consider American capital during the Cold War to have benefitted from naturalisation techniques as part of its process of organising society by reinforcing its message repeatedly.

Gilbert's work even suggests that there is a precedent to the idea that naturalisation techniques existed prior to neoliberalism as 'a hegemonic ideology, operating as all hegemonic ideologies do, to try to efface their own historicity and the contingency of the social arrangements which they legitimate'.[50] We see this effacement in Erica's views on the satellite. Her perturbance comes from the ideological invisibility of Cold War capitalism slipping and the doubts of capital's hegemony being revealed. One sees that this is distinct from neoliberal naturalisation as it is heavily tied to the concept of nationhood (a concept that is explored more later in the thesis) whereas neoliberalism is the primacy of capital over all other modes of societal organisation. Nevertheless, the techniques between the two time periods appear to remain largely similar, and the familiarity characters would have had with them goes some way to explaining the ease with which they are so easily implemented in the 1990s.

[49] Fisher, 'A Dialogue', pp. 89-90.
[50] Fisher, 'A Dialogue', p. 90.

The 1990s characters in *Underworld* take to the mechanisms of naturalisation so easily because of the emotional impact the by-products of capitalism have always produced. The way Erica regards her consumer products approaches what Macon Holt refers to in his work on Fisher as libidinization.[51] He writes that 'the hyper-competitive capitalism of the United States manages to keep the depressive revelation of capitalist realism somewhat at bay by submerging its subjects in the libidinizing spectacle of consumption'.[52] For Erica, the emotionally gratifying aspects of her consumer goods enable naturalisation; her blindness to the negative aspects of 1950s capitalism occurs through this libidinal component. It follows that this culture of consumption has enabled the processes of capitalist realism to have so much success in the present. Holt refers to other cultures, notably those of Scandinavia, where 'social democracy has […] slowed the advance of capitalist realism'.[53] There existed in pre-neoliberal America the processes of naturalisation which has enabled capital to utilise the same practices without there being transition between the periods.

It would be unreasonable to think that the Deming family in *Underworld* spend time thinking about the influence of capital on their lives, and they would almost certainly not attribute their issues to capital. This demonstrates both the 'invisibility' of the ideology, as well as the way Fisher argues 'capitalism is massively naturalised'.[54] Thinking of Erica's disquiet at the thought of American/capitalist failure, one sees expressed Fisher's suggestion that 'the disappearance of alternatives […] make[s] it much harder to apprehend capitalism as a specific, contingent system'.[55] The idea that there are no good alternatives to American capitalism is so deeply entrenched, as a result of naturalisation processes, that the family do not even think of capitalism when they clean their car, or covet consumer goods, they think only of America.

[51] Macon Holt, *Pop Music and Hip Ennui: A Sonic Fiction of Capitalist Realism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 22.
[52] Holt, *Hip Ennui,* p. 22.
[53] Holt, *Hip Ennui,* p. 22.
[54] Fisher, 'A Dialogue', p. 90.
[55] Fisher, 'A Dialogue', p. 90.

Theories that underpin naturalisation in *Capitalist Realism* suggest that this type of system does not appear as a 'political position' but rather comes slowly and 'emerges instead as a pragmatic adjustment'.[56] Although Fisher argues that 'whether we like it or not, the world is governed by neoliberal ideas', this fails to take into account this slowly emerging pragmatic adjustment, explained in *Underworld* by the presence of naturalisation techniques in the 1950s. Although ideals were different in that period, with less focus on market rule and deregulation, the pervasiveness of capitalist ideology means that the 'pragmatic adjustment' is barely even necessary. The politics of the earlier period makes this adjustment very minor, since the period of neoliberalism has been well prepared for in emotional terms.

Wallace asks a pertinent question for this section's current line of enquiry, when reading *Underworld*: 'what does it mean to represent the 1950s in the 1990s?'. Her reading implies that one could read the warning label phrases as signs of the toxicity of DeLillo's depiction itself, suggesting its veracity be questioned owing to the reliance of the 'production of history as a commodity'.[57] Although she makes the valid point that American demand for nostalgia of the 1950s is persistent, reading DeLillo's work in terms of only the depiction of naturalisation techniques removes nostalgia as a biasing influence on the reading.[58] Despite the irony and nostalgia that make *Underworld* a successful novel, the presence of naturalisation techniques in the 1950s implies that these were elements of society at the time.

She writes that one can consider depictions of the 1950s in the 1990s as 'nostalgia for an integrated national identity – a particular relationship to commodities that is lost in an era of globalization'.[59] The Deming family have a relationship with their commodities, and define themselves by their material possessions, in a way typical of a period in which national identity

[56] Fisher, 'A Dialogue', p. 90.
[57] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 369
[58] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 371
[59] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 371

was boosted by 'commentators celebrat[ing] the booming economy'.[60] This chapter does not necessarily agree with Wallace that the Deming family represent a nostalgic depiction of the Fordist era. However, there is a recognisability between the 1950s DeLillo writes and the contemporary period, specifically in terms of the naturalisation techniques, first used to foster solidarity within the nation and now to bolster capital's dominance. While nostalgia is rooted in an emotional longing for the past, *Underworld* suggests that emotional engagement is what is chiefly recognisable between the two time periods, but that this does not necessitate a yearning to return. The emotion inherent to naturalisation is what makes reading this part of *Underworld* instructive for a contemporary understanding, despite being set so far in the past.

The concept of naturalisation that finds its best exemplification in the present moment is, in *Underworld*, deeply connected with the 1950s. The way in which alternatives are not seen as viable (or, are not seen at all) is common to both periods, as is the importance put on emotionally engaging with elements of capitalist production through materialism. Wallace points out that the distinction lies with the fact that 'the language of commodity culture [in the 1990s] is no longer operating as a form of *national* identity, but as a form of international identity'.[61] As is discussed later in the thesis, the role of the nation has changed dramatically from the 1950s to the present day and modes of capitalism have adapted and made the pragmatic adjustment accordingly. This adjustment was less crucial on an individual level as the techniques of control remained the same or similar; it was only the beneficiary of the emotional engagement that changed. Naturalisation processes have universalised the language of commodities and capitalism and it no longer needs to be tied to national solidarity as it was in the 1950s. Wallace argues that this language of capitalism has become so naturalised that it has become synonymous with 'human nature itself'.[62]

[60] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 368
[61] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 378. (emphasis mine).
[62] Wallace, 'History-Commodity', p. 378.

Fisher's work and that of those writing on capitalist realism give one the language and tools for understanding the naturalisation process and recognising its presence in fiction. Although Fisher's understanding is primarily derived from UK society, naturalisation's presence in neoliberalism and the function it serves for neoliberal valorisation makes his perspective relevant for the USA. What reading DeLillo's *Underworld* has enabled is an understanding of the similarities between the techniques used to naturalise capital in neoliberalism as well as those used in the Cold War period. The novel reveals America's predisposition to a belief in the unwavering goodness of capitalism in the present day. Shay's beliefs in the 1990s are possible because of the political climate in which he grew up. *Underworld* and those writing on it often speak of the novel's claim that everything is connected, and what this reading has ascertained is that the novel demonstrates connections between the methods of control in the past and in the contemporary moment. Naturalisation as Fisher describes in *Capitalist Realism* is distinctly neoliberal, but DeLillo's work shows us that it is easier to achieve in the present day because of the political climate of the 1950s.

**Technology and protest**

This section builds on the analysis of *Underworld* by looking at texts from neoliberal-era DeLillo, in *White Noise* and *Cosmopolis*. It focuses on the contemporary depictions of capitalist control over society, the emotional aspects to these depictions, and interrogates the veracity of Fisher's claims through this lens. This section builds upon Fisher's work, not only through literary analysis, but also by drawing upon the work of Franco Berardi, who looks at the primacy of emotions in the workings of neoliberal capitalism.

In *Capitalist Realism* Fisher argues that it is not necessary for complete belief in capitalism for the naturalisation process to work, and that ultimately it is the lack of alternatives that reproduces neoliberal dominance. He suggests that one can be actively anti-capitalist while simultaneously engaging in the system and taking pleasure from it. He writes that 'we are able to fetishize money in our actions only because we have already taken an ironic distance towards money in our heads'.[63] This explains how people can simultaneously take the view that money is a 'meaningless token' as well as containing 'holy value'.[64] This seemingly contradictory way of thinking correlates closely with some of DeLillo's work.

In *Underworld* there was a great deal of correlation between the naturalisation process as outlined in the theory and its depiction in fiction, and other DeLillo novels also represent elements of this emotional process. One of the most relevant scenes appears in *White Noise* when Gladney goes to the bank:

> I went to the automated teller machine to check my balance. I inserted my card, entered my secret code, tapped out my request. The figure on the screen roughly corresponded to my independent estimate, feebly arrived at after long searches through documents, tormented arithmetic. Waves of relief and gratitude flowed over me. The system had blessed my life. I felt its support and approval. […] I sensed that something of deep personal value, but not money, not that at all, had been authenticated and confirmed. […] The system was invisible, which made it all the more impressive, all the more disquieting to deal with. But we were in accord, at least for now. The networks, the circuits, the streams, the harmonies.[65]

[63] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 13.
[64] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 13.
[65] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 46.

This scene shows DeLillo's character engaging with the technologies of capital, and the emotional power that the naturalisation process has over his life. Initially, the system relieves Gladney of the tiresome work and 'tormented arithmetic' that the fetishization of money has ensured he is bound to. He is tormented by the fact of his life's financialisation, and is only able to move past this process at the whims of capitalist technology. Rather than thinking critically about the process that binds him with money, he is merely grateful that he is one of the lucky exploited, to paraphrase Lauren Berlant's term. The positive emotional gratification he gains from the system is what comes closest to happiness for Gladney in the novel, and the system maintains such control over his outlook owing to this emotional power, and the positive emotion it appears to offer. The naturalisation process is expressed in the way Gladney finds something of 'deep personal value' and himself 'authenticated and confirmed' through the technology of capital. In this way neoliberalism becomes the 'hidden' ideology, as it has removed itself from his thinking, leaving only the positive emotion in an individual context. He does not think of money, despite it being a purely financial transaction, he thinks only of the emotional weight that the action carries. It is a similar process to his shopping trip later in the novel when he gains 'existential credit' on the basis of his consumerism.[66]

Although Gladney does not seem to notice his own normalising of capitalist processes, instead believing his emotional validation at the bank comes separately to capitalism, he does acknowledge the presence of a system. Although he says that 'the system was invisible', which coheres with Fisher's argument that ideology is 'hidden', Gladney ascribes this invisibility to technological systems, not to capital. He speaks to the technology of capital, but misses the neoliberal system that sits underneath, constituting the white noise of his life. The technology evokes disquiet in its invisibility, yet he remains grateful to the system of capital that ensures

[66] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 84.

the proliferation of these technologies. Just as he takes his emotional positivity to be separate from capital, so too does his unhappiness at technological advancements appear to him to be outside the sphere of capital. This shows the sophistication of the naturalisation process.

Berardi takes a view on the function of money that, although it 'is supposed to be the measure of value, [it] has been corrupted such that it now acts as a tool for complete submission'.[67] One sees this in the character of Gladney who, in *White Noise* submits himself to the emotional pull that capitalism has over him. Berardi links money to debt, arguing that people are bound in a 'chain of debt' which obliges them to accept exploitation.[68] Although DeLillo's character is not overtly indebted, the anxiety that is relieved by a positive bank balance demonstrates the debt mechanism's overwhelming influence on the controlling ability of capital. It serves as a primal fear and a reminder that there is no other way to exist other than to operate under the prescribed rules of neoliberalism. This is echoed in Gladney's eagerness to please his employers at the College. The way in which he does not recognise the emotional power money has over his life, preferring instead to express disquiet at technology, is typical of naturalisation; while Fisher argues that the ideology is hidden, Berardi formulates it as debt having entered the 'domain of the unconscious', which flattens experience in a way consistent with the argument that there is no alternative.

Indeed, similar conclusions arise if one reads *White Noise* purely from a consumerist-critical perspective. The central crux of the novel, even disregarding the emotional impact of capitalist transactions, is the idea of a pill that can cure the fear of death. As Robert Pallitto writes, DeLillo 'imagines this most precious consumer good, which would allow the buyer to transcend the greatest fear in human experience'.[69] Pallitto focuses on the fact that removal of this fear, as a 'central aspect of the human condition' would deny one of our 'most basic fact[s]'

[67] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide* (London: Verso, 2015), pp. 26-27.
[68] Berardi, *Heroes,* pp. 144-145.
[69] Robert Pallitto, 'Technology, Tradeoffs, and Freedom as Depicted in Postmodern Fiction', *The Journal of American Culture* 40 (2017), 399-413, p.403.

and thus argues for the essential inhumanity of consumerism in the novel. Further, naturalisation is so ingrained within the context of the novel that the idea of something as magical as this consumer good does not seem beyond the realms of possibility. Neither the characters nor the narration of the novel seem to doubt the possibility of capital developing such a unique and powerful level of control over emotion. The novel obviously plays with postmodern ironies in its depiction of consumerism, but nevertheless its central crux is the implicit power of capital to influence emotions. One may infer myopia on DeLillo's part, since criticism in the novel tends to focus on the dangerous power of technology, rather than the system that underpins it.

If one takes Fisher and Berardi's perspective on the importance of 'hidden' neoliberal ideology being crucial to the naturalisation of capitalist methods of control and normalisation of life under the neoliberal system, then one must ask *how* exactly the ideology comes to be hidden. Fisher writes that 'Jameson used to report in horror about the ways that capitalism had seeped into the very unconscious; now the fact that capitalism has colonized the dreaming life of the population is so taken for granted that it is no longer worthy of comment'.[70] Arguably, as was explored within the spiral of intensification theoretical model, naturalisation leads to further naturalisation, which leads to more deeply hidden ideology; what at first seems horrific soon becomes so normal it is not mentioned. Understanding this process as an exponentially expanding spiral explains how naturalisation leads to increased control and capitalist power and is difficult to counteract. But a contradiction here is the presence in both Fisher's work and DeLillo's of staunch anti-capitalist movements. Both writers' texts position these movements as part of naturalisation and part of capitalism, but to what extent is the ideology of neoliberalism hidden if it is being actively opposed, regardless of how successfully?

[70] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* pp. 8-9.

The answer to this problematic question is found in a protest scene in DeLillo's novel of finance, *Cosmopolis*. The scene is explored in various chapters of this thesis, from different perspectives. The violence and chaos of the protest suggests that the novel wants the reader to connect it with capitalism itself; both systems are violent and chaotic. This sort of reading supports the notion that protest is contained within market rationality. Packer regards the protestors as such:

> But these are not the grave-diggers [of capitalism]. This is the free market itself. These people are a fantasy generated by the market. They don't exist outside the market. There is nowhere they can go to be on the outside. There is no outside.[71]

Packer's comments take aim at the Marxist notion of capitalism producing its own grave-diggers, suggesting that in fact these protestors are as much a part of capitalism as he is. He goes further, suggesting that they are necessary to the market itself, 'a fantasy generated' presumably to fill a facsimile of resistance, required to make people less aware of the power of ideology. One could argue that outside of the market these protestors would not exist as they would have no need to but, when read alongside Fisher, DeLillo's novel implies they *cannot* exist outside the market because *nothing* exists there. This shows effective naturalisation of the neoliberal capitalist system.

However, this belief is partly self-fulfilling. If the perception of protest is that it does not work, then it will not work. Berardi writes that 'the strategy of the company is to make people so stressed that they lose every autonomy, any sense of solidarity, thus becoming totally dependent on the automatisms of exploitation'.[72] This broadly sits with Fisher's perspective as

[71] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 90.
[72] Berardi, *Heroes,* p. 171.

well. Packer supports his claims by saying that 'the market culture is total. It breeds these men and women. They are necessary to the system they despise. They give it energy and definition'.[73] The notion espoused by Packer and echoed in the Berardi quote is that individuals have become dependent on the market for everything, and thus have lost their autonomy and ability to act in solidarity with one another in a meaningful way. This is despite the evidence before Packer's eyes of solidarity in action. Although the usefulness of this action is explored further later in the thesis, and is not of interest to the aims of this chapter, the fact remains that the claim that these protestors are based within the market primarily stems from the belief that all things are contained there.

*Capitalist Realism* describes protest as a 'carnivalesque background noise' to capital, and suggests that there is a great deal in common between protests and corporate events'.[74] This is certainly evidenced by DeLillo's fiction, in which protest is framed in a way consistent with entertainment events, with a 'camera track[ing] a cop chasing a young man through a crowd' and a large Styrofoam rat.[75] Packer even watches much of the protest on his car's television monitor, rather than through the window. This does indeed demonstrate the naturalisation of protest as another part of capitalism, which exists as 'a series of hysterical demands which it [does not] expect to be met'.[76] Yet this perspective only engages with the emotional veracity of naturalisation, and presumes nothing except conformity in the individual emotions and motivations of the cast of protestors. It is one thing to question whether a particular protest could be successful, but DeLillo's character takes the position that this is not even a possibility. Fisher's work theorises this position and DeLillo's text suggests this is a reasonable viewpoint.

[73] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 90.
[74] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 14.
[75] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 90.
[76] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 14.

The narrator's voice, which is distinct from Packer's, describes the protestors in such a way that they are reduced to background characters in a story about capitalism's incontrovertible dominance.

> There were people approaching the car. Who were they? They were protestors, anarchists, whoever they were, a form of street theatre, or adepts of sheer rampage.[77]

The protestors are never revealed to be emotionally complex individuals, and the emotions and motivations that have driven them to commit relatively extreme acts of protest go unspoken. Instead, Packer's assertion is all that the reader is given, that the protestors are simply part of a system which they profess to disagree with, but ultimately serve. They are then symbolic of the hiddenness of the ideology that restricts and flattens all experience and emotion. The novel acknowledges that it knows nothing of these people and perhaps this is the most salient point. While DeLillo is obviously writing about a billionaire who is located squarely within the confines of capital, he never gestures towards others who may be outside these confines. In this sense, one could read *Cosmopolis* as furthering the naturalisation of neoliberalism: it only gives form to that which coheres with the ideology normalising the increasing prominence of market rationality. Those who seek to escape that sphere are depicted as already failing and inept and, like everything else, just part of the market.

The naturalisation process supposes that even protestors of capitalist exploitation are part of the market. DeLillo's work and Fisher's theory reinforce this idea, in that the emotional power of neoliberalism is able to hide ideologies that might weaken capital. Gladney's

[77] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 88.

happiness is as connected to capital as is his anxiety, but he never makes these connections. This serves only to strengthen capital's control over vast swaths of society. As Berardi writes:

> What follows is a sense of guilt, anxiety and reciprocal resentment for the perceived mutual inability to help each other, to build solidarity. This is how the heavy architecture of shared depression is built.[78]

Although DeLillo's characters are not overtly depressed, it follows that the growing belief in the failure of protest to offer a real alternative does two things. It depresses those who wish for alternatives and it further enforces the naturalisation of the fact that there just is not one available. In this growing level of control and hiddenness of ideology, individuals become more and more reliant on capital for their emotional gratification even if they do not realise they are.

The protestors in *Cosmopolis* are undoubtedly still reliant on the automatisms of capitalist exploitation, evidenced by their desire to see that system overturned. However, does their remaining sense of autonomy and solidarity not suggest that they can at least envisage their lives outside of capital? One can read their role in the novel as being demonstrative of the effectiveness of naturalisation, but is this merely a side-effect of being described by a character who wholeheartedly ascribes to market rationality? As the embodiment of capital he sees everything as being contained in the market just as the seriously religious may see things only in that context. DeLillo's novel presents protest as a facile thing and his depiction ignores the emotional elements that engender these acts of resistance, such as hope and anger, and instead relies on a view that expresses only a naturalised perspective of reality. It reveals a wider societal tendency that Fisher exposes, a belief that there is no alternative. Presenting a world

[78] Berardi, *Heroes,* p. 170.

in which the idea that there is an alternative is not even conceived, demonstrates the ubiquitous normalisation of capitalist realism.

## Conclusion

This chapter has investigated how emotion is used as a way for capitalism to maintain control over the economic lives of individuals and influence the non-economic aspects of their lives to an ever greater degree. The way in which neoliberalism functions can partly be explained by a process outlined in *Capitalist Realism* which shows how neoliberal capital is naturalised. This naturalisation is an emotional endeavour, which relies on the acceptance of capital as the only possible way. Fisher describes it like this:

> The affects that predominate in late capitalism are fear and cynicism. These emotions do not inspire bold thinking or entrepreneurial leaps, they breed conformity and the cult of the minimal variation.[79]

Looking at DeLillo's work in terms of naturalisation shows that fear and cynicism are prominent aspects of his characterisations. However, it is the appeals that capital makes to happiness which serve to mask the negative aspects of the system, as evidenced by Erica Deming's depiction. Naturalisation took effect in *Underworld* when she, perhaps subconsciously, attributed the happiness that came her way to the goodness of American capitalism, whereas she did not assume the bad things were a result of that same system.

[79] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 76.

The utilisation of emotion in this way ensures that the ideology of capital remains hidden, a technique of naturalisation that DeLillo's work suggests becomes more pronounced the further into the neoliberal period one goes. As Berardi's work corroborates, the combination of emotions and capital engender further control and valorisation for the system which is the current status quo; it enables individuals to ignore the bad aspects of capital to see only the good. The claim that there is no alternative becomes a fact.

Through reading the naturalisation process in DeLillo's work, this chapter has been able to expand on Fisher's theories. The first section saw evidence that naturalisation was indeed a phenomenon that one encounters in contemporary fiction, and the depictions of this process in *Underworld* demonstrated the language of capital becoming more prevalent in the common speech of individuals, with Nick Shay's characterisation representing the prioritisation of markets and finance over individual happiness and dignity. It was the way in which his reaction spoke of the common sense nature of market rationality that revealed *Underworld*'s engagement with the processes of naturalisation.

The second section of the chapter used analysis of the emotionality of 1950s capital as represented in the neoliberal era as a way of building upon Fisher's ideas. The presence of naturalisation techniques and processes in DeLillo's description of a Cold War era family spoke to the functionality of the techniques themselves, but also implied that they were not merely a neoliberal phenomenon. Although it is important to remember that DeLillo wrote this depiction in the 1990s and not the 1950s, the presence of naturalisation in this time reveals the usefulness of the techniques as methods of emotionally controlling populations. In the context of the Fordist period, these techniques were used to build national solidarity in the face of an enemy defined primarily in economic terms. The way in which the techniques are used in the present day are similar but for different means: building solidarity and belief in capital, as opposed to the nation. *Underworld* then showed that naturalisation is perhaps as effective as it

is in the present moment because of a history of using emotions for the normalisation of capital as the only conceivable way of running a society.

Finally, analysis of other DeLillo novels from the neoliberal period built upon the base of theoretical knowledge around naturalisation and capitalist realism. *White Noise* demonstrates *how* capital delivers positive emotion while negating fear and anxiety, deferring negativity onto technology while distancing itself from that technology. In this sense, the novel shows how the naturalisation process is able to keep the ideology that underpins it ever more hidden, strengthening it further. *Cosmopolis* goes further and this chapter's reading of it suggests that the novel's depiction of protest may be complicit in the naturalisation process. The protestors are deemed *a priori* ineffectual which means they can never be successful. Reading the novel in this way demonstrates the sophistication of the process in that its effects can be experienced even in a novel that is largely critical of contemporary capitalism. Where Fisher explains that protest is ineffectual because it has been subsumed by market rationality, reading DeLillo's novel suggests that perhaps it is only ineffectual because of the *belief* that it has been subsumed.

## Chapter Two

### 'The camp was not enclosed by stone walls': Deleuze, Foucault and power in capitalist society

The previous chapter explored how neoliberalism gains control over multiple spheres of society through the naturalisation process and how this, as Berardi writes, leads to the loss of 'every autonomy' and individuals 'becoming totally dependent on the automatisms of exploitation'.[1] Berardi suggests this is the 'strategy of the *company*' which implies that it is ultimately humans who are enabling neoliberal control over society and, while this is certainly the case in many instances of the naturalisation process, this chapter argues that part of the control neoliberalism enjoys over society is gained through a process of emotional engagement that requires individuals to simply *believe* they have made free choices, when in fact these choices have been made systemically. Naturalisation theory supports this, since individuals have no alternative besides adherence to neoliberal logic, but this is expanded by a reading of Gilles Deleuze. He argues in his essay 'Postscript on the Societies of Control' (hereafter the 'Postscript'), neoliberal capital has engendered a society based on control in which action is not necessarily required for the 'automatisms of exploitation' to take effect. This chapter combines analysis of Deleuze's theory and DeLillo's fiction to examine what the emotional components of contemporary power and control are beyond the naturalisation process.

For Deleuze, societies of control stand in contrast to the societies of discipline, which 'initiate the organization of vast spaces of enclosure' and are defined by their ability to 'compose a productive force within the dimension of space-time whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component forces'.[2] According to the essay, societies of control have no

[1] Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 171.
[2] Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October* 59 (1992), 3-7, p. 3.

use for the sites of enclosure such as the school or the factory, as they operate in a continuously changing manner, utilising 'free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system'.[3] To simplify, sites of enclosure are not required in contemporary control societies as the rupture in the way society functions under neoliberalism keeps individual behaviour predictable, and thus not requiring discipline. Deleuze suggests that societies of control are like 'a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other', and this chapter takes this as its focus for literary analysis. If contemporary capitalism exerts control through continuously shifting boundaries and meaning, then how do DeLillo's fictions represent the emotional reality of living in such a situation?

DeLillo's work allows this chapter to investigate the emotional aspects of Deleuze's theory that go unmentioned in his essay. The chapter explores whether there is evidence of an emotional aspect to the process that makes the societies of control possible, and to what extent this process and its emotional components are distinctly neoliberal. As a fundamental element of the spiral of intensification, it looks at debt to understand whether this can be understood to be crucial to the emotional structure of Deleuze's theory. It utilises the theory explored in parts one and two of the spiral theoretical model to explore the intensifying nature of emotion, and the way they relate to power and control. The chapter ultimately aims to use fiction to show how emotion in neoliberal society is crucial to this structure of power.

**Happiness behind bars**

In the 'Postscript', Deleuze uses Michel Foucault's writing on prisons and punishment as a starting point for an analysis of contemporary neoliberal society. He posits that the prison

[3] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.3.

system was one of the institutions in which the 'disciplinary societies' reached their height in the early years of the twentieth century.[4] The prison was and is a site of enclosure which appears as a space of constant reform in his formulation of contemporary society; the free-floating methods of control in the 'Postscript' suggest that enclosure is becoming less required for contemporary control.[5] In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault writes that 'the right to punish has been shifted from the vengeance of the sovereign to the defence of society',[6] which explains an even earlier shift in the power-structure of society away from the 'societies of sovereignty'.[7] One could read Deleuze's formulation of a third phase of social power and management as shifting the right to punish from society over to capital.

DeLillo's short-story 'Hammer and Sickle' presents a model of discipline that, through its contemporary or even futuristic depiction of prisons, engages closely with the ideas explored in the theories of Deleuze and Foucault. The story also deals with subject matter that allows a thorough emotional reading, highlighting the role of emotion in the societies of control. This section examines the representation of a disciplinary institution and also builds on Deleuze's work in exploring emotional components that the 'Postscript' does not fully develop.

'Hammer and Sickle' deals with Jerold Bradway's stay in a 'perfunctory, insecure prison for white-collar criminals'.[8] In the prison, passive methods of control have seemingly replaced more traditional authoritarian or heavy-handed methods. This particular institute seems indicative of a new move towards a reduction in individual autonomy, differing from what would be expected of a prison, as Berardi hypothesised, through emotional methods of control as opposed to through a figure of authority.[9]

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[4] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.3.
[5] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.4.
[6] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 90.
[7] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.3.
[8] Michael Jones (2018) 'The Other Side of Silence: Realism, Ecology and the Whole Life in Don Delillo's Late Fiction' *Textual Practice*, 32:8 (2018), 1345-1363, p.1345
[9] Berardi, *Heroes*, p. 171.

At first the prison appears to have more in common with Foucault's disciplinary societies, with 'guards front and back and at the flanks' escorting the prisoners to watch and take part in a soccer game.[10] However, the way in which the prisoners are allowed to roam 'in the lowest levels of security' despite the guards' presence implies that there are no concerns about their absconding.[11] Much of the story is quiet and passive, with more focus on the relationships and introspection of the prisoners, and less emphasis on claustrophobia and violence one might expect from a prison narrative. DeLillo writes that there were 'openings into the former world' such as the soccer game which was a 'breezy departure from the daily binding'.[12] The institution exerts very limited physical control over the prisoners and the inmates are emotionally boosted by the glimpses of the outside world that they receive. It is partly owing to this emotion that approaches happiness that they are so easy to control and stopped from simply walking out.

Although the prison is hypothetical, the crimes of the inmates are described in a contemporary way, with a number of neoliberal financiers among the inmates. The lackadaisical approach to security is demonstrative of the Deleuzian move toward the 'installation of new forces knocking at the door' and the old sites of enclosure losing their relevance and use.

There are a number of ways of engaging with how DeLillo presents the prison. He writes:

> The camp was not enclosed by stone walls or coiled razor wire. The only perimeter fencing was a scenic artefact now, a set of old wooden posts that supported sagging rails. There were four dormitories with bunk-bed cubicles,

[10] Don DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda: Nine Stories* (London: Picador, 2012), p. 147.
[11] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 147.
[12] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 147.

> toilets and showers. There were several structures to accommodate inmate orientation, meals, medical care, TV viewing, gym work, visits from family and others. There were conjugal hours for those so yoked.[13]

A reading of this passage could assume that the inmates enjoy the material comforts of living in a camp, with the pleasant overtones of classic Americana this image connotes, because they are benefitting from privileges of the wealthy. It would be reasonable to expect a prison of violent offenders not to have the same insecure arrangement, even in this relatively futuristic story. Under neoliberalism, and capitalism more generally, wealth is able to buy privilege in a variety of situations, so it is understandable to read this story in such a way. However, when one approaches it in the context of the 'Postscript' and with a focus on emotions, correlations emerge between DeLillo's prison and the methods of control Deleuze envisions.

The lack of enclosure in the camp is a clear corollary with the transition away from the 'vast spaces of enclosure' in earlier society's formulation of the prison, and indeed the use of terms like 'scenic artefact' and the physical degradation of the rails, as tools of enclosure, suggest a metaphorical weakening of this disciplinary model.[14] The prison is clearly no longer a site in which punishment and power are functions of a disciplinary model, but there remains an operation of power which nevertheless forces the prisoners to remain where they are. DeLillo's use of the word 'structures' is fortunate, for it encompasses what makes his prison a fitting imagining of such an institution in Deleuze's work.

The structures of the prison allow for a sense of normalcy for the prisoners, with their gym workouts, entertainment, family visits and orientation ensuring they are made content enough to remain incarcerated. These benefits act as what Deleuze terms 'modulations', which

[13] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 148.
[14] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 3.

serve as methods of control which do not take fixed form.[15] These modulations are inherently emotional in nature, as the prisoners' sense of happiness is manipulated and targeted in order to exert a controlling influence. Reading 'Hammer and Sickle' then reveals that the society of control gives form to the emotional power of capitalist society, and the structures deliver control through the emotional engagement of the prisoners. Both through their contentment and their uncertainty they are in effect forced to remain in place. They are 'not unhappy' in the prison, suggesting perhaps an apathy towards leaving, but it is also through uncertainty at the forms the structures in their lives take that debilitates them further.[16] Deleuze writes of this process:

> In the disciplinary societies one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in the societies of control one is never finished with anything – the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation.[17]

Emotions arise from the uncertainty of never being finished with anything, which is why the lack of fixed boundaries is beneficial for neoliberalism, and goes toward the claim that it is a system which flourishes in times of chaos. DeLillo's prison presents this modulation in the form of aspects of life that seem to continue while incarcerated: the soccer tournament, gym work, political news broadcasts and the social intrigue of prison-life all become things which make prison a more convenient place to remain. They are not unhappy there, and it is never a good time to leave.

[15] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.
[16] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, pp. 152 – 153.
[17] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 5.

Deleuze's basic ideas outlined in the 'Postscript' do, to an extent, correlate with the power structure DeLillo imagines in his near-future prison, but DeLillo's work builds upon this and highlights the importance of emotional engagement and manipulation for contemporary control. Bradway says that 'the free future is hard to imagine' perhaps suggesting that he cannot see much difference between the outside and inside, since he experiences contentment and happiness while locked-up.[18] Deleuze argues the societies of control have installed a 'progressive and dispersed […] new system of domination', which explains why, in DeLillo's text, the boundaries become flexible between institutions and normal life, which would make prisons gradually become obsolete as the outside world incorporates more elements of control.[19]

Writing about the 'Postscript', Andrew Goffey suggests that although 'prophetic', 'Deleuze doesn't really know in any detail how control societies operate, even if across six pages of text he offers some obviously intriguing and suggestive pointers'.[20] Given the exploratory nature of his essay, interrogating it using DeLillo's fiction allows one to extrapolate ideas that involve emotions toward an understanding of the emotional elements of control. The motif of the prison, for example, is used as just one example of an institution that will be reformed under this neoliberal control society. Deleuze posits that 'substitutions' will be made in terms of punishments, and that elements of the society of sovereignty may return, albeit in a modified form. He suggests electronic collars as opposed to physical imprisonment, but this perhaps does not fit with his overall theme, since he suggest that these collars may confine the wearer to the home.[21] DeLillo's prison seems more advanced than this and coheres more with the society Deleuze imagines in the first part of the 'Postscript'; one without boundaries and limits. The emotion that DeLillo's story depicts explains the mechanism that enables this

[18] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 154.
[19] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 7.
[20] Andrew Goffey, 'Towards a Rhizomatic Technical History of Control' *New Formations*, 84 (2015), 58-73, p. 59.
[21] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 7.

boundaryless society to exert control at all. Towards the end of the story Bradway has left the prison of his own volition, but says 'soon I'd be going back to the camp, sinking into the everydayness of that life'.[22] It envisages a neoliberal near future in which electronic collars are not necessary, and that punishment will be replaced by contentment for the punished, to the extent that it does not feel like one is being punished or controlled at all.

'If Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of capitalism as an engine for the deterritorialization of other sociocultural forms is an accurate way of understanding how our neoliberal political economy functions' writes Holt, 'then deference to spectacles of power can be an obstacle to efficient consumption. Thus the mechanisms of productive attention, for the most part, need to remain passive and, as such, subterranean'.[23] Although speaking about Deleuze's wider project with Guattari, Holt's point suggests perhaps a link between the naturalisation of chapter one, and the society of control explored in this chapter. DeLillo's prisoner does not escape because he is bound by a 'spectacle of power' that has remained 'passive' and hidden. This suggests that one of the ways in which neoliberalism can be identified in this society of control, is because such control manifests through the same techniques as naturalisation, namely emotional techniques, and thus goes unnoticed.

The way in which the theory in the 'Postscript' posits that society 'no longer relies on the closed milieus of disciplinary power-knowledge configurations' suggests that one can indeed consider the theory to be distinctly neoliberal, given that tightly regimented regimes do not fit as well in the chaotic neoliberal society.[24] Indeed, William Davies notes that even though Deleuze does not mention neoliberalism, his theory nevertheless resonates with theorisations on that form of contemporary capitalism. Davies says the essay 'indicat[es] the ways in which

[22] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 180.
[23] Macon Holt, *Pop Music and Hip Ennui: A Sonic Fiction of Capitalist Realism* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 66.
[24] Goffey, 'Technical History of Control', p. 59.

neoliberal thinkers […] were implicitly critical of discipline, and advocates for control'.[25] Citing Hayek as an example, Davies argues that Deleuze's society of control is descriptive of neoliberal phenomena, suggesting that 'control' rather than discipline is the inherent goal, or at least a fundamental aim, of the neoliberal project.

Other critical work on Deleuze's essay mostly considers it as a formulation of power within neoliberalism as Davies does, and this is explicit in DeLillo's work as well. Neoliberal financier prisoners accept the control methods of this type of prison very simply and happily as, much like Hayek, they too are distrustful of discipline. 'Hammer and Sickle' is clearly a text deeply engaged with neoliberalism, critically focusing on many aspects of contemporary capital, from 'rarefied instruments of offshore finance' and financial havens such as 'Switzerland or Liechtenstein or the Cayman Islands'.[26] If Deleuze's theory is akin to a description of neoliberalism, then DeLillo's story makes this case in a strong way through its depictions of emotions, which points toward the importance of emotion in neoliberalism. One of the inmates' feelings towards his incarceration are described as such:

> Norman missed his walls but he was not unhappy here. He was content, he said, unstuck, unbound, remote. He was free of the swollen needs and demands of others but mostly disentangled from his personal drives.[27]

The character seems to perfectly embody the shift from the enclosed spaces of disciplinary societies to the 'free-floating control' of Deleuze's formulation. Him missing 'his walls' even speaks to the disappearance of these sites of confinement (although he does not speak of walls in that context). The text carefully not stating that he *is* happy points toward a numbed vision

[25] William Davies, 'The Chronic Social: Relations of Control Within and Without Neoliberalism' *New Formations*, 84 (2015), 40-57, p. 43.
[26] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, pp. 147-148.
[27] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, pp. 152 – 153.

of happiness, stripped of something essential, yet his emotions are mostly positive, and he likes the lack of clarity in the way power is wielded against him. The adjectives used by DeLillo materialise the modulatory aspect of Deleuze's theory, and show that Norman is pleased at being in a society 'like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point'.[28]

Norman, like other prisoners, has naturalised the environment around him and stays in place partly through the fluctuations in structure that make acting-out too difficult, and through the happiness he feels that necessitates no action. His 'not happiness' is how he is controlled; like Bradway he does not want to escape.

The emotional component of the societies of control are not discussed by Deleuze in the 'Postscript', and there are few references that engage a theory of emotion in capitalism. Although he suggests that marketing is the centre of the corporation, and laments that corporations are now said to have a soul this only hints at the emotionality of control societies, in that the inherently emotional practice of marketing takes on renewed importance.[29] Through Davies' work, though, we can identify the emotion at the centre of the process discussed by Deleuze. Davies writes:

> Decisions become attributed to our bodies (most often our brains), calculations become entangled with emotions, communication becomes a function of our faces and sentiments. The individual is merely 'surfing', as Deleuze notes, between different situations, but never pausing in search of a judgement or an objective perspective.[30]

[28] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.
[29] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 6.
[30] Davies, 'The Chronic Social', p. 47.

This conception of decision making in contemporary control societies relies on a fundamentally emotional and affective understanding of the process. As this thesis continues to argue, emotion is the language of neoliberalism. This is expressed in the conception of control societies through the acknowledgement of an affective approach to decision making, as opposed to a rational one: a dichotomy that occurs throughout this project. Neoliberal power and control is most effective when it is free-floating or 'surfing' and thus impactful on an emotional level and not on a rational one.

DeLillo's work reveals an emotional component to the theories of the 'Postscript' and suggests that emotional engagement and manipulation is an inherent element of these societies of control as it appears to be in his prison. The characters accept and welcome the transition away from enclosure and yet keep themselves enclosed willingly due to the way in which their emotions are altered by the process. They are kept in a state they feel is akin to happiness inside the camp and ultimately do not view their circumstances as particularly punishing. One can consider that they have internalised the control, in that they do not escape when it would be simple to do so, with the openness of the prison and the neglect of the instruments of confinement being described. Although antithetical to the 'Postscript', this mindset reveals similarities to the physical structure of Foucault's panopticon. One might argue that if they are happy then being in their situation is not a problem. This perspective fails to take into account that they are unwilling and unable to desire anything other than what the prison gives them. The outside world has lost its appeal because out there too, the controlling mechanisms are in action. My reading of DeLillo's work builds upon Deleuze's basic premise, and suggests that control as a neoliberal phenomenon is possible when utilising the feelings and emotion as a site of manipulation, rather than physically constraining the body.

