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AFarid Benmezal - University M'hamed Bougara - Boumerdes

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Introduction

One difficulty encountered in studying Eric Packer as an anti-hero in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* is the absence of a clear definition of the term anti-hero. Such characters blend qualities traditionally deemed good and evil, making them easy to confuse with other hero types. For instance, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Satan's vengefulness and deceit mark him as an anti-hero, yet his leadership skills and eloquence align him with heroic figures. Moreover, no universal moral standard exists to determine whether a given behavior is heroic or anti-heroic. In Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huck's choice to help Jim escape slavery can be heroic from an anti-slavery perspective, whileslavery advocates may view him as an anti-hero.

This article's primary focus is Eric Packer's anti-heroism in *Cosmopolis*. The novel chronicles one day in the life of billionaire Eric Packer who, despite his confidence and tenacity, loses his fortune and ultimately dies at the hands of a former employee. In light of his unexpected demise, many critics label Eric anti-heroic. Stephanie Hemelryk Donald (2024) describes him as an "anti-hero" (p. 132) who is "briefly confronted with his complicity in his own destruction" (p. 132) and whose "reaction amounts to nothing more than a scripted tic in an already anticipated event" (p. 132). Martina Sciolino (2015) analyzes Eric's self-destruction through the lens of global capitalism, arguing that his compulsive competitiveness prevents him "from acknowledging the embodied presence of others unless they can be taken up in his service" (p. 211). She also labels him "a world citizen" (p. 211) and "a neoliberal anti-hero" (p. 211) whose death reverberates globally. Donald and Sciolino study DeLillo's novel in isolation, examining Eric's anti-heroism without comparing him to other hero types. By contrast, Anastasios Gaitanidis (2015) compares Odysseus's journey to Eric's, concluding that Eric's endless and impossible quest for home "contains its opposite : self-mutilation" (p. 266). Gaitanidis frames Eric as a postmodern Odysseus, whereas Odysseus's return is "fulfilled at the end" (p. 266) despite the perils he faces. However, Gaitanidis focuses solely on the hero's journey, overlooking other epic conventions.

Given the lack of consensus on definitions, this article defines Eric as an anti-hero through a process of exclusion : by comparing and contrasting the epic conventions that shape his anti-heroic essence with those that characterize Odysseus as a hero in Homer's *The Odyssey* and Belinda as a mock-heroine in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. In doing so,

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this article also interprets *Cosmopolis* as a parody of both Homeric and Popean poems. The comparison centers on four epic conventions : invocation of the muse, the hero's journey, underworld scenes, and the hero's combat and use of weaponry. In Homer, these conventions celebrate Odysseus's deeds ; in Pope, they ridicule Belinda's trivial exploits ; in DeLillo, they earnestly depict Eric as a self-destructive anti-hero.

1. Research Method and Critical Framing

Helpful theoretical tools for analyzing the different aspects of heroism in this article are drawn from Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality. Intertextuality permits us to read literary works in relation to other texts and textual networks. As Kristeva (1986, p. 37) observes, "each word [text] is an intersection of words [texts] where at least one other word [text] can be read," and "any text … is constructed as a mosaic of quotations ; any text is the absorption and transformation of another." In this view, no work of art emerges in isolation ; each inevitably interacts with preceding and contemporary texts.

This study also adopts Linda Hutcheon's conception of parody as "a form of repetition with ironic critical distance, marking difference rather than similarity … [with] tension between the potentially conservative effect of repetition and the potentially revolutionary impact of difference" (Hutcheon, 1989, xii). Hutcheon further argues that postmodernism operates through parody to "both legitimize and subvert that which it parodies" (p. 101) and that "parody signals how present representations derive from past ones and what ideological consequences flow from both continuity and difference" (p. 93). Accordingly, parody allows us to rethink historical narratives and to uncover fresh critical insights.

2. The Muse, the Friend, and the Chief of Theory

In *Cosmopolis*, DeLillo's underlying themes are most clearly articulated through Eric's "chief theorist," Vija Kinski. As "a voice with a body as afterthought" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 4), she theorizes about technology, money, and social movements. In this role, she functions as a modern variant of the Muse invoked by authors for guidance in storytelling. Her figure parodies the traditional invocation to the Muse found in both Homer's *The Odyssey* and Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. The tone of each invocation and the nature of the Muse figure are crucial for distinguishing the type of hero—or anti-hero—that each text presents.

The traditional epic begins with an invocation to the Muse, presenting themes the poet intends to explore. Such appeals to divine aid signal that the poem addresses serious matters and demands a solemn tone.

