

I Davidson - Mobility and materialism in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*

This paper uses theoretical perspectives from the rapidly developing area of mobility studies to provide a reading of Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*. In the novel the international financial guru Eric Packer is driven around New York in a stretch limousine. Stuck in the streets of a gridlocked city, Packer buys and sells currency, gambling speculatively and illogically that the value of the Yen will fall, losing millions in the process.

The car, that should represent the freedom of automobility, is unable to make progress faster than walking pace through the busy streets. It never leaves Manhattan, but is stored in an underground car park, leaving the driver to make his way through the tunnel to a home in the suburbs. Time and space are no longer compressed by the ability of the car to cover distance quickly, but by the globalised systems of telecommunications that feed the financial data into the car and allow Packer to carry out his dealing. The metal box and its cargo of flesh inches forward, while money is shifted around the globe in fractions of a second.