**Beyond discipline?**

The ideas that emerge from the reading of 'Hammer and Sickle' in section one can also be explored in the context of DeLillo's *Zero K*, in which an enclosed space operates in a similar way to the prison. The site in question, the Convergence, is a capitalist enterprise where the super-rich are cryogenically frozen and unfrozen at a later time. The desert location of the site means leaving is not within protagonist Jeffrey Lockhart's individual control, although unlike the prison he is not there against his will. The boundaries of the Convergence are not demarcated and are thus Deleuzian in design; the beginning of the desert and the end of the Convergence are not fixed. Control and emotion are at the centre of the novel, and at one stage Lockhart is asked:

> Don't you see and feel these things more acutely than you used to? The perils and warnings? Something gathering, no matter how safe you may feel in your wearable technology. All the voice commands and hyper-connections that allow you to become disembodied.[31]

The idea behind the Convergence is marketed and the enterprise's power is maintained through the manipulation of emotion, which coheres with how Deleuze's control society operates. The speed and technology in DeLillo's text are evocative of the 'coded figures' and the 'computer that tracks each persons' position' from the 'Postscript'.[32] The centre makes promises that appeal to its clients' hope for safety in order to ensure its valorisation. As with *White Noise*, this may be DeLillo's warning of the perils of technology, but the way it is acutely connected with fear and unease points towards a correlation with contemporary control. An individual's

[31] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 127.
[32] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 7.

fears and hopes essentially make them easier targets for marketing and behavioural manipulation; the Convergence relies on this fact for its customer uptake.

Lockhart confirms this perception by suggesting that 'what was gathering could well be a kind of psychological pandemic' and highlights the central emotional crux of contemporary capitalism's control methods in a 'fearful perception that tends towards wishfulness'.[33] Like 'Hammer and Sickle', *Zero K* presents a contextualisation of the present day that shows how facets of neoliberalism (such as technology) have a profound emotional impact and how this can act as a controlling agent. This 'wishfulness' motivates avoidance of a challenge to the status quo in the hope the future will be better; the services offered by the Convergence offer avoidance of being present in the present at all. This novel is concerned with this hope from a number of angles, with the billionaires going into cryogenic stasis in the hope of a better future.

Using relatively recent texts, *Zero K* as well as 'Hammer and Sickle' to interrogate the incomplete formulation of control found in the 'Postscript' allows this chapter to further understand control as an emotional operation in contemporary society. This section also looks at some questions asked of Deleuze's work regarding Foucault and uses an emotion-centric reading of fiction to make conclusions in this respect. Mark Kelly describes oversight from Deleuze and writes 'the Panopticon, arguably the key figure of Foucault's account of discipline, is missing from the 'Postscript', as are even very general themes'.[34] If Deleuze has misread or misrepresented the foundation of discipline and power in contemporary society, then his perceptions on control require further investigation. Using contemporary fiction to examine further the emotionality of neoliberalism in the context of control probes the accuracy of both Deleuze's and Foucault's ideas.

[33] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 127.
[34] Mark G. E. Kelly, 'Discipline is Control: Foucault Contra Deleuze' *New Formations*, 84 (2015), 148-162, p. 156.

At the end of the first part of the essay Deleuze writes of the crisis of disciplinary institutions, that their failure 'could at first express new freedom, but they could participate as well in mechanisms of control that are equal to the harshest of confinements'.[35] This remark on the transition to control societies suggests the changes that are seen in the prison and the Convergence are not necessarily less brutal than the authoritarian structures that preceded them. Yet, as the first section argued, control societies are successful due to the way in which they engage with individuals' emotions and manipulate them. As the changes toward control society become more pronounced, so too has the emphasis put on affective and emotional engagement from neoliberalism. Where once emotion was not emphasised in discipline, with individuals merely pressured into being obedient, now one is expected to be dynamic and motivated, and one's affective labour becomes ever more integral to the function of control mechanisms as these mechanisms must strip the individual of choice without making any physical move to do so. In this regard, Deleuze's notion of control being equal to the harshest of confinements must be in respect to a mental or emotional harshness as opposed to a physical one.

This can be explained through Davies' work on the impact of emotion in control societies. He writes that 'in its permanent, uninterrupted quality, the control society might appear to require individuals to live 'constantly in a state of crisis'', which reinforces the idea that neoliberal control is predicated on constant emotional engagement.[36] This constant crisis explains how neoliberal control can be equated to harsh confinement, in that both put extraordinary stresses on an individual, and both negative emotions explored by Davies, and the happiness seen in DeLillo appear to be integral for neoliberal control societies. This is perhaps what Deleuze hinted at when he wrote 'there is no need to fear or hope, but only to

[35] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.
[36] Davies, 'The Chronic Social', p. 45.

look for new weapons'.[37] The emotional investments one makes are what drives and maintains this method of control, which renders hope and fear invalid with regards to breaking such control.

Once again, as if foreseeing the boundaries of the argument, DeLillo's work engages in exactly these two emotions as modes of control in *Zero K*. Fear and hope both act as manipulators, but also as marketing in the Deleuzian 'soul' of the corporate Convergence. 'Technology has become a force of nature. We can't control it', a representative of the Convergence says, 'It comes blowing over the planet and there's nowhere for us to hide. Except right here, of course, in this dynamic enclave'.[38] The fear that is invoked here is used to sell the idea of cryogenic preservation to valorise capital. To the centre's customers this type of fear works in conjunction with a hope for a different future, and works to control the decisions that these customers will make. However, much like the ATM passage of *White Noise*, the technology that is the source of fear in *Zero K* is a function of capitalism, despite their suggestion that it is separate from their enterprise. In doing this, capital is able to relieve itself of the burden of blame and to suggest more investment in capital as the answer to the problem. This is technology as a force of nature: it is something physically unstoppable and the only way to move past the fear is to reside within the safety of their enclave. In this sense fear *is* used to control, but perhaps not in exactly the way Deleuze's theory might predict. In this sense it works to confine people by marketing limited buying choices to them, rather than by overtly constraining their behaviour.

Enclosure at the Convergence is something that is being offered, which suggests a drastic move away from the enclosure as punishment of earlier societies. Deleuze depicts Foucault's formulation of enclosure as things which 'distribute in space', 'order in time' and

[37] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.4.
[38] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 245.

'compose a productive force within the dimensions of space time'.[39] The enclosure in DeLillo's novel is caught somewhere between the free-floating control of Deleuze and the stringent boundaries of how Deleuze reads Foucault: customers of the Convergence are corralled by walls but not tightly so and are followed electronically more than physically, or optically as they are in Foucault's panopticon. The distinction is that they are corralled by their own wishes, or more accurately, they are made to wish for this enclosure.

The fear that is used to corral the wealthy customers in DeLillo's work suggests that the receding power of institutions in the 'Postscript' is not as accurate a depiction of neoliberalism as many believe, or that the function of institutions has changed from governmental to corporate. Laura Barrett describes DeLillo's broader work as being about characters who 'attempt to wield control over their bodies because they have little control over anything else' but in *Zero K* 'Convergence clients perversely sacrifice their bodies as a means of gaining control'.[40] This chapter accepts her claim, but suggests that although the characters may think they are gaining control they are actually ceding it, as they are manipulated through fear of the present and hope for the future into certain behaviours. Deleuze conceives control in a way that one can read as inherently emotional, but this analysis shows that he does not describe neoliberalism in its entirety, with his formulation of institutions failing to incorporate capitalist institutions into its structure. The corporation is able to utilise the emotionality of neoliberalism to exert control and to valorise itself. Foucault's own theory of discipline may actually cohere more closely to DeLillo's work. He writes: 'a stupid despot may constrain his slaves with iron chains; but a true politician binds them even more strongly by the chain of their own ideas'.[41] The emotional engagement, the fear/hope dichotomy, is what enables Convergence staff to control their visitors into undertaking the process of cryogenics. They are

[39] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.
[40] Laura Barrett, '"[R]adiance in dailiness": The Uncanny Ordinary in Don DeLillo's Zero K' *Journal of Modern Literature*, 42:1 (2018), 106-123, p. 110.
[41] Foucault, *Discipline*, p. 103.

in effect manipulated through a form of discipline that Foucault identifies, despite Deleuze's claim about the societal transition away from discipline.

Despite finding many areas of correlation between the 'Postscript' and 'Hammer and Sickle', the essence of discipline as a fundamental concept still remains pertinent in DeLillo's work. Discipline is formed in contemporary neoliberalism through the emotion which is essentially found in the synthesis between Barrett and Foucault above. A new form of discipline is founded on a system of emotional control; individuals become 'chained' by the emotional investment they have in their own sense of freedom. Altering this freedom, altering what happiness is conceived to be and how one can attain it, puts DeLillo's position somewhere neither completely Foucauldian nor Deleuzian.

Bradway, with the rest of the inmates, watches his daughters on television deliver a news broadcast filled with communist rhetoric. His separation from his family is an obvious emotional trigger, but he tries 'to detach [himself], to see the girls as distant references' and this is, in a sense, symptomatic of the emotional changes neoliberalism asks of individuals; how it passively wrestles control.[42] Just as institutions change, according to Deleuze with the transition to a new form of society, emotions change too. Bradway attempts to shift his emotional perspective to better suit his reality. He cannot be with his daughters, so he separates further, in an attempt to dis-engage which is symptomatic of the need to modulate emotions in order to present a successful image of oneself and to adapt to a changed, neoliberal experience. Bradway even thinks of telling his fellow inmates that the girls were his daughters but 'didn't want the men in dorm looking at me, talking to me, spreading the word throughout the camp'.[43] He feels he is required to have a certain image and that knowledge of the girls would disrupt this, and therefore he learns to control his emotions according to the requirements of something outside of himself. He 'was learning how to disappear', and the loss of personal autonomy that

[42] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 150.
[43] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 160.

this entails points towards a systemic controlling mechanism over his life. 'People are expected to be critical about their emotions and about their own identity', writes Jan Ott, 'and have to develop a positive relation 'with themselves'.[44] Bradway's behaviour correlates with contemporary sociological arguments about the 'major preoccupation' with one's emotions.[45]

Control is exercised over the prisoners in the short story through subtle logic of naturalisation, with its goal to convince inmates that they occupy a good position, and that they feel happy about it. The operation of power in the story differs from that described by Deleuze as the structures of discipline do not disappear in 'Hammer and Sickle', they are merely ignored or perceived positively. Happiness is crucial in this process: 'Happy here, that was Norman. We're not in prison, he liked to say. We're at camp'.[46] The prison still separates inmates from the wider world but not through walls and rules, but with emotional engagement and manipulation. The environment controls the inmates because it convinces them that they are happy where they are. Foucault wrote that the aim of public execution 'was to make an example, not only by making people aware that the slightest offence was likely to be punished, but by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power'.[47] DeLillo's prison shares some similarities with this disciplinary technique, in that the use of feelings is paramount for controlling behaviour, but it also coheres in part with power in the 'Postscript', in that control is sought through the subjectivity of feeling, rather than through force.

In *Zero K* feeling is also clearly a useful tool for structural control, but this often manifests in a way that correlates with both Deleuze and Foucault's arguments. In an early description of The Convergence, Lockhart notes:

[44] Jan Cornelis Ott, 'Perceptions of the Nature of Happiness: Cultural, but Related to the Dynamics of the Human Mind and the Gratification of General Needs' *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 18 (2017), 313-319, p. 315.
[45] Ott, 'Perceptions', p. 315.
[46] DeLillo, *The Angel Esmerelda*, p. 161.
[47] Foucault, *Discipline*, p. 58.

> The number of structures was hard to determine from my near vantage. Two, four, seven, nine. Or only one, a central unit with rayed attachments. I imagined it as a city to be discovered at a future time, self-contained, well-preserved, nameless, abandoned by some unknown migratory culture.[48]

The centre is designed to evoke a sense of anxiety through uncertainty at one's surroundings, which acts as an emotional component to the process of control. Reading the text with a focus on emotion is to note that Lockhart's perception of the centre is only a minor negative, but that the difficulty navigating the physical space means that there is an element of enclosure to this site; it is designed to make people feel certain ways that impacts the way they move through it. Although the text engages with elements of Deleuze's rhizomatic control society, it still suggests that enclosure is present in neoliberalism, although interestingly it is the remoteness of the centre that acts as an enclosing mechanism, making escape difficult. Indeed, later in the text the physicality of the Convergence is again commented upon, Lockhart wondering about 'setting it in this harsh geography, beyond the limits of believability and law', which points towards an emphasis on physicality over the free-floating control society. The harshness of its location is what gives it power to influence emotion.

The emotional power of the Convergence comes from the fact of its environment existing outside of comprehensibility. *Zero K* ultimately reveals how deeply seated the human need for belief is' argues Alexandra Glavanakova, and the emotion that comes from being outside of believability is a stupefying force.[49] Although Jeffrey Lockhart's father Ross is sceptical at first, his taking part in the cryogenic process eventually suggests that the loss of faith in the present, and the hope for the future that the centre offers, is the controlling force in

[48] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 4.
[49] Alexandra K. Glavanakova, 'The Age of Humans Meets Posthumanism: Reflections on Don DeLillo's Zero K' *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 50:1 (2017), 91-109, p. 106.

the novel. In this sense the marketing power of emotion that is present in the 'Postscript' comes into contact with the enclosure of Foucault's disciplinary theory, suggesting that neoliberalism perhaps synthesises the two. The sites in 'Hammer and Sickle' and *Zero K* point at a theory beyond Deleuze's essay to explain emotional control in neoliberalism. Deleuze's arguments posit that contemporary neoliberalism has shifted away from bodily control, to a more affective and emotional controlling force, and suggests that Foucault's theory on confinement explains a shift in power structures. For Kelly, however, 'Foucault's stance is precisely to downplay the significance of confinement' and that the transition from a physical 'repression of bodies to a looser control occurs within essentially the same regime', which is the regime Deleuze draws away from and refers to as disciplinary.[50]

Further to this, Kelly suggests that Deleuze's misreading of Foucault's argument places the contemporary moment in a contemporary disciplinary society, rather than a society of control.

> One might refer to Foucault's invocation of societies of 'biopolitics' or 'security' or 'government' as coming after discipline: however, these terms are largely synonymous for Foucault and do not betoken a shift away from disciplinary power, so much as an addition to it. […] It is true that Foucault's analysis of the discipline […] primarily concerns itself with the nineteenth century and stops well before the present. […] For Foucault such work comprises 'histories of the present' – examinations of historical materials to understand the contemporary situation.[51]

[50] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', p. 153.
[51] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', pp. 153-154.

Deleuze's argument rests on the fact that the society described by Foucault was one of discipline and is significantly different to the form contemporary neoliberalism takes. However, as Kelly points out, Foucault's argument merely suggests that contemporary society provides additions to power structures, enabling control to be taken in new ways that are essentially a function of discipline. Much like the analysis of DeLillo within these chapters, his examinations of the past act as interrogations of the present. The functions of discipline have developed emotional components that place new importance on emotional rather than physical control.

Davies takes a different view, and suggests that the vagueness of Deleuze's article, rather than representing a misreading of Foucault, points towards the ambiguous methods of the control society itself. In the context of data science, he writes that 'knowledge and judgement will no longer be bound by the strictures of discipline'.[52] In both Davies' and Kelly's arguments, correlations are found in the work of DeLillo in the way he advances emotion as a fundamental component of control, but does not suggest that it breaks away from the importance of confinement. One is led to the acknowledgement of metaphorical and emotional confinement, in addition to existent physical institutions, as measures of discipline in neoliberal power structures after reading DeLillo's work.

In *Zero K* Lockhart 'knocked on the doorknob and reached for the doorknob, realizing there was no doorknob. I looked for a fixture on the door that might accommodate the disk on my wristband'.[53] This scene seems to perfectly mirror the imagined city from the 'Postscript' 'where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighbourhood, thanks to one's […] electronic card […], the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day'.[54] This city, like the Convergence, relies on methods of control that remain undefined and difficult

[52] Davies, 'The Chronic Social', p. 42.
[53] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 119.
[54] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 7.

to detect. Neoliberalism is able to manipulate and manage emotions in order to control, while not being visible to the individual; giving, as Barrett says, the impression that the individual is the one gaining control. The emotional manipulations, the confusion in *Zero K* and the contentment in 'Hammer and Sickle' are controlling because they appear to originate within the individual, rather than the system in which they exist.

This reading of DeLillo's work tends towards some agreement with the 'Postscript', with the depiction of a receding in the physical disciplines that Deleuze uses to define earlier societies. However, to borrow from the work of Kelly, 'less disciplinary it may be, but this does make it non- or anti- or post- disciplinary'.[55] DeLillo's work does not seem to accept that there is a shift away from discipline entirely within neoliberalism, and the elements of control society that are present in DeLillo's work do not represent complete transitions away from discipline. Kelly writes 'contemporary public policy does not bypass discipline, but utilises it in different ways'.[56] DeLillo's texts, being set in confined spaces are clearly demonstrative of continued use of discipline in neoliberalism, but as Deleuze points out they do not use boundaries in the same way. This does not necessarily dictate a new system, but only a new method of discipline. 'In neoliberalism', writes Kelly, 'we are not disciplined so much through the direct intervention of the state, but the provision of incentives to drive human behaviour'.[57] Kelly builds on the foundation set by Foucault and Deleuze and arrives at a similar conclusion that an emotional reading of DeLillo's texts reveals: control and discipline are, in contemporary neoliberalism, intertwined through the need for emotional engagement from individuals. Individuals are incentivised to act in certain ways either through external forces causing fear or confusion, or the desire to appear happy and content. These methods of control are successful

[55] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', p. 154.
[56] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', p. 154.
[57] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', p. 154.

because they operate below the line of sight and neoliberal discipline thus takes on a hidden systemic mechanism.

**Debt and control**

The readings of DeLillo's recent work above demonstrate that the theories set out in the 'Postscript' do, to an extent, cohere with a contemporary understanding of control in neoliberalism. DeLillo's work allows one to open up emotional components not present in Deleuze's formulation of control, and demonstrates how emotions are crucial tools for maintaining neoliberal control. The depictions in DeLillo's work also go towards critique of Deleuze in that it does not cohere with his suggestion that society is transitioning away from modes of discipline, instead it seems that discipline is merely changing to incorporate emotional modes of control. This final section focuses on debt in the contemporary control society as presented by Deleuze, and how it can be considered an aspect of power and control more generally within neoliberalism. Earlier DeLillo works reveal the emotional underpinnings of the mechanisms of debt intrinsic to capitalist power structures.

Debt is only mentioned once in the 'Postscript', but it is given weight and importance. Deleuze writes that 'man is no longer man enclosed but man in debt', and this suggests that debt forms a key component of the shift away from disciplinary society.[58] This section later returns to the claim that man is no longer enclosed, but for now the central point is that contemporary neoliberalism controls through debt. Berardi builds on this idea, writing that 'the accumulation of abstract value is made possible through the subjection of human beings to debt, and through the predation of existing resources'.[59] Capitalism is able to valorise itself in

[58] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 6.
[59] Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2015), p. 162.

the same way that it controls, by subjecting individuals to debt and its emotional ramifications. Thus far, it is simple to understand debt as a mechanism whereby capitalism may control individuals and increase its profits simultaneously, but one must return to Nietzsche to understand how this is an emotional component of neoliberalism's power structure.

The mass indebting of society as Lazzarato has argued, leads to individuals who have the burden of debt, with the negative emotion that this entails. 'The 'debtor' will pledge something that he still possesses to meet the contingency of his failure to pay his creditor', Nietzsche writes, 'something that he still has in his power, for instance, his life or his wife, or his freedom, or his body'.[60] If man is in debt as Deleuze argues, then it follows that the desperation described by Nietzsche will be commonplace. The debtor transfers something that they have in their power over to the creditor, to capital. Increasingly in a society that places importance on emotion over physicality, it would not be the body, but the work of the mind and the emotions that the transfer of power insists upon. Nietzsche supposes that 'the creditor was entitled to inflict upon the person of the debtor all manner of humiliation and torture'.[61] Given the move away from physicality that Deleuze has quite rightly observed, it follows that for the debtor, it is the emotional turmoil that this creditor can place them under that is most punishing and serves to transfer power and control away from the indebted.

DeLillo's work enables one to see this process of indebting as an emotional endeavour; a process that works as a control technique due to its emotional components. This is despite the fact that the majority of DeLillo's characters are either wealthy or comfortably middle-class and are not who Nietzsche was probably thinking of when he wrote of the debtor. This is what so fundamentally makes this a neoliberal concern, the fact that it is no longer merely the poor who are indebted. 'The condition of indebted man, which was already present, since it represents the very heart of neoliberal strategy', writes Lazzarato, 'now occupies the totality of

[60] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), p. 50.
[61] Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, p. 50.

public space'.[62] This totalising debt allows for a reading of DeLillo's works that takes into account the impact of debt on every character, not just the poorest. Billionaire Eric Packer, for example, is as much impacted by the debt society as anybody else. Building on Nietzsche, Lazzarato suggests that 'by training the governed to "promise" (to honor their debt), capitalism exercises "control over the future"'.[63] Packer believes that his destiny is to master the future, trading in currencies as he does, but ultimately he is a Deleuzian 'man in debt' and it is capital to whom he transfers his power at the end of the novel.

In *Cosmopolis* debt is presented in terms of the power that money and credit has in neoliberal society, corresponding with how Berardi suggests 'capital is above all a power to command and prescribe exercised through the power of destruction/creation of money'.[64] Although ostensibly in the business of creating wealth, Packer actually has no control over the creation and destruction of money as societal value, and as such is still reliant and dependent on disembodied and impersonal capital. This is why Lazzarato suggests that 'debt is a universal power relation, since everyone is included within it'.[65] Packer continues to generate wealth but ultimately he is still a debtor to the 'universal creditor' that is capital. The opening of the novel gives multiple accounts of his fragile state of mind, his emotional problems and his inability to sleep: 'He didn't know what he wanted', 'he tried sedatives and hypnotics but they made him dependent',[66] 'I feel located totally nowhere'.[67]

One may view these instances of negative emotion as the results of the control the capitalist system he so admires wields over him. Despite his privileged position within the system he is as emotionally impacted as anybody. Packer presents an image of a strong-willed person to match his wealth, but repeatedly throughout the text he reveals emotional fragility

[62] Maurizio Lazzarato, *The Making of Indebted Man* (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2011), p. 38.
[63] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 46.
[64] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man,* p. 73.
[65] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 32.
[66] Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 6.
[67] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 23.

and uncertainty. In a conversation with his advisor, she reveals her thoughts on capitalism. Talking of protestors, Packer suggests that 'the urge to destroy is a creative urge', to which she responds:

> This is also the hallmark of capitalist thought. Enforced destruction. Old industries have to be harshly eliminated. New markets have to be forcibly claimed. Old markets have to be re-exploited. Destroy the past, make the future.[68]

Many critics have positioned Packer as a 'neoliberal anti-hero',[69] including Jung-Suk Hwang who suggests that the limousines Packer rides around in 'signify the huge and intimidating power of global capitalists'.[70] But the truth of *Cosmopolis* is that he is every bit as impacted by the credit/debt cycle as the destitute former-employee who later murders him. He has money only as long as he has it, but he has no control over that tautology. He may 'forcefully pursue [his] objectives regardless of any resistance', but this is only an attempt to offset the lack of security experienced by everybody within contemporary capitalism, and a reinforcement of the extreme competition expected of individuals.[71] His eventual financial downfall is the result of his mirroring of capitalistic chaos; he tries to act like the market, chaotically and on impulse, but he is punished with enormous losses. Control through chaos and irrationality only works for the universal creditor, which is only ever the system itself.

As in the 'Postscript' where new institutions replace the old ones as new emotional methods of control come to the forefront of society, Packer too is replaceable in the context

[68] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, pp. 92-93.
[69] Martina Sciolino, 'The Contemporary American Novel as World Literature: The Neoliberal Antihero in Don DeLillo's Cosmopolis', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 57 (2015), 210-241.
[70] Jung-Suk Hwang, 'Staging the Uneven World of Cybercapitalism on 47th Street in Don DeLillo's Cosmopolis' Critique: *Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 59 (2018), 27-40, p. 32
[71] Hwang, 'Staging the Uneven', p. 32.

that his advisor sets out. He is pictured as the youthful future of capital, but he will eventually be part of the 'old industry' that has to be replaced. In the beginning of the novel he is the living present, but by the end he is the already irrelevant past. He appears to recognise this fact in his assessment of the protestors: 'two hours ago they were a major global protest. Now, what, forgotten'.[72] Capital retains control through debt, through the money function, as it ensures the fragility of individuals and groups. This is both financial fragility and emotional. 'The corporation', writes Deleuze, 'is a spirit, a gas' and exists in a state of 'perpetual metastability'.[73] The corporation replaces the factory as the prominent site of contemporary control and, through a simple reading of Packer, the lack of control across the entire hierarchy of the corporate ladder is revealed.

This chaos that puts capital beyond the control of even the wealthiest is an emotional component of the mechanism Deleuze identifies as corporate gaseousness. 'People in free societies don't have to fear the pathology of the state', argues Packer's advisor evoking this Deleuzian idea, 'we create our own frenzy, our own mass convulsions, driven by thinking machines that we have no final authority over'.[74] Even DeLillo's own personified version of capital retains no 'final authority' and is merely part of a system that ensures an individual's compliance. Berardi underlines this idea, writing of the fact that 'fifty times the amount of total GDP is traded on financial markets' every day. He says 'if there is one thing we can learn from the current global economic mania, it is that capitalism cannot help itself. It operates by its own logic. It has to think short term. And so we now live in a short-term civilization'.[75] This short-term civilisation follows the novels own musings on the replacement of the old. *Cosmopolis*

[72] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 118.
[73] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.
[74] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 85.
[75] Berardi, *And*, p. 293.

tells readers that Packer is 'dealing with a system that's out of control' and that 'the frenzy is barely noticeable most of the time. It's simply how we live'.[76]

The fact of living in a state of frenzy, out of control, reveals the emotional difficulties of living with the debt function as a '"capture," "predation," and "extraction" machine on the whole of society'.[77] It recalls Davies' concern about the emotional ramifications of living in 'constant crisis', with the frenzy coming to represent the normal state of things. This is the reality in DeLillo's conception of neoliberal capitalism, and it broadly aligns with the perspective on debt in the 'Postscript', when one reads debt as Lazzarato does, to be of concern to 'the entirety of the current population as well as the population to come'.[78]

Deleuze, argues Kelly, 'claims that debt has replaced confinement' yet, as argued above, there is space for a middle ground between Deleuze and Foucault.[79] DeLillo's work demonstrates the coming together of Foucault's authoritarian discipline and Deleuze's control societies of neoliberalism. Kelly writes that debt and confinement 'are hardly mutually exclusive' and this is indeed what Packer's experience of the money as debt mechanism attests to. The final scene of the novel ends with Packer 'dead inside the crystal of his watch' which makes a good metaphorical example of his confinement within the structure of capital, unaware of his enclosure.[80] Debt is itself a form of confinement: it confines and controls emotions, feelings and actions.

The confines of debt are an emotional trigger in themselves and can leave characters and individuals with the sense that they have nowhere meaningful to go. DeLillo describes Packer, late in the novel: 'How could he take a step in any direction if all directions were the same'?[81] As with much of DeLillo's writing, the emotions are latent behind the characters

[76] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 85.
[77] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 29.
[78] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 29.
[79] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', p. 158.
[80] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 209.
[81] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 180.

description. Packer's metaphorical confinement is a mirror of his enclosure within a system of finance that has come to dominate every area of life.

It is the all-encompassing nature of debt that impacts emotions the most, and this is compounded by the seemingly never-ending nature of the debt cycle that Lazzarato identifies. He writes that 'we are no longer the inheritors of original sin but rather of the debt of preceding generations', thus implying the long-term residual function of money as debt in current societal structures. It is then both the certainty of debt, and the uncertainty of its impact that causes the stresses that lead to the 'frenzy'.[82] This is expanded upon by Davies who includes both states and individuals in his formulation of the 'man in debt' idea from the 'Postscript'. The states, he argues 'come to operate under the constant, non-specific threat that they might be punished by financial markets', and individuals are offered credit not 'on the basis of any identifiable judgement'.[83] Societies that operate in this way are shaped by neoliberalism through influences that are both ubiquitous and unknowable. The impact of this on emotions is indicated by Berardi thus: 'Absolute capitalism is destroying the protections that were created by modern social civilization, and we are returning to the original, naked condition of human existence: precariousness'.[84] Berardi's point reflects the perspective of the spiral of intensification, in which a number of different aspects of capitalism lead to an intensification of factors resulting in negative emotional states. He seems to suggest that as the influence of capital increases, as the spiral intensifies, the emotional well-being of populations decreases. Precariousness comes to be the normal condition, in a state of chaos which is uncontrollable by individuals, as evidenced by Packer's attempts to out-think the market. The logic of Deleuze's free-floating societies of control is seen in the anxiety that results from the certain and yet unidentifiable nature of the threat posed by capital, which also functions as a metaphorical site of enclosure.

[82] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 32.
[83] Davies, 'The Chronic Social', p. 53.
[84] Berardi, *And*, p. 211.

The looming fear of the unknowable is a common theme in DeLillo's work, and nowhere more so than in *White Noise.* Although it again concerns itself with a reasonably wealthy character, fear (or more exactly, dread) is an ever-present feature in the novel. Jack Gladney and his wife Babette are consumed by their fear of the ultimate unknown, death, and the majority of the novel is about their attempt to deal with this fear. The certainty and the incomprehensibility of death can be read as a metaphorical representation of the power that capital has over society; like death it is unimpeachable and ultimately the fear that presents itself is of no help ('new weapons' are required).[85] The novel embodies this fear in the 'airborne toxic event'; a large cloud of noxious gas that is disturbing for the amorphousness of the danger it poses. Although this mirroring of the emotional crux of capitalism's power structure may not have been intentional, it nonetheless reveals the background of fear and dread that ensures continued neoliberal dominance.

*White Noise* also provides a telling representation of the condition of subservience to capital as it impacts every element of society. Gladney is a well-to-do college professor and yet his fear and doubts about his ability to maintain his position and his appearance follow him almost as relentlessly as his fear of death. He teaches Hitler studies, and finds that 'Hitler gave me something to grow into and develop toward, tentative as I have sometimes been in the effort'.[86] His career aspirations manifest the insidious grip of capital, shaping even his appearance. 'The glasses with thick black heavy frames and dark lenses were my own idea, an alternative to the bushy beard that my wife of the period didn't want me to grow'.[87] He attempts to hide behind facial features, not wanting to reveal the authentic person (or fearing that the authenticity is not there at all) for fear that it would undermine his career and his security. He feels he must do this, just as he must learn German later in the novel despite the anxiety it gives

[85] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p.4.
[86] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 2011), p.17.
[87] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p.17.

him. He is 'the false character that follows the name around', a self-assessment that demonstrates his loss of subjectivity in an economic system.[88] He must individualise himself to become a product that is marketable for the college. This process is reflected in Lazzarato's writing, where he suggests 'the individualization carried out by institutions now involves "morality" by mobilizing the "self," since the debtor's future actions must be molded, his uncertain future established in advance'.[89]

Lazzarato is talking of credit institutions that base their decisions on the same un-fixed terms found in Deleuze's formulation of contemporary society. These expectations map themselves onto Gladney who is trapped by the threat of an insecure future, the anxiety this develops into, and the constant need to perfect his image and to fix his position. This lack of security is inherent to the debt system, as it ensures a constant level of engagement from individuals across society. Berardi would view Gladney's suffering as systemic; he writes: 'mental suffering no longer concerns a small minority of weird people, but tends to become the norm in a system that is based on the exploitation of precarious cognitive work'.[90]

Thomas Peyser, when speaking of the uncertainty that surrounds the characters in *White Noise,* writes 'this and other kinds of uncertainty are characteristic of the emerging world picture'.[91] This emerging world picture with which the novel engages recalls the emotional control which is partly observed in the 'Postscript'. Peyser goes on to say that the novel deals with the fact that 'every aspect of human life […] is traversed by countless streams of cultural power emanating from who knows where'.[92] Neither he nor Deleuze exactly state where this cultural power comes from, and Peyser does not even ascribe it to neoliberal capitalism.

[88] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p.17.
[89] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 132.
[90] Berardi, *And*, p. 46.
[91] Thomas Peyser, 'Globalization in America: The case of Don DeLillo's White Noise' *Clio*, 25:3 (1996), 255-271, p. 269
[92] Peyser, 'Globalization in America', p. 269.

However, it surely resides in the debt mechanism; the emerging world picture is that of the indebted man described by Lazzarato.

Overall, DeLillo deals with debt in the sense that Lazzarato conceives of it, with each individual a debtor to capital. This is how one can read Packer and Gladney: characters impacted by the emotional upheaval caused by the debt mechanism, despite their apparent wealth. Their security always flees ahead, just out of reach, despite their wealth. They live in a constant state of crisis, of precarity. Deleuze only mentions debt once in his analysis of control, but from reading *Cosmopolis* and *White Noise* in conjunction with Lazzarato it becomes clear that it is an integral feature of contemporary power and control, and it is primarily achieved through the power of fear and anxiety. Berardi touches upon this notion when he says:

> If you do not adapt to such procedures, and don't follow the technical rules of the game, you are not playing the game. If you don't react to certain stimuli in a way that complies with the protocol, you don't belong to the network.[93]

DeLillo's work shows that even 'playing the game' does not eliminate the difficulties of existing in the neoliberal system. The fear and precarity that come from debt are merely ways to ensure the continued adherence to these rules of capital. In this sense Deleuze's suggestion that man in debt is no longer man enclosed misses the mark: man is enclosed *because* man is in debt.

**Conclusion**

[93] Berardi, *And*, p. 222.

Alessandra De Marco has claimed that 'DeLillo's novels offer an aesthetic representation of the new social relations proper to a financial regime and its attendant "structure of feeling"'.[94] In quoting Raymond Williams, De Marco acknowledges the inherent emotional components of contemporary neoliberal capitalism. This structure of feeling is constructed in a number of different ways, and the next chapter discusses it in more detail. This chapter has addressed how the notion of control and power within neoliberalism is predicated on a system of feeling that emerges in different forms.

Starting from Deleuze's 'Postscript', this chapter has examined what Deleuze called 'a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of enclosure' and what he refers to as an 'installation of new forces'.[95] DeLillo's short-story, 'Hammer and Sickle', explored how a traditional site of enclosure, the prison, may be conceived differently in contemporary neoliberalism than as formulated by Foucault and Deleuze. The story presents punishment as being radically different to the 'closed environments' of Foucault's 'disciplinary societies', with this most notably involving emotion in the sense of manipulation.[96] The inmates of the prison are hardly aware of their punishment and are even made to feel happy and secure in their space. The power structure of capital maintains its control and dominance through emotional means, making the individuals believe that the situation in which they find themselves is the best possible situation. Reading DeLillo's work to engage with the 'Postscript' has revealed another layer to the famous Thatcher idea that there is no alternative to capitalism: capitalism maintains control by removing the emotional need for an alternative.

However, Deleuze's work is not complete in its analysis of contemporary control. Not only does he largely ignore the role of emotion in control societies, he misrepresents some key

[94] Alessandra De Marco, 'Don DeLillo's Fiction of Finance Capital' *Literature Compass*, 11 (2014), 657-666, p. 660.
[95] Deleuze, 'Postscript', pp. 4-5.
[96] Deleuze, 'Postscript', p. 4.

aspects of Foucault's work. Kelly's work provides insight for the analysis of DeLillo, in its criticism of the 'Postscript':

> Rather than identifying discipline and sovereign power as Foucault does as 'technologies of power', he uses the terms 'sovereignty', 'discipline' and 'control' adjectivally, speaking of 'disciplinary societies'. This allows a serious divergence from Foucault's position to go unmarked: Deleuze takes these notions as essences of societies, whereas for Foucault there is no limit to how many technologies might coexist in a social formation.[97]

DeLillo's work, when considering *Zero K* alongside 'Hammer and Sickle' in order to gain a more robust contemporary perspective, coheres with Kelly's analysis of Foucault, rather than Deleuze's. Deleuze's view of discipline and control as separate entities does not match DeLillo's fictional depiction, in which control and discipline are both aspects of the emotionally manipulative activities of capital. Discipline and control in neoliberal society are both elements of a method of incentivisation; external forces of neoliberal power acting on the emotion of individuals. These methods are successful and ensure continued valorisation because they go unnoticed.

Finally, the 'Postscript' suggests that debt is also a crucial aspect of control in contemporary society. Although it only mentions it once, Lazzarato suggests that elsewhere in Deleuze's work 'he underscores the impossibility of considering a market economy in itself, since [it derives from] the money economy and debt economy which distribute power'.[98] This distribution of power flows only in the direction of capital, and DeLillo's novel suggests that even the most wealthy are still in effect debtors to capital. Packer in *Cosmopolis* ultimately

[97] Kelly, 'Discipline is Control', p. 51.
[98] Lazzarato, *Indebted Man*, p. 75.

fails because he attempts to live chaotically, to mirror capital and its success, but is unable to do so. This reading of *White Noise* and *Cosmopolis* suggests that capital presents precarity as the norm, regardless of where one stands on the financial ladder. The 'Postscript' is again too quick to point away from enclosure towards the controlling mechanism of debt, as the debt-money economies position both Packer and Gladney in the fiction as effectively enclosed.

They are in a system in which the effects of debt are felt in the negative emotions that come from immobility and a loss of autonomy. The fear and anxiety keep them locked into the game but, as one sees with Packer, there is no security to be had in a precarious system. Berardi summarises these effects of 'capitalist absolution […] asserting its right to the unfettered control of our lives' as an 'epidemic of unhappiness', but this chapter argues it goes further than this.[99] Unhappiness can be a symptom of indebtedness, but this is not the only emotional manipulation with which the current neoliberal system of power and control engages. The depictions of closed centres and prisons in DeLillo's work reveals that *happiness* is just as effective at ensuring people stay within a set of undefined limits as unhappiness.

[99] Berardi, *And*, p. 304.

# Part Two

## Structure and Crisis

## Chapter Three

### ‘Science awash in irrepressible fantasy’: Neoliberalism’s Structure of Feeling

Chapters one and two demonstrated how neoliberalism incorporates emotions into the economic and political control it exerts within society. Through a synthesis of literary analysis of DeLillo, and theoretical analysis of Mark Fisher and Gilles Deleuze, those chapters explained how this dominance and control functions through emotion. Part two of this thesis, and this chapter in particular, is interested in the intersection of emotion and capitalism in dimensions beyond the purely political and the economic. This perspective expands on the work of affect theorists that was part of section three of the spiral of intensification in the introduction. It will explore the emotion over a time period in order to understand how emotional intensity changes, mirroring the outward spiralling of the model. The chapter looks at how emotions work in the context of what Raymond Williams refers to as a ‘structure of feeling’ in *Marxism and Literature*. He describes an ‘affective infrastructure’ that makes up the real, lived experience of individuals in society.[1] This structure is a way of understanding the direct function of emotions as they exist and reproduce neoliberalism. The wide-reaching influence of capitalism on contemporary life means that a contemporary structure of feeling will reflect neoliberalism’s presence in the emotional lives of individuals even where capitalism is not obviously present.