Homer opens *The Odyssey* with a direct plea : "Muse, speak to me now of that resourceful man," (Homer, 2002, p. 3)

He invokes the Muses—daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne—to grant him inspiration and favor. This invocationestablishes Odysseus's arduous journey from Troy back to Penelope and Telemachus in Ithaca, exalting his trials within a divine framework shaped by the will of gods. Athena's entreaty to Zeus to free Odysseus, and Poseidon's reluctant concession, illustrate the interplay between human agency and divine intervention.

In *The Rape of the Lock*, Pope replaces pagan divinities with his friend John Caryll, who commissioned the poem to reconcile the Fermors and the Petres through shared laughter after Lord Petre cut a lock from Arabella Fermor :

> "What dire Offence from am'rous Causes springs,
> What mighty Contests rise from trivial Things,
> I sing—This verse to Caryl, Muse ! Is due ;
> This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view :
> Slight is the Subject, but not so the Praise,
> If She inspire, and He approve, my Lays." (Pope, 1896, pp. 1–2)

Pope's mock-invocation satirizes societal pettiness, foreshadowing how genuine passions are replaced by mock emotionshandled with playful irreverence. The poem's epic subjects (love and war) are diminished : the "dire Offence" leads to "mighty Contests" over "trivial Things," and "soft bosoms" harbor "mighty rage."

In *Cosmopolis*, Vija Kinski diverges from these classical Muses. While she addresses weighty issues, her voice is not divine but analytical, warning Eric of cybercapitalism's perils. Unlike Homer's Muse, who predicts Odysseus's success, Vija "foretells Eric's grand finale of transcendent extinction" (Laist, 2010, p. 166), marking him anti-heroic. She argues that capitalism is vulnerable due to its dematerialization of industries and its impulse to collapse past and future into the present :

> "'This is also a 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 reexploited. Destroy the past, make the future.'"(DeLillo, 2003, p. 4)

Vija predicts that future events will "correct the acceleration of time. Bring nature back to normal." (DeLillo, 2003, p. 34)

Cybercapitalism emerges as a digital system where computers "are melting into the texture of everyday life" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 46), capable of measuring the yoptosecond (one septillionth of a second). Despite its power to process vast data, the system is "out of control" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 37). Even the most powerful tycoons, "driven by thinking machines," have "no final authority over" cybercapitalism (DeLillo, 2003, p. 37).

3. Three Types of Journey : Glorious, Trivial and Deadly

3.1. Homeric Hero's Journey and Belinda's Thames Voyage

Eric's journey across Manhattan parodies the hero's and the mock-hero's quests. His search for a haircut—and his partial success in obtaining only half of it—echoes the Baron in *The Rape of the Lock*, who admires Belinda's golden locks, attempts to cut one, and succeeds in seizing a single curl. Yet, Eric's journey is far from trivial. Throughout his journey, he parts ways with his new wife, forfeits all their money, and is ultimately killed by a former employee. As an anti-hero unable to overcome these challenges, he cannot compare with Odysseus**,** the hero who returns home triumphant after a long and arduous voyage.

Odysseus's journey serves to immortalize his name and achieve enduring fame. His craving for glory motivates his visit to the land of the Cyclopes. He could have avoided this peril**,** having already stocked food and water on a neighboring uninhabited isle. With twelve comrades, he sails to Polyphemus's cave, where the Cyclops seals the entrance with a mighty rock, thus trapping them inside. After Polyphemus kills many men, Odysseus and his comrades blind him and escape. As they sail away, Odysseus boasts to Polyphemus :

> "Cyclops, if any mortal human being asks about the injury that blinded you, say your eye was burned out by Odysseus, sacker of cities, son of Laertes, a man from Ithaca." (Homer, 2002, pp. 162–163)

This victory, filled with pride, cements his fame.

3.2. Movement from Order to Chaos in Odysseus's Voyage

Odysseus's journey is also characterized by a shift from order to chaos, embodying a hero's struggle to reclaim his rightful place in the cosmic hierarchy. The Ancient Greeks conceived the universe as an ordered cosmos governed by deities :

> "Zeus became ruler of the sky, Poseidon king of the ocean, and Hades ruler of the underworld."(West & Ganeri, 2011, p. 10)

This cosmological principle extended to mortals**,** each assigned a specific role. Odysseus, a king, leaves Ithaca to fight in the savage Trojan War for ten years. After the war, on his homeward voyage, he blinds Polyphemus, son of Poseidon**,** incurring divine wrath. Poseidon delays his return by casting him into a world of monsters—Scylla and Charybdis—and detaining him with nymphs like Calypso and the Sirens. Consequently**,** Odysseus spends another ten years at sea. Being torn from Ithaca represents "the initial chaos," while his eventual return signifies "the restoration of the harmony of the cosmos." (Ferry, 2013, p. 12) His love for Penelope and nostalgia for Ithaca underscore his longing for cosmic order.