In this chapter Williams’ perspective inspires a method for reading literature that incorporates a ‘participants’ perspective on culture; that is, not only what was said and done at a particular place and at a particular time, but what it was like to be there’.[2] Understanding how

[1] Devika Sharma and Frederik Tygstrup, *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture* (New York: De Gruyter, 2015), p. 2.
[2] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.1.

neoliberalism impacts the emotions of individuals enables the construction of a picture of the underlying emotional characteristics of capitalism. The structure of feeling can be understood to be comprised of:

> The many different components that go into the formation of a 'group' to which its members can adhere and feel attachment, from shared social background to common political beliefs, from body language to generational experience, from linguistic habits to idiosyncratic views on specific topics, and much more. […] ideas, events, and their effects, but also, and more ambitiously, all of the less tangible qualities that eventually make up the specific social and intellectual atmosphere of the group.[3]

This chapter reads DeLillo's work through this type of structure, to interrogate emotional qualities of fiction in order to develop a clearer idea as to the emotional qualities of neoliberalism. To understand how this structure reveals facets of neoliberalism's relationship with emotion, it will be necessary to look towards scholars on Williams as he wrote relatively little on the subject despite its importance to this theory.[4]

This chapter responds to the 'urgency to understand and theorise affects and affectivity, simply in order to understand what is happening around us'.[5] The world is 'becoming increasingly affect-driven' and this makes understanding how this is expressed in terms of lived experience useful for a reading of fiction.[6] Section one looks at *Point Omega* with a focus on affect theory, particularly focusing on Frederic Jameson's notion of affect, and uses fiction to explore the manifestations of contemporary conceptions of affect and feeling. The second

[3] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.1.
[4] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.1.
[5] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.3.
[6] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.3.

section looks at *Zero K* in order to interrogate the emotional structure that underpins the 'very basic idea, yet very complex phenomenon, of the lived presence'.[7] It looks at hope, fear and happiness, and questions how these are key to the structure of feeling of contemporary capitalism. The third section explores the influence of consumerism on the structure of feeling, looking at *White Noise* to explore the phenomenon of 'when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing'.[8] This section asks what relationship consumerism has with the structure of feeling that has been identified in other parts of the chapter.

Williams' argues that 'the making of art is never itself in the past tense. It is always a formative process, within a specific present' and this chapter contends that this specific present is dominated by neoliberal capitalism.[9] The chapter uses Williams' perspective to read DeLillo's work, drawing also on the affect theory of Lauren Berlant, Sara Ahmed and others. Indeed, affect theorists like Ahmed have expressed similar views to Williams, writing that she 'turned to emotion in order to explain how worlds are reproduced', and it is from this conviction that neoliberal society is comprehensible through a more robust understanding of its affects that the chapter takes its starting point.[10] This chapter asks whether its claim that emotions are the language of neoliberalism is reinforced by the structure of feeling that emerges through literary and theoretical analysis of the neoliberal period. It asks of what the neoliberal structure of feeling is comprised and uses DeLillo's work as a way of finding answers.

**The waning of affect**

[7] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.1.
[8] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (London: Duke University Press, 2011), p. 2.
[9] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p.21.
[10] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 204.

When considering the output of Don DeLillo in the neoliberal period, a lot of the critical work involves analysis of his fiction in the context of postmodernism as both a literary and a cultural project with close theoretical links to capitalism.[11] There are numerous articles and chapters on the subject of DeLillo as postmodern,[12] with him described to readers new to his work as a 'postmodern master'.[13] His work is read alongside that of Baudrillard perhaps more than any other postmodern theorist but, in order to consider how his novels inform an understanding of neoliberalism's structure of feeling, Jameson's ideas about the role of affect in 'late capitalist' society would be more pertinent.

Jameson's influential text brings capitalism and affect theory together in a way that has been built upon in the humanities since its publication. Affect theory is useful for an interrogation of neoliberalism's structure of feeling, as it develops a critical structure and language with which one can talk of emotion. Jameson theorises contemporary capitalism in a number of ways he describes as postmodern, part of which is 'a waning of affect in postmodern culture', which he explains through comparative analysis of Vincent Van Gogh and Andy Warhol.[14] DeLillo's work, like Warhol's, could be said to be evident of postmodernism which showcases 'the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality'.[15] The waning of affect is 'perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms' for Jameson, which suggests that emotions and affects are a key way of distinguishing contemporary society from the past.

[11] Each of Carmichael, Parish, Donovan, Laist, Wilcox, Reeve, Kerridge have work that focuses on DeLillo's fiction with a particular interest in the postmodern aspects of his work. Please see bibliography for specific examples.
[12] Peter Knight's 'DeLillo, Postmodernism, Postmodernity', in *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo,* ed. by John Duvall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 27-40, being one example; Thomas Carmichael's 'Lee Harvey Oswald and the Postmodern Subject: History and Intertextuality in Don DeLillo's Libra, The Names, and Mao II', *Contemporary Literature*, 34:2 (1993) 204-218., another, and Annjeanette Wiese, 'Rethinking Postmodern Narrativity: Narrative Construction and Identity Formation in Don DeLillo's White Noise' *College Literature*, 39:3 (2012), 1-26., a third.
[13] Kris Doyle, 'Don DeLillo: a Beginner's Guide', *Pan Macmillan Blogs* (2016) <https://www.panmacmillan.com/blogs/literary/don-delillo-beginner-s-guide> [accessed 27 September 2018].
[14] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 10.
[15] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. 9.

If DeLillo is a postmodern writer, then it would follow that his work would contain this flatness and reproduce this superficiality, but for Jameson the waning of affect is not as simple as the idea postmodern works do not contain complex emotion. He writes of the artworks that 'it would be inaccurate to suggest that all affect, all feeling or emotion, all subjectivity, has vanished from the newer image', and offers the suggestion that postmodern works involve affect and emotion in a 'strange' manner.[16] Jameson suggests that artworks reflective of contemporary capitalism present emotion in a way that differs from previous periods of capitalism and that they can be understood, not through engagement with traditional 'feelings', but through an understanding of affect and emotion that proceeds from a Lyotardian language of intensity. This form of contemporary emotion is described by him as 'free-floating and impersonal'.[17] The requirement to identify a structure of feeling in order to understand neoliberalism is heightened by the fact that Jameson's emotional conception of capitalism is relatively vague as to how these emotions actually present.

His analysis of emotion in contemporary capitalism as 'free-floating' is reminiscent of the way Deleuze formulates his society of control. Despite the similarities between the two theorists, Jameson's conception suggests a weakened ability of emotion to impact on individuals and society. However, in DeLillo's work, emotions are not simply depthless surface patterns, but intrinsic to the control mechanisms of contemporary capitalism. This section is therefore concerned with understanding how best to theorise affect and emotion in capitalist society, and what this theorisation can add to a conception of a neoliberal structure of feeling. It also questions whether one should consider DeLillo's work postmodern, or whether postmodernism has any place in a contemporary conception of a structure of feeling. Berlant is critical of Jameson's formulation, suggesting that he uses affect as 'a coarse measure of a shift from a norm of modernist care for the historical resonance in the represented object to a

[16] Jameson, *Postmodernism,* p. 10te
[17] Jameson, *Postmodernism,* p. 16.

postmodern investment in flatness and surface'.[18] This section uses DeLillo's fiction to gain insight into the manifestations of the ideas put forward by affect theorists.

The notion of a waning of affect might suggest that one could expect generally lower levels of affective intensity in capitalist art, and if one sees art as reflective of society, this formulation suggests that emotion would be less crucial for the functioning of that society. The first two chapters have already provided evidence contradicting this assertion, in that emotion is a fundamental element in naturalisation and control society, and much of politics, economics and culture function through emotional means. However, one can easily find instances of a lack of affective intensity in DeLillo's work. In *Point Omega* Jim Finley and Richard Elster retreat to a barren desert to discuss, among other things, war and filmmaking. The desert is described by Finley as 'outside my range', 'an alien being', 'science fiction', and 'both saturating and remote', which serves to impress upon the reader the inhospitable nature of DeLillo's choice of setting.[19] This could suggest a lack of affect in DeLillo's art, corresponding with what Rachel Greenwood Smith describes as 'the performative distance of postmodernist prose', which might make readers 'estranged from the part of [them]selves that emotionally identifies'.[20] *Point Omega* could therefore be said to present postmodern depthlessness, and subsequent lack of emotional engagement that renders emotional experiences relatively cold and impersonal. However, beyond the surface level, *Point Omega* is rich with emotional complexity and depth which stems from this barren environment.

The landscape has an affective impact even before the emotional connection between characters is developed. Finley says that he had to 'force [himself] to believe [he] was here', which one could read as being indicative either of a lack of affect or, alternatively, the power

[18] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 65.
[19] Don DeLillo, *Point Omega* (London: Picador, 2010), p. 25.
[20] Rachel Greenwald Smith, 'Postmodernism and the Affective Turn', *Twentieth Century Literature, 57*(3/4) (2011) 423-446, p. 439.

of even the most depthless elements having profound impact on the character.[21] Finley is obviously *affected* by the landscape. His depiction in the novel is evidence of the complex emotional structure at work in the text and reinforces the idea that DeLillo's work is emotionally complex, and not indicative of a lessened affective intensity. 'Affect, like sensation' for theorist Brian Massumi, 'refers to unmediated experience, bodily experiences or feelings that have not yet been coded (signified) as emotions'.[22] Finley has been unable to 'code' his emotions, leaving them to present themselves in a way that is confusing to him, and in this sense contemporary emotion in the novel corresponds with the same 'free-floating' logic that Deleuze uses to explain control; un-coded emotions that cause automatic behaviour patterns. Affect then is crucial for understanding the structure of feeling that underpins the control mechanisms of the first two chapters; the mechanisms that comprise neoliberalism's functionality. While elements of the text may not be revealing about capitalism, they nonetheless reveal the structure of feeling of capitalist society.

Much of the philosophical dialogue in the novel exemplifies the affective infrastructure of neoliberalism, and the desert may be seen as an allegorical representation of the incoherence of contemporary society:

> Day turns into night eventually but it's a matter of light and darkness, it's not time passing, mortal time. There's none of the usual terror. It's different here, time is enormous, that's what I feel here, palpably. Time that precedes us and survives us.[23]

[21] DeLillo, *Point Omega,* p. 25.
[22] Beverley Best, '"Fredric Jameson Notwithstanding": The Dialectic of Affect' *Rethinking Marxism*, 23:1 (2011), 60-82, p. 70.
[23] DeLillo, *Point Omega*, p. 56.

For Elster, the spaciousness of the desert is affectively powerful while still being cold and distant, bringing with it a revelation of the insignificance of human thought and experience. He does not feel outright terror, but something else which suggests it is an un-coded emotional experience. Seeing this type of emotional reaction as a reflection of the structure of feeling reveals the impact of the chaotic capitalist system that underpins society. This overt emotional reaction comes despite Jameson's waning of affect. Although he is not saying that affect does not exist in these texts and societies, he does claim that it is less impactful.

Jameson's work, as read by Beverly Best, reveals that a 'surfeit of something can eventually produce its opposite',[24] and that too much affect eventually produces 'the substantial disappearance of affect'.[25] For her this is 'primarily a function of commodification' suggesting that through consumerist appeals to emotions, the intensity of affect is weakened.[26] Reading it in this way implies that contemporary capitalism is characterised by its overuse of emotion, which weakens its impact. One could read the desert in *Point Omega* in this context: a barren landscape that has resulted from the overuse of emotion and affect in postmodern or neoliberal capitalism; the desert being the literal destination Elster seeks after the overwhelmingness of the city. Despite the validity of this perspective, the emotions between the characters while in the desert are sincere and point towards the fundamental importance of emotion in understanding the present. If affect had been rendered meaningless through overuse and this was reflected in the desertification of emotion, the result of Jessie Elster going missing in the desert would be rendered less impactful than it is in the text.

Elster begins to 'speak in fragments' and is 'driven insistently inward' as a result of this disappearance, which demonstrates the continued impact of affect in the desert despite the claims of a surfeit producing its opposite.[27] Affect and emotion are intrinsic to characterisations

[24] Best, 'Jameson', p. 71.
[25] Best, 'Jameson', p. 80.
[26] Best, 'Jameson', p. 71.
[27] DeLillo, *Point Omega,* p. 109.

in the novel as well as representing a contextualising of society, as a literary machine. The novel becomes about the emotions of loss, suggesting the primacy of this emotion in the structure of feeling and society. While the loss in this text is not related directly to capital, this project's mode of reading fiction means that the loss implies an emotion that is structural, rather than merely personal to Elster. Frida Beckman agrees: writing on *Point Omega* in the context of Jameson's work, she suggests it shows 'the re-emergence of allegory in postmodernity', which provides 'figurative machinery that allows us to envision the global in the local'.[28] The fact that even these barren landscapes reveal affective intensity suggests that the structure of feeling depicted in *Point Omega* is not one in which affect has waned and been nullified through overuse.

Best disagrees that allegory re-emerges in postmodernity, but suggests that the 'dominant social and cultural modality' of affect' has 'replaced the older […] modality of representation'.[29] However, while there is much affect in DeLillo's work, it works in a way that suggests there is no replacement (of representation for affect), but rather allegory can come about *through* affect. For Best, affect is a way of expressing the inexhaustible confusion of contemporary capitalism, but textual depictions of confusion is itself representation. Affect in the text reveals the structure of feeling through its allegorical potential. While Elster may experience personal loss, one can read this as part of the emotional reality that exists in this period of neoliberalism. Beckman, writing on *Zero K* also posits this textual device, suggesting that characters and events are potentially 'markers for more specific national concerns'.[30] Elster may grieve for his daughter in the text, but this can be read as allegorical for a broader emotional reality that exists within 2007's neoliberal society.

[28] Frida Beckman, 'Cartographies of Ambivalence: Allegory and Cognitive Mapping in Don DeLillo's Later Novels' *Textual Practice*, 32:8 (2018), 1383-1403, p. 1384.
[29] Best, 'Jameson', p. 80.
[30] Beckman, 'Cartographies', p. 1386.

Elster's character, for example, can be read as a commentary on the irrationality and free-floating nature of contemporary society, influenced as it is by capitalism, making the affective intensity of his characterisation serve an allegorical purpose. Despite his support for the war in the Middle East, Beckman views his project as 'yearn[ing] for a directness, a palpability of meaning', the rationality of which stands in opposition to the emotional nature of capital.[31] Much of the text's affective intensity is delivered through him, and his relationship to capital (viewed primarily through his connection to a war heavily linked with neoliberalism), allows one to read his character in a way that is critical of the emotional structure of capitalism. As well as being connected to capitalism through the war, Elster also experiences the same capitalist society as the other characters in the novel, meaning that even scenes involving familial emotions are influenced by capitalism. The intensity of the emotional connection between Finley and Elster throughout the novel might suggest a need for human connection and the role that pain and fear play in everyday life in contemporary neoliberal society. Although Best's affect theory nullifies allegory in postmodern fiction, one can read in Elster affective intensity which is easily narrativized. The seemingly non-capitalist elements of his life enable understanding about the wider capitalist structure of feeling, since his emotions are representational for life in that particular economic system.

Contrary to Best's perspective, DeLillo's work suggests that works of fiction can explore the dominant social modality of affect alongside allegory and representation. The emphasis on affective intensity in *Point Omega* is itself representational of the affective qualities that much of neoliberal society has incorporated. The text is not necessarily representational of capital but it nonetheless reveals, through its allegorical-affect, aspects of a distinctly contemporary and capitalist structure of feeling. In an instance where Finley provides

[31] Beckman, 'Cartographies', p. 1398.

personal care to Elster, immobilised through grief and worry about his missing daughter, the affective intensity is obvious:

> If I had to give him a shower, I'd give him a shower. I'd stick his head in the kitchen sink and wash his hair. I'd scrub out the sour odor he carried with him. I told him I was almost done but I wasn't almost done. Then I realized there was something else I'd forgotten, some sort of brush to whisk away all this hair.[32]

The closeness and bodily contact between the stronger character and the more vulnerable, and the physicality in Finley's determination to make Elster well again demonstrate the emotional connection between the characters, and this comes through Massumi's 'un-coded' affect, which requires a level of emotional intelligence on the part of the reader to be understood. While the passage is not overtly concerned with capitalism, it is specifically concerned with emotions that could be considered allegorical of a society that *is* capitalist. Much as carrying out an emotional reading of a text from the nineteenth century would reveal the qualities of that society's structure of feeling, *Point Omega* is able to reveal aspects of contemporary emotional infrastructure.

In her work on emotional capitalism Eva Illouz highlights the notion of emotional intelligence becoming 'a central concept of American culture overnight' as a result of its implantation in the corporation.[33] DeLillo's work reveals that a surfeit of affect does not lead to a loss of the affective intensity, but rather the affect becomes a representational element of the fiction, revealing of the society in which it exists. The *quantity* of affect in *Point Omega* is representational of capitalism's requirement for emotional intelligence: just as contemporary

[32] DeLillo, *Point Omega*, p. 114.
[33] Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 64.

society presents 'emotional competence [as] a crucial attribute of the mature self', emotional intelligence is crucial in this case for literary understanding.[34] The text is also representative through affect in the way it presents affective labour, and how it becomes a central aspect of contemporary capitalism's structure of feeling. This 'affective labour', which can be traced to Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, designates work that is 'immaterial' and is understood as being labour that relates to the emotional, rather than physical, quality of the effort in the work, as well as the goals of the work.[35] It is unlike 'cognitive labor [which] dislocate[s] passion from knowledge'.[36] The text's inclusion of affective labour is allegorical, as it mirrors the inherently emotional contemporary system. Best describes it as 'service, care, and entertainment industries: industries that involve human contact and interaction/health care, education, entertainment (film, TV, radio, the Internet), emotional/spiritual, well-being' etc.[37]

DeLillo shows this type of affective work from both of the primary male characters of *Point Omega*. Prior to the setting of the novel, Elster worked as an academic, writing on the war that took place in the early twenty-first century in the Middle East. His essay on the subject, comprising an example of his affective labour, finishes with the sentence:

> In future years, of course, men and women, in cubicles, wearing headphones, will be listening to secret tapes of the administration's crimes while others study electronic records on computer screens and still others look at salvaged videotapes of caged men being subjected to severe physical pain…[38]

[34] Illouz, *Cold Intimacies*, p. 64.
[35] Ben Anderson, 'Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of "Total War"' in *The Affect Theory Reader,* ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 184.
[36] Lawrence Grossberg, 'Affect's future: Rediscovering the Virtual in the Actual' in *The Affect Theory Reader,* ed. by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p. 333.
[37] Best, 'Jameson', p. 67.
[38] DeLillo, *Point Omega*, p. 42.

His work is non-material and cognitive, and also interpretive and philosophical. They are primarily emotional techniques which are also used in consumerism and this shows that these are typical neoliberal techniques of functioning which can be applied in many aspects of life. The brutality faced by the caged men in his essay elicits a strong emotional and affective response from both the reader and the characters themselves, with the essay being an important factor in Finley reaching out to Elster.

Elster's affective labour demonstrates how contemporary society requires this emotional response in order to make sense of situations. The representational quality of his essay is clear, in that the war is described as 'a revenge play that reflects the mass will and interprets the shadowy need of an entire nation, ours'.[39] It engages in dramatic affective intensity *and* provides a coherent narrative for understanding the atrocities of the war, illustrating the need to use affect and emotion to understand the world. Berlant describes this 'turn to affect' 'as timely because it provides a way of understanding and engaging with a set of broader changes in societal (re)production in the context of mutations in capitalism'.[40] Even where *Point Omega* is not overtly about capitalism, it remains reflective of a structure of feeling that is part of capitalism, one aspect of which is this turn to (greater and greater) affect. Elster's work (in DeLillo's) shows that affect is a crucial way of understanding the present moment, beyond merely acknowledging incomprehensibility. This affective analysis of *Point Omega* reveals how the structure of feeling of contemporary capitalism can be inferred in texts that are set in capitalist societies, but are not necessarily, or entirely conceptually concerned with capitalism. Illouz says that 'emotional behaviour has become so central to economic behaviour', implying that emotional behaviour in *Point Omega* relates to economic behaviour, even when it is personal in nature.[41]

[39] DeLillo, *Point Omega*, p. 43.
[40] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism,* p. 165.
[41] Illouz, *Cold Intimacies*, p. 64.

Finally, DeLillo's work corresponds with much of Berlant's affective formulation of capitalism. She writes that 'the labor of reproducing life in the contemporary world is also the activity of being worn out by it' which can be compared with Finley's planned artistic documentary about Elster and the war.[42] In his affective labour he hopes to critically interrogate the system that gave rise to the brutality of the war:

> Someone free to say whatever he wants, unsaid things, confidential things, appraise, condemn, ramble. Whatever you say, that's the film, you're the film, you talk, I shoot. No charts, maps, background information. Face and eyes, black and white, that's the film.[43]

Although a virtuous sounding project, the film nonetheless echoes the same techniques in its attempt at critiquing the world that one finds in the affective labour of capitalism. Elster standing at the wall without background information is an affective image that aims to convince rather than educate, and as such it does what Berlant identifies capitalism doing when it 'suspend[s] questions about the cruelty of the now'.[44] In this case, it occurs through a belief in the affective power of art to change society, and to resist dominant structures, but like the protestors in *Cosmopolis*, Finley's art ultimately speaks in the same affective language as the system he criticises and is part of the same affective infrastructure.

This section has underscored the importance of affect for navigating contemporary neoliberal capitalism, and that through understanding the dominant emotions in a society one can learn about the systems of power that shape that society and cause those emotions. It demonstrates that rather than a waning of affect (through overuse or otherwise), or the

[42] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 28.
[43] DeLillo, *Point Omega*, p. 57.
[44] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 28.

predominance of affect over allegory, there exists a profound representational quality to these 'un-coded' emotional responses. It points towards neoliberalism as a system built on images, feelings and beliefs. It has highlighted that in order to understand contemporary society, an understanding of neoliberal structures of feeling is essential, due to the inherently emotional and irrational ways individuals are asked to move through their lives.

**Interlocking and in tension**

Brian Chappell identifies a common theme in the postmodernist tendencies of DeLillo's fiction and suggests that it 'reflects a seeming loss of hope in the possibilities of art to assuage trauma and stem the apocalyptic tendencies of the age'.[45] He primarily draws on the work of Eve and Adelman in making this suggestion, which implies that there is some critical consensus that DeLillo's late work explores a 'loss of hope', an argument for which could be made via Jessie Elster's disappearance in *Point Omega*. This section is interested in the concept of hope as a central component of the affective infrastructure that reproduces neoliberalism, but it contends that rather than a *loss* of hope there is in fact a surfeit of hope that counters the overwhelming fear that typifies the 'apocalyptic tendencies of the age'.

In *Cruel Optimism,* Berlant identifies hope as a crucial element in understanding contemporary capitalism from an emotional perspective, suggesting that hope or 'optimism' 'involves a sustaining inclination to return to the scene of fantasy that enables you to expect that this time […] you or a world [will] become different in just the right way'.[46] This suggests that wherever one finds hope (including outside of capitalist contexts) it should not be

[45] Brian Chappell, 'Death and Metafiction: On the "Ingenious Architecture" of Point Omega' *Orbit: Writing around Pynchon*, 4(2): 6 (2016), pp. 1–25, p. 3.
[46] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism,* p. 2.

considered a positive emotion since it relates to a negative lived experience; something to be *hoped away from*. Hope for Berlant is 'fantasy' and it is in this way that it relates itself to happiness; it is anticipated but also deferred happiness. In her formulation, the fantasy only exists because of negativity (such as the 'ordinariness of suffering') that is the dominant emotional experience in capitalism.[47] This idea attains relevance when reading *Zero K* in which the technology of capital is described as 'science awash in irrepressible fantasy'.[48] It is precisely because of the negative lived experience within capitalism that hope comes to be such a notable element in the structure of feeling and the workings of capitalism.

The 'apocalyptic tendencies of the age' that hope is used to assuage in the novel are explored through technology related to death and eternal life, offered to the characters by a capitalist enterprise. This chapter prefers the terms fear or anxiety over the notion of apocalypse, and argues that fear, owing to its relationship with hope, is another element of affective infrastructure that characterises neoliberalism. For hope to exist and to function for capitalism there must be something to hope for and something to assuage; something which the individual is either afraid of or rejects in another way. Ahmed writes on fear that 'the difference between fear and anxiety is most often represented in terms of the status of the object. Indeed, fear has often been contrasted with anxiety insofar as fear *has* an object'.[49] Understanding how this fear works and how it works in conjunction with hope and happiness will be a fundamental undertaking for discerning the neoliberal structure of feeling.

Reading *Zero K* from the perspective of emotions reveals much about the role fear and hope play in contemporary capitalism, owing to their prominence in the lived experience of the characters. Considered alongside the analysis of *Point Omega* in the first section, the two novels enable a contemporary examination of these emotions and how they benefit capital. It

[47] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism,* p. 8.
[48] Don DeLillo, *Zero K* (London: Picador, 2016), p. 257.
[49] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics,* p. 64.

reveals the 'undeniable experience of the *present'* which for Williams is the purpose of this method of reading.[50] Although the work of this chapter is to identify how emotions function beyond the control techniques of chapters one and two, in identifying how a structure of feeling operates, there will arise further understanding as to how that control is possible. This section builds on some of the theoretical work done on DeLillo by Ashman, Baya, and Chappell, who look at the novels, and in some cases specific emotions in detail, but without focus on their relation to underlying structure of contemporary capitalism.

*Zero K* continues working on themes that DeLillo has been concerned with for many years: the fear of death and the future being primary among them. He returns to some of the affective language that was used in *Point Omega* through his protagonist, Jeffrey Lockhart and just as Finley does in the earlier novel, Lockhart uses physical affective ideas in order to build human connection and alleviate fear and pain. In one section he is thinking of his partner Emma and their sleeping arrangement:

> Know the moment, feel the gliding hand, gather all the forgettable fragments, fresh towels on the racks, nice new bar of soap, clean sheets on the bed, her bed, our blue sheets. This was all I needed to take me day to day and I tried to think of these days and nights as the hushed countermind, ours, to the widespread belief that the future, everybody's will be worse than the past.[51]

In the small details of their personal life Lockhart finds some solace and optimism that, much like the affective care Finley carries out with Elster, relieves the pressing fear and anxiety of the world around them. The hope and optimism experienced as a result of their relationship is directly tied to both happiness and the alleviation of fear; him thinking 'this was all I needed

[50] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 20. (emphasis mine).
[51] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 200.

to take me day to day' suggests an emotional state that already approaches happiness, but an underlying negativity that still requires aid to make it 'day to day'. He explains that this perception is merely a 'hushed countermind' to a more widely shared, negative emotional outlook. This is a manifestation of the emotional lived experience of neoliberalism, and while his negative emotions do not overtly implicate capitalism, the 'widespread belief' that the future will be worse than the past points at a dominant negative feeling that characterises life under this system.

If indeed there is such a fear that the future will be worse than the past then a hopeful outlook allows individuals to make it 'day to day' rather than being paralysed by that fear. Hope, is therefore a countermeasure to fears that are the result of 'rapid transformations and innovations, which have not only eroded old structures and values, but have also led to feelings of loss of control and loss of certainty about the future'.[52] In this sense, the perceived benefits of hope feed into the Deleuzian control mechanisms: it makes individuals operate in certain ways when they are influenced by the hope neoliberalism affords them. Lockhart in the novel must put his faith in something and invest it with hope in order to transcend a growing panic about the future. While a fear of the future is common throughout history, neoliberal capitalism occupies a place in which it exacerbates this fear through its progresses (its technology, for example, producing confusion and chaotic fluctuations in the world). It then asks individuals to put their faith in the same processes that bring about their fears.

The Convergence in *Zero K* is a site in which the novel brings together fear and hope as emotions connected to a capitalist system of production. Much like *White Noise*, the newer text explores the pressing fears that characterise a society in thrall to capitalism and technological innovation. Where the earlier novel looks towards consumer drugs as a way to alleviate anxiety, *Zero K* suggests that ultimately more capitalism is the answer and the source

[52] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics,* p. 72.

of hope. This coheres with Philip Mirowski, who suggests dominant neoliberal ideology argues that 'any problem, economic or otherwise, has a market solution, given sufficient ingenuity'.[53] DeLillo suggests that this even extends to problems that can be caused by neoliberalism itself. Lockhart's father Ross says 'they're making the future. A new idea of the future' and 'we're forgetting everything we knew'.[54] The development of capitalism that takes place in the Convergence demonstrates the hopeful nature of the technology in use, but also that this hope ultimately rests merely on disregarding the problems of the past and present. Lockhart also connects it to the unequal structure of neoliberalism, in that his father had 'access denied to others' which further connects hope to the structure of capital.[55] The novel reflects a tendency toward merely deferring pain and fear through hope within neoliberalism, the functional role of hope therefore identifying it as a key piece of affective infrastructure.

For Nathan Ashman this deferred pain in *Zero K* is directly related to capital, and he writes that 'the facility becomes a microcosm of a contemporary culture increasingly under threat from the combined forces of technology and global capital'.[56] His work is more concerned with the role of death as an object of fear than with the generalised anxiety that is part of the contemporary structure of feeling, but he recognises the Convergence as a site in which the mechanics of overcoming this fear are of paramount importance. Since his work is not directly focusing on emotions or capitalism it does not connect the concept of hope with the crucial interlinking of fear and capital, but it does acknowledge the impact of capital on humanity being an integral reason for the existence of the Convergence at all.

The project at the Convergence aims to offset the 'petty misery' that individuals experience in contemporary society through a technique that blends 'medical science' with

[53] Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste* (London: Verso, 2013), pp. 64-65.
[54] DeLillo, *Zero K*, pp. 30-31.
[55] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 31.
[56] Nathan Ashman, '"Death Itself Shall Be Deathless": Transrationalism and Eternal Death in Don DeLillo's Zero K' *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 60:3 (2019), 300-310, p. 301.

'foundations, corporations, secret funding from various governments'.[57] Turning towards capitalism for a sense of hope, as the Convergence asks the characters to do, completes a circle of dominance, since much of the negative emotion they experience stems from the capitalist system itself. Even the videos on screens around the Convergence which show natural disasters or war are indicative of the destructive results of capitalism throughout the developing world. In this sense one can see the spiral of intensification at work. As was outlined in the third section of the theoretical model, the system in which individuals aim to find hope and salvation is the same system that delivers the sources of their fear to begin with. It is a hermeneutical circle that mirrors Mirowski's formulation of neoliberal ideology in that the cause of a problem can be its solution. Hope in this respect functions both as a consumer product, sold by the Convergence, and as something that the clients have to invest into the system in order for it to (ostensibly) work.

The Convergence attempts to use capitalism to solve the fear and unhappiness that the inequality within capitalism has caused. In Ahmed's terms this fear seems to have no direct object rendering it more as generalised anxiety. This is also the case for Adina Baya who writes that 'in *Zero K*, fear functions as a latent yet dominant feeling. It is less expressed by characters, but it is responsible for prompting them to try to suspend the implacable power of death'.[58] As Berlant highlights, hope here suspends the cruelty of the now. The Convergence invites people to forget contemporary problems and to put their hope that capitalist enterprise can bring eventual happiness. Hope then becomes a way of excusing the past, and capitalising on it, by promising happiness that never has to be delivered.

Lockhart identifies the common emotions of neoliberalism that he perceives as being present in the technology of the Convergence when he suggests that 'what was gathering could

[57] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 33.
[58] Adina Baya, '"Catastrophe is Our Bedtime Story": the Media-Fuelled Obsession with Death in Don DeLillo's *Zero K*' *Romanian Journal of English Studies,* 16 (2019), 9-15, p. 12.

well be a kind of psychological pandemic. The fearful perception that tends towards wishfulness'.[59] DeLillo's character perceives the intimate connection between fear and hope, as if fear could not exist in its current state without hope. The fact that happiness is relegated to the future, something that can be bought now but not enjoyed yet points towards the logic of consumerism that will be expanded upon in the next section. Best writes on the 'messages that rationalize fear, anxiety, peace, well-being, contentment, ecstasy, or joy as appropriate responses to consumption of commodities' that individuals face throughout their lives within capitalist societies.[60] If the capitalist system in *White Noise* invented the medicine Dylar as a way of assuaging fear then *Zero K* shows the mutations and developments of neoliberalism; it has discovered that 'senseless hope' (to borrow Fisher's phrase) is an even greater consumer product than a fear-curing drug. Hope is rationalised as an appropriate response to the product offered at the Convergence, and much of the discussion taking place there has the tone of a sales pitch. The hope that one will outlast death is enough to convince the wealthy to abandon the 'cruelty of the now' instead of attempting to use their means to remedy it. In this sense hope is a defence mechanism for capital, ensuring that there is no great will to change the cruelty in the present, much of which is attributable to capitalist practices.

Williams suggest that in order to uncover a particular structure of feeling one has to 'identify a specific configuration of relevant elements, a configuration of traits that marks out the profile of a feeling […] as a set, with specific internal relations, at once *interlocking* and *in tension*'.[61] The analysis of DeLillo above has uncovered the interlocking nature of fear and hope in contemporary capitalism, suggesting that they are crucial for an understanding of the neoliberal structure of feeling. They are also in tension, as evidenced by the contradictions of capital that can offer up the same system as a source of both hope and the fear it attempts to

[59] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 127.
[60] Best, 'Jameson', p. 72.
[61] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 5. (emphasis mine).

assuage. Writing on the use of Williams' method, Illouz notes that this 'this level of experience has an underlying structure, that is, is systematic rather than haphazard'.[62] The experience of hope and fear in *Zero K* responds to a structural and systemic function of emotions in neoliberal capitalism that is deliberate in the sense that it enables capital to be valorised.

Depictions of fear and hope in *Zero K* also respond to the 'different components that go into the formation of a 'group'' that Williams' argues is the rationale for uncovering a structure of feeling. Ahmed argues that the 'complexity of the spatial and bodily politics of fear has never been so apparent in the global economies of fear since September 11 2001'.[63] While this thesis does not aim to discuss the role of terrorism and its links with capital, Ahmed's idea nonetheless explains the myopic turning away that is present in DeLillo's recent novel. The novel responds to the structure of feeling which is comprised of fear that 'functions as a technology of governance [used] to make others consent to that power' largely in the wake of the ostensible rise of global terrorism following the millennium.[64] The staff at the Convergence, although not a government, use the same technique, 'the elimination of fear, to ensure consent' and ensure eagerness to use their service.[65] This functional use of emotion is what makes it a *structure* in the sense that it underpins a system. The leaders of the Convergence give a talk to the gathered customers:

> They spoke about ecosystems of the future planet, theorizing – a renewed environment, a ravaged environment – and then Lars held up both hands to signal a respite. […]

[62] Illouz, *Cold Intimacies,* p. 50.
[63] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, p. 72.
[64] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, p. 71.
[65] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, p. 71.

> "We understand that some of the things we've been saying here today may act as disincentives. This is okay. This is the simple truth of our perspective. But do this. Think of money and immortality." […]
>
> "Life everlasting belongs to those of breathtaking wealth".[66]

This demonstrates the role of fear and hope in the structure of feeling. The fears and troubles which stem from capital are assuaged by the promise of some future happiness, away from the imminent present. For Ahmed this happiness may be 'a technique of distraction, a way of covering [individuals] with the warmth of a blanket'.[67] This reading of fear and hope in DeLillo's novel not only shows his engagement with these emotions as elements of the structure of feeling, but enables greater understanding of how this affective infrastructure actually functions.

Williams justifies using literature in this type of analysis, writing of finding 'inalienable elements of a social material process' by 'defining forms and conventions in art and literature'.[68] In *Zero K* hope and fear as they are 'interlocking' and 'in tension' represent the 'affective infrastructure' of neoliberalism, through their depiction as simultaneously the cause of negative emotion and its remedy. It is expressed succinctly by Massumi, who writes 'capitalism universalizes generic conditions (of free-fall) that self-divide into specific conditions (of staying of afloat). Free-fall and staying afloat aggravate rather than encourage one another'.[69] Free fall (fear) and staying afloat (hope) come to be the emotional reality for many living within contemporary society. The section of *Zero K* above illustrates the three stages of this process: the fear of a ravaged environment, the hope of money and the desire to buy immortality, and the eventual happiness that comes in the form of 'life everlasting'. The

[66] DeLillo, *Zero K*, pp. 75-76.
[67] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, p. 227.
[68] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 24.
[69] Brian Massumi, *Politics of Everyday Fear* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), p. 35.

fact that the reader suspects that this final form will never emerge demonstrates part of capitalism's structure of feeling where happiness is always deferred.

Ross Lockhart's partner Artis is preparing to undergo the cryogenic treatment offered by the Convergence, and is kept medicated during this process. Her state is described as 'languid contentment' which is a good expression of how hope can be provided in neoliberalism's structure of feeling.[70] She is not happy, as this is promised for the future, but she is no longer fearful. Much as the capitalist system looks away from its own excesses and destruction, Artis looks away from her pain toward an imagined fantasy future. Berlant questions:

> What is the good life when the world that was to have been delivered by upward mobility and collective uplift that national/ capitalism promised goes awry in front of one? What is life when the body cannot be relied on to keep up with the constant flux of new incitements and genres of the reliable, but must live on, maintaining footing, nonetheless?[71]

*Zero K* may answer this with its presentation of a neoliberal structure of feeling that shows the primacy of hope and fear as the functional emotions of capitalism. The good life is a place that is always deferred, and the hope for which keeps the promises that have gone awry from being either a catalyst for change or for the complete breakdown of society. The fact that individuals *must* continue to be exploited if they are not to succumb to their fear means that they must keep living on in hope. Languid contentment is the form of acquiescence that believing in hope takes in contemporary neoliberal capitalism.

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[70] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 26.
[71] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism,* p. 69.

**Consumerism and fear**

This section advances the chapter's understanding of the neoliberal structure of feeling through an examination of consumerism in *White Noise*. No other DeLillo novel places the same emphasis on consumerism as both an emotional act, and one that typifies life in neoliberal America. Indeed, many scholars have written on *White Noise* from the perspective of consumerism, with Sanja Matković highlighting Gladney as a character who 'creates his own identity by choosing from the abundance of offers, thus being a consumer in every aspect of his life'.[72] The novel itself has a 'fascination with supermarkets and shopping' that necessitates further examination as to how this fascination impacts what a neoliberal structure of feeling looks like and how it functions.[73]

In their book on Williams' theory, Devika Sharma and Frederik Tygstrup explore what makes consumerism an important part of affective infrastructure within capitalist societies. They suggest that consumerism is built on the logic of emotions:

> And this is undoubtedly another reason why we have become preoccupied with affect studies today: the affective aye or no is really the model for customer behaviour in the market place, which in turn sets the agenda in still more areas of our lives.[74]

Consumerism, they argue, is inherently affective. The affective, pre-conscious impulse is what steers the direction of consumerism in neoliberal society; it is both how individuals decide what

[72] Sanja Matković, 'The Construction of Identity in a Consumerist Society: Delillo's Jack Gladney', *Anafora*, 2.01 (2016), 163-179, p. 165.
[73] Matković, 'Construction of Identity', pp. 165-166.
[74] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 4.

to buy, and how capitalist enterprise decides what should be sold. As the increasing marketisation of society occurs during neoliberalism, so too does this sort of behaviour come to be the normal way of deciding the 'agenda' in other aspects of daily life. In this regard, consumerism comes to be the place in which the claim 'emotion is the language of neoliberalism' is most clearly evident. 'Consumption', argue Sharma and Tygstrup, 'is becoming still more affect-driven, and so is production'.[75]

Thinking of consumerism as being part of the affective infrastructure of contemporary capitalism is a useful way of understanding its role in the way emotions impact society. The focus on consumerism in *White Noise* does not represent a conceptual break with that of sections one and two, as the role of consumerism is deeply implicated in the formulation of the predominant emotions of neoliberalism, hope and fear. The way in which DeLillo's recent novels suggest that these emotions are crucial for understanding capitalist structure of feeling is expanded upon through this exploration of consumerism in *White Noise*. This DeLillo text depicts consumerist responses to both of these prevailing emotional modalities.

Consumerism's link with happiness is theorised by Bauman as 'happiness comes from disposal of the old to make room for the new',[76] but also that 'happiness and unhappiness refer to states wished for and wished to be avoided, rather than states of reality'.[77] This second idea reinforces the nature of hope in the structure of feeling that gives rise to contemporary, neoliberal consumerist practices. Shopping encourages individuals to replace old things with new things; replacing negative emotions with positive, or at least hopeful, emotions. The importance of consumerism in recognising the nuances of neoliberalism's structure of feeling is outlined in *White Noise* in which the market and capital's interests take precedence. Gladney speaks to his students, suggesting that as they learn and grow older they become 'less targetable

[75] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 4.
[76] Zygmunt Bauman, *Consuming Life* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2013), p. 37.
[77] Bauman, *Consuming Life,* p. 43.

by advertisers and mass-producers of culture'. He asks them 'what is your place in the marketing scheme?' as if this should be of fundamental importance to them.[78] This demonstrates that in neoliberal capitalism, a person's relationship with consumerism and capital is of fundamental importance, because the emotions involved in the consumerist system ultimately shape the how the structure of feeling impacts the whole of society.

The section of *White Noise* that is most overtly concerned with the emotion inherent to consumerism is that which directly follows an affective encounter Gladney has with a colleague. The colleague describes him as 'so harmless, Jack. A big, harmless, aging, indistinct sort of guy' which perturbs Gladney, but also puts him 'in the mood to shop'.[79] In this brief encounter, Gladney's feelings are hurt by the description, and the view he has of himself is challenged. This view, his perceived identity, is closely tied with consumerism and capitalism in general, as evidenced by his immediate and unthinking impulse to shop in order to boost his emotional state. For Gladney, consumerism carries the potential for positive emotion and carries the *hope* for happiness which will assuage the pain felt from the encounter with the colleague. It is also pertinent that, despite being a fair walk away from the mall, shopping is the initial action Gladney thinks of to bolster his emotional state and wellbeing, suggesting the primacy of consumerism in emotional capitalism.[80] The act of shopping that follows is illuminating for its relevance to the role of consumerism in the neoliberal structure of feeling. His family who roam the shops with him are his 'guides to endless well-being' for the way in which 'when [he] could not decide between two shirts, they encouraged [him] to buy both'.[81]

DeLillo here reflects the tendency to see consumerist practices as intrinsically tied to happiness and functioning on an affective level. Bauman suggests that 'consumer society thrives as long as it ensures the unhappiness of its members' and this is mirrored in Gladney's

[78] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 50.
[79] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 83.
[80] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 83. (The Gladney's walk 'across two parking lots' to get to the mall).
[81] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 83.

rationale for shopping.[82] He shops to relieve the unhappiness stemming from his colleague's remarks, and this is seen in the tactile and emotional language he uses to describe the trip:

> he 'smelled chocolate, popcorn, cologne', 'organ music rose from the great court', 'my family gloried in the event'.[83]

The way in which consumerism here is an 'event' is suggestive of an emotional spectacle, and something which carries great significance for the individuals involved. The consumerism gives him hope in a similar way to that which Berlant formulates as 'the subject leans towards promises contained within the present moment of the encounter with [his] object'.[84] In the way Gladney shops with abandon, moving 'from store to store, rejecting not only items in certain departments […] but whole stores […] that did not strike our fancy for one reason or another' one sees the affect with which the process takes place.[85] Moments of happiness are fleeting and impossible to predict, and this is expressed in the hope with which Gladney 'leans towards promises contained in the present moment'. If identifying a structure of feeling requires a contemporaneous outlook, then consumerism provides it; the hope that underpins the act of shopping in Gladney's case is inherently tied to the present moment, with no wider intellectual or temporal considerations given.

Consumerism is a practice in which individuals in a neoliberal society look for positive emotions. It refers back to the idea of hope as one of the key components of the underlying structure of feeling. As a result of shopping, Gladney says 'I began to grow in value and self-regard. I filled myself out, found new aspects of myself, located a person I'd forgotten existed.

[82] Bauman, *Consuming Life,* p. 47.
[83] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 83.
[84] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 24.
[85] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 83.

Brightness settled around me'.[86] The brightness that settles around him is a figurative positivity that runs throughout the section on shopping at the mall and depicts the emotion of the character in that moment. Shopping does not undo the negativity of his colleague's comments, but it does offer *hope* in that maybe Gladney is not the person that the colleague identified, and that maybe his acts of consumerism will bring out in him something more positive or turn him into somebody better. The happiness that Gladney feels in this moment is what Baudrillard describes as 'the absolute reference for consumer society', suggesting that DeLillo's character follows the consumerist logic of chasing happiness through products.[87] Consumerism relies on happiness as a goal so that it can use hope as a marketing tool, which makes individuals rely on consumerism for their happiness. Robert E Lane notes that 'many studies show that people are not very good at explaining why they feel good or bad', and it is noteworthy that throughout the shopping section Gladney does not refer to feeling bad, as if to name that negative state would be to confront it.[88] Instead he retreats immediately to the hope that happiness can be delivered through consumerism.

The ability of consumerism to deliver positive affect within the neoliberal system clearly reinforces the role of hope that was identified in the last section as being important for the contemporary structure of feeling. For Gladney, hope is powerful and has a sweeping emotional impact which is shown to be more complex that a simple longing for happiness. On the sums of money he was spending:

> These sums came back to me in the form of existential credit. I felt expansive, inclined to be sweepingly generous, and told the kids to pick out their Christmas gifts here and now. I gestured in what I felt was an expansive

[86] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 84.
[87] Jean Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (London: Sage, 1998), p. 69.
[88] Robert Lane, *The Loss of Happiness in Market Democracies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 72.

> manner. I could tell they were impressed. They fanned out across the area, each of them suddenly inclined to be private, shadowy, even secretive.[89]

Gladney's state could not really be described as happy, but it seems as though the 'existential credit' he has been granted has rendered him temporarily free from fear. In this sense, consumerism has delivered on the promises made in its mechanism of hope. His generosity, rather than being the positive action of a happy man, appears to be an act of arrogance, with an emphasis on how he is perceived. His children also react in the way Bauman would expect: they each act secretively as if afraid to share their own positive emotion with the others, suggesting that consumerism is ultimately an individualistic endeavour. [90]

At the end of the shopping, our understanding of how consumerism is an active force within the functioning of capitalist emotion is made more complex. DeLillo writes 'we drove home in silence. We went to our respective rooms, wishing to be alone'.[91] There is no sense of happiness or even unhappiness in this, but the characters could hardly be said to be in high spirits. It does not take long before their sense of hope (for happiness) is deflated once again, and the realisation that their purchased goods have not changed anything makes them revert back to their pre-shopping emotional levels. Massumi writes that 'when we buy, we are buying off fear and falling, filling the gap with presence-effects. When we consume, we are consuming our own possibility'.[92] Much as Bauman's suggestion on 'consumer society thriv[ing] as long as it ensures the unhappiness of its members', capitalism utilises emotions like happiness through hope because it never has to deliver in any lasting way.[93] Gladney uses up his hope when he purchases items, losing the emotion's potential through consumption, leaving him

[89] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 84.
[90] Bauman, *Consuming Life,* p. 56.
[91] DeLillo, *White Noise,* p. 84.
[92] Massumi, *Everyday Fear,* p. 12.
[93] Bauman, *Consuming Life,* p. 47.

deflated. This valorises capital and guarantees repeat consumers, looking to assuage their fear once again in the hope that this time it will deliver lasting results.

Hope only works this way because of fear and while Gladney's primary fear is death, one could certainly read the overwhelmingness of this fear as being representative of anxiety within neoliberalism. Indeed, Hossein Pirnajmuddin and Bahareh Samani suggest that the Gladney's fear of death can be 'explained through [Paul] Virilio's views on speed and time' in terms of the 'frenzied pace of modern life' that exists under contemporary capitalism.[94] Similarly, Weise believes that the fear of death in the novel echoes 'the loss of presence of wholeness described in contemporary theories of information saturation and randomization'.[95] In both of these critical discourses, fear is positioned as a motivating force to act in a hopeful way. Gladney's shopping trip ending in disappointment shows how the affective infrastructure of neoliberalism works, with hope functioning as a way further down a spiral that becomes intensified. As was outlined in the third section of the spiral of intensification theoretical model, the way in which emotions such as hope function is to increase over time the intensity they are felt, thus increasing their societal effects. As Berlant notes, 'if consumption promises satisfaction in substitution and then denies it because all objects are rest stops amid the process of remaining unsatisfied […] then hoarding seems like a solution'.[96] One can consider Gladney's attempts to hoard hope or happiness that ultimately fail. The fear in *White Noise* is the fear of death, but the way this fear manifests demonstrates how fear functions as part of a structure of feeling in neoliberalism.

Consumerism in the text also serves to illustrate the primacy of fear within neoliberalism's structure of feeling. As above, one can easily read the fear of death in *White*

[94] Hossein Pirnajmuddin and Bahareh Bagherzadeh Samani, 'Don DeLillo's *White Noise:* A Virilian Perspective' *Text Matters,* 9:9 (2019), 356-374, p. 358.
[95] Annjeanette Wiese, 'Rethinking Postmodern Narrativity: Narrative Construction and Identity Formation in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*' *College Literature,* 39:3 (2012), 1-26, p. 6.
[96] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism,* p. 42.

*Noise* as being connected to the anxiety that exists in capitalist society. In the novel, the medication Dylar is proposed as a solution to the fear of death, and in doing this DeLillo positions consumerism as a respite from fear as a central motif to his text. Pallitto refers to Dylar as 'this most precious consumer good, which would allow the buyer to transcend the greatest fear in human experience'.[97] In questioning the validity of the medication, the Gladneys' discuss it as a consumer product: 'I can't be the only one [who fears death] or why would Gray Research spend millions on a pill?'.[98] Capital recognises the opportunity to offer hope and to capitalise on fear in the consumer market, and this would apply to any product that aims to assuage fear, not just this product. This process valorises capital since 'death' or *fear* 'controls everything [Gladney] does, and he therefore tries to get rid of his fear of death by occupying himself with very American habits, i.e., shopping, watching TV, reading tabloid magazines'.[99] The automisation of the route from fear to consumerism shows how the affective infrastructure of contemporary society functions in conjunction with consumerist logic. The system encourages individuals to feel a certain way, and to live and experience things in a certain way, that will boost sales and reinforce the emotional states that reproduce the system.

One of Gladney's colleagues, Murray, later speaks to the connection between fear and contemporary society. He says:

> Fear is unnatural. Lightning and thunder are unnatural. Pain, death, reality, these are all unnatural. We can't bear these things as they are. We know too much. So we resort to repression, compromise and disguise. This is how we survive in the universe. This is the natural language of the species.[100]

[97] Pallitto, 'Technology', p. 403.
[98] DeLillo, *White* Noise, p. 197.
[99] Eid, 'World of Consumerism', p. 215.
[100] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 289.

The things Murray describes as unnatural are, in fact, very natural, which speaks to the role of irrationality, affect and emotion in within neoliberalism. It is suggested that something which makes you afraid must be hidden from, rather than confronted as if no salvation could come from understanding and confronting fears. His suggestion that repression, compromise and disguise fit closely with the idea that consumerism offers brief respites from fear but is ultimately ineffectual. The way he describes this unnatural behaviour as natural highlights Fisher's naturalisation theory. Matković believes that Gladney, 'is "eager… to be fooled", which proves his unhealthy belief in the advantages of consumerism and consumer products'.[101] Whether or not it is unhealthy, this eagerness to believe highlights that fear and negative emotion are powerful motivators: they are enough to make even intelligent people give up on rationality in favour of senseless hope.

Dylar is a complex consumer product, but one that succinctly characterises the function of hope within contemporary capitalism. The fact that Dylar does not alleviate fear does not stop it from being an appealing product that both Jack and Babette Gladney seek out during the course of the novel. In the same way, hope continues to function in sites of consumerism (both in the novel and in wider society) as an emotional tool capital uses to alleviate fear and negative emotion. The fact that it does not work, or at least not in any lasting way, does not stop it from being a repetitive process. Indeed, much as if Dylar were to be a one-time cure for the fear of death it would be considerably less profitable, so too would hope cease to be an integral feature of neoliberalism's reproduction if it were more successful at delivering lasting happiness. DeLillo's work demonstrates the constant need for a recycling of fear and hope for the system to continue, and that the constant transition between the two is the affective infrastructure that defines neoliberalism.

[101] Matković, 'Construction of Identity', p. 175.

## Conclusion

Inspired by Williams' work, this chapter has examined three DeLillo texts alongside prominent theories of emotion and affect. In using fiction to capture the 'lived experience' of the contemporary moment each section has created greater understanding of neoliberalism's structure of feeling through analysis of emotion. This analysis reveals the emotional qualities of 'contemporary life, in which relationships, institutions and formations in which we are still actively involved are [usually] converted […] into formed wholes rather than forming and formative processes'.[102] Williams laments that the 'strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products' which is why this chapter treats DeLillo's work and the emotions involved therein as a depiction of an ongoing and living process.[103] Williams' idea is the perfect reading method for an emotional study of continuously evolving capitalism. This continuous evolution is mirrored in the timescale that the chapter covers while looking at different affective concepts, from the 1980s through to the present day; it acknowledges that neoliberalism has existed in the past, but is not yet *finished*.

Reading *Point Omega* alongside Jameson's 'waning of affect' complicated the argument that DeLillo is a postmodernist writer. The rich emotional quality in DeLillo's novel provided both a 'free-floating' affect, as well as complex representational and allegorical qualities, suggesting that affect was not only emotionally potent, but narratively useful. While there is a surfeit of affect in much of DeLillo's work, it was representational of the increased importance of emotion in contemporary society, rather than the weakened impact of affect.

[102] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 20.
[103] Sharma, *Structures of* Feeling, p. 20.

This can be understood to be due to the overwhelming requirement to use affect and emotion (over rationality) in navigating neoliberal society.

A reading of *Zero K* aided an understanding of the key emotional concepts of the neoliberal structure of feeling. The site of the Convergence in the text revealed contemporary society's reliance on hope and fear, and that these two emotions were both interlocking and in tension with each other, both driving-at and deferring happiness as an unachievable end-goal. The text reveals that the lived experience of contemporary neoliberalism is commonly one containing fear, which enables capital to maintain a position of dominance through offering repeated glimpses of hope, that promised future happiness. This happiness, in the novel, was little more than fantasy and in this respect *Zero K* shared much of what Berlant wrote about in *Cruel Optimism.*

Building on the understanding of affect from section one and the affective infrastructure in section two, the third section explored how consumerism is a crucial component, both in reinforcing the hope/fear dichotomy, and as a representation of how the emotions in the structure of feeling function across multiple spheres of neoliberal society. Bauman's work on consumerism captured many of the nuances that were explored in *White Noise*, writing: 'nay infinity of options comes close to the awe-inspiring capacity of eternity, in which, as we know, everything may sooner or later happen'.[104] This demonstrates how hope functions as part of consumerism. For Gladney fear is assuaged temporarily by the belief that a number of overwhelming opportunities may come to pass, bringing with them a longed-for sense of happiness. The structure of feeling that underpins neoliberalism is revealed in this section, and across the chapter more generally, to be one of constantly recycling fear and hope, keeping the consumer cycle operational and happiness consistently deferred.

[104] Bauman, *Consuming Life,* p. 104.

This reading of DeLillo reveals hope and fear to be the defining characteristics of a contemporary longing for happiness that comprises the neoliberal structure of feeling. Returning to the arguments of chapters one and two, this operation of this structure of feeling is what ensures the continued dominance and defence of neoliberalism. As well as this, understanding how the lived experience of a society is revealing of the system that underpins that society allows for critiques of capitalism to emerge from texts that do not directly confront capitalism. It enables an understanding of many facets of life to be understood by their emotional connection to capitalism: how everything is in some way related to the economic system that underpins society. Berlant writes 'this is why exploitation is not what the children cast as the enemy. They want to be exploited, to enter the proletarian economy in the crummy service-sector jobs it is all too easy to disdain as the proof of someone's loserdom or tragedy. The risk would be opting out of the game'.[105] Looking at the affective infrastructure like this chapter has done demonstrates why it is not seen as viable to exist in a space outside of capitalism. DeLillo's work utilises affective and emotional language to present allegorical depictions of a society in which repeated hopeful attempts are made, but individuals are typically disappointed. It reveals that hope and fear are the affective infrastructure through which individuals most commonly navigate their lives, and that emotion, the primary tool of consumerism, is also the language of neoliberalism.

[105] Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p. 171.

## Chapter Four

### ‘The dead and missing. Then the commercial’: Tragedy, crisis, pandemic, profit

The introduction to this thesis argues that neoliberalism is a system which flourishes in chaos and times of crisis, and may even create environments in which unpredictability is the normal state. To paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari, the more things break down, the better capitalism works.[1] Certain crises have neoliberalism as their root cause, such as the financial crash in the early twenty-first century which is often attributed primarily to reckless financial trading in a deregulated market, and in particular relating to property transactions. Other crises are worsened by the effects of neoliberalism, such as growing inequality between rich and poor all over the world, both within and between nations. Still more crises are a by-product of its practices, such as seemingly natural disasters that occur as a result of aggressive agricultural capitalism.[2] Given the tendency for crises to occur in neoliberalism, it follows that there would be an emotional impact which could form part of the affective infrastructure present in neoliberal societies. One can consider aspects of the spiral of intensification, such as debt, to be an element as well as a cause of crisis. This chapter’s examination of crisis, then, builds upon on the work done in the introductory theoretical model to see in what ways large events impact on the already outwardly expanding downward spiral of emotion.

In each case of crisis, neoliberal capitalism incorporates these problems and profits from them, often by developing new industries and commercial solutions. Mirowski’s suggestion that ‘it offers more, better neoliberalism as a counter to sputtering neoliberalism’

[1] Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), p. 177.
[2] This link is made by numerous journalists, notably George Monbiot who writes ‘First, that it is the system, rather than any variant of the system, that drives us inexorably towards disaster’, George Monbiot, ‘Dare to declare capitalism dead – before it takes us all down with it’, *The Guardian* (2019) <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/apr/25/capitalism-economic-system-survival-earth> [accessed 13 May 2020].]

combines the notions of crisis-opportunism and what Fisher describes as the naturalisation of capitalist practices.[3] Faced with crisis, neoliberalism is able to offer market solutions through the belief that there is no alternatives to them. Crises valorise capital, but this thesis is concerned with the emotional components of crisis in order to understand this process. Even when there is criticism of the system, as there was after the 2008 financial crash, there appears to be no alternative but to accept market solutions.

This chapter first considers *Cosmopolis* and *Falling Man* as literary machines to explore how large crises, such as the attacks of 11th September 2001 (hereafter referred to as 9/11), impact individual emotion as well as the affective infrastructure of societies. The section looks at how DeLillo's novel of finance (*Cosmopolis*) reveals the way in which capitalism benefits from crisis, and how his novel of 9/11 (*Falling Man*) presents emotions as crucial for the management of crises and for the valorisation and reproduction of a neoliberal system. It looks at how crises are used to reinforce neoliberal ideology and it asks how capitalism is able to utilise crises in order to valorise and protect itself. It asks what role emotions play, both in terms of lived experience and in terms of their manipulation and utilisation.

The second section of the chapter returns to *Point Omega* and *Zero K*, to consider how emotions and crises intersect, by exploring how overseas crises play a part in the emotional structure of post-9/11 neoliberalism. It does this through an analysis of mediated crises, primarily those that appear on screen, in DeLillo's texts and explores how capitalism can cause as well as benefit from crises. It uncovers how emotional responses to larger more dramatic crises such as 9/11 are formulated and looks at how this impacts a capitalist system that promotes a fear that has no object. It looks at how events like 9/11 are processed emotionally both individually and within society, and whether this has lasting impact on the structure of feeling of neoliberal society.

[3] Philip Mirowski, *Never Let a Serious Crisis go to Waste* (London: Verso, 2013), p. 92.

Finally, this chapter investigates the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, in order to understand whether crises can ever disrupt capitalism. It contrasts the global response to this pandemic with the response to the 'airborne toxic event' in DeLillo's *White Noise*. In these cases, emotional responses are different and they reveal that if such a challenge to capitalism is to be mounted in the fallout of a crisis then emotions will have a crucial role to play in how such a challenge is effective. The ongoing nature of the pandemic (at the time of writing) means that no final conclusions can be drawn about whether capitalism will be lastingly disrupted. This is consistent with the notion in Raymond Williams' work of the structure of feeling as a continuous process, and any possible conclusions will expose the potential contained in the current moment. This section poses questions that contribute to the chapter's understanding of crisis in capitalism, but also to the next part of the thesis' focus on globalisation and resistance movements.

Given the importance of crisis and chaos for neoliberalism's continued valorisation, understanding how emotions intersect with crisis is an important component of this thesis. Questions aimed at the impact of crises and emotion on one another, and their effects within society can explain some of the fundamentals of the relationship between capitalism and emotion. Analysis of DeLillo's work combined with a Williamsian perspective and attendant theoretical insight will explore what happens to the lived experience and emotions felt by people going through a time of capitalist crisis In an interview with Peter Boxall, DeLillo talks of crisis and disaster: 'in this country the daily disasters of TV newscasts, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, wildfires. This is routine, the powerful images, the toll of the dead and missing. Then the commercial'.[4] His work connects the powerful commercial interests of American capitalism with the tragedies that result from crises throughout the globe.

[4] Peter Boxall, 'Interview: The edge of the future: A discussion with Don DeLillo', in *Don DeLillo: Contemporary Critical Perspectives,* ed. by Katherine Da Cunha Lewin and Kiron Ward (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 162.

**Patriotism and profit**

DeLillo's work often involves themes of crisis, tragedy and chaos. From the assassination of John F. Kennedy in *Libra*, to the terrorism in *Mao II* and the personal tragedy suffered in *The Body Artist*, how societies and individuals respond to uncertainties and disruptions is a common theme in his fiction. His first two novels following 9/11 both deal with tragedy, crisis and chaos from different perspectives. *Cosmopolis*, started before and finished after the attacks, has 9/11 in the background, though this event is never mentioned. Years later, *Falling Man* places grief, death and feeling at the centre of its crisis narrative. Both are novels of crisis and chaos. The earlier text pre-empts the financial crash and explores how capitalism flourishes in such environments, and *Falling Man* considers tragedy on an individual level and explores dominant emotions felt across society that emerged in the fallout of the attacks.

The characterisation of *Cosmopolis*'s protagonist Eric Packer highlights the excesses that exist within neoliberal capitalism. His excesses emphasise the chaotic fluctuations that are typical of high-stakes capitalism in which success is equally as likely as failure. The text is critical of the type of business that has 'made and lost sums that could colonize a planet', highlighting the chaotic fluctuations and the inherent inequality in neoliberalism.[5] One can extend this line of thought, with the link between capitalism and chaos in the text having a negative effect on human wellbeing: 'the logical extension of business is murder', Packer ironically says to his bodyguard.[6] While meant in jest, the novel seems to confirm this idea when Packer is eventually murdered. Indeed, his murder is perhaps the most explicit sign in the novel of the chaotic nature of capitalism: he begins the text as a billionaire, and ends it financially ruined, anonymous and dead. Capital's unsentimental connection with humans is

[5] Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis* (London: Picador, 2004), p. 129.
[6] DeLillo*, Cosmopolis*, p. 113.

crucial for it to find profit and success anywhere. In the text, Packer is ruined and other parts of the American financial world are disrupted because of his failed bets against the Japanese yen; the constantly rising yen he bets against highlights that what is a success in Japanese markets is a financial meltdown in the USA. Mathias Nilges suggests that a 'history of capitalism' is a history of 'the regulation of its crises', but perhaps regulation is not the right word in neoliberalism's case, as capitalism seeks not to regulate but to encourage crises and chaos in order to create profit.[7]

Mirowski's explains how capitalism is able to absorb and benefit from the effects of crisis and chaos. His work argues how the ability to profit from crisis continues virtually undisrupted by critics of capitalism, which can be explained by Fisher's conception of naturalisation. Mirowski argues that alternatives to free-markets are seen as being incapable of dealing efficiently with the 'roiling chaos of evolving nature', and that the 'ultimate objective' of neoliberalism 'is to rely upon the market' as the 'only dependable source of knowledge' on that roiling chaos.[8] The chaos that enables such fluctuations as Packer's ruin and allows profiteering from crisis is possible because it is seen as natural. There is no viable alternative because 'the neoliberals [agreed] that, for purposes of public understanding and sloganeering, neoliberal market society must be treated as a "natural" and inexorable state of mankind'.[9] Packer is the neoliberal *par excellence* and represents the unyielding belief in the market that has come to characterise the neoliberal era: a belief that enables capital to benefit from situations of crisis.

Reading *Cosmopolis*, it is possible to conclude that chaos and crisis opportunism are a core principle of neoliberalism. Matt Kavanagh writes that 'the advent of cyber-capital' of which Packer is a proponent, 'marks an epochal shift as the logic of development overtakes the

[7] Mathias Nilges 'Neoliberalism and the time of the novel', *Textual Practice*, 29:2, (2015) 357-377, p. 367. (emphasis mine).
[8] Mirowski, *Crisis*, p. 260.
[9] Mirowski, *Crisis,* p. 47.

reality principal'.[10] The neoliberal drive for profit has begun to outpace humanity, resulting in the kinds of market chaos that are central to DeLillo's text. If neoliberalism requires that development occurs, even when such development is at odds with human wellbeing then the outcome is highly unpredictable. Packer acts chaotically throughout the text, with his fortune originating in volatile currency markets, but even he is undone due to the speed of contemporary capitalism. When the financial crisis begins to overwhelm him, he seeks out assassins and drives through riots; he returns to the logic of crisis and chaos, even when the same techniques have failed his finances. Despite his eventual failure he remains committed to the logic of chaos. This short reading of *Cosmopolis* hints at the inherently chaotic structure of the capitalist system which, as DeLillo's treatment of 9/11 in *Falling Man* shows, can have major emotional impact.

*Falling Man* tells the story of a 9/11 survivor, Keith Neudecker, his wife Lianne, their family and friends and the emotional impact that the attacks have on their lives. Predominantly it is concerned with how these individuals come to terms with the attacks, and one of the most significant instances in the novel is Lianne's confrontation with her neighbour. After 9/11, the structure of feeling is revealed partly to change in terms of the functionality of fear. Joseph Conte sees a tension and dramatic irony in the text, since in previous novels 'DeLillo repeatedly invoked the World Trade Centre as representative of the gigantism and hubris of capitalism, a force he has stridently resisted from the start of his career'.[11] Although there is less criticism of the capitalist system in *Falling Man*, DeLillo's depictions of interpersonal relationships reveal the affective implications of living within capitalist society in times of crisis. Lianne's neighbour plays loud 'Arabic' music, the exact origins of which Lianne is uncertain of, with it

[10] Matt Kavanagh, 'Collateral Crisis: Don DeLillo's Critique of Cyber-Capital', in *Don DeLillo: Currents and Currencies,* ed. by Jacqueline A. Zubeck (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), p. 38.
[11] Joseph M. Conte, 'Don DeLillo's *Falling Man* and the Age of Terror', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 57:3 (2011) 557-583, p. 563.

described in the text as 'the sound of a solo lute from Turkey or Egypt or Kurdistan'.[12] Something as simple as music being the source of aggravation and fear suggests that 9/11 has had a drastic impact on the way emotions function within capitalist society.

Lianne takes offence at the music because it is not in a style she thinks of as American, even though she does not know its exact origins. It is enough that it is different to what she associates with her country. For Sara Ahmed, fear would now have an object in contemporary America, 'we fear an object that approaches us', she writes.[13] Generalised fear now is transferred to an object, depicted in Lianne's case by Islamic music. She is careful not to directly mention Islam as the source of her grievance, which suggests she is ashamed of feeling how she does, while also suggesting it does not need mentioning as it is the dominant national fear. Islam is only significant here because of the religious affiliation declared by the perpetrators of the attacks, but the function of fear has altered to incorporate those symbols of non-Americanism. After 9/11 there appeared to be a shift away from generalised, uncertain anxiety that chapter three identified as more typical of neoliberal economies. With an object of fear, individuals now feel confident with regards to their emotion: Lianne feels justified in her actions: 'Finally she had to do it and then she did'.[14] Her emotional response is normalised within society after 9/11 and the text makes it seem that she had no alternative, making her fear, dressed as patriotism, entirely justified.

*Falling Man* presents two ways of expressing emotion and coming to terms with pain in this part of the novel. Elena (the neighbour) defends her choice to play the music, saying 'it's beautiful. It gives me peace. I like it, I play it'.[15] Affectively, her response is like the language used in chapter three's analysis of *Point Omega* and *Zero K*: a personal, introspective emotional event. She tells Lianne: 'you want to take it personally, what can I tell you?'

[12] Don DeLillo, *Falling Man* (London: Picador, 2007), p. 120.
[13] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 65.
[14] DeLillo, *Falling Man,* p. 119.
[15] DeLillo, *Falling Man,* p. 119.

implying there should be no confusion as to why somebody might take solace in a time of crisis in art.[16]

However, the way in which Lianne attacks the music suggests that there are correct and incorrect ways to deal with the trauma. She tells Elena 'the whole city is ultrasensitive right now. Where have you been hiding?'.[17] She reflects a dominant narrative that did not have room for outlying methods of mourning or personal care in the wake of 9/11, and only allowed for a limited scope of emotional responses. Although she is only one character in the text, she responds to how she perceives society at large to feel, which is why her evocation of the 'whole city' constructs an us versus them oppositional, built on the notion of acceptable emotion. Sarah McCreedy sees this as DeLillo addressing 'how the political atmosphere of fear produced by 9/11 now begins to violently infiltrate the domestic, changing the "routine moment"'.[18]

This disruption of the routine moment is an interesting element of the neoliberal structure of feeling that responds to increased levels of fear by creating a certain acceptable way of being and feeling. Just as happiness can be understood as a performance indicator, sadness too serves a performative function. Lianne's acts reveal that following 9/11 there is a shift in which emotional reactions are and are not acceptable. Ahmed writes about the form of 'national happiness' that occurred in Britain after a royal wedding, and suggested that 'those who did not participate in this national happiness were […] alienated from the nation by virtue of not being affected in the right way', and the same process occurs in *Falling Man* in the wake of 9/11.[19] A specific type of national sadness emerged, a way of grieving and recovering from tragedy that a character like Elena did not fit into, and she becomes alienated from the nation.

[16] DeLillo, *Falling Man,* p. 119.
[17] DeLillo, *Falling Man,* p. 120.
[18] Sarah McCreedy, 'Domesticated Crisis: The Changed 'routine moment' in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*', *American Literature and Culture at Queens* <https://blogs.qub.ac.uk/americanists/2016/01/21/domesticated-crisis-the-changed-routine-moment-in-don-delillos-falling-man/> [accessed 13 May 2020].
[19] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics,* p. 228.

For Ester Peeren, Lianne's behaviour is a manifestation of a consumerist process that she suggests emerged after 9/11 which utilises emotion to enable greater profits for business. She calls it the spectacularisation of mourning, and implies that mourning became less a personal endeavour and more a public one, used to display what was perceived to be the correct mentality.[20] Peeren refers to the gift shop in the 9/11 memorial visitor centre and suggests that it contains many items that sell the notion of *proper* mourning, with the idea being that one displays them to show that one is affected correctly. Similar to Lianne's nationalist display of emotion, the visitor centre's gift shop implores its guests to publicly demonstrate their allegiance through commerce. Peeren calls this consumerism an expression

> of a "comfort culture" accompanied by a "politics of affect" that works to depoliticize; by peddling objects that provide reassurance and enable Americans to constitute themselves as victims, a dominant emotional register is allowed to saturate the public realm while complex political and ethical questions surrounding the events of 9/11 and the American response to it are elided.[21]

Lianne *is* a direct victim of the attacks due to her proximity to her husband, but her encounter with Elena shows compliance with the notion that America is a victim. Elena is not part of that shared community as she does not express herself in what is seen as an American manner. Lianne takes the Islamic element of the music and asks 'why now? This particular time?' suggesting it is opposed to the victimhood she is experiencing.[22] She evokes this dominant emotional register when she says 'of course its personal' when she is actually making a *public*

[20] Esther Peeren, 'Compelling Affects / Structured Feelings: Remembering 9/11', in *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture*, ed. by Devika Sharma, and Frederik Tygstrup (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), p. 89.
[21] Peeren, 'Compelling Affects', p. 88.
[22] DeLillo, *Falling Man,* p. 119.

display of her 'correct' emotional response.[23] This emotional register valorises capital through consumerism and protects neoliberalism from disruptions that may emerge from engaged political questions. Just like the souvenirs in the gift shop, Lianne's response does not 'so much assuage or make up for a pre-existing pain as attest to the arising of the "proper" feelings it is one's duty to express'.[24] Lianne, in being part of the saturated public realm, does not have to ask herself why the music offends her and open herself up to scrutiny. John Duvall sees this as a key element of the text, and argues that 'if we are ever to awaken from the nightmare of history, we must lose our political innocence and try to imagine that those who oppose the United States are more than unthinking brutes who irrationally hate democracy'.[25] His perspective suggests that the dominant emotional registers throughout a society serve to avoid political questions that may open up a critical discourse against America's neoliberal and globalist policies.

Peeren's patriotic consumerist hypothesises, mirrored in Lianne's behaviour, is part of the emotional mechanism that allows capitalism to profit in times of crisis. If there is an acceptable way to mourn, then it follows that there are acceptable products: 'Within a few months, posters appeared all over New York City with the image of the Statue of Liberty and the words "Support New York, Shop New York"'.[26] Although the connection between American patriotism and consumerism was not new, the use of emotion in the fallout of this crisis demonstrated capitalism's ability to profit directly from tragedy. Wal-Mart sold 110,000 *more* U.S. flags on 9/11 than it did the same day the year previous, which illustrates the immediacy of the impact of the crisis on feeling and emotion.[27] While the public outpouring of

[23] DeLillo, *Falling Man,* p. 119.
[24] Peeren, 'Compelling Affects', p. 88.
[25] John N. Duvall, 'Witnessing Trauma: Falling Man and Performance Art', in *Don DeLillo: Mao II, Underworld, Falling Man*, ed. by Stacey Olster (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p. 168.
[26] Francis a. Frascina, 'Advertisements for Itself: The New York Times, Norman Rockwell, and the New Patriotism', in *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*, ed. by Dana Heller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 79
[27] Jennifer Scanlon, '"Your Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven Anymore": U.S. Consumers, Wal-Mart, and the Commodification of Patriotism', in *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*, ed. by Dana Heller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 177.

grief was not necessarily a bad thing, Giroux argues that 'the all-encompassing power of the market quickly converted [it] into forms of civic vacuity that spawned an endless array of consumer products'.[28] These products, as well as serving to create profit, also allow the dominant emotional register of nationalism to continue, which explains Lianne's emotion in *Falling Man*.

Ultimately, this appeal to sadness as an indicator of the correct American victimhood functions as a reinforcement of the neoliberal consensus. Ostensibly it offers shared emotional community, but in practice it ostracises what does not fit within a narrow frame. Mirowski writes of neoliberal crises that 'doubt is their product, but eventual manufactured consensus is their profit', and one can see doubt in the case of *Falling Man* and its real-world consumerist counterparts as the fear the attacks initially invoked.[29] Dana Heller writes that the term '9/11 […] has attained the cultural function of a trademark'.[30] Consensus is then manufactured through individuals relating to the trademark and the fear and victimhood with which it is associated.

The performance artist, the eponymous Falling Man, is another character within the text who can be used to explore the emotional consensus that had been constructed in the fallout of 9/11. His presence in the text references the famous photograph by Richard Drew, and both are useful in explaining the problems with understanding the post-9/11 structure of feeling. The artist, hanging down from a rope in public situations, is met with outrage from the public who view his method of dealing with the tragedy as outside of the acceptable limits. Lianne looks at him:

[28] Henry A. Giroux, *The Terror of Neoliberalism: Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of Democracy* (Colorado: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), p. 126.
[29] Mirowski, *Crisis*, p. 297.
[30] Dana Heller, 'Introduction: Consuming 9/11', in *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*, ed. by Dana Heller (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 3.

> There were people shouting up at him, outraged at the spectacle, the puppetry of human desperation, a body's last fleet breath and what it held. It held the gaze of the world, she thought. There was the awful openness of it, something we'd not seen, the single falling figure that trails a collective dread, body come down among us all.[31]

Initially, the response from the wider crowd coheres with the notion that there came to be an acceptable way in which to mourn and in which to emotionally respond to a tragedy. The performance artist's method of expressing himself does not allow for the easily-marketed collective victimhood, instead it expresses the individual fear of a 'single falling figure'.[32] The text suggests that in the wake of the trauma of 9/11 came the 'collective dread' that gives rise to emotions Peeren highlights as those sold at the memorial's visitors centre: a 'normative affective mix of sadness, fear, anguish, indignation […] that functions somewhat like a Teflon layer, making it difficult for anything else to stick to them'.[33] This type of commercialised response does not allow for the alternative emotional reactions such as Elena's music or the art of the Falling Man.

The image of the falling man from Drew's photo is a poignant motif in the novel, as it mirrors common emotional responses after the attacks on America. The man's image is fixed in the frame, and the performance artist's body also hangs fixed, which is reminiscent of an adherence to fixed and rigid emotional responses such as Lianne's interaction with her neighbour. She is aggressive because she feels part of a society in which there is only one acceptable way to grieve. Much like the crowd who watch the performance art, their outrage shields them from the political elements of the tragedy and resultant crisis, never engaging with

[31] DeLillo, *Falling Man*, p. 33.
[32] DeLillo, *Falling Man*, p. 33.
[33] Peeren, 'Compelling Affects', p. 89.

America as anything but an innocent victim. Even to ask a question such as this would be seen as unpatriotic. The man in Drew's photograph and the artist in *Falling Man* are both stationary, but neither is actually fixed in place with permanence. DeLillo's character gets up and moves on, and Drew's photograph captures a man who is falling to his death. When viewing the man Lianne appears to experience the realisation that the structure of feeling of a nation is never a fixed thing. She notes that he delivers to her something 'we'd not seen' with a positivity not used when she later attacks Elena for mourning outside of acceptable limits. Her acknowledgement of the Falling Man's work suggests a critical perspective in the text regarding the dynamic nature of emotion. Some critical work also sees DeLillo's novel in this way, with Karam Ally writing that he 'asks us to force ourselves to see the man and not the empty shirt' of the real falling man from the photograph, to see past the 'disembodied, symbolic representation that conceals him' and manipulates him for profit.[34]

When Lianne attacks her neighbour she is acting as capitalist society requires people to act following the tragedy, she is unable to see the dynamism of emotions in response to tragedies that she glimpses when looking at the Falling Man. Peeren highlights that the emotional limitations exist in an attempt to fix acceptable responses to within certain limits that ultimately benefit capital.

> While no consensus exists among all victims' relatives, the influence of the most active members of this group, which is substantial, tends less towards keeping the event's meaning in process in a living present than towards fixing it in an eternal, tragic and threatening present like the man falling from one of the towers in the infamous photograph taken by Richard Drew.[35]

[34] Hamza Karam Ally, 'Mourning in the Age of Terror: Revisiting Don DeLillo's Elusive 9/11 Novel *Falling Man*', *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 49:3 (2019) 349-371, p. 369.
[35] Peeren, 'Compelling Affects', p. 93.

Ultimately, capital has used the tragedy of 9/11 to control the scope of acceptable mourning that occurs, and to utilise public perception to fix in place a correct way of reacting. This enables it to sell goods, such as gift items in the memorial museum, as well as hundreds of thousands of USA flags and the notion that American capitalism is beyond reproach. It attempts to do this despite the real lived experience that the emotional fallout of 9/11 is just another development of neoliberalism's relationship with emotion, rather than something that is permanent. It is a process which simultaneously encourages nationalism and naturalisation and, as the next section will show, is utilised to avoid discussion of ideas that are damaging to capitalism.