3.3. Belinda's Mock-Heroic Thames Excursion

Belinda's trip on the Thames to Hampton Court mirrors Odysseus's sea journey but lacks its epic stakes. While Odysseus wins immortal fame, Belinda fails to maintain her reputation for chastity while exhibiting her beauty. The divine dangers that test Odysseus are absent in *The Rape of the Lock*. As a mock-heroine, Belinda embarks on a carefree water excursion. Valuing her attractiveness, she enlists sylphs to prepare her attire : some braid her hair, others fold her dress, and others arrange

> "Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux."(Pope, 1896, p. 7)
> "Trembling, begins the sacred rites of pride …
> The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
> Transform'd to Combs, the speckled and the white.
> Here Files of Pins extend their shining Rows

> Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
> Now awful Beauty puts on all its Arms."
> (Pope, 1896, p. 7)

Her beauty, "like the sun," captivates: "every eye was fixed on her alone." (Pope, 1896, p. 8)

Her "lovely looks" and "quick" eyes (p. 8) attract attention. Ironically, this beauty becomes her downfall : her locks become

> "these Labyrinths his Slaves detains,
> And mighty Hearts are held in slender Chains." (Pope, 1896,
> p. 9)

When the Baron cuts one of her two locks, he vows to keep it. Thalestris warns Belinda that he will display her hair, so that: "your honor in a whisper lost." (Pope, 1896, p. 27)

Yet the lock ascends to the heavens, becoming a star :

> "When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
> And all those tresses shall be laid in dust ;
> This lock, the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
> And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name !" (Pope, 1896,
> p. 38)

Belinda's journey is a petty counter-version of Odysseus's homecoming : a mock-heroic displacement from safety to superficial unease.

3.4. Eric Packer's Futile Odyssey

Eric's journey from his home in the East Side Twin Towers to his childhood barbershop in the West Side is inherently anti-heroic**,** as its goal conflicts with his aspirations. It begins when "he didn't know what he wanted." (DeLillo, 2003, p. 1)

and ends in stasis :

> "There was nothing to do. … The moment was empty of
> urgency and purpose. … There was nowhere he wanted to
> go, nothing to think about, no one waiting." (DeLillo, 2003,
> pp. 77–78)

Obsessed with hoarding wealth, he abandons a $ 4 million apartment—with

> "dozens of rooms, incomparable views, [a] private elevator," "air
> rights," and "regulating sensors and software."(p. 34)

This stark incongruity underscores his disconnection. His futuristic vision—

> ATMs are "anti-futuristic, so cumbrous and mechanical that
> even the acronym seemed dated." (p. 34)
> Cash registers "confined to display cases in a museum of cash
> registers in Philadelphia or Zurich." (p. 31)

—collides with the randomness of the barbershop.

Though anarchist protesters chant

> "a rat became the unit of currency"
> and
> "A SPECTER IS HAUNTING THE WORLD—THE SPECTER OF CAPITALISM."(DeLillo, 2003, p. 42)

Eric's limousine cameras shield him, and André Petrescu, the "pastry assassin," inflicts only cream-pie humiliation (p. 61). Yet, cybercapitalism is his true nemesis. He leverages the yen to "acquire information and turn it into something stupendous and awful." (p. 7)

—but overextends, prompting his confession: "The market was not total. It could not claim this man or assimilate his act." (DeLillo, 2003, pp. 43–44)

This admission marks his anti-heroic downfall.

3.5. Alienation in Intimacy

Penelope and Belinda spur their heroes ; Eric's wife, Elise Shifrin, exemplifies his alienation. Their marriage— "she was rich, he was rich ; she was heir-apparent." (p. 31) —is fragile. Elise knows neither his work nor his eye color :

> "'Tell me this. Where will you go now … To your office ? Where is your office ? What do you do exactly ?'" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 7)
> "'You never told me you were blue-eyed.'" (p. 6)

Technology—his secular Athena—allows him to hack her bank :

> "…where he open[s] a new account for her more or less instantaneously, by thumb-nailing some numbers on the tiny keypad…." (p. 53)

In his hubris**,** he drains her fortune to ensure no one can challenge his illusion of total command of everything in his private world. As a single, arrogant, and hubristic individual, he thus appropriates all of Elise's money to make sure that she cannot help him**.** It is worth noting that, while Athena's divine power restores Odysseus to his wife**,** Eric's secular substitute—technology—serves to isolate him completely**,** hacking millions from Elise into his corporate accounts.

4. Katabasis: The Underworld, the Cave of Spleen, and the Barber's

4.1. Odysseus's Descent into the Underworld

Eric's visit to the barber in *Cosmopolis* parodies Odysseus's katabasis into Hades. In epic tradition, the hero descends below when he "faces near defeat and recalibrates his vision and expectations moving forward on both a practical and psychological level" (Battles, 2025, p. 39). Such descents serve to consult with departed ancestors, mentors, or warrior-leaders and receive prophecies that enable the hero to complete his mission.

After the Trojan War, Odysseus blinds Polyphemus, incurring Poseidon's wrath. On Circe's recommendation, he sails to the entrance of the Underworld and performs rites to summon the dead. There he meets the blind seer Teiresias, who prophesies Odysseus's fate :

> "Offer rich sacrifice to lord Poseidon,
> And when you reach your native soil again
> Leave without delay, nor linger on the shore ;
> Go straight to the house of old Laertes, and there
> You shall find death as a kindly end of life." (Homer, 2002, p. 190)

Teiresias foretells that Odysseus will return to Ithaca alone "in someone else's ship" and must slay Penelope's suitors.

> "You shall find the day of your return alone
> In someone else's ship ; there, you will slay
> The suitors in the hall of Ithaca." (Homer, 2002, p. 190)

Armed with this prophecy, Odysseus departs Hades a wiser man, his vision reshaped for the final trials.

4.2. Umbriel's Journey to the Cave of Spleen

In *The Rape of the Lock,* Pope's mock-heroic katabasis sends Umbriel to the Cave of Spleen to amplify Belinda's despair. Belinda's own descent is emotional rather than physical : she wallows in "rage, resentment, and despair" more bitter than that felt by

> "youthful kings in battle seiz'd alive,
> Or scornful virgins who their charms survive,
> Or tyrants fierce that unrepenting die." (Pope, 1896, p. 23)

Unable to contain her spleen-born fury, Belinda remains in her bed. Umbriel alone ventures to the cavern where he kneels before the goddess Spleen and requests a potion to worsen Belinda's mood. She entrusts him with

> "a bag of joys, a bag of cares,
> Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues," (Pope, 1896, p. 26)

and a vial containing

> "fairing fears,
> Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears." (Pope, 1896, p. 26)

Returning to Hampton Court, Umbriel "broke the vial of sorrows on her head,"(Pope, 1896, p. 26)

thereby intensifying Belinda's mock-tragic grief. Yet her anguish proves superficial, driven by fear of public disgrace rather than true moral remorse.

4.3. Eric Packer's Visit to the Barber's (Hell's Kitchen Katabasis)

Eric's cross-town journey culminates in a secular katabasis : a visit to his father's old barber in Hell's Kitchen. Unlike epic and mock-heroic descents, the barber offers **no** prophecy to avert Eric's doom. Instead, he recounts family history :

> "'Your mother was the brains of the outfit. That's where you get your mentality. Your mother had the wisdom.'" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 69)

By listening, Eric briefly reconnects with his human roots : he shares food, drink, and stories with his driver Ibrahim Hamadou—a stark contrast to his earlier detachment ("he did not look at the driver," p. 14). This glimpse of empathy shatters when, mid-cut, Eric suddenly stands : "'I need to leave. I don't know how come. That's how come.'" (DeLillo, 2003, p. 73)

He departs with half a haircut and no wisdom. Moments later, he faces his murderer, his katabasis ending not in illumination but in violent finality.

5. Three Types of Weaponry : Glorious, Trivial and Destructive

5.1. Odysseus's Bow and the Suitors

Eric's final confrontation with Benno Levin parodies both Odysseus's climactic battle with the suitors and Belinda's petty combat with the Baron. In classical epics, the hero's acquisition and mastery of arms underscore his exceptionalism. Odysseus's victory relies on his own bow, a weapon so powerful that no one else can string it.