**Safe enough to shop?**

In his 2001 essay on the World Trade Centre attacks, DeLillo writes 'the dramatic climb of the Dow and the speed of the internet summoned us all to live permanently in the future, in the utopian glow of cyber-capital, because there is no memory there and this is where markets are uncontrolled and investment potential has no limit. All this changed on September 11'.[36] What actually changed on the day of the attacks was the immediacy of the fear felt by Americans across the country. A fear that was already present within neoliberalism on a generalised level grew more impactful and gained an object that could be used to 'depoliticise' the nation. He goes on to write that 'the primary target of the men who attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre was not the global economy. It was America that drew their fury. It was the high gloss of our modernity. It was the thrust of our technology. It was our perceived godlessness.

[36] Don DeLillo, 'In the Ruins of the Future: Reflections on Terror and Loss in the Shadow of September', *Harper's* 2001, 33–40, p. 34.

It was the blunt force of our foreign policy'.[37] It is the contention of this thesis that the targets described by DeLillo are all different aspects of contemporary capitalism and the global economy, and that while much changed on 11th September 2001, the market response to crisis, as with its response to everything, was to put more faith in markets. 9/11 temporarily tested the faith in the good life capitalism delivers, but within a few years the 'hijacking of the grief', according to Giroux, served as the 'gist for expanding markets' and belief in capitalism quickly returned, stronger than before. It was bolstered by patriotism that was strongly connected to capitalism.[38]

Analysis of *Point Omega* and *Zero K* in chapter three develops the idea of the interlocking of hope and fear within the neoliberal structure of feeling. These are two post-9/11 novels, though ones far enough removed from the immediacy of the events that emotional reactions like Lianne's in *Falling Man* are not depicted. Peeren remarks that 'those furthest away have considerably more freedom with regard to whether and how to remember and mourn than those closer to it', and this may follow for time as well as distance.[39] These later novels are not concerned with the correct way to mourn the events, instead they depict emotions as being the automatic result of a system that is emotional at its core. They are novels about America but they are also concerned with other parts of the world, so this section uses these texts to explore American capitalist emotions within the context of overseas crises. It asks whether the growing distance between the contemporary moment and 9/11 returns emotional reality to a point where Americans can feel safe enough to shop without worrying about violent attacks, or whether the prospect of further crises like 9/11 lingers in the national consciousness.

Slavoj Žižek regarded the attacks on the World Trade Centre more of a spectacle than a crisis. He notes that 'for the great majority of the public, the WTC explosions were events on

[37] DeLillo, 'In the Ruins', p. 33.
[38] Giroux, *Terror,* p. 126.
[39] Peeren, 'Compelling Affects', p. 90.

the TV screen' as opposed to the minority of New Yorkers who saw and experienced them up close.[40] Crisis on television is something that occurs in many of DeLillo's novels, especially in *White Noise.* This novel from well before 9/11 shows the Gladneys watching disasters on television as if it were entertainment:

> That night, a Friday, we gathered in front of the set […]. There were floods, earthquakes, mud slides, erupting volcanoes. We'd never before been so attentive to our duty […]. Heinrich was not sullen, I was not bored. Steffie, brought close to tears by a sitcom husband arguing with his wife, appeared totally absorbed in these documentary clips of calamity and death.[41]

For the Gladneys these events are entertaining and absorbing. As these crises all take place in distant places the characters do not feel connected to them, and this disconnect means they can take part in the spectacle of crisis while still feeling safe in their homes. In a pre-9/11 world, they could feel safe because they had no real conception of these sorts of events happening to them. Although the USA has its share of extreme weather, these are regarded as normal due to geographical features of the land, so characters are mostly preoccupied with assuaging a generalised fear. The toxic event that occurs later in the novel is in this sense an outlier and is met with disbelief from the residents of the town.

The family watch 'houses slide into the ocean, whole villages crackle and ignite in a mass of advancing lava' and 'every disaster made [them] wish for more'.[42] Their distance from the events makes them more secure in their feelings (much as Peeren suggests physical distance from 9/11 allows). The requirement for sadness to be performed following 9/11 has not yet

[40] Slavoj Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (London: Verso, 2012) p. 12.
[41] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 64.
[42] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 64.

emerged within the affective infrastructure of capitalist society and they can watch the events without connecting their lives to the crises. Žižek wrote of 9/11 that 'we wanted to see it again and again; the same shots were repeated *ad nauseum*' but his 'we' is not broad enough. Individuals outside of the United States may have been engrossed in the spectacle of the attacks like the Gladneys, but for those within the States it was being repeatedly watched to enforce an economic and political message that 'the post-9/11 national consciousness include[d] a commitment to security, to policing the borders, to staking a clear identity claim on who is and who is not American'.[43] The way in which the Gladneys watch *ad nauseum* is not the same as this type of repeated watching in post-9/11 America.

The emotional landscape of the USA changed after 9/11, and one would not expect characters to enjoy watching disasters which would be reminiscent of the attacks on the World Trade Centres and of America's vulnerabilities. However, Jesse Kavadlo suggests that *Point Omega* 'seems inclined toward the intertwined politics of personal, national and global disaster', and the novel mediates crises through Elster's essay and through Finley's proposed film.[44] It subtly links national and global crises through affect that enables exploration of the political, such as the 'revelation of the prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib',[45] through 'salvaged videotapes of caged men being subjected to severe physical pain'.[46] Although affectively striking, the torture and abuse is relegated to a line with no specifics. One can read this lack of detail in a post-9/11 text as a way in which to avoid dealing with difficult emotions that might counteract the desired function of fear, since fear is useful for American capitalism as it has 'provided a major visible source of economic growth' through 'national security and security related corporations'.[47] Critically observing crises of America's making overseas would

[43] Jennifer Scanlon, 'Flag Decal', p. 191.
[44] Jesse Kavadlo, '"Here and Gone": Point Omega's extraordinary rendition', in *Don DeLillo: Currents and Currencies,* ed. by Jacqueline A. Zubeck (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2017), p. 71.
[45] Donald Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (University of Minnesota Press: London, 2009), p. 37.
[46] Don DeLillo, *Point Omega* (London: Picador, 2010), p 42.
[47] Joe Lockard, 'Social Fear and the Terrorism Survival Guide', in *The Selling of 9/11: How a National Tragedy Became a Commodity*, ed. by Dana Heller (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2016) p. 221

distract from the dominant emotional narrative that enables the security industry and the patriotic consumer industry to flourish, and would possibly disrupt it. The characters in *Point Omega* instead of confronting the 'shadowy need of an entire nation' are too preoccupied with the fear that forms an enormous part of life in neoliberal capitalist society.

However, *Zero K* implies that confronting fears external to the USA becomes unavoidable. Whereas in *Point Omega* references to overseas crises were not as engaged with, the television screens in the Convergence present Lockhart with an image of global crises that he cannot help but be affected by:

> Everything loomed, scenes lasted long past the usual broadcast breath. It was there in front of me, on my level, immediate and real, a woman sitting life-sized on a lopsided chair in a house collapsed in mudslide. A man, a face, underwater, staring out at me. I had to step back but also had to keep looking. It was hard not to look. Finally I glanced back down the hall waiting for someone to appear, another witness, a person who might stand next to me while the images built and clung. There was no audio.[48]

Although these crises are still mediated, and thus reminiscent of the Gladney's entertainment, it appears as though Lockhart engages emotionally with them. They are 'immediate and real' as opposed to the Abu Ghraib torture or the mediated crises in *White Noise*. This appears to suggest that there is no longer the ability to avoid completely that which takes place outside of America. The American characters in *Zero K* still feel safe enough to shop, and live other aspects of their daily lives, as the on-screen events are far away, but fear for America's safety that emerged immediately after 9/11 has spread to incorporate crises all over the globe. As is

[48] Don DeLillo*, Zero K* (London: Picador, 2016), p. 11.

the topic of the next chapter, this may be due to globalisation. Ronan McKinley points towards this, suggesting that '9/11 represented a 'fall into history', marking the end of America's apparent immunity to the violence associated with processes of globalization of which it is one of the principal agents'.[49]

American emotional responses to global crises undergo a number of transformations in DeLillo's work depending where one is in relation to 9/11. In the earlier neoliberal period, characters watched overseas disaster as though they were a pleasurable experience with no impact on their lives. As seen in *Falling Man* lived experience of emotions changes after 9/11 to incorporate a concern with national security, based on fear and utilised by capital to celebrate and legitimate American and neoliberal imperial ambitions.[50] This is still largely existent in *Point Omega* which demonstrates an inability to deal with overseas crises, especially if they are linked with American capitalist interests, as it might serve to undermine the emotional structure that ensures the dominant narrative. *Zero K* as the most recent depiction of overseas crisis and American emotional response suggests that there is the increasing and unavoidable engagement with the problems of other nations, but the Convergence demonstrates that this is still profitable for capital.

The crises depicted in *Zero K* indicate pressing concerns to which the business function of the Convergence responds, and one can see this in the depiction of environmental crises. While these are shown to Lockhart on screen and predominantly indicate crises in developing countries, the nature of climate change means that these concerns are also of a pressing nature for Americans. While not directly related to the novel's post-9/11 status, this concern with environmental disasters, once overwhelmingly the domain of developing countries, suggests a new capacity to engage with the impact of the global on the local. What happens around the

[49] Ronan McKinney, 'Staging the Counter-Narrative in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*', in *Don DeLillo: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Katherine Da Cunha Lewin and Kiron Ward (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), p. 115.
[50] Giroux, *Terror*, p. xix.

world, as of the late 2010s, appears to have growing significance for America. This is evident in the second instance in which Lockhart watches on as disaster unfolds on screen:

> Soon, in seconds, a rotating column of wind, dirt and debris. It began to fill the frame, a staggered tunnel, dark and bent, soundless, and then another, down left, in the far distance, rising from the horizon line. […] The screen all tornado now, an awed silence that I thought would break into open roar. […] whole streets levelled, school bus on its side. […] people coming this way […] carrying what they'd salvaged, a troop of men and women, black and white, in solemn march, and the dead arrayed on ravaged floorboards in front yards.[51]

Compared to the earlier 'mud slide' episode, these images of crisis and disaster are relatable to Americans, the tornado being a common environmental weather event in the nation. As with the first film he sees, Lockhart is profoundly affected by what he witnesses: he watched, 'feeling obligated to something or someone, the victims perhaps'.[52] This scene of environmental crisis come to America is perhaps the first financial reason for the existence of the Convergence, a reason why the wealthy would want to leave the present. As DeLillo's character observes, 'here was our climate enfolding us'.[53]

Scholarship on the current climate crisis reveals the links between environmental degradation and capitalism. Naomi Klein writes extensively on the subject, and argues that 'our economy is at war with many forms of life on earth, including human life. What the climate needs to avoid collapse is a contraction in humanity's use of resources'.[54] It is her conviction

[51] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 36.
[52] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 36.
[53] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 36.
[54] Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything* (London: Penguin, 2015), p. 21.

that the "free" market simply cannot achieve this task'.[55] Lockhart's suggestion that he had 'seen many tornadoes on TV news reports and waited for the footage of the rubbled storm path, the aftermath' but in this case when he stands waiting for the mediated closure he finds 'houses gone, girl on bike gone, nothing, finished, done'.[56] It appears that this time it is different. The emotional reality of capitalist society in the present day allows for fewer people to deny capital's impact on the environmental crises. Whether he makes this connection consciously, the text points towards an increased emotional engagement, much in the same way 9/11 brought the reality of violent crises on American soil to the forefront and forced engagement with them.

Boxall suggests that DeLillo's work has 'become increasingly interested […] in the relationship between human and environment', and this relationship points towards a growing understanding of the impact capital has on that environment.[57] Strong emotional responses to environmental problems have the potential to cause the emergence of alternative systems, but in the case of the Convergence, they create new capitalist technologies that look at escaping the present. In so doing they mirror the fear that was the dominant narrative after 9/11. The hope given to assuage fear by the technology of the Convergence means that the wealthy customers of the centre do not have to engage with the problems of environmental threat, as they hope not to be around to experience the worst of it.

Indeed, the Convergence, 'to which the wealthy and their scientific experts flock to waste time and resources needed by a planet in peril' exists in order to recreate the profitability that emerged from the system of fear that followed 9/11.[58] It does this through appeals to fear and hope related to earth's resources, environmental disaster and the implied global fallout of

[55] Klein, *Changes*, p. 21.
[56] DeLillo, *Zero K*, pp. 36-37.
[57] Boxall, 'Interview', p. 163.
[58] David Cowart, 'The Dream of Cryonic Election' in *Don DeLillo: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Katherine Da Cunha Lewin and Kiron Ward (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010), p. 145.

such disaster. Just as shops and business profited from the fear that encouraged individuals to buy patriotic consumer goods after 2001, the Convergence encourages its customers to buy its services as a response to a fear that crises might come to America with unprecedented frequency. Just as the post-9/11 spectacularisation of mourning served to protect capital through depoliticization, the Convergence's utilisation of hope to avoid environmental fear suggests that the new capitalist technology does not want individuals to engage with the political difficulties of the present.

David Cowart suggests that the Convergence is 'a kind of ultimate bait-and-switch: consumers are sold a pod or capsule that turns out just to be a coffin after all'.[59] Following this, Klein's claim that neoliberalism cannot solve the current climate crisis can be understood in different ways: capitalism cannot solve a crisis by offering a new technology that myopically looks away from it and, since such technology does not deliver anything worthwhile, it follows that it cannot solve the crisis with yet more markets, as per Mirowski's argument. The structure of feeling that was outlined in chapter three saw hope and fear functioning to strengthen the financial and political position of capital. This structure is evident in *Zero K* and DeLillo's other works when looking at crises; although their proximity to 9/11 may reveal changes to the level of intensity and particular uses of fear (as one would expect with a dynamic structure of feeling) fear continues to be a crucial way for capital to reproduce itself. The nature of the crises that occur overseas in *Zero K* tends towards the weakening ability for Americans to feel secure, with events in far-off locations taking on a global significance. Although they feel safe enough to shop within their own streets, the presence of an enterprise like the Convergence suggests that there is an increasing level of fear that impacts individuals across America, and capital struggles to create a market solution.

[59] Cowart, 'Cryonic Election', p. 145.

**As one crisis ends…**

In her book on the environmental crisis, Klein suggests that capitalism and the free market are unable to accomplish the task of reducing human impact on the environment, and that our use of resources is too ingrained in our economic system. She writes that 'indeed, this level of emission reduction has happened only in the context of economic collapse or deep depression'.[60] While this has not happened yet, the 2020 Covid-19 global pandemic seems certain to leave a lasting impression on the capitalist economies of the world. For capitalism's impact on the environment to be impeded, it has had to face a crisis unlike anything it has seen in almost a century. Of course, what comes after the crisis is still largely unknown, but for Žižek 'there is no return to normal, the new "normal" will have to be constructed on the ruins of our old lives, or we will find ourselves in a new barbarism whose signs are already clearly discernible'.[61]

Evocative of DeLillo's 'In the Ruins of the Future', Žižek points towards a seismic shift that will change every aspect of society, including the emotional reality and structure of feeling of neoliberalism. If society returns to largely how it was prior to the pandemic then the environment will continue to be damaged, inequalities will continue to worsen, and the systemic fear will continue to be assuaged by consumerist hope; the creators of the Convergence will get their clients. But if the crisis is the start of a paradigm shift, as Žižek suggests it might be, then the way emotions that have been ensuring neoliberalism's prevalence function will change. This section looks at a crisis that is ongoing at the time of writing and compares the emotional response to it with the airborne toxic event from DeLillo's *White Noise*. It asks questions as to whether spaces of resistance may be opened by this crisis and

[60] Klein, *Changes*, p. 21.
[61] Slavoj Žižek, *Pandemic! Covid-19 Shakes the World* (London: Or Books, 2020), p. 12.

whether it is the first disaster from which neoliberalism will not make systemic gains. How has societal panic in response to crises changed from *White Noise* to the present day, and does our current situation point towards lasting change in contemporary affective infrastructure, and the structure of society?

The first instance of the airborne toxic event in *White Noise* shows the Gladneys sitting and discussing the outbreak as it occurs over the radio. Already the text reveals how neoliberalism is driven by emotions, rather than rationalism:

> "It's called Nyodene Derivative or Nyodene D. It was in a movie we saw in school on toxic wastes. […]"
> "What does it cause?" […]
> "At first they said skin irritation and sweaty palms. But now they say nausea, vomiting, shortness of breath."[62]

Gladney and his son discuss the uncertainties that surround the outbreak. So soon after the initial outbreak there are rumours about its effect on humans, which only serves to increase the levels of panic and fear. Gladney responds in a way that typifies neoliberal emotional responses when he expresses what Fisher terms 'senseless hope', saying 'well it won't come this way', which he reiterates repeatedly after his son questions how he could know that: 'I just know. It's perfectly calm and still today. And when there's a wind at this time of year, it blows that way, not this way'.[63] His hope has no basis in fact, but he uses it so avoid engaging with the danger that his family might face and in this sense his outlook mirrors that of the Convergence. His is an immediate and unthinking reaction; it is just *what he does* in times of crisis.

[62] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 111.
[63] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 111.

For Ahmed this is 'pedagogy' and she writes that 'we learn about ideas by learning how they become quick and unthinking'.[64] In this case, Gladney's immediate response goes towards an understanding of how emotions function, from a capitalist perspective, in times of crisis. His reaction is quick and unthinking, rather than rational and considered, precisely because it is how he has been conditioned by society to respond. Nick Levey reads this scene as Gladney 'quarantin[ing] his family from such "hostile facts," refusing to take the risk seriously in a botched assertion of paternal authority'.[65] While he reads this from the perspective of paternalism, an understanding of the neoliberal tendency towards 'senseless hope' makes it clear that this is a learned and instinctive behaviour. It is how neoliberalism asks people to cope. Levey goes on to say that being undermined by 'the unpredictability of the cloud undercuts the image of his certainty, impinging on his ability to secure the "happiness and security" of his family'.[66] But like much under contemporary capitalism, the cloud is unpredictable. Gladney's response towards unpredictability, his belief that things will be okay, mirrors all the hope for happiness that goes on within the contemporary capitalist system. Just as the cloud blocks out their happiness in a time of crisis, so too do the unpredictable movements of capital more generally.

Disinformation spreads in the text as symptoms announced on the radio, impact on humans and even the names given to the disaster change. These factors each result in increased anxiety, since there are no routes to find clarity. With each change Gladney responds with his hope, as if the current information is correct: 'that's a little more accurate, which means they're coming to grips with the thing. Good'.[67] His calm and measured responses belie the danger of the situation, and he even begins to contradict himself: 'I know nothing's going to happen, you know nothing's going to happen. But at some level we ought to think about it anyway, just in

[64] Ahmed, *Cultural Politics*, p. 212.
[65] Nick Levey, 'Crisis and Control in Don DeLillo's *White Noise*', *The Explicator* 71:1 (2013), 11-13, p. 11
[66] Levey, 'Crisis and Control', pp. 11-12.
[67] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 113.

case'.[68] Exemplifying a neoliberal lack of rationalism, Gladney is certain and uncertain in the same sentence.

Soon, the family's calmness comes to resemble complete irrationality, buoyed as they are by their hope that this sort of thing happens to 'people who live in mobile homes out in the scrubby part of the country'.[69] Their reaction goes against rational thinking because they have been taught to believe that these events do not happen to those in their economic circumstances.

> "It said something like, 'Evacuate all places of residence. Cloud of deadly chemicals, cloud of deadly chemicals."
> We sat there over sponge cake and canned peaches.
> "I'm sure there's plenty of time," Babette said.[70]

The family cling to hope even when action is demanded of them by authoritative voices being amplified in their street. Their reaction to the event reveals that they are not concerned by events like this and, indeed, throughout the novel their fear is the objectless fear of death, but when that death takes on an airborne physicality, they cannot intellectually understand it. The way they doubt expert guidance points towards a neoliberal tendency to trust one's instincts above all else.

The outbreak in *White Noise* suggests an inability to experience genuine personal emotion within their society, as characters repeatedly respond to the crisis in ways that are expected of them rather than with sincerity. Just as how, in future novels, DeLillo shows the performance of sadness, and Berlant argues for the need to perform happiness, *White Noise* seems to point towards a performative requirement to *feel* something, but an inability to

[68] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 114.
[69] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 117.
[70] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 119.

comprehend what one should feel. While evacuating their town, they 'looked at people in other cars, trying to work out from their faces how frightened we should be'.[71] Throughout the initial outbreak they are unable to focus on one set of facts and respond to them; they are used to situations changing frequently and unpredictably, as society that has no fixed boundaries will do. Gladney thinks that 'in a crisis the true facts are whatever other people say they are. No one's knowledge is less secure than your own'.[72] Rather than this statement being a response to being corrected by an expert, he is referring to shoppers going about their business in a roadside mall. His perspective suggests that within neoliberalism how one should react and feel toward a situation is never rationally comprehended, it is rather something which is societally conditioned.

The free market that has delivered such beliefs is, according to Žižek, not 'enough to prevent chaos and hunger' as the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic continues.[73] A market-based system is what gives rise to the Gladney's belief that:

> These things happen to poor people who live in exposed areas. Society is set up in such a way that it's the poor and the uneducated who suffer the main impact of natural and man-made disasters. People in low-lying areas get floods, people in shanties get the hurricanes and tornadoes. I'm a college professor. Did you ever see a college professor rowing a boat down his own street in one of those TV floods?[74]

However, in Žižek's words, the 2020 global pandemic means that everybody is in the 'same boat', and the old inequalities that existed under capitalism and were worsened under

[71] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 120.
[72] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 120.
[73] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 12.
[74] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 114.

neoliberalism might not be as prominent.[75] For this reason, the 2020 pandemic contrasts starkly with the neoliberal crises of the past such as recession, since from the start there was the suggestion that this impacted rich and poor alike.[76] Žižek suggests that the realisation that this particular crisis is different to events that have happened in the past points towards a break from a typical neoliberal way of profiting and benefiting from crisis. He suggests that the equality that this virus enforces could undo the political system which gives rise to commonly held views like those of the Gladneys. 'Now is the time to drop the "America (or whoever else) First" motto', Žižek writes.[77] DeLillo's acknowledgement, evidenced by the quote above, that neoliberal society is set up in a deeply unequal way shows how it has coped with crisis that have occurred. It has pushed the risk onto the vulnerable and this has enabled it to keep fear at a level that enables its own reproduction. The paradigm shift that this crisis might create, however, forces the question of whether the same system will be possible afterwards.

This is not to say that there are no shared emotional characteristics of both the airborne toxic event and the Covid-19 pandemic, but this would be expected, since our current crisis is taking place within a neoliberal society that is simply further developed than the one in *White Noise.* Žižek writes that:

> Fredric Jameson drew attention to the utopian potential in movies about a cosmic catastrophe such as an asteroid threatening life on earth, or a virus wiping out humanity. Such a universal threat gives birth to global solidarity, our petty differences become insignificant, we all work together to find a solution—and here we are today, in real life.[78]

[75] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 5
[76] 'While anyone, rich or poor alike, is at risk of infection, it seems clear that the most disadvantaged are suffering disproportionately', write The Financial Times. It seems clear that although it cannot undo decades of neoliberal inequality, the virus infects indiscriminately. Andrew Jack and Darren Dodd, 'FT Health: We're not all in this together', *Financial Times*, (2020) <https://www.ft.com/content/b8bef00e-dac4-48a1-8eb2-67a59e261664> [accessed May 13 2020].
[77] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 15.
[78] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 41.

This is mirrored in DeLillo's novel when the evacuated townspeople gather 'around certain men. Here were the sources of information and rumour. One person worked in a chemical plant, another had overheard a remark […]. True, false and other kinds of news radiated through the dormitory from these dense clusters'.[79] The victims of the toxic event gather together to work out the problem in much the same way that Žižek suggests the pandemic may enable. The idea of solidarity stems from being in 'the same boat', and so the characters in the novel listen to each other and share ideas (although these ideas are, of course, not always correct).

However, in the case of *White Noise* 'remarks existed in a state of permanent fluctuation' which is typical of free-floating neoliberal society. A rumour circulates in the novel: 'It was said we would be allowed to go home first thing in the morning', which echoes the rumours from news outlets thirty-six years later regarding when lockdowns would be ended.[80] While this fluctuation does clearly exist to an extent today there is more demand for expert opinion and, indeed, governments have found many restrictions on freedom to be relatively well received by large sections of the population. It seems that in today's climate what is perceived as the best course of action is more accepted among individuals compared with DeLillo's text (even if official messages are sometimes unclear). In both our contemporary case and DeLillo's novel there exists a level of fluctuation around the validity of belief in truth and rumours. But today a belief in experts has gained traction, although not without some efforts to undermine it. Such a thing was not possible earlier during the neoliberal period, even as recently as a year ago.

In contemporary neoliberal societies like the USA and Britain, there has been a concerted effort by those pushing neoliberal policy to undermine the opinions of experts and

[79] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 129.
[80] One of the hundreds of publications that have written articles about when and how Covid-19 restrictions would be lifted: James Gallagher, 'Coronavirus lockdown: When will it end and how?', *BBC Online,* May 2020 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52183295> [accessed 13 May 2020].

to suggest we should trust instincts instead, since the market is driven by emotions like happiness rather than hard facts.[81] Arguably, the failure of this emotional thinking over rational thinking led to the pandemic's extent: Žižek writes that 'we were told again and again that a new much stronger epidemic was just a matter of time […] although we were convinced of the truth of these dire predictions, we somehow didn't take them seriously'.[82] Such a belief follows the neoliberal logic of total faith in free market capitalism to solve any problems, even ones caused by that system. It is evident in early neoliberal novels too, and *White Noise* deals with it in a conversation between Gladney and another evacuee: 'Floods, tornadoes, epidemics of strange new diseases. Is it a sign? Is it the truth? Are you ready?' Gladney is asked. He responds by saying that 'earthquakes are not up, statistically' to which he receives a 'condescending smile'.[83]

It is not important whether the contemporary slogan of 'we are following the science' is reflective of actual policy, what is significant is the belief that this scientific rationale is what the current situation requires.[84] The contemporary moment may be shifting to the point that rather than rubbish the claims of experts, or to condescendingly smile at statistics, the public wants to hear what health experts are saying, otherwise government ministers would have no reason to invoke them in their speeches. This represents a dramatic shift from *White Noise*, in which Gladney, even when quoting statistics, agrees with the condescension: 'maybe it was prissy to be quoting statistics in the face of powerful beliefs, fears, desires'.[85] Perhaps the emotional change that can be observed in this shift towards believing experts, might be the starkest sign of neoliberalism's failure to successfully incorporate this crisis. If this is to be a

[81] Henry Mance, 'Britain has had enough of experts says Gove' *Financial Times,* (2016) <https://www.ft.com/content/3be49734-29cb-11e6-83e4-abc22d5d108c> [accessed 13 May 2020].
[82] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 64.
[83] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 136.
[84] Hannah Devlin and Sarah Boseley, 'Scientists criticise UK government's 'following the science' claim', *The Guardian,* April 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/23/scientists-criticise-uk-government-over-following-the-science> [accessed 13 May 2020].
[85] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 136.

long-lasting change of belief and behaviour, then it could open up space for conversations on an alternative structuring of society.

In his timely book on the pandemic, Žižek sees changes occurring that take us away from what he calls disaster capitalism. He argues that the state should have a much more active role,[86] and that 'disaster communism' is an antidote to 'disaster capitalism.[87] The economic measures that many world governments have put in place already point towards a disruption of the neoliberal order; massive and necessary increases in welfare, even if temporary, point towards the inherent inability of free-market capitalism to deal with these types of crises. Unfortunately, at the time of writing there are few sources of academic writing on the Covid-19 pandemic, but Žižek does not fail to examine both possible outcomes. The alternative to his 'disaster communism' he writes, is barbarism. A return to austerity and other neoliberal policies might be just as likely an outcome as the continuation of socially minded welfare policy, and this would be in the wake of a return to instinct regaining primacy from science. Information, and the trust one puts in that information, will necessarily take on increased importance if the irrationality of neoliberalism is to be disrupted on a long-term basis.

In the wake of the airborne toxic event DeLillo points towards information being a problem for coping with crises. 'What good is knowledge if it just floats in the air? It goes from computer to computer. It changes and grows every second of every day. But nobody actually knows anything'.[88] The textual depiction of this crisis deals with the reality of neoliberalism; when everything is in fluctuation, when emotions and irrationality are how decisions are made, no changes can arise. When nobody knows anything, nobody can do anything. The crisis in *White Noise* echoes that of *Falling Man* in which the emotion that was stirred up after the attacks was used to depoliticise and stop individuals from looking for truth. Although it is far

[86] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 112.
[87] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 112.
[88] DeLillo, *White Noise*, pp. 148-149.

too early to tell, the 2020 global pandemic appears to be disrupting society's acceptance for myopia. Many people are demanding that experts are listened to and rationality is followed. Žižek quotes Julian Assange, who says 'this new phase of the crisis is, at the very least, making it clear to us that anything goes—that everything is now possible'.[89]

Although there is no clarity in the situation at the time of writing, the 2020 crisis differs in emotional qualities starkly from those depicted in DeLillo's early work, and this opens up questions as to whether these emotional differences will lead to differences occurring in the structuring of society. As explored above, DeLillo's work in the mid-1980s was already engaging with the difficulties surrounding the veracity of information and the role emotion plays in crisis response. The way in which he returns to these same themes but develops very different perspectives on them in more recent work such as *Zero K* points towards an awareness of the dynamism of the emotional reality of contemporary capitalism, as well as the ways in which feelings can be manipulated and change organically over time. The break that Žižek identifies during the 2020 crisis suggests the possibility of structural change across society that starts with emotional outlooks. In DeLillo's work, emotional changes mirror and often pre-empt changes that occur in society, suggesting that one could expect that a pandemic or crisis depicted by DeLillo following the 2020 crisis will reflect these new possibilities surrounding emotion and information.

## Conclusion

Richard Gray saw the attacks of 9/11 as a seismic event, a crisis that utterly changed the way literature in America was made and understood. He wrote that events like 9/11 are part of:

[89] Žižek, *Pandemic!*, p. 99.

> the soil, the deep structure lying beneath and shaping the literature of the American nation, not least because they have reshaped our consciousness; they are a defining element in our contemporary structure of feeling and they cannot help but impact profoundly on American writing.[90]

For Gray, events like 9/11 profoundly alter the functioning of emotions within contemporary capitalist society. In this case they redefine the way in which emotions like fear influence individuals and society. This chapter has examined the impact of crises on emotion in DeLillo's work, not to examine the claim that crises 'impact profoundly on American writing' but to utilise the literary machine to understand how crises impact American society. What do DeLillo's novels reveal about the way emotions function in society during times of crisis?

Gray suggests that free market capitalism was hurt by the attacks, but analysis of *Falling Man* reveals that the opposite is true.[91] Lianne shows that any alteration in the structure of feeling after the attacks serves to valorise capital, through both positive patriotic sentiments linked with the economy, and through hindering negative political criticism. She mourns the attacks through loudly arguing with her foreign neighbour; she performs her sadness and chastises her neighbour for mourning incorrectly. In so doing she demonstrates Peeren's argument that this is a consumerist practice, 'against the notion that mourning should be discrete […] it is now supposed to be shown in the form of public displays of emotion that converge on public displays of objects'.[92] The chapter has considered how Lianne's actions mirror a patriotic/nationalist consumer tendency emphasise mourning and purchasing in the correct way to commemorate the dead. In expanding upon the fear already existing in

[90] Richard Gray, 'Open Doors, Closed Minds: American Prose Writing at a Time of Crisis', *American Literary History,* 21:1 (2009) 128-151, p. 129.
[91] Gray, 'Open Doors', p. 131.
[92] Peeren, 'Compelling Affects', pp. 88-89.

neoliberalism, capital responded to this crisis by developing a dominant narrative that limited acceptable ways of emotionally responding. This depoliticised events as criticism of America came to be unacceptable.

Across the three sections DeLillo's work demonstrates that crises have a profound impact on the role of hope and fear in neoliberalism. Events like 9/11, war and financial crisis can all be profitable and beneficial for capital (in terms of valorisation and reinforcing a dominant narrative), but there also exists the possibility of global crises that might ultimately make a move away from neoliberalism inevitable. Some crises are incorporated into the already existing emotional structure of neoliberalism, heightening fear, giving it an object and ensuring behaviour and feeling tends towards a position favourable to capitalism. However, the presence of a site like the Convergence indicates a growing acknowledgement of capital's inability to deal with crises. The ability of neoliberalism to assuage generalised fear through hope might wane to the point where belief that other systems are impossible falters. Thatcher said that there is no alternative to free-market capitalism, but the Covid-19 crisis has proven her wrong, at least in the short-term. With the climate crisis on the horizon, it poses the difficult question of what the world will look like if an emotional, irrational, neoliberal response is all humanity has.

# Part Three

## Globalisation and Resistance

## Chapter Five

### ‘I travel between places, never in them’: Innovation, globalisation, and the nation

In its focus on the relationship between emotion and capitalism, this thesis has primarily studied how this relationship functions within the context of America. It is, however, necessary to consider how neoliberal practices and principles have taken on a global significance which can inform the status of emotions explored in these chapters. The previous chapter suggests that crises have made the emotional components of neoliberalism a global phenomenon and this chapter explores this further, asking how the export of American neoliberalism has impacted the emotional reality for millions who live in these societies. It asks what the impact of neoliberal globalisation is on emotions, what capitalist expansion means for the American nation, and how technological advancements have engendered these changes. By analysing DeLillo’s treatment of these areas, this chapter uncovers the role globalisation plays in the relationship between capitalism and emotion.

Globalisation is a contested concept, with James Annesley being among those suggesting that it may be less an ‘unquestionable reality’ than a ‘network of contradictory and unstable forces’.[1] But, like nearly every aspect of capital discussed in this thesis, contemporary globalisation’s contradictory and unpredictable nature is one of the ways in which it is identifiably neoliberal. If there is a deep bond between technology and globalisation as this chapter argues, ‘then it has been going on for almost two hundred years’, and possibly even longer than this, with advancements such as steam ships ushering in opportunities for global trade in the past.[2] It is the transition away from nations operating on a global scale to a global

[1] James Annesley, ‘“Thigh bone connected to the hip bone”: Don DeLillo’s “Underworld” and the Fictions of Globalization’, *American Studies,* 47(1) 2002, 85-95, p. 92.
[2] Prem Shankar Jha, *The Twilight of the Nation State* (London: Pluto Press, 2006), p. 8.

capital power that operates above nations that perhaps best exemplifies what makes current global expansion distinctly neoliberal. DeLillo's fiction responds to the globalising impulses of neoliberalism, and his work reveals some of the fault lines running through it, particularly as they relate to the emotions it engenders.

Proceeding from this understanding, section one explores how it is possible to consider the nation-state in a time of rapid transformation where 'the boundaries of the nation-state tend to fade into the background as capital realises itself on the world market'.[3] If globalisation is 'steadily reducing the areas of autonomy of sovereign states' then, this section asks, which emotional components are part of this process, and what are the emotional results?[4] This section analyses DeLillo's 1982 novel *The Names* to consider how the status or function of the nation is to be understood in a contemporary conception of emotion and capitalism.

Placing *White Noise* and *Cosmopolis* in dialogue with Paul Virilio's understanding of technology, section two explores how speed and technological acceleration play an important role in the changing emotional reality of neoliberal globalisation. Commentators on DeLillo have noted that his work demonstrates the ways in which the global merges with the local, that 'traditional battlefields have been replaced by network-centric battlespace, a more fluid geography'.[5] In response to such a claim, section two will consider what DeLillo's writing suggests about the impact on individuals and societies that have been involved in the exchange of neoliberal ideals and practices through technological means.

Finally, the third section looks to *Zero K* to ask how the diminishing relevance of the nation, coupled with technological acceleration, may begin to usher in a new conceptualisation of place and space within contemporary neoliberalism. This changing of the nature of space and place is not a recent occurrence within neoliberalism, evidenced by the title of this chapter

[3] Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press: London, 2000), pp. 327.
[4] Shankar Jha, *Twilight*, p. 7.
[5] Marie-Christine Leps, 'Terror Time in Network Centric Battlespace: DeLillo's Later Fiction', *Canadian Review of American Studies,* 45(3) 2015, 400-429, p. 402.

which is taken from 1982's *The Names,* but is more highly developed in *Zero K*, evidenced by the economic and emotional functionality of the Convergence's obscure and remote location.[6] It opens a space to explore what a move away from organisational structures that are centred around nations, cities, and towns might mean for the emotions of the humans who live in them. Building on Hardt and Negri, who write that 'the search for additional constant capital […] drives capital towards a kind of imperialism characterised by pillage and theft', this section explores the emotional ramifications in a system that demands global expansion regardless of the human cost.[7]

Whether it is the chaotic turmoil faced by Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis*, the anxiety of Gladney in *White Noise* or the consternation of the Lockharts in *Zero K*, DeLillo's work continually explores both how capitalism seeks to expand and break through its current limits and the impact this has on individuals. For Hardt and Negri, this process of expansion is 'always inadequate but nonetheless necessary […] to quench [capital's] insatiable thirst', and in the process of globalisation this inadequacy sees capital look to every spatial, temporal and technological possibility for valorisation.[8] The rapid changes experienced as part of globalisation cohere with the third section of the spiral of intensification, and how emotions expand negatively outwards away from a more secure centre. Although globalisation is not a feature of spiral model itself, the way in which globalisation intensifies capitalist reach around the world, inclusive of debt and naturalisation (as per sections one and two of the model), suggests that the exacerbation of negative emotional states observed within the model will be part of what is exported and transferred between nations.

[6] Don DeLillo, *The Names* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 50.
[7] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 225.
[8] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 222.

**Empire of no nation**

The role of the United States in a neoliberal world economy is a complex matter. Not only were theorists from the Chicago School of Economics instrumental in developing and testing neoliberal economics overseas, US foreign policy has served to enact neoliberalism in many parts of the world.[9] America has popularised neoliberal capitalism across the world, while also maintaining the idea of a strong US nation, despite neoliberalism's tendency to remove borders and boundaries. Much of the economic activity undertaken by the USA over the last five decades could be said to be both nationalist and globalist. In *America*, Baudrillard refers to the US flag not as a symbol of a nation but as 'the label of the finest successful international enterprise'.[10] Although he views the United States as having lost its central power over the capitalist world, he suggests that this is because there is no longer any centre at all.[11] America's influence over a decentred capitalist world-system has enabled it to spread neoliberalism through 'advertising effect' associated with its culture. The spread of this culture, and the affective infrastructure that accompanies it, has resulted in expansive possibilities for capital, at the cost of reduced national autonomy, for nations including the US and the developed world.

As section three will demonstrate, the limitations placed on capitalist expansion by national regulations are antithetical to neoliberal globalisation. For Hardt and Negri, these national structures 'contradict in principle and obstruct in practice the operation of capital'.[12] The US attempts to spread neoliberalism through the exporting of American culture and ideals, despite capitalism being opposed in its contemporary form to the limitations placed on it by nations. It therefore follows that the United States has spread a system that directly impacts its

[9] This is covered extensively in Catherine V. Scott, *Neoliberalism and U.S. Foreign Policy: From Carter to Trump* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
[10] Jean Baudrillard, *America,* (London: Verso, 2010), p. 86
[11] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 107.
[12] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 327.

own global power. With the dwindling sovereignty of nations under this form of capitalism it is capital, rather than the United States, that acts as a neo-imperial or hegemonic force. Baudrillard indicates the connection between American culture and neoliberalism, recognising that 'it is this culture which, the world over, fascinates those very people who suffer most at its hands, and it does so through the deep, insane conviction that it has made all their dreams come true'.[13] Baudrillard suggests that the attractions of American culture mask the problems and difficulties that accompany its neoliberal foundation, so that the cultural aspects of the United States act as marketing for neoliberal economics.

Prem Shankar Jha sees this new form of globalisation as the system by which a new cycle of capitalist expansion is occurring. Unlike earlier formulations of globalisation and cycles of capitalist expansion, this form removes hegemonic power from any one nation. He writes that 'In every new cycle of expansion, the task of tearing down old political and economic institutions in order to build new ones has fallen upon one hegemonic power'.[14] Like Baudrillard, Shankar Jha argues that the US occupies a relatively privileged position within the process of globalisation and the spread of neoliberalism, which it attains partly through the emotional effects that result from its culture. Considering America as being at the vanguard of a system in which it is no longer the hegemonic power (and, indeed, where there is no hegemonic power), this section looks at DeLillo's *The Names* in order to understand the emotional components of this global transition, to ask what the role of the nation is in the relationship between capitalism and emotion.

DeLillo's work began to feature themes of globalisation soon after the adoption of neoliberal policy by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the USA and UK. *The Names* focuses on American risk insurer James Axton who is based in Athens, Greece. Alongside his colleagues, he travels across continents and does business in a variety of locations, for which

[13] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 77.
[14] Shankar Jha, *Twilight*, p. 19.

Greece acts as a convenient crossroads. Cornelius Collins suggests that this novel 'has long been seen by author and reader alike as a turning point in DeLillo's writing', and this turning point comes as a result of the process of neoliberal globalisation that was already underway in 1982.[15] Axton's job as a risk insurer highlights the role of risk in a world-economy comprised of multiple interconnected nations, surrounded by increasingly porous boundaries. Collins goes on to say that it is with *The Names* 'that DeLillo definitively takes up one of his mature work's chief subjects the US-led transformation of the world into a single economy and market—the project to end history'.[16]

The emotional ramifications of a planet that has become intensively connected following the establishment of a global market are evidenced by the novel's treatment of risk. Globalisation ensures that the emotional implications of capitalism are shared across borders, with crises and events in one country influencing another. Christian Moraru notes that in *The Names* there is 'no place away from us, above, or below this material surface where either we or the world can evade each other, distance from one another, and hide ourselves or what we signify'.[17] This contraction of the world, discussed in more detail in section three, means that economic events that take place in any country become relevant to all others. In explaining the purpose of his job, Axton says:

> In effect I review the political and economic situation of the country in question. We have a complex grading system. Prison statistics weighed against the number of foreign workers. How many young males unemployed. Have the generals' salaries been doubled recently. What happens to

[15] Cornelius Collins, '"Gathering Facts for the end of the World": Don DeLillo's Archive of Global Turbulence', *Orbit: Writing Around Pynchon*, 4(2) 2016, 1-31, p. 4.
[16] Collins, 'Global Turbulence', pp. 4-5.
[17] Christian Moraru, 'The World Has Become Self-Referring: Don DeLillo's *The Names* and the Aesthetic of the Contemporary', *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory*, 3(2) 2017, 5-24, p. 8.

> dissidents. […] What seems likely? Collapse, overthrow, nationalization? Maybe a balance of payments problem, maybe bodies hurled into ditches. Whatever endangers an investment.[18]

The cultures and idiosyncrasies of entire nations are reduced to data used for determining the potential profit a US business may make in a specific country. Here, DeLillo's work suggests that the tendencies of neoliberal globalisation remove human emotional suffering from economic considerations, to the point that balance of payment problems are considered alongside bodies thrown into ditches. This implies that without the regulation of national sovereignty, capital is free to treat the world's people as data points rather than as individuals with emotional needs and desires. Much as Baudrillard suggests of the US, each nation under neoliberal globalisation becomes nothing more than a brand to be invested in and sold. This diminishing of humanity is perhaps why Moraru sees 'the advancing systemic world' as 'an apparent paradox', in which the world is 'in deepening turmoil' and 'terror-prone'.[19] The paradox arises when one considers the positive potential of increased connectivity in the world compared to the often negative reality that these interconnections cause.

Rowser is one of Axton's colleagues who has an obsession with 'facts on the infrastructure' of the countries he was involved in, and that 'probabilities, statistics' were 'the music of [his] life'.[20] Despite the pleasure that he takes in this work, what connected him with the other characters involved in his work 'was risk'.[21] This implies that the globalised market is a network of precarity and uncertainty. Although it is their job to work on external risks, the nature of an interconnected world means that such work takes on an essential function. They dedicate so much time to the economisation of collapse, overthrow and nationalisation because

[18] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 40.
[19] Moraru, 'Aesthetic of the Contemporary', p. 16.
[20] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 53.
[21] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 53.

of the fear these factors now represent. They represent visceral, lived fear to inhabitants of those nations, but for capital they are the fear of systemic or economic collapse. The freedom for capital to operate in a deregulated, global way opens up the space for new fears to enter new nations for the first time. *The Names* shows how globalisation is a profitable but risky endeavour for the United States.

Events beyond the borders of the USA now have a direct impact on the emotional experience of Americans. *The Names* explains this through the context of oil prices:

> The price of oil was an index to the Western world's anxiety. It provided a figure, $24 a barrel, say, to measure against the figure of the month before or the year before. It was a handy way to refer to our complex involvements. It told us how bad we felt at a given time.[22]

The text implies that consumerism, deregulation and other aspects of neoliberalism have been exported to places all over the world, along with the emotional ramifications of these economic factors. In some cases, nations welcomed neoliberal ideas and practices, and in others they have been coerced into adopting them. However, in each case, America's involvement with these overseas territories also ensured that the spread of emotion went in both directions, and the fear, anxiety, or possible happiness, related to changing oil prices is a clear demonstration of the influence that global factors have over America. Rather than only America exerting its influence over the rest of the world, with it no longer being the only global power, Jha notes that

[22] DeLillo, *The Names*, pp. 77-78.

> as happened in the previous cycles of its expansion, when capitalism broke out of the container of the nation state in the last third of the twentieth century and started to create a single global market, it began to destroy not merely the institutions of the national market but also the framework of laws, conventions and organisations […] that had sustained and humanized it.[23]

Axton's dehumanising checklist for investing in a country would, for Jha, be explained by the spread of the global market and the dwindling importance of national regulations. Where possible, capital has done away with the national frameworks which allowed at least some protection for citizens.

The impact of globalisation is felt by both Americans and non-Americans in the novel, with one of the Athenian characters telling Axton 'for a long time our politics have been determined by the interests of the great powers. Now it is just the Americans who determine'.[24] Considered in the context of the spread of capitalist hegemony this is less critical of America itself than of America's privileged position. Baudrillard acknowledges that 'America has retained power, both political and cultural, but it is now power as a special effect'. Criticism of the role of American power is therefore misguided when one considers the negative impact of globalisation on many aspects of the American nation, as well as how the movement of capital, rather than national influence, determines the character of global culture.[25] Although Axton's company benefits from soft power through its financial holdings in other countries, it is only capital, as a force without a nation, that experiences no risk with globalisation. Baudrillard's assertion that there is an 'insane conviction' that American culture makes the dreams of other nations come true, suggests the common belief that *capitalism* makes the

[23] Shankar Jha, *Twilight*, p. 97.
[24] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 281.
[25] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 107.

dreams of nations come true. Thinking in these terms demonstrates a capitalist, rather than American, hegemony and 'a crucial feature of hegemony', writes Jha, 'is the ability of the hegemonic power to convince dependent countries that policies that serve its interest also, to a greater or lesser extent, serve theirs'.[26] The results of this capitalist hegemony on nations are identified by Hardt and Negri, who write 'traditional cultures and social organizations are destroyed in capital's tireless march through the world to create the networks and pathways of a single cultural and economic system of production'.[27]

For many characters in the novel, the diminishing importance of national identity and sovereignty is closely aligned with the superiority of America in global capitalism, despite the US's relatively diminished status. Andreas, one of the Athenians, suggests that 'I don't think there's any nationality in companies such as ours', which indicates that within capitalism and corporations the notion of shared national identity is irrelevant.[28] Andreas does suggest that the blame for this still partly lies with America, even when criticising the Greek government for letting 'American strategic interests take precedence over the lives of Greeks'.[29] This points to an awareness in newly neoliberalised countries of America's position of relative power in contemporary capitalism. When Axton responds with 'it's your government, not ours' Andreas tells him 'I am not so sure'.[30] The novel is unsure whether it is Americans who are in charge, or capitalism at this point, suggesting perhaps that at this earlier developmental stage of neoliberalism, the distinction had yet to become evident. In either case, it suggests that there is a coherence between the interests of America and those of global capitalism. Of course, the fact that the Greek government is in fact *Greek* and not American, as Andreas humorously indicates, suggests that the Greeks have made their decisions on behalf of capital, not the

[26] Shankar Jha, *Twilight*, p. 185.
[27] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 326.
[28] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 280.
[29] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 281.
[30] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 281.

United States. America's role is that of a model that the Greeks intend to mimic. It points to the dehumanising and negative emotional effects of capitalist hegemony when financial interests are put before human concerns.

*The Names* repeatedly asserts that the distinction between capitalism and the sovereignty of nations is diminished by globalisation, and Charles Maitland even states directly that 'it's like the Empire', prefiguring Hardt and Negri's work on capitalist imperialism that would be published eighteen years later.[31] Maitland compares the exploits of capitalists overseas to the 'opportunity, adventure, sunsets, dusty death' experienced by the British colonising the world.[32] In many ways *The Names* foreshadows the work of Hardt and Negri who note the diminishing of national sovereignty in the face of capitalist hegemony, and also explain the degree to which America still retains the 'soft power' that Baudrillard considers. They write: 'this is not to say that the United States and Brazil, Britain and India are now identical territories in terms of capitalist production and circulation, but rather that between them are no differences of nature, only differences of degree'.[33] This is also reflected in the spread of capitalist finance to Africa and the Middle East in *The Names*.

The novel not only compares different countries in terms of their position in a global market, it also compares national and capitalist sovereignty. Characters make humorous points such as 'if it's possible to call a bank the size of yours a private institution', which imply that corporations have grown to a size, and gained power, once only associated with state institutions.[34] The increased power transferred to private institutions has negative emotional consequences for working populations, with capital having no direct accountability. Hardt and Negri posit that capitalist hegemony takes direct control of these working populations away from governments, resulting in increased fear through precarity and powerlessness. They write:

[31] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 8.
[32] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 8.
[33] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 335.
[34] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 69.

'the constant fear of poverty and anxiety over the future are the keys to creating a struggle among the poor for work and maintaining conflict among the imperial proletariat'.[35] This fear increases precarity and powerlessness because an individual's only means to enact change is to vote in democratic elections that have limited power compared with capital. This lack of accountability resulting from globalisation increases the fear felt by populations, as Robert Went argues, the increased mobility of capital also contributes to this fear, as companies are able to move easily to locations with less regulation.[36] This increases uncertainty around the future of jobs, income, stability and security.

Although this reading of the novel aligns with the position that American power in neoliberal globalisation is often a soft power, and that hegemonic power has shifted to nationless capital, it still acknowledges the result of America's relatively privileged stance. Although America only has power by inertia, it remains complicit in the spread of the fantasy of capitalist happiness, which includes the exploitative processes that are utilised as suggested above.[37] This results in a new culture of fear for expatriate Americans, who experience danger in the novel that becomes a normal way of life for them: '"I was in Tunis." "Are they killing Americans?"',[38] and '"Are they killing Americans?" "Not so you'd notice"' being two instances in which the violent attacks on Americans are expected.[39]

This fear, although depicted humorously, shows negative emotional effects at the forefront of a system in which supranational capitalism retains the power but not the risk. The way in which individual Americans are held responsible for their actions in facilitating multinational capital is shown through Axton and his group of associates. Writing on *The Names*, Heather Houser suggests that

[35] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 339.
[36] Went, *Globalization*, p. 93.
[37] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 115.
[38] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 231.
[39] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 52.

> They are terror profiteers who do not aim to eliminate risk so much as to capitalize on it. Those who gather data from native informants, cull statistics, calculate probabilities, and, based on this information, implement financial and governmental policies form a community connected by risk and the capital it generates. Admittedly, no character explicitly states a desire for a terrorist event to occur, if only because the threat is more profitable for the corporation.[40]

The novel acknowledges that these figures who embrace capitalism experience the negative consequences of America's soft power through the violence that is directed toward them, but this is the response to the spread of fear that accompanies increased risk through globalisation itself. Much as in *White Noise* the ongoing fear of death is what makes Dylar a potential success, the ongoing threat of terrorism that expands in a globally interconnected world is a booming industry for multinational capitalists in the form of risk insurance. Where Baudrillard suggests that it is through the classical image of happy consumers that the fantasy of American capitalism is successfully exported, the happiness promised does not transpire. Instead, *The Names* suggests, the global expansion of capitalism invites the viral and intensifying spread of fear, both from violence now able to move through porous borders, and from house-of-cards style networks of international financial organisations. American business finds global capitalism extremely profitable, but it makes itself open to external dangers through its position towards the top of the capitalist hegemony.

[40] Heather M. Houser, '"A Presence Almost Everywhere": Responsibility at Risk in Don DeLillo's The Names', *Contemporary Literature*, 51(1) 2010, 124-151, p 132.

**Semi-mythical technology**

As with *The Names*, in which the globe contracts as markets open themselves up, the nature of space in *Zero K* is radically altered, and this would not be possible without technology that allows for rapid globalisation through communications. According to Virilio, 'the smaller the world becomes as a result of the relativistic effect of telecommunications, the more violently situations are concertinaed'.[41] Like the interconnectivity of risk in *The Names*, the advanced technology that DeLillo describes as 'semi-mythical' in *Cosmopolis* enables negative emotional and physical effects to be felt on a global rather than isolated level.[42] David Harvey writes that

> problems are not confined to the realms of political and military decision-making, for the world's financial markets are on the boil that make a snap judgement here, an unconsidered word there, and a gut reaction somewhere else the slip that can unravel the whole skein of fictitious capital formation and of interdependency.[43]

Both Virilio's and Harvey's ideas, in which increasing global connectivity increases risk and negative emotion, allow this section to build on the analysis of section one. Virilio suggests the influence of technology is crucial to this globalising process, due to its reach and ubiquity in capitalist societies and corporations. The idea that the sovereignty of the nation has diminished as capitalism has gained more hegemonic power invites questions about the impact on the

[41] Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb*, (London: Verso, 2005), p. 67.
[42] Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, (London: Picador, 2004), pp. 206-207.
[43] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 306.

emotional lives of individuals both within and outside America as a result of the advancements made by technologies that engender quicker global progress.

How are the emotional realities explored in this thesis influenced by the technological acceleration that is essential to contemporary capitalism? Victor Li argues that structures that 'cannot enter globalization's temporal frame because they do not fit its 24/7 operational mode, future-oriented temporality, and accelerated tempo, are (mis)translated as anachronistic – they are […] devalued, deemed obsolete, seen no longer to count'.[44] The pressure to import the neoliberal system of 24/7 markets observed in America, causes drastic alterations to the emotional experience of individuals when exposed to this 'accelerated tempo'. This section explores the impact of technology on emotion in *White Noise*, shortly after the period of globalisation depicted in *The Names*. It then expands this to the more contemporary *Cosmopolis* to ask whether the promises of happiness that accompany technological developments spread themselves equally across the globalised world.

*White Noise* is 'obstinately domestic; central characters talk about other countries without themselves budging more than a few miles from their homes', and yet DeLillo is concerned with the speed and technology that has come to characterise globalisation almost from the start of the text.[45] Gladney's thought process is shown: 'Let's enjoy these aimless days while we can, I told myself, fearing some deft acceleration'.[46] From this early point in the novel he already thinks of speed and acceleration as a source of impending fear, and an impediment on the enjoyment of his life. The acceleration, reminiscent of the technology that has a forbidding presence in the novel, is a threat to his chance of achieving happiness. Despite this, it is a technology in the form of Dylar that presents a holy grail in which he invests all his hope for future happiness, suggesting a contradictory relationship in 1980s America with

[44] Victor Li, 'The Untimely in Globalization's Time: Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*', *Globalizations* 13(3) 2016, 256-269, p. 257.
[45] Thomas Peyser, 'Globalization in America: The case of Don DeLillo's White Noise', *Clio,* 25(3) 1996, 255-271, p. 257.
[46] Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (London: Picador, 2011), p. 18.

technology since it brings both happiness and fear. Virilio similarly suggests that approaches to technological advancements are often framed as 'totality or all-inclusiveness', as 'communism, or […] single-market capitalism'.[47] If one considers technological progress to be a key measure of globalisation, this experience of it points towards a turbulent way of emotionally relating to the speed of the world.

Technology exerts emotional control over individuals within neoliberal society, as depicted when, in *White Noise*, Gladney visits a bank. When 'the figure on the screen roughly corresponded to [his] independent estimate, feebly arrived at after long searches through documents' he experiences 'waves of relief and gratitude'.[48] The power of technology is demonstrated in its ability to instantaneously carry out calculations by which Gladney is 'tormented', and such technology takes on an air of infallibility. Technology in this case relieves fear and stress, and the reverence and awe he feels towards it borders on religious: 'the system had blessed my life. I felt its support and approval'.[49] With technology being almost all-powerful, he feels he has comparatively little power over his life. This makes his relief so great because of the fear that preceded it; fear that the infallible system would find against him. He senses 'that something of deep personal value, but not money, […] had been authenticated and confirmed' after the interaction with the ATM, but like an infallible and omnipotent god, 'the system was invisible, which made it all the more impressive, all the more disquieting to deal with'.[50] Gladney is not made happy, but has been relieved of his fear until the next time he has to encounter such technology. In this mode of engaging with overwhelming technological speed, this relief approximates happiness.

The novel suggests that this period of neoliberalism, as sophisticated technological developments were emerging, can be characterised by technology with increasing power and

[47] Virilio, *Information Bomb,* p. 7.
[48] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 46.
[49] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 46.
[50] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 46.

influence. It operates by enforcing the fear/hope dichotomy discussed in earlier chapters. DeLillo often regards technology negatively, with its impact on Gladney's emotion being reminiscent of what Virilio calls a 'culture of chance' in which individuals must be 'hyper-anticipatory and predictive'.[51] This chance links with the fear found in precarity. Gladney could easily have been on the wrong side of the ATM's calculations and found himself powerless, and the anxiety involved in trying to keep up with technology is one of the crucial ways in which it engenders negative emotion. In this sense, rather than reducing stress and increasing happiness, technologies created to make life easier can instead bring about unease.

*White Noise* demonstrates the fear associated with technology that results from how it operates beyond the capabilities of human understanding. In a scene in a doctor's surgery, technological devices are seen to take on sentience, when Gladney reveals: 'I am afraid of the imaging block. Afraid of its magnetic fields, its computerised nuclear pulse. Afraid of what it knows about me'.[52] As *Cosmopolis* also shows, technological devices can understand situations without human input and Gladney's fear corresponds with Virilio's description of 'extreme science' in which science becomes 'the agent not, as in the past, of the acceleration of history, but of the dizzying whirl of the *acceleration of reality*'.[53] Whether medical or commercial technology, *White Noise* suggests that it transcends the need for human input and oversight, with the supermarket checkouts being so sophisticated that 'it doesn't matter what [shoppers] think or see' as the terminals 'decode the binary secret of every item infallibly'.[54] The novel reveals an anxiety concerning one of the principal components in the process of neoliberal globalisation.

It is possible to further connect technology with emotion, following Ross Maffey and Yugin Teo, who explore technology's connection with the theme of disaster in DeLillo's work.

[51] Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1980), p. 104.
[52] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 324.
[53] Virilio, *Information Bomb*, p. 3.
[54] DeLillo, *White Noise*, p. 326.

They utilise the same three key texts as this project to suggest that 'technology is able to produce a diversion from foreboding thoughts of death as it offers an existence that has no physical limitations'.[55] One can see this process in all three of *White Noise*, *Cosmopolis* and *Zero K*, although in the former, as Maffey and Teo state, technology also brings fear the forefront, as it gives Gladney 'the means to visualise his own death'.[56] It is perhaps this dual functioning of technology in DeLillo's work that best exemplifies its role in the relationship between emotion and neoliberalism, as something that at once can act as a salve and hopeful reassurance, but also as a reminder of fear. While it reminds Gladney of his fear of death, the technological readouts in his ATM transaction prompt anxieties related directly to capitalist production.

*Cosmopolis* depicts an America which is now part of a highly technologically developed global marketplace, where the 'networks' and 'circuits' feared by Gladney are now commonplace and connect the entire capitalist world. Though set in New York, the novel explores the transformation of localised anxiety and fear into one with a global reach. Baudrillard writes that although the USA no longer has the same global dominance, 'it used to be a world power; it has now become a model […] – and a universal one – even reaching as far as China'.[57] If the USA is the model from which other nations formulate their versions of neoliberalism, then the emotional results of engagement with technology found in *White Noise* would now have global implications. However, the extraordinary advancement in technology means that the relationship with fear has changed within the US itself: Packer is not afraid of ATMs and in fact finds them annoying for their inability to 'escape the inference of fuddled

[55] Ross Maffey and Yugin Teo, 'Changing Channels of Technology: Disaster and (Im)mortality in Don DeLillo's *White Noise, Cosmopolis* and *Zero K*', *C21 Literature: Journal of 21st-Century Writing,* 6(2), 1-23, p. 3.
[56] Maffey and Teo, 'Changing Channels', p. 12.
[57] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 116.

human personnel and jerky moving parts. The term was part of the process that the device was meant to replace'.[58]

DeLillo's concern with the apparent sentience of technological devices develops in *Cosmopolis* when Packer's financial equipment carries out calculations seemingly faster than so-called actual time and becomes aware of events before humans. 'The car stopped and moved and he realized queerly that he'd just placed his thumb on his chinline, a second or two after he'd seen it on-screen',[59] is one of the first instances of this process, and Packer later recoils from a bomb blast after he had already done so on screen.[60] What Virilio describes as the acceleration of reality continues until the final paragraph when '[Packer] is dead inside the crystal of his watch but still alive in original space'.[61] This aligns with Virilio's claim that 'the development of high technical speeds would thus result in the disappearance of consciousness as the direct perception of phenomena that informs us of our own existence'.[62] Although Packer is an advocate of cyber capital, it nonetheless suggests an increasing ability within neoliberal globalisation for capital to operate beyond human comprehension. This applies to many areas of life in which perceptions can no longer be relied upon for a view of reality. What happens to Packer recalls Victor Li's concept of the exclusion of time zones that do not fit globalised time and return us to the dwindling importance of the nation. What is happening to Packer represents his, and ultimately America's, falling behind the speed of supranational capital.

The role of technology in neoliberal globalisation is summarised by Virilio who writes 'the aim is to make the computer screen the ultimate window, but a window which would not so much allow you to receive data as to view the horizon of globalization, the space of its accelerated virtualization'.[63] The computer thus becomes a space in which the expanse of

[58] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 54.
[59] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 22.
[60] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 95.
[61] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 207.
[62] Paul Virilio, *Aesthetics of Disappearance* p. 104.
[63] Virilio, *Information Bomb*, p. 16.

capital is realised, not in a way that is easily comprehended by humanity, but in a way that demonstrates the reach of capitalist globalisation as being something beyond our purview. The computer screens Packer is surrounded by do not just show currency data but illustrate the economic shape of the world, and the fact they pre-empt situations that impact him suggests that neoliberal capitalism, as hegemonic power under the contemporary phase of globalisation, uses technology in ways that outpace human capability. Indeed, Maffey and Teo also suggest that 'technological devices become essential to Packer in understanding first-hand, real life events as a result of his media saturation'.[64] In this respect technology (and, by extension, capital) takes on a controlling force over individuals' sense of the world and their affective responses to it. This process increases anxiety through the reduction in affective elements of society, with descriptions of the people on the street in the novel suggesting a loss of their humanity to speed: 'people hurried past […], endless anonymous, twenty-one lives per second, race-walking in their faces and pigments, sprays of fleetest being'.[65]

Screens also surround Packer in the city and show the 'electronic display of market information' which take the form of 'three tiers of data running concurrently and swiftly about a hundred feet above the street. Financial news, stock prices, currency markets'.[66] Although they are in midtown Manhattan, the screens show them the horizon of globalisation in a way beyond even Packer's sophisticated understanding of finance: 'the hellbent spring of numbers and symbols, the fractions, decimals, stylized dollar signs, the streaming release of words, of multinational news, all too fleet to be absorbed'.[67] Although the screens show the horizons of the global they do so in a way that is not useful or even understandable, only a way that incites the rage of protestors, or the anxiety of those like Gladney who attempt to keep pace. Writing on this emotional process, Virilio asks 'how could you not be afraid of the power, ubiquity,

[64] Maffey and Teo, 'Changing Channels', p. 7.
[65] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 20.
[66] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 80.
[67] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 80.

and instantaneousness that, very significantly, were first the attributes of the gods?'.[68] This perspective suggests the fear that arises in the face of technology is representative of the shift in power to new capitalist forms of organisation. Virilio suggests that to be afraid of such power is natural, implying the fear that results from technology is a required and intentional outcome of its use within globalised capitalism.

While there exist uses of technology that can create states of happiness, when used as tools of neoliberal globalisation this is not their primary purpose. *Cosmopolis* suggests that the technological advancements that enable globalisation are necessarily limiting human comprehension and increasing negative states of emotion:

> Beneath the data strips, or tickers, there were fixed digits marking the time in the major cities of the world. […] Never mind the speed that makes it hard to follow what passes before the eye. The speed is the point. […] We are not witnessing the flow of information so much as pure spectacle, or information made sacred, ritually unreadable.[69]

Capital uses speed to pass over the temporal symbols of major cities metaphorically showing capital leaving these tangible places behind. The novel invites the perception that technology in the context of globalisation is a source of fear and confusion. As Li posits that 'globalization's temporal framing of the world demands the exclusion of those times that do not fit', cities that are not considered major cities have already been excluded from the tickers that Packer watches.[70] However, as with Packer's failure to keep pace with financial capital, the future created by cyber-capital might eventually lead to a point where no city was major

[68] Paul Virilio, *The Administration of Fear,* (London: Semiotext(e), 2012), p. 43.
[69] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 80.
[70] Li, 'Globalization's Time', p. 256.

enough under neoliberal hegemony.[71] Packer's suggestion that the purpose of this system is to take capitalism beyond human comprehension implies a teleological point in which capital moves beyond the need for national boundaries in a free-floating, rhizomatic network.

The computers that allow global capitalism to outpace human cognition contribute to Packer's ruin when he causes a financial meltdown which erases his fortune and damages projects throughout the city. In this sense, his inability to keep pace with capitalism is evidenced by the fact that his misfortune comes from gambling on the global currency markets. The frenzied ramifications of his actions demonstrate how the inability of capitalists to keep pace with capital can create a chaotic and unpredictable level of inequality and concurrent emotional turmoil throughout society. Jung-Suk Hwang suggests that DeLillo was familiar with the idea that 'the domination of the market by a few, maximizing returns on capital while minimizing returns to labor, and the expanded economic gap between nations and people within nations— is one of the main underlying causes of many different forms of the anti-globalization and anti-capitalism protests'.[72] *Cosmopolis* demonstrates this with Levin/Sheets, who feels slighted by Packer after being financially ruined when working on a global currency. The instability caused by neoliberal globalisation impacts the wealthy but can also bring the middle classes to financial ruin. This is the case for Sheets who now 'bank[s] at one location only because I am dwindling down financially to nothing. It's a small bank with one machine inside, one in the street set into the wall. I use the street machine because the guard will not let me in the bank'.[73]

Packer's downfall comes through his attempt to keep up with globalised capital, whereas Sheets' ruin is brought on him without his involvement, falling into what Baudrillard

[71] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 79.
[72] Jung-Suk Hwang, 'Staging the Uneven World of Cybercapitalism on 47th Street in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 59(1), 27-40, p. 30.
[73] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 151.

refers to as the 'fourth world'.[74] For Baudrillard, this fourth world comprises those 'who have 'fallen into oblivion' and have been left behind by the capitalist tendency to pay attention only to power and wealth'.[75] One might have expected that fear from technology's overwhelming speed and distortion of reality would be exported around the world as part of America's role as the country that, more than others, seeks to expand neoliberal attitudes and systems. However, *Cosmopolis* implies that it is felt nowhere more keenly than within the United States itself. In the novel, the continually rising yen demonstrates that this fear is both technological and global, since the result of events elsewhere directly impact the United States. Packer's loss on the yen and Sheets' on the Thai baht shows that it is possible for the import of fear through the technology present in global capitalist markets. They become manic and angry due to their inability to trade effectively in a system that is designed for them to fail. When different parts of the world incorporate neoliberalism they also import the structure of fear and hope that comes with it, but it is perhaps less predictable that in a capitalist hegemony the US is as vulnerable emotionally and economically as any other nation. The traditional image of America as the centre of capitalism is lost in *Cosmopolis* and this occurs largely through the spaces opened up by technology. Baudrillard summarises this shift: 'if America is now no longer the monopolistic centre of world power, this is not because it has lost power, but simply because there is no centre any more'. If technology has contributed to this American vulnerability and decreased importance of the nation, then it opens up questions as to the very nature of space within neoliberal globalisation.

[74] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 112.
[75] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 112.

**A new idea of the future**

Many of DeLillo's novels are set in his home of New York City, and as one of the financial hubs of the world it is pertinent for a study of emotion and capitalism. This section builds on the idea that the nation has diminished in importance and examines the impact on individual emotion of capitalism's globalising shift away from the city. One possible reading of DeLillo's *Zero K* is that the role of technology has altered the way in which capitalist societies are configured, with this jeopardizing the role of the city within neoliberalism. The desert location of the Convergence, outside of the legal jurisdiction of the United States, highlights a shift in capitalism similar to the destruction of the centre hypothesised by Baudrillard. For him, the desert space is a 'place of signs of an imperious necessity, an ineluctable necessity – but void of all meaning, arbitrary and inhuman, and one crosses it without deciphering'.[76] This transition towards inhuman spaces represents a threat to the emotional wellbeing of individuals under neoliberalism.

In the 'Postscript', Deleuze writes of controlling modulations and 'limitless postponements' which serve to replace the fixed enclosures of the disciplinary society.[77] Arguably, these mechanisms are made possible through deregulation carried out by governments, sometimes at the direct behest of capital. In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri explore globalisation and suggest capitalism has a need to 'eventually overcome imperialism and destroy the barriers between inside and outside'.[78] For Baudrillard, the barriers themselves have not so much been destroyed, as bypassed, as space has been rendered 'infinite by the destruction of its centre'.[79] Capitalism must extend its reach towards new markets that fall outside of national boundaries and in *Zero K* we see this extended reach materialise in the

[76] Baudrillard, America, p. 128.
[77] Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October* 59 (1992), 3-7, p. 5.
[78] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 234.
[79] Baudrillard, America, p. 99.

Convergence. This facility is a high-tech enterprise, located in the Central Asian desert in order to bypass the national regulations of the city in order to realise the expansion of capitalist possibility.

The desert in *Zero K* is a place in which the politics, societal obligations and regulations of nations are limited and neoliberalism is allowed to operate without boundaries. This is exemplified by a business that kills its clients to sell them eternal life. The physical distance between the desert and the city allows it to become a perfect space of neoliberal capitalism to operate, functioning in ways that would be illegal in other, regulated, social spaces. In *Point Omega*, the desert is not strongly affective, with the individuals who inhabit it finding the desert's otherworldliness to be the principal cause of intensive responses. Due to the technological advancements of capitalism, the desert in *Zero K* is connected with the rest of the world, which means it is still able to operate in the efficient and effective way expected of 'cyber-capitalist' enterprise. The compression of space brought about by technological developments invites enterprises such as those running the Convergence to move into these inhuman spaces in order to operate freely without restrictions. Capitalism's ability to adapt means that the desert requires none of the necessary human aspects of city-based capitalism, such as large working populations, but only its simultaneous technological connection and physical disconnection from the nation.

DeLillo's protagonist Jeffrey Lockhart is useful for exploring the emotional ramifications of this shift towards the un-affective and inhuman space of the desert, because he shows doubt and consternation towards the enterprise's cryogenic claims. It seems alien to him and he finds it problematic, primarily from a spatial perspective: 'Why so isolated? Why not Switzerland? Why not a suburb of Houston', he asks his father Ross, suspicious at the isolation.[80] Ross responds: 'This is what we want, this separation' and later he tells his son

[80] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 30.

that the Convergence are 'making the future. A new idea of the future'.[81] The unregulated environment of the desert is what allows the Convergence to create its idealised neoliberal version of the future in which they can operate beyond the laws of nation states. Lockhart's perspective of the project demonstrates fear, as he clings to the names of locations that he sees as the places for human endeavour, with the move into the desert implying a break with history. Indeed, we are told that in the desert 'history is buried here'.[82] They are able to move past the human histories that are ever-present in places like New York, and this lack of history, lack of regulation, allows them to transcend any boundary, including considerations of human wellbeing.

Despite the assertion that they are breaking with history, the move into the desert continues the neoliberal progression of history that unceasingly seeks the 'outside' in order to find new markets. Peyser suggests that the last boundary is death, and globalisation has already done away with other boundaries. Reading *Zero K* in this context suggests capitalism's involvement in the death industry means neoliberalism will have reached the end of possible expansion.[83] Lockhart's negative emotional state demonstrates that the relationship between capitalism and emotion allows the freedom of the desert only for capital, extending its hegemony and creating precarious and uncertain futures for humans. His feelings are a manifestation of the idea that 'for all except the gilded few who own most of the wealth in industrialised nations, the future has become utterly unpredictable and therefore indescribably threatening'.[84]

Lockhart compares the city to the desert, saying that in New York 'elevators go up and down rather than sideways'.[85] Like much of DeLillo's work, emotional negativity stems from

[81] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 30.
[82] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 30.
[83] Peyser, *Globalization in America,* p. 268.
[84] Shankar Jha, *Twilight*, p. 326.
[85] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 167.

technology but, as discussed in section two, it is the implementation of technology that Lockhart takes issue with. The technology of the Convergence has, like Packer's computers, started to leave humans behind, moving in ways that they do not understand. Like much of the technology in *Cosmopolis*, the Convergence primarily causes fear through the way it goes beyond human comprehension, from the location outside of human space, to the technology itself which incorporates death.

A crucial way in which *Zero K* subtly reveals the relationship between global capital and emotions is through the confusion that Lockhart experiences throughout the text. He regularly comments in ways that exemplify the positivity of the city and the contrasting desert space:

> When we returned back from the Convergence I announced to Ross that we were back in history now. Days have names and numbers, a discernible sequence, and there is an aggregate of past events, both immediate and long gone, that we can attempt to understand.[86]

The novel enables a critique of a future that continues the development of neoliberal globalisation in opposition to human wellbeing, and this period of transition into the future is the subject of discussion by both Went and Jha. Owing to the dominance of neoliberal institutions, organisations, and agencies over nations, Went writes 'the likelihood of crises that spread like oil spills due to the interconnection of economies and companies is growing'.[87] Jha builds on this idea of transition into the future arguing that 'during periods of transition, growing economic interdependence can be a potent cause of war, for it creates vulnerability'.[88]

[86] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 167.
[87] Went, *Globalization*, p. 23.
[88] Shankar Jha, *Twilight*, pp. 328-329.

Although neither theorist envisions neoliberal globalisation operating at the level depicted in *Zero K*, they both acknowledge the fear that results from an increase in global interconnectivity and reduced regulation. The Convergence is perhaps the best example of interconnectivity in that it is not formally connected with any nation, and in that respect has the potential to impact them all. The novel shows capitalism operating in a new, global, future and new spaces where it is difficult for humans to feel at ease, which explains Jeffrey Lockhart's yearning for the city and the knowable.

Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* illustrates the role of the city and technology in an increasingly globalising capitalism, and it speaks to the argument that the desert is a place that opens up new possibilities for capital, and why it appears to be moving away from the city-capitalism of the past. His space-time compression argument claims that our spatial and temporal worlds are compressed, meaning that 'processes that so revolutionise the objective qualities of space and time [force us] to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves'.[89] In other words, certain processes within capitalism, such as globalisation, technology and communication, make the way in which the world *appears* in terms of its size, or time, seem vastly different from the how it was in the past. In this respect people are forced to change the way in which the world is understood. This reinforces Baudrillard's notion that space has not been destroyed, it has 'simply [been] rendered […] infinite by the destruction of its centre'. This centre was crucial for human understanding and navigation but, owing to the changing nature of space in capitalism, this understanding has been disrupted.

For Li, this new phase of capitalism alters the way things are in reality, making it possible to expand on Harvey's account of how neoliberal globalisation changes the appearance of things. Li writes:

[89] David Harvey, *Condition of Postmodernity,* p. 240.

> The temporal frame within which capitalist globalization operates emphasizes growth, accumulation, innovation, and the continuous 24/7 functioning of the global market; it is also future-oriented and infatuated with speed. Those times that cannot enter globalization's temporal frame because they do not fit its 24/7 operational mode, future-oriented temporality, and accelerated tempo are (mis)translated as anachronistic – they are literally othered, devalued, deemed obsolete, seen no longer to count.[90]

Section one showed that the traditional model of the nation fits the description of the types of temporal modes Li argues are being devalued, and the once important role of a collective national identity for happiness and emotional wellbeing is eroded by the fact that deregulated, unbound space becomes a more attractive option for capital once it becomes a viable site for development. Although the Convergence is at a distance, it no longer matters. Space has become compressed in such a way that we can think of this desert space as an extension of capital's ability to influence and control.

When one compares the city's relative safety in *Zero K* to the chaos of the city in the earlier *Cosmopolis* one gets the impression that there are enormous ramifications stemming from the destruction of the centre and the move towards formerly uninhabited spaces, both in terms of society and individual emotions. Lockhart gets a job in the most natural and simple of all things, water, as if to contrast further the life-and-death technology of the Convergence with the city. He looks forward to a 'late dinner in a modest restaurant on a tree-lined street between the brawling traffic of the avenues, our mood nicely guided by the infrastructure of water'.[91] The city to which he clings is simple and understandable and even the noisy traffic is calming

[90] Li, 'Globalization's Time', p. 257.
[91] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p 167.

due to its familiarity. The loss of security that the desert enterprise represents is emphasised by the positivity that Lockhart experiences within the city. Hardt and Negri write that 'capital does not function within the confines of a fixed territory and population, but always overflows its borders and internalizes new spaces'.[92] Lockhart's negative impression of this overflowing into the desert shows a fear and acknowledgement that his and America's position in control is in jeopardy; capitalism has shed both individual and national limits in its search for new opportunity in unregulated space.

Ross undergoes a transformation which reinforces the idea that humanity does not have the ability to comprehend the capitalist advances that have enabled the drive into the desert and destruction of the centre: His son Jeffrey asks him to return with him to the history of the city, but

> It turned out that my father was not interested in history or technology or hailing a cab. He let his hair grow wild and walked nearly everywhere he cared to go, which was nearly nowhere. He was slow and a little stooped […]
>
> His hands sometimes trembled. He looked at his hands, I looked at his face, seeing only an arid indifference.[93]

Ross's involvement with the Convergence has reduced his connection with the human world his son inhabits. His transformation from suave businessman into a wild character might represent the wildness of the desert that his 'mind is tunneling back to', and one can read his aversion to history and to the technology to which Jeffrey refers (cell-phones) as being his adherence to the heightened capitalism of the desert, and it is in this adherence that he loses

[92] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 221.
[93] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 168.

the human qualities that are so noticeable to his son.[94] Indeed, he appears to study his hands with confusion as if even the human body has lost meaning for him. This repeated comparison in DeLillo's novel between the city and the desert points to a loss of humanity that results from the unprecedented transformations made possible by neoliberal globalisation. Loss of humanity is inherent in the technology of the Convergence, who aim to 'cast off the person' and question whether the new technologies will 'allow the brain to function at the level of identity'.[95] Ross's deterioration suggests he has reached the neoliberal future quicker than expected.

Baudrillard writes of America that 'there is the same wildness in the endless, indifferent cities as in the intact silence of the Badlands', and perhaps this is why American capitalism is so smoothly able to transition to the wilderness of the desert and takes on the position in the vanguard.[96] Although Baudrillard argues that both the desert and the American city deliver one from 'all depth', through 'a brilliant, mobile, superficial neutrality' the city is, in *Zero K,* something a lot more human and meaningful.[97] Lockhart responds to the desert with scepticism and cynicism: 'is the desert where miracles happen? Are we here to repeat the ancient pieties and superstitions?', whereas Ross loses his humanity due to the superficial neutrality of the desert.[98] Both Lockharts seem to explore the relationship between global capitalism and emotions, each going separate directions. In this sense it is not necessarily just scepticism that has Jeffrey reacting how he does, but fear. That emotion which is so often involved in neoliberal processes is perhaps due to the loss of safety and security that comes with the transition towards the unknown 'outside' that capitalism necessarily seeks. In the middle of *Zero K* Jeffrey Lockhart asks us to 'define *time*, define *space'*, suggesting an awareness that the structures through which individuals understand their worlds, might be becoming

[94] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 168.
[95] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 67.
[96] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 123.
[97] Baudrillard, *America*, p. 124.
[98] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 128.

unrecognisable.[99] It is the ongoing process of neoliberal globalisation, enabled by technological advancements, that have resulted in this unrecognisable world emerging. This world is predictable in the emotional consequences it delivers, with fear being a primary side effect of a society that gears itself towards the valorisation of capital, instead of the improvement of human happiness.

## Conclusion

In the texts considered in this chapter there are insights into the emotional experience of living alongside the ongoing process of neoliberal globalisation. From *The Names* in the early 1980s through to the recent *Zero K,* the way in which DeLillo demonstrates the shift from what Jha calls a national 'container' of capitalism through to an open world market shows not only how this process takes place, but also the implications for those living within the impacted societies. Each of the novels demonstrates that, for capital, the expansion into the world market is an inevitable process, given its inherent need to expand. Along with Hardt and Negri's *Empire*, DeLillo's works illustrate that capitalism opens up what Hardt and Negri describe as new 'terrain[s] of possibility' in a way that was once typical of how colonialism influenced the third world.[100] In so doing, not only does neoliberalism get exported throughout the world, it opens up the United States to vulnerabilities previously unexpected. Indeed, despite the privileged position of the American nation in *The Names*, the nation faces new challenges that emerge from its own opening up to global markets. Like earlier periods of globalisation, neoliberal globalisation is intricately tied to technological advancements, with the computers that open Packer up to global markets in *Cosmopolis* also knowing more about him and predicting his

[99] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 109.
[100] Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 334.

future in a way that goes beyond human cognition. This is reminiscent of how Deleuze described the functioning of control societies with a 'computer that tracks each person's position'.[101] We can consider globalisation to increase capitalist control over larger parts of the world, while pushing the risk onto nations which no longer have full control over their governance.

The novels considered in the context of globalisation reveal insight through the emotions of the characters. In *White Noise*, *Cosmopolis* and *Zero K* characters all express confusion and fear at the way in which technology affects their lives, leaving them vulnerable to a new experience of shared risk in much the same way that their economies now have the potential to unlock new profits. In *The Names* too they are open to new risks and fears: despite characters' privileged position within neoliberal globalisation, they face violence that does not take into account the end of purely American hegemony. DeLillo writes that they are targeted particularly in 'the Middle East and Latin America', both of which are places where an American vanguard has sought to expand the interests of capital.[102] This increased fear is exacerbated through technology, starting in *White Noise* and coming to a death-focused telos in *Zero K*. Reading the novels in conjunction with Virilio's theory reveals that the characters are often forced to live as part of a 'culture of chance' that at once denies them the ability to comprehend their situations and encourages them to make decisions based on rapidly transforming information. It is through globalisation that this technology comes to impact the characters and the speed at which it moves suggests that it causes fear through its design that means it cannot be managed and understood by human minds.

This chapter has unearthed new understandings about contemporary capitalism and its relationship with emotion by focusing on how globalisation is presented in the work of DeLillo. Readings of the novels show that capitalism now functions beyond the nation, and beyond the

[101] Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October* 59 (1992), 3-7, p. 7.
[102] DeLillo, *The Names*, p. 54.

human mind, and this has resulted in a capitalist hegemony or empire in which the US operates with a privileged position, but nonetheless experiences increased risk and less direct control. Viewing a site like the Convergence reveals how neoliberal globalisation makes the corporation 'without either a social base or a political constitution […] a pure apparatus expressing the rights of globalized capital'.[103] No longer are government regulations able to control enterprises like the Convergence as they operate beyond their jurisdiction, and are free to move anywhere they like should new regulations attempt to disrupt their practices. While people like Packer are free to try to exploit new markets and make billions in the process, the result is widening chaos and inequality, as people like Sheets exist who experience the affective downsides of such a technological and global relationship. Although neoliberal capital occupies a position of hegemonic power and is able to spread its economic policies and emotional reality across the globe, it follows that new resistance methods would also be global, and therefore strengthened, in response. In *Cosmopolis,* Packer notes a quick transition from 'major global protest' to 'now, what, forgotten'.[104] Yet with the increased spread of global risk and fear, there may well come the increased potential for alternatives and resistance movements to utilise the same technological and emotional avenues that capital has used to entrench its dominance. The opportunities and difficulties in these areas are explored in the next chapter.

[103] André Gorz, *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 15.
[104] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis,* p. 118.

## Chapter Six

### 'Marching into American sunlight': Routes to resistance

'Resistance is physical', writes Costas Douzinas, 'every force affected by another provokes a resistance, which thwarts the first without stopping it. Wherever there is power, in an intimate relationship or collectivity, in a university, company, political party or state, there is resistance'.[1] Over the course of this thesis, the different emotional components of neoliberal capitalism have been revealed to be integral to the continuation of capitalist power and dominance. As Nietzsche suggests, power is entrenched through the mechanism of credit and debt which is a fundamental part of capitalist exchange: the creditor is granted 'the satisfaction of being able to wield, without scruple, his power over one who is powerless'.[2] In light of this central idea first explored in the spiral of intensification theoretical model, the first five chapters have considered how, in DeLillo's writing, emotion is seen to be crucial to the process of increased capitalist domination and that there is a significant emotional impact on the dominated and powerless. In each chapter, emotions were shown to be a part of a system that moves in a spiral shape, downward away from a neutral starting point. This structure is the fundamental way in which emotions and power intersect within capitalism. If capitalism benefits from a system that utilises emotions to transfer power to capital, and to reproduce existing structures of power, then what role does emotion play in the forms of resistance that must inevitably emerge? This chapter asks what potential there is in acts of resistance that are rooted in emotion to form lasting changes and alternative systems and societies.

[1] Costas Douzinas, 'Notes Towards an Analytics of Resistance', *New Formations*, (83) 2014, 79-99, p. 80.
[2] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (London: Penguin Classics, 2013), p. 50.

This question will be approached in a number of ways to examine whether capitalism is able to appropriate and incorporate within its sphere of influence and control the act of resistance, much as it is able to do with crises. The first section asks whether the production of art can be an emotional act of resistance, through its affective potential. Considering *Mao II* it explores the role of artwork in terms of its potential to cause ruptures, when compared with physical affectivity of terrorism, a common theme in DeLillo's work. The second section then explores whether the bodily affectivity found in acts of terrorism, as well as in more traditional protests, can enable emotionally resistant potential; whether 'marching into American sunlight' possesses the potential for change.[3] Focusing on *Cosmopolis* for its depiction of global protest and individual violence, section two asks whether these things are outside the market and can elicit change, and whether something must be outside of capitalism to disrupt it in the first place. The final section looks at the notion of hope, which is an emotion that is a key focus of this thesis. In the context of *Zero K* the section looks at whether hope is not only a tool for manipulation and naturalisation, but also whether the technology currently employed by capital might be put to more humanitarian or utopian uses.

Aaron Bastani writes that in the contemporary world 'the possibility of most people finding happiness and meaning is impossible as long as these things are commodities' and it is in this central problem that the idea of resistance becomes pertinent.[4] As we have seen throughout DeLillo's work, happiness is promised through products, consumerism and the mechanics of capital. In *White Noise*, Gladney finds happiness (or believes he does) only when out shopping, boosting his ego through consumption, and he only finds relief when the ATM 'blesses' him. Bastani's argument echoes DeLillo's work, where much of the emotion that his characters experience is commodified and part of capitalism. This chapter considers whether, in his texts, there is any type of resistance that approaches an *outside* of capitalism, or can at

[3] Don DeLillo, *Mao II*, (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 3.
[4] Aaron Bastani, *Fully Automated Luxury Communism*: *A Manifesto* (London: Verso, 2019), p. 194.

least envision one; any situation in which happiness may exist unconnected to the mechanisms of credit and debt and in what circumstances such an alternative might come into being.

**The affective potential of art**

Resistance and art come together in DeLillo's 2001 novel *The Body Artist*, but it is not resistance to capitalism that is explored as much as how one resists and overcomes grief. Through her art, the protagonist deals with the death of her husband. Resistance is recovery in the novel, and Laura Di Prete writes that 'language – the site where knowledge about death and life, loss and recovery, trauma and survival, and the mysterious possibility of their coexistence emerge – proves central to the quest that the novel enacts'.[5] DeLillo is clear that artistic practice, whether performance art or writing, can impact people's lives. This suggestion is compounded by the fact that a few years prior to *The Body Artist* DeLillo stated that he believes writers ought to be writing 'against what power represents'.[6] This statement reveals a conviction that writing and art can confront power and shape thought and society.

The grief experienced by Lauren Hartke, around whom the novel is constructed, is similar to the experience of many under the credit and debt mechanism of capitalism, which is often one of loss, trauma and the attempt to survive. If artistic practice can impact on grief as DeLillo's novel implies, then it follows that the potential of artistic endeavour to move us could also disrupt the contemporary neoliberal status quo. When he writes more overtly on the topic of resistance to capitalism in *Mao II* DeLillo begins to question whether the emotional power

[5] Laura Di Prete, 'Don DeLillo's "The Body Artist": Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma', *Contemporary Literature,* 46(3) 2005, 483-510, p. 500.
[6] Remnick, David, 'Exile on Main Street: Don DeLillo's Undisclosed Underworld', *The New Yorker*, September 15, 1997.

of art can really be impactful. The writer Bill Gray, *Mao II*'s protagonist, suggests while being interviewed that he used to think 'it was possible for a novelist to alter the inner life of the culture. Now bomb-makers and gunmen have taken the territory'.[7] Hartke's performance art is affectively potent enough to act cathartically on the negative effects of grief, whereas for Gray artistic practice does not have the power to influence wider feeling. The question of whether art has lost its affective potency or whether affect has lost its ability to be *affective* is complicated by the fact that the bodily affect of terror is still significant for Gray. Kim Charnley writes that 'art has been insulated against the crisis tendencies of neoliberal capitalism but also restructured to serve the interests of finance capital'.[8] It may be that art fails to offer resistant potential because it has been integrated into systems of capitalist exchange.

Gray suggests that the function of emotional resistance once occupied by art has been transferred to terrorism. He suggests that terrorists 'make raids on human consciousness. What writers used to do before we were all incorporated'.[9] Not only does this suggest that art's integration into capitalism *has* reduced its affective potential, it also implies that terrorism and violence have come to be more effective in resistance movements. Gray is disappointed that his work and practice no longer have the ability to influence society emotionally, and his words lament the transition from artistic affect to violence as the dominant social force for change. Leonard Wilcox argues that 'Gray stubbornly upholds the notion of artistic integrity […] and the idea that the creative process involves resistance – whether to capitalist commodification or totalitarian oppression', and yet DeLillo's protagonist expresses his distaste at writing's reduced influence, and how it ultimately adheres to the logic of capitalist commodification.[10] He believes that writing should operate outside of capitalism, in the same way that he regards

[7] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 41.
[8] Gregory Sholette, *Delerium and Resistance: Activist Art and the Crisis of Capitalism* (London, Pluto Press, 2017), p. 5. (Kim Charnley is the author of the introduction to this text).
[9] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 41.
[10] Leonard Wilcox, 'Terrorism and Art: Don DeLillo's "Mao II" and Jean Baudrillard's "The Spirit of Terrorism,"' *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal,* 39(2) 2006, 89-105, p. 93.

terrorists. For him it is in this incorporation into capitalism that his work has lost its affective intensity, ultimately seeking success in the same area it ought to be writing 'against'.

Arguably, the affective potential in an act of resistance can be seen by the attempts made to thwart it: for example, the attempts of the American military, acting in the interests of neoliberal capitalism, to pursue a 'war on terror'. Many would agree that violent acts such as 9/11 are unjustifiable, but they nonetheless have a profound affective consequences, cause strong emotions, and 'make raids on human consciousness'. For Gray, this impact is what the artist once aimed for and his friend Charlie's view is that: 'every government, every group that holds power or aspires to power should feel so threatened by writers that they hunt them down everywhere'.[11] Where one sees oppression by powerful forces, one often sees book burning or draconian prohibitions for publishers and writers. Gray's disappointment comes from the fact that the capitalist system in which western writers operate does not seek to destroy their artistic work. It does not matter whether this is because the neoliberal system is tolerant of opposing ideas, or because these artworks do not effectively oppose the system. In either case, such a response suggests a lack of affective impact and resistant potential in the work of art.

DeLillo uncovers the condition of art's potential when he explores Gray's desire for writers to be feared by the establishment. Gray does, in fact, 'become a hunted man' in the text, like his terrorist counterparts.[12] However, this hunting is the result of the powerful emotion that originates in consumerism rather than resistance, as he is not hunted by the powers benefitting from neoliberal policy, but rather by the capitalist consumer markets that want his latest work. He withholds publication of his newest text and by 'keep[ing] this book out of sight. Build[ing] on it. Us[ing] it to define an idea, a principle' the work takes on the affective power that Gray wants for it, but does so in a way that is entirely unresisting to capital.[13] In fact, the withheld

[11] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 97.
[12] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 97.
[13] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 67.

novel is beneficial for capital (and for his own wealth) as it generates ever greater commercial revenues for his previous works, and hype for his withheld text. The more he hides his work, the greater affective potential it acquires, the greater its commercial value, but the weaker any resistant potential becomes. 'The withheld work of art is the only eloquence left' the novel tells us, suggesting that artworks have become so thoroughly compromised by their position within the capitalist framework that they are no longer able to influence through their affective resistant potential; they are only affective in terms of consumer appeal.[14]

The novel draws comparisons between artists and terrorists for their ability to influence culture, but also because, in different ways, they seek to influence large numbers of people. For Gray, art now seeks to do this in a commercial way, and the ability to influence politics or daily life is reserved for the terrorist: 'What terrorists gain, novelists lose. The degree to which they influence mass consciousness is the extent of our decline as shapers of sensibility and thought'.[15] Indeed, the idea of the masses is a running theme in the novel. Terrorists influence mass consciousness, Gray's novel appeals to a mass audience, images of Mao Zedong, mass weddings and crowds are littered throughout the text. If one takes a common form of anti-capitalism, symbolised by Mao and realised in terrorism as a powerful way to influence the masses, then Gray's art stands on the opposite side in terms of its societal function. Nonetheless, both capitalist artwork and leftist terrorism rely on the masses. Richard Hardack suggests that the 'American notion of terrorism […] is born from an acute fear of collective identity based in a long Western literary tradition of fetishizing the individual'.[16] Gray withholds the work which valorises his position as creator, while offering no resistant potential. He and his associates are afraid of releasing the novel for what might happen to his reputation: to release the book 'would obviate him, replace the individual producer with a collective book

[14] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 67.
[15] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 157.
[16] Richard Hardack, 'Two's a Crowd: Mao II, Coke II, and the Politics of Terrorism in Don DeLillo', *Studies in the Novel,* 36(3) 2004, 374-393, p. 374.

or mass commodity'.[17] Acts of resistance in the text conflict with acts of individuality. Gray laments art's diminishing social power while simultaneously reinforcing the commodification which limits its ability to operate in a traditional position of mass resistance.

Within neoliberal capitalism there has been an assumption, particularly on the left, that the 'interest [of the masses] must be the driving force behind any new social theory'.[18] This is due to the desire to counter the ethos of individualism in neoliberal capitalism, and it explains Gray's belief in the power of violence over art. For Gray, novels are individualised artefacts that affectively enhance the author's reputation, but do not cause resistance to capitalism. The terrorist, on the other hand, directly influences society, through fear, violence and coercion. Terrorism attempts to disseminate ideas through bodily affect and emotion, whereas the work of art attempts to disseminate commodities through the individualised reputation of its creator. Gray displays hypocrisy, simultaneously believing that writers have lost social power while agreeing to speak at a reading aimed at influencing the release of a hostage in Beirut.[19] This shows a belief in his own individualised power, rather than that of his artworks. 'Book and writer are now inseparable' *Mao II* tells us, once again affirming the idea that appealing to the generalised masses artwork is a commercial, rather than resistant, process.[20] It is not clear whether this is DeLillo's own belief or a fear of his as to the diminishing power of art, but it does make an important criticism of America's relationship with anti-capitalist movements. Novels in the text are seen to be more aligned with commodification than as part of collective resistant movements. To act collectively still carries a connection to the anti-communism of mid-century America. The text notes that both commodification and collectivisation are appeals to the masses, suggesting that only through mass movements can there be impact,

[17] Hardack, 'Two's a Crowd', p. 381.
[18] Roger Burbach, Orlando Núñez and Boris Kagarlitsky, *Globalization and its Discontents: The Rise of Postmodern Socialisms* (London: Pluto Press, 1997), p. 143.
[19] Maureen Whitebrook, 'Reading Don DeLillo's Mao II as a Commentary of Twentieth-century Politics', *The European Legacy,* 6(6) 2001, 763-769, p. 763.
[20] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 67.

whether through changes in society or the increased sales of a novel. Although it may seem obvious that writers can have an emotional influence, the way *Mao II* places art in opposition to mass-resistance does suggest questions about how far an artwork can be resistant to capital, given that it necessarily takes on the role of commodity.

This view implies that for art to contain activist potential it has to go beyond the function of the commodity, to a position where it is able to affect the masses. Yet for Gray, this process is in conflict with the American notion of individualism, which can be seen in itself as a variety of capitalist individualism; the same individualism is depicted in his position as reclusive author. The novel suggests that commodities are not thought-shaping and affective, but that violent bodily protest (in the form of terrorism, crowds, cults) can be. Gray's individualism stands in contrast to other characters' yearning for collectivism, with one of his close friends saying 'Bill doesn't understand how people need to blend in, lose themselves in something larger'.[21] This blending in is closer to the potential of the crowd and the terrorists depicted in the novel than it is to the artwork Gray produces, which is purposely withheld to build up Gray's name and reputation. The yearning to blend in felt by these characters suggests that individualism and a focus on individual differences is one of the primary emotional problems of neoliberal capitalism, and while it does not say that artistic practice has no place in a process of resistance, it does points toward the need for collectivism over fierce individualism.

Charnley writes that 'the art system, bloated by finance capital, has become delirious and cynically disenchanted', which explains part of the problem with conceiving art as resistance in *Mao II*.[22] In the text, art is positioned as a commodity in terms of its affective potential and its role within the artist's life, so while Gray laments art's lack of resistant potential he remains attached to the individualistic logic of neoliberalism and exacerbates the

[21] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 89.
[22] Sholette, *Delerium and Resistance*, p. 5.

problem. Art's affective potential becomes about how much it can appeal more to a generalised desire, than to how much it can influence thought, and while it may do both, the former is necessarily given precedence to serve profit motives. It does not matter whether Gray's novel is ground-breaking, resistant writing against power, because it has become cynical through its attachment to the mechanisms of finance capital that seek to capitalise on the reputation and fame of the individual writer. These mechanisms stop the artwork from being inconsequential, but only in terms of commercial possibilities, not social power. 'Art flows by all the time, part of the common bloat' the reader is told in *Mao II*, and in withholding the novel, Gray and his publishers ensure it does not become part of this bloat by becoming lost amongst other commodities.[23] It maintain its commercial potential while forgoing its emotional potential. Commercial concerns are all that matter. Art has been central to resistance throughout history, but in *Mao II* there is the suggestion that the mechanisms it ought to resist have assimilated it. In the form of the terrorist, the novel explores collectivism and violence, with the terrorists' 'work' retaining affective potential. However, it does so through collectivist and anti-individualist methods that are antithetical both to Gray's perception of his own art, and to preconceived notions of American identity. In this sense, one could argue that America's close relationship with capitalism is what keeps collective resistance efforts from gaining advantages.

DeLillo's novel places art and terrorism at a crossroads in terms of affective potential. In one direction are commodities, commercialism and individualism, all of which are presented as a goal within neoliberalism. In the other direction is collectivism, violence and a perceived sense of authenticity. In both cases, commercialism and collectivism represent forms of mass identity, which reveals the rationale for the images of crowds that pepper the novel. DeLillo's work invites the comparison between these two poles, suggesting that there are similarities

[23] DeLillo, *Mao II,* p. 67.

between the practices of terrorism and art in the way they appeal to mass audiences. Indeed, the collectivist cult leader in the novel, Mr Moon, offers hope through mass identity, which is similar to what is offered by capital, although capital tends to market mass identities as individuality.[24] Despite the similarities between both forms, it is terrorism and bodily violence that the novel posits as being the only effective resistant acts. This is a problem for Gray not only because of his position as writer, with diminished affective power, but also because he is averse to collectivity.

The turn towards violence as a source of emotional resistance speaks to the failure of art to offer anything approaching this level of affective potential. Gray's assistant suggests that 'the novel used to feed our search for meaning […] It was the great secular transcendence […] But our desperation has led us towards something larger and darker. So we turn to the news which provides an unremitting mood of catastrophe'.[25] The thorough commodification of artworks such as Gray's leads to a lack of affect or catharsis. While the novel does not say that *no* artwork can offer affective resistance, it suggests that this 'larger and darker' side of life as a more readily available source of affective power. Terrorism and violence in *Mao II* are presented as being outside of capitalism, and are able to influence it and promote alternative societies. Although arguably worse than capitalism, the violence of bodily affect provides one of only two alternatives to neoliberal society present in the text, the other being collectivism which is explored by a number of characters. Evoking collectivism, one character says that 'we can't survive by needing more, wanting more, standing out, grabbing all we can'.[26] This is the most prominent way in which the text points to collectivity over individualism and consumerism in terms of the emotional potential for resistance: it highlights that the

[24] Whitebrook, 'Reading Don DeLillo's Mao II', p. 763.
[25] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 72.
[26] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 89.

commercialism Gray's artwork is engaged in cannot alleviate suffering. Her position implies that by 'blending in' rather than 'standing out' one has the best chance of survival.

*Mao II* situates art in a conflicted situation within neoliberalism with regards to its resistant potential. Artistic practice has become entangled with the mechanisms of capital to the point where its affective potential is harnessed for commercial gain rather than as a method of resisting power. By being outside of capital, the bodily affect of terrorism is suggested to have a position of influence over the emotional reality of contemporary society. DeLillo's work shows that emotion is crucial for affecting society, and one area of concern is understanding the most effective source of this emotion. The novel posits that a combination of violence and collectivity is the reason for terror's affective potential, and that art, in becoming an increasingly individualistic affair, has had its own potential diminished. However, *Mao II* is itself an artistic artefact that reveals how literature's affective potential could still play a role within resistance. By presenting the situation and appealing to readers' emotional responses, DeLillo's text at least reveals the problems and challenges facing art, even if it does so from within the confines of an artform that has come to be thought of in terms of commodification. Ryan Simmons writes that 'whereas Gray, at first figuratively and then literally, dies as an author, unable to do anything but surrender to the trends of mass media and commodification, DeLillo at least puts forward a work that challenges, if it cannot escape, these forces'.[27] *Mao II* is a commodity, but one that puts forward questions about the role of affect in art and terror in terms of resistance, and in asking these questions it takes the first step in imagining a resistance process that has art as its driving force.

[27] Ryan Simmons, 'What is a Terrorist? Contemporary authorship, the Unabomber, and Mao II', *Modern Fiction Studies,* 45(3) 1999, 675-695, p. 676.

**Protest and violence**

This chapter's reading of *Mao II* suggests that it is through the violent acts of terrorism, and the collectivity they often entail, that capitalism is most disrupted through emotional means; that, rather than the commercially-minded passivity of art, bodily affect is a more effective route to resisting neoliberalism and forging alternative visions of society and social practices. While these methods are reprehensible when enacted through terrorism, they are nonetheless effective. This possibility is explored by looking at the bodily affect in the protest movements depicted in *Cosmopolis*, as well as the violence-as-resistance that Eric Packer experiences at the hands of his murderer, Richard Sheets. These modes of using the body to resist capitalism suggest some impact through emotion or affect, but the text explores whether they are ineffectual in the same way as Gray's artwork. Although *Mao II* is clear that by using violence the terrorist can shape thought, emotion and consciousness more than the artist, there lingers an element of doubt about the terrorists' ability to authentically disrupt power, as the reader is told 'these groups are backed by repressive governments'.[28] Although still resistant to western capitalism, it is unclear whether the violence found in the terrorist, the communist or the murderer offer any sort of authentic resistance to power if it is still originating in 'totalitarian states'.[29] And what role is there for protest, which utilises violence and bodily affect in a different way to the terrorist?

With the market having an ever-increasing role in people's lives, dissenters will exist and attempt to promote alternative forms of social and economic existence. Often these movements involve protests that attempt to change society, through bodily presence and affect, as well as through the emotion that results from violent acts. For Douzinas 'resistance may involve a vision of justice, but this is not necessary', and resistance movements, whether intent

[28] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 158.
[29] DeLillo, *Mao II*, p. 158.

on justice or just disruption, often revert to the traditional methods of bodily resistance: protest.[30] However, the fact that protest has long been in use but has not impeded capitalism's dramatic rise suggests limitations to this bodily and emotional method for resisting. Douzinas continues, claiming that those on the left have agreed 'that recent events brought to a temporary end a long period of defeat and retreat on the left. This welcome development is accompanied by a sense of embarrassment and disbelief in the emancipatory potential of resistance'.[31] If the sometimes violent but always affective act of protest has been the source of embarrassment for the left for decades of neoliberal control, it opens up questions as to whether protest and resistance movements can be understood as useful in opposition to capitalism in the contemporary period.

Leslie Sklair finds that 'capitalist globalization could accommodate and subvert most of these [protest] initiatives and turn them into variations on the consumerist theme' and this is also one of the primary viewpoints of Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis*.[32] In response to the Marxist notion that capitalism produces its own gravediggers, Packer, referring to the protestors outside of the car, is dismissive of the idea: 'But these are not grave-diggers. This is the free market itself. These people are a fantasy generated by the market. They don't exist outside the market. There is nowhere they can go to be on the outside'.[33] Indeed, much as Gray suggests with artwork, both Sklair and Packer see an army of protestors as something that is now part of the market, *incorporated* within it, as opposed to operating separately. In that respect, one could consider terrorism to be part of market capitalism too because, like protest, the motive of many acts of terrorism and violence is to disrupt the neoliberal system. In *reacting* to neoliberalism, Packer's opinion suggests that violent acts and bodily affects become part of that system.

[30] Douzinas, 'Analytics of Resistance', p. 95.
[31] Douzinas, 'Analytics of Resistance', p. 81.
[32] Leslie Sklair, 'Capitalist Globalization and the Anti-globalization Movement' in *Globalization and After,* ed. by Samir Dasgupta and Ray Kiely (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 307.
[33] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 90.

Although DeLillo's and Packer's perspectives may differ, his novel, in its portrayal of protest, explores whether these sites of bodily resistance can be sites of active change or whether they have indeed been subsumed into the market. In so doing it opens up questions about the possibilities for alternatives to emerge.

Indeed, for Packer the protesters are doing nothing outside the limits of acceptability within neoliberalism and he finds much of their behaviour to be strikingly similar to his own. Although they are causing chaos outside of his car, he notes from some of the literature quoted on their signage that they have 'been reading the same poetry' as him.[34] Not only does this suggest a further dampening of the *artistic* potential for resistance, considering the neoliberal *par excellence* reads the same literature as the protestors, it suggests a diminishing level of distinction between neoliberalism and those who protest against it. Art which is often personal and characteristic of a certain ideological perspective is reduced to the status of a commodity. Packer finds this 'exhilarating' rather than confusing, as if confirming the diminishing gap between his world of investments and risk and everything else. Additionally, while observing the protestors destruction, Packer and his advisor discuss how 'the urge to destroy is a creative urge' and that 'this is also the hallmark of capitalist thought'.[35] Again, what is traditionally seen as an effective show of resistance and protest is likened by Packer to the very characteristics of neoliberal capital. Much of what Packer does in the novel is destructive, and DeLillo clearly asks how different the ostensibly opposing systems can be.

If there is limited difference between protestors and neoliberals, between their methods and those they rail against, then it follows that these types of bodily, affective protests would be largely unsuccessful. Similarly, given that capitalism is inherently emotional and controlling of society through emotional means, it is questionable how far can overtly emotional and affective protest techniques can succeed. Fisher is enlightening on the subject:

[34] Don DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, (London: Picador, 2004), p. 97.
[35] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 92.

> Since [anti-capitalist movements were] unable to posit a coherent alternative political economic model to capitalism, the suspicion was that the actual aim was not to replace capitalism but to mitigate its worst excesses; and, since the form of its activities tended to be the staging of protests rather than political organization, there was a sense that the anti-capitalism movement consisted of making a series of hysterical demands which it didn't expect to be met.[36]

Here Fisher reveals the tendency for protests to be purely for show, or carried out despite the foreknowledge of their failure. The traditional protest is a model that enables capitalism to continue unabated, since 'anti-capitalism is widely disseminated in capitalism'.[37] He cites the film *Wall-E* as an example (through how it connects environmental collapse and the consumer culture of which it and its audience are a part), but one could easily think of a novel like *Cosmopolis* (if one reads it as an anti-capitalist text) in the same way. The presence of anti-capitalist sentiment 'performs our anti-capitalism for us, allowing us to consume with impunity'.[38] These fictional representations of real-life protests can be considered purely gestural according to both Fisher and DeLillo's Packer. Both express disbelief in the power of bodily protest to impact and disrupt neoliberalism, with each suggesting that there is a complicity between the act of protest and capitalist exchange.

Fisher argues that the emotions that dominate neoliberalism 'do not inspire bold thinking or entrepreneurial leaps, they breed conformity and the cult of the minimal variation, the turning out of products which very closely resemble those that are already successful'.[39] If

[36] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (Winchester: O Books, 2009), p. 14.
[37] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 12.
[38] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 12.
[39] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 76.

one applies this attitude to protest one clearly sees that the continued use of traditional but ineffectual means of resistance comes about because of the perception of effective resistance it generates. It is *gestural* resistance which seems designed to engender an emotional reaction with which capitalism can comfortable co-exist rather than a lasting political one. Indeed, the protest in *Cosmopolis* is gestural and *spectacular* in many ways that point towards it as a facet of commercialised capitalism, rather than something that exists outside the market. Although described as a 'vanguard', which suggests authentic resistance to capital,[40] the crowd of protestors who descend carry a 'styrofoam rat twenty feet tall' which Packer sticks 'his head out the sunroof and watched'.[41] This spectacle of protest for Packer is entertainment rather than an affective, powerful resistant effort; an ineffectual act that may once have suggested socialist protest but now has more in common with neoliberalism. It is protest for show, operating on the level of cognisance that neoliberalism requires: the emotional and irrational one. It performs the anti-capitalism on behalf of the non-protestors, allowing them to consume with impunity,[42] as evidenced by 'people on the traffic island buying discount theatre tickets' while the protestors passed by.[43]

The protest appeals to emotion in order to bring about some sort of disruption, but in so doing it makes itself a commodity by evoking facile images of protest and resistance. 'A SPECTER IS HAUNTING THE WORLD – THE SPECTER OF CAPITALISM'.[44] Its 'wrongheaded' use of *The Communist Manifesto* seems to miss the original point of the text, with the original implying that communism was the spectre lying in wait to replace capitalism.[45] The protestors appeal to an image that is emotionally powerful like communism but either irrelevant or largely discredited in societal contexts. One can see this as a realisation

[40] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 86.
[41] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 86.
[42] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 12.
[43] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 87.
[44] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 96.
[45] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 96.

of Fisher's idea that protests make demands they do not expect to be met. Not only does this language imply a lack of affective potential, it also suggests that there is a lack of original thinking and resistant potential in the movement. Movements refer back to old ideas when 'nostalgia for the context in which the old types of praxis operated is plainly useless'.[46] In being Marxist, or adherent to another traditional form of anti-capitalism, they miss opportunities to operate outside of the usual space of protest that has been incorporated by capitalism.

The failure of bodily protest and resistance to offer an effective and lasting challenge to capitalism can be understood to be related to its rigid adherence to past forms of protest, and the way in which it utilises the same emotional logic on which capitalism itself relies. The violent protests in *Cosmopolis* attempt to force societal change through the strong emotion that its acts create, as well as having its origins in emotion: the participants 'eyes were blazing between the red-and-black bandanas they wore'.[47] The passion with which they approach the protest may imply a loss of clarity of thought, a reliance on instinct over rationalism that neoliberalism encourages, so the emotional quality of neoliberal capital prevails within this movement. The problem that arises with using bodily affect and violence in resistance efforts is that they follow the same logic and language as neoliberalism; it is an attempt to use the tools of manipulation that capital is far better equipped to employ. They use these same techniques because violent protest has been incorporated into the market, much as Packer and Fisher assert.

This incorporation into the market correlates with this section's analysis of *Cosmopolis*. The failure of resistance movements is due to the way they operate through emotion, and it is through emotion that they are incorporated. While it could be argued that overreliance on emotion should be avoided in resistance movements, other characteristics of contemporary global capital are *necessary* to resistant efforts. Both Iain Watson and Leslie Sklair argue that

[46] Fisher, *Capitalist Realism,* p. 26.
[47] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 92.

global co-ordination is necessary, but it does not have to take the shape of emotive protest movements.[48] Many of the contemporary perspectives and theories on potential success in resistance tend to move away from the emotionally potent language of violence and bodily resistance, toward an attempt to prioritise rationalism. Massimo de Angelis highlights the necessity of moving outside of the realm of capitalist logic, that 'emancipatory political theory and practice must find a way beyond this dichotomy [of market or disciplinary control], to discover *forms* of social interaction that cannot be reduced to the disciplinary and organisational features of the market or the prison'.[49] David C. Korten also suggests that it is more important to uncover resistant potential through thought over feeling, saying 'to win it is necessary to seize the initiative by *articulating* an effective and attractive counter to the corporate libertarian's disempowering mantra: "There Is No Alternative"'.[50] In both of these cases the writers recognise that resistance movements are unsuccessful because they have not been rational by devising ways that change can realistically occur outside of the emotional market of neoliberalism, but have instead attempted to be successful through emotive means.

One of the main violent acts of resistance in *Cosmopolis* is Richard Sheets/Benno Levin's murder of Packer. Although it ends with the murder of Packer as an act of retribution for perceived maltreatment while employed at Packer Capital, it begins with writing. Like *Mao II* Sheets seems convinced at first at the power for the emotional potential of artwork to cause fundamental change: 'I want ten thousand pages that will stop the world' he writes, although he ultimately ends up failing to write many at all.[51] Sheets connects artwork and violence, saying 'this will be a spiritual autobiography that runs to thousands of pages and the core of the work will be either I track him down and shoot him or do not, writing longhand in pencil'.[52]

[48] Iain Watson, 'Politics, Resistance to Neoliberalism and the Ambiguities of Globalisation', *Global Society,* 15(2) 2001, 201-218, p. 202. See also: Leslie Sklair, 'Capitalist Globalization', p. 301.
[49] Massimo De Angelis, *The Beginning of History: Value Struggles and Global Capital* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), p. 195.
[50] David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*, (Virgina: Kumarian Press, 1995), p. 7. (emphasis mine).
[51] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 152.
[52] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 149.

Despite the conviction that either artistic practice or violence will be a successful source of the resistance he seeks, both essentially fail him. He kills Packer but this in no way improves his life or disrupts the existence of the neoliberalism for which Packer stands. The system that tormented Sheets continues after this, unaffected by this act of violence.

At one point Packer has 'lost interest in the man' suggesting the inconsequential nature of violent resistance in the face of capitalist strength.[53] It also shows the failure of protest and bodily affect to resist neoliberalism since it has no overarching controller or centrality; Sheets takes issue with Packer but ultimately it is the system that has injured him. 'I'm helpless in their system that makes no sense to me. You wanted me to be a helpless robot soldier but all I could be was helpless'.[54] His fear is experienced as a result of the system, but ultimately fails to return this fear to Packer or to capital despite trying. When he attempts to frighten Packer he gains nothing except the death of a single man: neoliberalism is unimpacted because it cannot be the subject of fear. *Cosmopolis* shows through both protest and individual violent acts that neoliberalism, due to having no centralised position of power, cannot be disrupted through the same emotional violence that it enacts on society.

Neoliberalism's lack of centralised power, epitomised by Packer's fall and the relatively localised effect of this on the world capitalist system is given as a reason to defend contemporary capitalism by Johan Norberg, who says that 'no one is in the driver's seat, because all of us are steering'.[55] This belief fails to take into account the increased power that Packer had, compared to Sheets prior to his death. It would be very easy to argue that Packer, or a real-life figure like Jeff Bezos, has more of a control over the steering wheel than a man like Sheets. While these figures of power can lose out, they lose out to capital, not to the resistance movements that seek to enact violence on them. Even if an act of violence succeeds

[53] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 209.
[54] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 195.
[55] Johan Norberg, 'In Defence of Global Capitalism', in *The Globalization and Development Reader: Perspectives on Development and Global Change*, ed. by J. Timmons Roberts and Amy Bellone Hite (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), p. 264.

against them, it ultimately does not disrupt the system. When Norberg says that 'our ability to control our own lives is growing, and prosperity is growing with it', he uses rationalism in defence of neoliberalism.[56] Packer, on the other hand, defends capitalism purely by suggesting that there is no other way to live. To rationalise arguments, as with Norberg, is to invite criticism and the possibility of losing in debate. The reason that violence does not work in *Cosmopolis* as a resistant effort is precisely because it does not attempt intelligently to debate, it relies on emotion in the same way that capitalism does. If there are to be successful resistance movements then they may have to move beyond the emotional logic of neoliberalism, because violent protest is simply part of the neoliberal system. Packer's advisor points out that the protestors are 'working with [him], these people. They are acting on your terms', and the novel seems to suggest that, like art, the emotional power of violence is precisely what stops it from being an effective counter measure to a contemporary capital that has incorporated emotion.[57]

**Looking to the future**

The above two sections propose that, through emotional means, anti-capitalist resistance such as art, violence and protest have been not just unsuccessful at disrupting the neoliberal status quo, but are also absorbed into the system they challenge. This section explores where these movements might turn next. Theorists including De Angelis and Korten suggest that that new modes of protest are borne out of robust theory and an attempt to match the capabilities of capitalist development. This indicates that a new method of seeing and understanding neoliberalism is required, one that does not react to capitalism, but anticipates it and moves beyond it. The spiral of intensification theory that is developed in the introduction to this thesis

[56] Norberg, 'In Defence of Global Capitalism', p. 263.
[57] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 92.

gives a clearer understanding of the emotional mechanisms at the heart of neoliberalism, and how they are used to intensify emotions like fear and exacerbate situations to the benefit of capital. In examining aspects of neoliberal capitalism such as debt, the theory highlights a structure of spiralling outwards, distancing individuals from a secure centre, and allowing power to be more firmly exerted over them. This understanding can inform which new modes resistance must take if they are to be successful, given the awareness of the role of emotion in this process of exacerbation. However, as discussed at the end of chapter four, the nature of humanity's involvement with capitalism is uncertain and even in the face of utopian hopes there are a number of assurances that things will return to as they were. To consider what the future of emotion in resistance might look like, this section explores *Zero K*, DeLillo's most future facing novel, to look at the possibilities in this future, and to ascertain what the challenges will be.

One of the central concepts of *Zero K* is an obsession with looking and seeing, and this begins with Lockhart who continues a childhood habit of entering a room and closing his eyes: 'Then I shut my eyes. Is this a surrender to the dark? I don't know what this is. Is this an accommodation. Let the dark dictate the terms of the situation'.[58] This refusal to *see* connects with the central concept of the novel in which the wealthy clients of the Convergence myopically look away from the crises of the present, borne out of an attachment to the fear/hope dichotomy of capital. Their inability or unwillingness to see problems means that they are unable to see solutions, and when Lockhart's closes his eyes it metaphorically reflects this tendency. This section of the novel reveals the current predicament of humanity in the face of increasing crises of capitalism: surrender to the darkness and allow the neoliberal status quo to dictate the terms of the situation. For DeLillo's protagonist, it is second nature, a childhood habit that sees him shut his eyes almost pathologically. In light of the future that the wealthy

[58] Don DeLillo, *Zero K* (London: Picador, 2016), p. 18.

clients and owners of the Convergence envision for humanity, Lockhart's myopia is representative of the simplicity and ease of allowing capital to continue to operate. Many characters in the novel, when facing difficult subjects such as death, prefer to look away from them and towards 'senseless hope', and this section takes such a perspective and more utopian theoretical arguments to form a dialectic on what the future of humanity's involvement with capital and emotion might be.

The hope in *Zero K* is, like other hopeful instances in this thesis, a negative rather than positive aspect of capitalism. Hope within capitalism stands opposed to the realisation of a better future, with the mechanisms of fear that underpin the Convergence as a capitalist enterprise reliant on offering promises of relief without delivering them. There is no evidence that the future will be better because nobody is trying to make it so. There is only a foolhardy belief; this is largely because capital must withhold happiness from the present moment and position it in some far away time. The novel proposes a technology that can take the wealthy away from the problems of the present, whether they are economic, political, environmental or medical (as is the case of Artis who has a terminal diagnosis). However, the hope of the Convergence does not need to actually deliver this better future, it is enough to offer the suggestion that it exists and, as explored earlier in this thesis, it is described as 'faith-based technology'.[59] This religious hope that things will improve makes the customers less likely to take any progressive action themselves, nullifying resistant potential, and makes them comfortable with the predicaments of the present. The technology is described by an advocate of it as 'another god. Not so different, it turns out, from some of the earlier ones. Except that it's real, it's true, it delivers'.[60] The technology of the Convergence is then shown to be beyond rational understanding and squarely within the emotional realm of hope. It actively encourages

[59] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 9.
[60] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 9.

its clients to not think too hard about the problems of the present, but only to accept that by looking away the present will soon be the distant past.

The futuristic qualities of the technology in the Convergence are what allow it to offer this hope that approaches religiosity. It returns us to what Virilio suggests is the 'dizzying whirl of *the acceleration of reality'*, a technology that is 'losing itself in the very excessiveness of its alleged progress'.[61] Indeed, such technology contains substantial progressive and positive potential, but when employed by a capitalist enterprise it is being used in a regressive way, encouraging individuals to look past the problems caused by the economic system from which they have benefitted. Despite their reliance on technology to sell their brand of myopic hope they acknowledge that technology (and by extension capitalism) are part of the reason they exist: '[technology] comes blowing over the planet and there's nowhere for us to hide. Except right here, of course'.[62] The patrons of the Convergence have to acknowledge that these problems exist, and that they would rather use their means to hide from them than to effect change. DeLillo positions his protagonist in a sceptical position, which points readers towards a view of the Convergence as a place of senseless hope. When the sales pitch of the Convergence is delivered, that 'life everlasting belongs to those of breathtaking wealth […] Kings, queens, emperors, pharaohs', it reads more like marketing than what they propose is a promise over the future's surety.[63]

The fear at the centre of the Convergence's mission statement, and the hope it uses to assuage that fear, are inherently linked with the fear/hope dichotomy that has been explored throughout this thesis. Whether through environmental collapse or technological over-development, that which frightens the customers of the Convergence is often a symptom of the same system through which they made their wealth. To face this problem would mean using a

[61] Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb*, (London: Verso, 2005), pp. 2-3.
[62] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 245.
[63] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 76.

distinctly un-neoliberal *rational* discourse to criticise that system and their own positions of power within it. The Convergence relies on the use of hope to ensure that they will not have to give up anything. They promise the future to those of breathtaking wealth because it does not have to be delivered: to offer it is enough to assuage the fear. However, although the enterprise enjoys the fact that 'technology has become a force of nature' as it means it can exploit that fear for profit,[64] the owners acknowledge that 'we can't control it'.[65] However one takes this 'we', either as the Convergence staff or as humanity, it implies a power present in technology that, while perhaps uncontrollable in a capitalist sense, could offer the material conditions for positive change and resistance.

These material conditions rest on the fact that technology opens up a space in which traditional forms of 'work' could soon be done by advanced machines. This is the subject of much literature on the future of work, the future of capitalism and the future of resistance. As André Gorz writes, 'the imperative need for a regular income is used to persuade people of their 'imperative need to work''.[66] Yet, working backwards from this, if technology removes the need to work, what happens to the need for a regular income that is in essence what keeps individuals afraid and precarious through the credit/debt mechanism in neoliberal and other capitalist economies? Bastani argues that a shared use of the commons is the only logical response to the price mechanism breaking down in this new age driven by information technology.[67] The technology on show in *Zero K*, rather than being used to offer hope to a capitalist class, hypothetically could be put towards positive social ends and an alternative structuring of society. However, because technology is shown in DeLillo's work to exacerbate capitalist crises, and to enable the wealthy to merely look away or escape from them, it casts a doubtful perspective on this possibility. DeLillo's novel, far from making the case that this type

[64] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 245.
[65] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 245.
[66] André Gorz, *Reclaiming Work: Beyond the Wage-Based Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 72.
[67] Bastani, *Luxury Communism*, p. 64.

of utopian resistance movement is inevitable as Bastani does, merely demonstrates that the material conditions for this type of society are becoming possible. Of course, a mass effort is required to put these technologies towards positive change. Gorz refers to industrial jobs in the immediate post-Fordist period when 'the massive abolition of 'work' […] could and should have opened up the social space for a proliferation of self-organized and self-determined activities'.[68] The fact that, instead of this change occurring, neoliberalism was able to attain cultural and economic dominance does cast doubt onto Bastani's argument: why, if the wealthy can simply use technology to maintain the status quo, as they do in *Zero K*, would it be part of a resistance movement?

The cryogenic capabilities in *Zero K* represent a development in science in which Bastani's arguments about technological utopianism could become realised, through public medical uses and research, for example. Yet this technology is firmly within the hands of the wealthy. Not only do they promise everlasting life to the breathtakingly wealthy, they also show that this has essentially always been the idea behind these types of developments. A sceptical Jeffrey Lockhart is told that 'this is not a new idea. It is an idea [that] is now approaching full realization'.[69] The idea that there might exist a way for neoliberalism to completely bypass the damage it causes is shown to be at the root of this technology. Of course, for Artis, the technology enables her to hope to go beyond her terminal illness and offers her the chance of health and happiness, but for many others in the text it is clear that it is just a way to escape the perils of the present. This is a theme explored earlier in DeLillo's oeuvre: *Cosmopolis* reveals the aim to live indefinitely on a disk, 'why die when you can live on a disk? […] An idea beyond the body. A mind that's everything you ever were and will be, but never weary or confused or impaired'.[70] The earlier novel suggests that this telos of

[68] Gorz, *Reclaiming Work*, p. 5.
[69] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 8.
[70] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 105.

neoliberalism and technology has long been considered: 'great men historically expect to live forever' the text says, and through the context of this technology's 'full realization' in *Zero K* one sees that 'great men' are those of incredible wealth.[71]

For Bastani, the privilege given to the wealthy is something that will inevitably fall away as technology reaches ever deeper into our lives. He argues that this is 'because capitalist realism has no offer of a better future – especially so over the course of the last decade – its default logic is one of anti-utopianism. Flat wages, falling home ownership and a warming planet might be bad, granted, but at least we have iPhones'.[72] In this summary of contemporary neoliberalism, Bastani latches onto the fear and hope dichotomy that capitalism uses as a tool to reproduce itself. It cannot offer happiness in the present, so it develops fears that enable it to offer hope. The iPhone is a small glimmer of hope and can create an amount of temporary happiness, and this is promoted as a way to assuage the fear and suffering that is the ongoing situation for many. In *Zero K* we see this logic come to a dramatic endpoint, in that the 'iPhone' in this case becomes an offer of death and rebirth. Although Bastani argues that the increased use of technology will inevitably lead to capitalism's demise, there does remain the question of how this could come about.[73] DeLillo's novel suggests that, even if it is inevitable, neoliberal capitalism will fight to continue its control. The pitch of the Convergence is persuasive:

> Think about this, what is here and who is here. Think about the end of all the petty misery you've been hoarding for years. Think beyond personal experience. Leave it back there. What's happening in this community is not just a creation of medical science. There are social theorists involved, and

[71] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 105
[72] Bastani, *Luxury Communism,* p. 18.
[73] Bastani, *Luxury Communism,* p. 6.

> biologists, and futurists, and geneticists, and climatologists, and neuroscientists, and psychologists, and ethicists, if that's the right word.[74]

These staff members use emotion as a tool to persuade the potential customers that this is the way to escape the fear that is the driving force in the text; they are told they do not have to fear economic, environmental or medical collapse and they do not have to fear death. The Convergence offers them hope. It is implied that the technology is rooted in science and rationalism, when the emotional tone used to describe it suggests quite the opposite. Even though this technology might be used for some public good, the outlook of the Convergence suggests that it will be used in conjunction with emotion to keep capitalism dominant.

Bastani is aware that such contradictions are common in an increasingly technological neoliberal society: 'a world which will soon have the technology to sequence the human genome of every organism on earth also permits thousands to drown in the Mediterranean every year'.[75] Arguably this is no contradiction at all: as Packer suggests in *Cosmopolis*, inequality is the point.[76] *Zero K* shows that the material conditions for 'utopian'-style technological reform are coming into existence, and yet neoliberalism will continue to utilise emotional mechanisms to attempt to ensure its own dominance at the expense of equality. Resistance efforts will have to look towards the theoretical and practical as a way of developing new ideas, and away from the emotional if they are to create a lastingly different world with the technology that is now coming into being.

Although DeLillo's text does not suggest that the resistance Bastani writes about in *Fully Automated Luxury Communism* will come about inevitably as a result of the rise of technological developments, there is undoubtedly a utopian acknowledgement in the text.

[74] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 33.
[75] Bastani, *Luxury Communism,* p. 157.
[76] DeLillo, *Cosmopolis*, p. 90. (Packer asserts that the more visionary something is the more people it leaves behind).

While most of the characters spend the text looking away, or shutting their eyes, in the face of problems, the technology does offer a semblance of comfort to Artis who is dying. It is not difficult to imagine the societal benefits of such technology, were it offered to those beyond the wealthy. Unlike in the majority of the novel, where to act myopically in the face of fear is the normal action to take, the text ends with the spectacular *image* which is *seen* by those on a bus of 'the full solar disk, bleeding in the streets, lighting up the towers to either side of us'.[77] While it is ambiguous, this final image points towards the importance of looking *at* as opposed to looking away; the positives that can come from facing things head on. The ambiguity follows Immanuel Wallerstein's impression of the future, which 'far from being inevitable' as Bastani might argue, 'is being determined in this transition that has an extremely uncertain outcome'.[78] To attempt to go beyond the emotional status quo of neoliberalism, the potential of technology could be utilised in such a way that rationalism overtakes the instinctual as the dominant mode of operation and decision making within society. For a wider selection of people to enjoy the benefits, rather than just the wealthy, a new way of seeing and understanding the emotional reality of capitalism will have to emerge.

**Conclusion**

This thesis demonstrates the crucial role emotion plays in neoliberal dominance and valorisation, and chapter sought to understand the extent to which emotion is involved in attempts to disrupt the neoliberal capitalist status quo. Looking toward forms of resistance such as art and violence has revealed that there is an ability for contemporary capitalism to absorb

[77] DeLillo, *Zero K*, p. 274.
[78] Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Globalization or The Age of Transition? A Long Term View of the Trajectory of the World-System', in *Globalization and After,* ed. by Samir Dasgupta and Ray Kiely (London: Sage Publications, 2006), p. 67.

these forms of protest, owing to their shared reliance on different forms of emotion as a driving force. Resistance efforts and the dominant systems of capitalist accumulation both rely on emotional means of appealing to mass audiences, as was explored in *Mao II*, but while these types of resistance are affective, they are not necessarily effective disruptors. Roger Burbach et. al. posit that 'Karl Marx asserted in *Das Kapital* that as the bourgeoisie expanded capitalist production, it would create its antithesis, organized workers in the factory who would eventually overthrow the system. Today flexible accumulation makes that scenario increasingly improbable'.[79] However, protestors in the text are overly reliant on passion and attempt to employ bodily affect through their violent disruption. Therefore, flexible accumulation is not the only element in this process that weakens the resistance movement's position, as the fact that capitalism itself operates on the same emotional logic with a tendency towards destruction weakens the impact that the bodily affect of protest can create. Both art and protest in DeLillo's novels react to capitalism, rather than attempt to operate separately.

The first two sections of this chapter consider how capital operates with impunity when faced with resistance movements that are primarily emotional. Gray's novel in *Mao II* and the protest in *Cosmopolis* each act on the level of consumerism and commercialism, and are incorporated into a capitalist system that encourages resistance movements to 'perform' anti-capitalism. The spectacle of the Styrofoam rat in the latter text is typical of gestural resistance, rather than attempting anything that might take the movement to a place outside of capital. Art and protest both rely partly on emotion to appear to be impactful, and in so doing play into the notion that there is nothing outside of capitalism. Although some theorists suggest we do not live *in* capitalism and 'when we call our own world 'capitalism', we forget the 'non-capitalism' of our lives', both *Mao II* and *Cosmopolis* present resistance efforts as being firmly located

[79] Burbach, et. al., *Globalization and its Discontents,* p. 60.

within the structure of neoliberalism, acceptable to it and even, according to Packer, a function of the market.[80]

Fisher cites Negri saying that 'an individual can never find his way out of despondency through art alone' and that 'it is only by new forms of solidarity – which necessarily must involve art – that escape is possible'.[81] Indeed, Bastani argues that 'the return of 'the people' as the main political actor' is an inevitable step towards successful anti-capitalist resistance.[82] This notion of the power of collectivity is, according to these DeLillo novels, only going to be a viable way of creating alternative societies when art and protest can act and function on a level beyond the purely emotion. While this thesis is not anti-emotional by any means, it has continuously sought to uncover elements of emotion influenced by capitalism that have been normalised to the point their control functions go unnoticed, and this process is perhaps why art and violence have both slipped into capitalist structures without their weakened resistant potential being widely identified. However, knowledge of their absorption 'does not need to lead us to despair' as 'knowledge of these forces does not make us weaker […] it makes us stronger, because the system reveals […] what it must do in order to survive'.[83] This view, held by De Angelis among others, reveals that the reliance of art and violence on emotion that DeLillo explores is what holds back resistance movements that ought instead to focus rationally on theory and social organisation outside of mass consumerism.

DeLillo's work does not imply the impossibility of a resistance movement emerging that is rationally constructed and technologically focused, one that moves away from the strongly irrational tendencies of art and violence. *Zero K* is, however, not optimistic that this is what will transpire. The future is always going to be uncertain and the Convergence relies on this fear to offer a promise of happiness that is aligned with the emotional system that

[80] De Angelis, *Beginning of History,* p. 34.
[81] Mark Fisher, *K-Punk*: *The Collected and Unpublished Writings of Mark Fisher* (London: Repeater, 2018), p. 490.
[82] Bastani, *Luxury Communism*, p. 191.
[83] De Angelis, *Beginning of History,* pp. 225-226.

underpins neoliberalism. DeLillo's work suggests that although systems that surround capital may change, there remains the distinct likelihood that capital will adapt and utilise its emotional processes to continue its control, and that while emotion itself is not bad, it is an effective tool of control for the neoliberal system. As William I. Robinson argues 'twenty-first century fascism appears to be a *pre-emptive* strike at […] the spread of mass resistance'.[84] This 'fascism' that he identifies is just one example of how capital may attempt to employ emotion to nullify resistance, and even if the neoliberal model adapts its ever-changing structure of feeling to incorporate new authoritarian measures, it will continue to put the interests of capital at the forefront and will do so through renewed appeals to fear, hope and happiness.

[84] William I. Robinson, 'The Next Economic Crisis: Digital Capitalism and Global Police State', *Race & Class*, 60(1) 2018, 77-92, p. 88.

# Conclusion

## 'There's always something else coming at us down the pipeline': Happiness, capitalism, the future.

DeLillo's *Zero K* was released shortly before the start of this project and his latest novel, *The Silence,* was published just as this thesis was coming to completion. This project, then, has approached DeLillo's work in a period of stability, with few new themes to ponder and few adjustments to previous assertions needed in the light of new material. In the four years between 2016's *Zero K* and 2020's *The Silence*, while this project was ongoing, DeLillo produced very little, with only a handful of interviews in that period.[1] Although his oeuvre did not change, the world changed greatly. In that time there was political and environmental turmoil and upheaval, a global pandemic and a continued surge of inequality, perhaps best expressed by the wealth of billionaires, which increased by more than a quarter during a worldwide recession.[2] Across many societies in these last four years there has been a tendency to avoid or to question certain kinds of truth and to dispute facts, favouring instinct, passion and belief, and it is in this development that the pertinence of this thesis is most timely. Its intervention into the relationship between emotion and capitalism before 2016 provides a blueprint for understanding the developments that are ongoing.

Over the course of six chapters, this thesis has observed neoliberalism's tendency to promote emotion over other forms of understanding the economy and as the basis of political decision making, and has suggested that emotion is the language in which this form of capitalism speaks. This has been accomplished through an exploration of fictional works

[1] Including an interview given around the same time as *Zero K*'s publication, and one in October 2020.
[2] Rupert Neate, 'Billionaire's wealth rises to $10.2 trillion amid Covid crisis', *The Guardian* (2020) https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/oct/07/covid-19-crisis-boosts-the-fortunes-of-worlds-billionaires> [accessed 14 October 2020].

depicting capitalist societies from the 1980s to the present day, and in doing this has developed an understanding of how happiness and emotions function as tools of capital, as well as how they can be used as measures for things like success. Although the material analysed in these chapters was written before 2016, and the world has undeniably changed since then, the emotional qualities of the world under neoliberal capitalism have remained similar:

> The older [DeLillo] grows, the less narrative sense the world makes. Trump sits in the White House, there are pipe bombs in the post and Russian trolls are targeting the swing states. We may have reached the point when the facts outstrip the fictions.[3]

Motivating this thesis is an attempt to capture the changes to the status of emotions that have made the developments of the last four years possible. A reality star's surge into the presidency and the perceived inauthenticity of news made possible by the proliferation of digital technology are events that could have been extrapolated from DeLillo's oeuvre, and they are most explainable by capitalism's relationship with emotion. As the interviewer in the above text points out, the line between fact and fiction is becoming increasingly blurred, and this thesis identifies the reason for this as being rooted in emotion. Decisions are increasingly being made and behaviour is being encouraged or discouraged on the basis of instinct, feeling and what is perceived as being the quickest route to short-term happiness.

This thesis has considered how the future is always uncertain but never more so than when in the hands of globalised, neoliberal capitalism, a system in which crises and chaos are able to be incorporated, perhaps contradictorily, into systems of continued control and

[3] Xan Brooks, 'Don DeLillo on Trump's America: "I'm not sure the country is recoverable"', *The Guardian* (2018) <https://www.theguardian .com/stage/2018/nov/05/don-delillo-trumps-america-love-lies-bleeding> [accessed 31 July 2020].

dominance. Exemplified at the individual level – in Richard Sheets from *Cosmopolis* for example – the precarity of the present day, whether through debt anxiety or another emotional mechanism of capital, is a cause of suffering across the spectrum of lived experience. The system that promises happiness repeatedly delivers its antithesis. DeLillo acknowledges the crisis and unpredictability of capitalist society in his interview, saying that he's 'not trying to imagine the future in the usual terms. [He's] trying to imagine what has been torn apart and what can be put back together, and [he does not] know the answer'.[4] In the introduction to this thesis, it was said that the project would look to answer the questions raised by Bill Gray in *Mao II*, about the value of the writer. It did so by examining how, rather than writers, it is works of fiction themselves that can respond to and reveal facets of the relationship between capitalism and emotion. It seems that DeLillo also sees fiction as having this ability, suggesting in 2018 that he hoped he could arrive at an answer to such problems 'through writing the fiction'.[5]

As discussed in chapter three, Raymond Williams claims that 'The strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity is this immediate and regular conversion of experience into finished products'.[6] Instead of seeking a statement on the relationship between happiness and capitalism, as if it were a finished product, this thesis has sought to delineate an analytical approach, and a theoretical framework, that allows one to respond to the complex and developing relationship between the two. Considering individual DeLillo novels as products of their particular context and time has enabled changes in this relationship to be observed as neoliberal economies have developed over the past forty years.

Literary texts provide refracted moments when the flux of the world is frozen, and in which one can see a snapshot of the relation between the economic system and lived

[4] Brooks, 'DeLillo on Trump's America'.
[5] Brooks, 'DeLillo on Trump's America'.
[6] Devika Sharma and Frederik Tygstrup, *Structures of Feeling: Affectivity and the Study of Culture* (New York: De Gruyter, 2015), p. 20.

experience. Techniques used to explore a text in this thesis, such as reading it alongside Deleuze's 'Control Society', could be applied to DeLillo's latest novel *The Silence* and an updated and slightly different set of conclusions about emotions in neoliberalism would emerge. It could equally be applied to a different writer, writing in a different time, and reveal facets of the emotional experience of neoliberalism distinct from those found in the experiences depicted by DeLillo. The critical and theoretical tools used in this project recognise 'human cultural activity' and have investigated its emotional components through fiction, in order to inform our understanding of different contextual moments that have so far comprised neoliberalism, without attempting to claim that the period of neoliberal dominance is over.

This project's primary concern is not whether neoliberalism has come to an end or will ever be over. In 2018 DeLillo told an interviewer that 'the national memory lasts 48 hours, at best. And there's always something else coming at us down the pipeline. You can't separate it all out. You get lost in the deluge'.[7] This statement attests to the fluctuating nature of neoliberalism, with memory being unreliable and short-term. Although some point towards the rise of the authoritarian right, the Covid-19 pandemic and other factors as signalling the end of neoliberalism, this thesis contends that it cannot be considered defunct as it consists of an malleable and mutating structure that can easily incorporate all manner of changes. Statements like DeLillo's suggest that the emotional ramifications of contemporary capitalism, the negative states it engenders, are inherently connected with the unpredictable future it creates. Although no future is truly predictable, the chaos inherent in neoliberalism means that even the way it will be structured cannot be anticipated. Despite knowledge of how it operates now, and how it did so in the past, one cannot predict what 'deluge' will encompass the future, though we can predict that power and capital will seek to intensify and control crises in order to maintain authority. Like DeLillo's novels, this thesis has offered some predictions, but these

[7] Brooks, 'DeLillo on Trump's America'.

are based on the emotional mechanisms of neoliberalism's past, with the acceptance that the future will not (if it remains neoliberal) necessarily follow the same patterns.

Each chapter of this thesis examines DeLillo's texts in relation to how they engage with the relationship between happiness and capitalism, with different facets of the relationship being intimately described in his fictional worlds. The theoretical framework that was developed alongside the literary analysis sought to explain why and how neoliberalism operates through emotion, and how the best way to approach happiness was often indirectly, through related emotions. Chapters one and two examine how DeLillo's texts reveal a process of naturalisation which manufactures consensus for capitalist ideology, and how this is a fundamentally emotional control mechanism, able to operate despite (and even because of) capitalism's chaotic nature. Similarly Deleuze's 'society of control' was reflected in the prison with no fixed boundaries in 'Hammer and Sickle'. Chapters three and four identified the way in which emotions operate functionally as part of a structure of feeling, and how DeLillo's novels (in particular *Falling Man*) demonstrate the usefulness of emotions such fear for capitalism actively reproducing itself, even in the face of crisis. Finally, chapters five and six found that the interrelationship of risk and globalisation ensures that both happiness and fear spread as quickly across borders as financial transactions, and how these new connections create difficulties but potentially also possibilities for resistant and alternative economies to emerge. Literary analysis found that in place of happiness is a dichotomy of hope and fear that results from capitalist practices and is the fuel that powers neoliberalism. Happiness is something that has to be out of reach in order to keep people moving toward it.

This thesis' exploration of DeLillo's work has produced a detailed understanding of a number of facets of the relationship between neoliberalism and emotion, providing material from which to carry out further analysis of the fluctuations within that relationship. DeLillo's perspective on neoliberalism inevitably develops from a particular set of coordinates within

that system. It might be argued that DeLillo is destined to offer a perspective that reflects his status as a straight, white, middle-class man and it is necessary to consider how he challenges these forms of identity, especially in relation to the critiques of neoliberalism that unfold in his writing. This project has shown that neoliberalism cannot be defined by *any* one perspective, and DeLillo's work has given a wide-ranging view of capitalism, that is intimately concerned with the lived experience of a number of different types of characters in different neoliberal societies.

Both the approach to DeLillo in terms of emotion and affect, and the broader concern with the relationship between happiness and neoliberalism with which this thesis has been concerned, might be the starting point for further projects. Although this thesis took its literary subject matter solely from the work of DeLillo, projects may be possible that consider other writers and are able to further unpack the complex emotional hold capitalism exerts. In exploring DeLillo as the sole focus, this thesis allows for a broad-reaching and comprehensive first look into the relationship between capitalism and happiness within fiction. There are doubtless many facets of the relationship between emotion and capitalism found in this thesis that are applicable across the spectrum of lived experience, but equally there remain elements that will differ: happiness and capitalism may present in different ways for *Zero K*'s Jeffrey Lockhart than for characters written by other writers. The theories that are explored in the thesis, the findings from DeLillo's work, and the Deleuzian method for treating fiction as a literary machine, can all be utilised in other projects that look at similar concepts. This thesis contributes to the body of work on the social and cultural function and status of emotions. It does so through a focus on DeLillo's work that yields literary conclusions as well as finding nuance in the responses to neoliberalism his fiction provides. These findings contribute to an understanding of the experiences of many different people under neoliberal capitalism.

Conceiving the functions of neoliberalism in terms of a spiral of intensification that manifests in DeLillo's fiction through the increasing fear, reliance on hope, and deferral of happiness that his characters experience. Understanding how these processes take place in conjunction with elements such as debt, intensifying negative emotion as debt worsens, for example, allows this project to make wider comments on the nature of emotion within society. Understanding how happiness, a term that conceals what is often a disconcerting interplay between fear and hope, is part of a neoliberal mechanism for control and valorisation can be useful for identifying where emotions are being utilised in transitions towards new forms of neoliberal control and dominance. Nietzsche, Fisher, Deleuze, Ahmed and others reveal how 'felt' experiences of capitalism are as crucial as economic policy in the functioning of capitalism. Reading DeLillo's fiction, and fiction more generally, through this theoretical lens has potential across the humanities, where other texts besides those of DeLillo can be used as 'machines', in order to understand how other cultural, social, economic contexts impact the nature of the relationship between capital and emotion. It also has potential because it provides a basis on which work can continue. As the Williamsian outlook from chapter three attests, neoliberalism is a changing and dynamic entity. The understanding revealed by DeLillo's work of happiness within neoliberalism as both a control mechanism and an unachievable goal provides a foundation from which one can observe changes.

The project might lose some contemporary relevance if neoliberalism were to cease being the dominant cultural, economic and social system of most of the world. Many have argued, in fact, that this is now becoming the case and that the rise of 'post truth',[8] 'authoritarian' and 'alt-right' political positions represents a return to nationalism and a retreat

[8] This can be defined in a number of ways, one of which: 'the propagation of alternative facts in service of populist authoritarian agendas' demonstrates its inherently political usage. Benjamin Neimark, John Childs, Andrea J. Nightingale, Connor Joseph Cavanagh, Sian Sullivan, Tor A. Benjaminsen, Simon Batterbury, Stasja Koot & Wendy Harcourt, 'Speaking Power to "Post-Truth": Critical Political Ecology and the New Authoritarianism', *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, (2019) 109:2,613-623, p. 614.

from the globalising impetus of neoliberalism.[9] These developments (which have intensified during the project), do not mean that neoliberalism is no longer the controlling system, but simply that neoliberalism has changed to incorporate new mechanisms for functioning and for valorising itself. Indeed, these new mechanisms of operating can be seen as a continuation of the increasing emotional momentum that this thesis has identified as the 'language of neoliberalism', with some suggesting that 'the alt-right [is not] a subversive subculture, but […] a movement deeply embedded within the history of the far-right, and as a performance of the post-2008 neoliberal imaginary'.[10]

Since the rise of (among others) Donald Trump in the USA, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and in a different, but politically similarly way, Brexit in the UK, the world has witnessed a surge of nationalist-influenced, right-wing authoritarian populism.[11] This thesis has been produced at a momentous moment in capitalism's history, and it is clear that many of the same techniques used by and for capital over the past four or five decades are now being employed to create a frenzy of passion directed toward certain political causes. It is worth noting that, despite his loss in the 2020 US election, Trump was still the recipient of over seventy-four million votes, suggesting that the emotion he engenders is still very potent. Although much of this emotion is anti-immigration or pro-nationalist in nature, it remains possible that this political direction is being used to further capitalist interests despite an ostensible aversion to globalisation, as chapter four argued about 9/11. The nation has played a diminished role in neoliberal power structures, but events such as 9/11 have provided opportunities to turn strong sentiments into valorisation and naturalisation, and this turn toward a new nationalist,

[9] 'Since Spencer coined the euphemistic term in 2008, the "alt-right" has come to shelter white nationalists, anti-Semites, radical misogynists, and neo-Nazis', In this context, 'right' has incorporated extreme right wing political views under the same umbrella that right wing economic views are held. Fred Turner, 'Machine Politics: The rise of the internet and a new age of authoritarianism', *Harpers*, (2019) < https://fredturner.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/Turner-Machine-Politics-Harpers-Magazine-2019-01.pdf> [accessed 31 July 2020].
[10] Turner, 'Machine Politics'.
[11] Richard Wolffe, 'Britain allowed its populist right to rise. America should heed the warning', *The Guardian* (2016) < https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/jun/24/britain-right-wing-brexit-america-trump> [accessed 31 July 2020].

authoritarian tendency does not necessarily mean a turn away from neoliberal capitalism. In fact, Trump, as one of the main figures in the nationalist movement in the USA, has also presided over 'historic deregulations' that are typical of neoliberalism.[12]

Just as with nationalist elements that emerged in neoliberalism after 9/11, recent years have indicated few changes to the neoliberal mode of prioritising industry over citizens, and despite a renewed interest in national concerns, inequality has not decreased as one might have expected if the neoliberal mode of production were losing steam. In fact, declarations of 'fake news' that have accompanied the rise of the alt-right and authoritarianism served to direct attention away from the inequalities caused by capital, blaming minorities as scapegoats for issues better attributed to capitalist accumulation. Considering the way contemporary capitalism has incorporated nationalism, which was evidenced in both *Falling Man* and, to a lesser extent, *Point Omega*, it is easy to see how authoritarianism, something once seen as out of step with the 'free-market', can be easily assimilated into what we think of as neoliberalism. Indeed, Fred Turner argues that 'one of the deepest ironies of our current situation is that the modes of communication that enable today's authoritarians were first dreamed up to defeat them'.[13] Just as technology was supposed to free humanity but allowed capital to enclose us with its Virillian speed, (a problem with which DeLillo's work has often been concerned*)*, the freedom of communication has enabled authoritarian messages to spread. Neoliberalism does not require external factors to adhere to its rules, rather it changes its rules to incorporate external factors into its methods of self-valorisation. The emotional language used as part of popular nationalism could positively influence how the American working poor are treated, or

[12] 'President Trump's Historic Deregulation Is Benefitting All Americans', *Whitehouse Official Website* (2019) <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-trumps-historic-deregulation-benefitting-americans/#:~:text=Trump%20has%20led%20historic%20deregulation,regulations%20for%20every%20new%20one> [accessed 14 October 2020].
[13] Turner, 'Machine Politics'.

it could be used to justify and naturalise the weakened position of the American worker. It could make globalisation effectively irrelevant by lowering the wages of American workers.

Whether this will occur is too soon to say, but it is hard to ignore that one of the reasons put forward for Brexit was to put an end to EU regulation in favour of a national interest, and that in so doing, nationalism and typically neoliberal economic deregulation were combined. Of course, as chapter six argues, the future is always uncertain, especially so during what is, at the time of writing, the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. But as Williams proposes in his conception of a structure of feeling, the way in which felt experience is characteristic of a period is never a fixed and permanent thing. Currently one can conceive authoritarianism and the alt-right as either the end of neoliberalism, or 'as a strand of militant neoliberalism that turns inwards seeking to defend free market economics from the post-2008 electoral advances of the left'.[14] It is the impermanence of neoliberalism, and the impermanence of emotional experiences that makes them such a fruitful coupling for capitalist valorisation. This shift in the political landscape towards authoritarianism does not mean the end of capitalism as we have come to recognise it, but is merely a transitional phase that can be witnessed through the contemporary structure of feeling. More so than ever, emotions are the language of neoliberal capitalism.

It is not yet predictable whether the rise of nationalist sentiment, the perception of fake news, post-truth and authoritarianism will develop into something that does transcend what we can call neoliberalism. What this thesis can point toward, however, is that the authoritarian nature of neoliberalism is not new. Rather, it is a new manifestation in the form of authoritarian figureheads and movements. Capital retains power through the manipulation of emotion rather than with physical control. Indeed, one could suggest that the position of power Trump gained in 2016 points towards the naturalisation of these authoritarian measures when used in service

[14] Theodore Koulouris, 'Online Misogyny and the Alternative Right: Debating the Undebatable', *Feminist Media Studies* (2018) 18:4, 750-761, p. 756.

of capital; a naturalisation carried out by a billionaire using the fear and emotion associated with nationalism. 'What mainstream analysts see as psychological weakness, Trump's fans see as the man just being himself. What's more, his anger, his rants, and his furious narcissism act out the feelings of people who believe they have been dispossessed by immigrants, women, and people of color'.[15] Where one sees nationalist rhetoric it is possible that one is seeing the naturalisation process at work, obfuscating the facet of capitalist control that reproduces neoliberal dominance.

Emotional ideas such as these have been explored through analysis DeLillo's fiction and its relationship with capitalism, but it was *The Happiness Industry* (2015) by William Davies that was most influential in the genesis of the project's focus on emotion. To look again at Davies' work, including his recent *Nervous States: How Feeling Took Over the World* (2018), is an appropriate way to conclude. According to Davies' *Happiness Industry*, emotion plays a fundamental role in contemporary capitalism, and despite the fact this project looked beyond happiness, to ask how fear and hope are also part of neoliberalism's mechanisms, it is indebted to the idea taken from Davies that capitalism functions through emotion. The constantly shifting nature of emotion in capitalism is clear to Davies, since what started as an industry through which capitalism used happiness to profit and normalise behaviour has become the dominant mode of organisation across neoliberal societies. For him, the benefits that capital and authoritarians gain from having populations enter into 'nervous states', suggesting that 'the mere sense of danger produces a rising desire for safety, which autocrats satisfy through making threats towards others'.[16] In any context, it seems emotional registers are the most effective method for making impact in contemporary society, with Turner saying 'whether they are lying like Trump or revealing long-buried truths like the members of

[15] Turner, 'Machine Politics'.
[16] William Davies, *Nervous States: How Feeling Took Over the World,* (London: Penguin, 2018), p. 17.

#MeToo, those who would claim power in the public sphere must speak in a deeply personal idiom'.[17]

In *The Happiness Industry* Davies explores how emotion and capitalism connect, and their relationship could be said to constitute what he refers to as an industry, in and of itself. This thesis has expanded on this, by looking primarily at what specifics are present that enable both this industry and this relationship to work as it does. Davies writes that as early as 1965 a development in 'happiness studies' occurred that measured emotion not by asking how individuals 'felt towards specific products, policies, leaders or institutions [but] how they felt about their lives, relative to their own aspirations'.[18] This development, Davies notes, revealed 'the loneliness and aimlessness of a society with nothing but private fulfilment as its overarching principle'.[19]

In examining DeLillo's work this project has revealed that such private fulfilment is a crucial aspect of how emotions are constituted in neoliberal societies. The financial industry in *Cosmopolis*, consumerism in *White Noise*, the pull of technology in *Zero K* all ask individuals to constitute themselves, their identities, and to find their happiness in the mechanisms of capital. Although many of DeLillo's characters have families and some happy elements in their lives, they nonetheless often typify the aimlessness that Davies identifies. What DeLillo's work has enabled is an expanding of Davies' arguments, revealing the extent to which they apply across the spectrum of lived experience. DeLillo's work enables one to approach happiness by way of fear and hope, facets of the relationship between capitalism and happiness and, arguably, facets of the 'Happiness Industry' itself that are as crucial as the eponymous emotion. It also shows the spread of this aimlessness. Although at the time of writing it is still very newly published, DeLillo's latest novel seems to return to these themes. A review of *The Silence*

[17] Turner, 'Machine Politics'.
[18] William Davies, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London: Verso, 2015), p. 147.
[19] Davies, *Happiness Industry,* p. 147.

highlights a phrase from the text: 'And isn't it strange […] that certain individuals have seemed to accept the shutdown, the burnout? Is this something that they've always longed for, subliminally, subatomically?'.[20] Although he is not writing about the 'lockdowns' that resulted from the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, he describes the same sentiment that was seen across the world, where individuals often welcomed the shutdown.[21] This aspect of the new novel appears to ask the question that this thesis also implicitly raises through its assessment of emotional capitalism: what can individuals do to cope? The emotional burnout that results from life in the spiral of intensification seems to be an inevitable response to neoliberalism. As the third section of the theoretical model introduces, the continuing cycle between fear, hope and happiness not only exacerbates negative emotional states, but causes this exhaustion that enables a process like naturalisation to occur.

Davies argues in *The Happiness Industry* that 'even after the epic failure of the neoliberal model of 2008' there was a definitive return to its ethos.[22] DeLillo's novels corroborate this and enable a view of the extent to which that ethos was maintained. Now, however, the world has faced a trial far more serious than the 2008 crisis, a crisis that has seen people acknowledge *en masse* the difficult emotional positions capitalism had placed them in for years. This project has continuously asserted that capitalism can incorporate crisis, and that the many other recent developments in society have not necessarily constituted a move away from neoliberalism. Whether the next decade will radically alter this perspective will be intimately connected to the way people relate their lives to capitalism, where they look for happiness, and how the latter is conditioned by the former.

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[20] M.C. Armstrong, 'Don DeLillo's *The Silence*', *The Brooklyn Rail* (2020) <https://brooklynrail.org/2020/10/books/Don-DeLillo-The-Silence?fbclid=IwAR36viv15E7EQi-1eMwwLc38B5GPZ3cE-ZbU7LrJP2CO_qFO_5eJon2cyfk> [accessed 14 October 2020].

[21] News outlets as diverse as *The Guardian, Sky News,* and *The Financial Times* have all explored the phenomenon of being happier in lockdown. Please see bibliography for relevant articles from Jess Denham, Lucia Binding and Lucy Kellaway.

[22] Davies, *Happiness Industry,* p. 141.

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