As Homer recounts, after blinding Polyphemus and enduring Poseidon's wrath, Odysseus returns to Ithaca to confront Penelope's suitors. Athena furnishes him with the means to wield his bow :

> "She gave him a bow of finest make, my lord's own weapon,
> And she whispered in his ear the full command
> To string it and bend it, saying : 'You shall prove
> The pride of all Achaeans, if you first
> Can bend this bow.'"
> (Homer, 2002, p. 386)

Yet the bow's origin lies in a guest-friendship : as a young man, Odysseus visits Ortilochus and meets Iphitos, exchanging weapons—Odysseus receives the bow, Iphitos a sword and spear: "To Odysseus went the bow, to Iphitos the gleaming sword and spear." (Homer, 2002, p. 190)

Penelope, stalling her remarriage, decrees that only the man who can string the bow shall wed her. No mortal but Odysseus accomplishes this:

> "He strung the bow on the first try and loosed an arrow True as the heart of man's desire ; then, revealing himself, He laid low the suitors with a rain of lethal shafts." (Homer, 2002, pp. 386–387)

By triumphing with the bow, Odysseus reaffirms his supremacy and rightful kingship.

5.2. Belinda's Bodkin and the Battle of Cards

Pope transmutes Homeric warfare into trivial vanities. At Hampton Court, Belinda enters a cards contest to win fame. Sylphs, like divine aides, descend to assist :

> "To aid fair Belinda in the bold debate,
> The airy sprites from yonder vaulted height
> Wedged 'twixt her wits and the contentious game." (Pope, 1896, p. 19)

Despite her triumph, her "honours shall be cursed forever this victorious day" (p. 19), for her mock-heroic victory inflames the Baron's resolve.

When Trent's mock-battle fails, Belinda wields a bodkin—an heirloom forged from her great-great-grandfather's buckle and her grandmother's whistle :

> "Belinda snatched a bodkin from her side,
> That by her sire's and grandsire's arts was plied
> Through many forms till last it learned to wound." (Pope, 1896, p. 35)

Yet the bodkin, like a rusty sword, cannot fell the Baron. Instead, Belinda snuffs him: "She launched a powder-puff—and snuffed his eyes." (Pope, 1896, p. 35)

A comic, unheroic gesture, for instead of death, the Baron sneezes—comic relief supplanting tragic prowess.

5.3. Eric's Guns : Futuristic and Bygone

Eric's murder inverts epic paradigms : his guns fail to secure victory and precipitate his demise. Benno Levin, once a community-college lecturer and now currency analyst, embodies cyber-capitalism's castoff : "I made my million. What people discard, I profit." (DeLillo, 2003, p. 25)

Levin's squat contrasts with Packer's skyscraper and limousine—the dark underbelly of the capitalist dream.

Eric, in a moment of hubris, kills his bodyguard Torval with a voice-activated pistol: "'Nancy Babich.'
A gun's report echoed – and Torval lay dead." (DeLillo, 2003, p. 63)

Gold-plated future tech is no match for human error. Later, the barber's old revolver – a relic from his father's era – proves just as lethal to Packer's fate:

> **Barber:** "You might need this."
> *(He presses the cold steel into Eric's palm.)*
> **Eric:** "'What is that?'"
> *(Moments later, the gun misfires, and Packer's luck runs out.)*
> (DeLillo, 2003, pp. 72–73)

Bereft of wisdom, he wields the guns imprudently. After a missed shot, he perceives himself

> "dead inside the crystal of his watch but still alive in original space, waiting for the shot to sound."(DeLillo, 2003, p. 91)

His wristwatch, micro-spycam idol, outlives him – technology that was meant to extend life instead crystallizes his death.

Conclusion

This article has interpreted Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* as a deliberate parody of both Homer's *The Odyssey* and Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*. Although all three authors employ the same epic conventions – invocation of the Muse**,** the hero's journey**,** katabasis, and weaponry – their purposes and outcomes diverge sharply. In Homer's epic, these conventions elevate Odysseus to the status of a quintessential hero. In Pope's mock-epic, they ridicule his characters' petty exploits, while in DeLillo's novel they are subverted to chart the self-destructive downfall of an anti-hero.

Both the hero and the anti-hero engage with the gravest concerns of human existence, setting them apart from the mock-hero, whose trivial actions are nonetheless treated with epic grandiloquence. Like the hero, the anti-hero possesses virtues and vices; yet his vices outweigh his virtues, precipitating his demise. Despite Eric Packer's prodigious knowledge of currency markets, his ability to transform data into wealth, and his extravagant possessions – including his limousine – he fails to achieve his ambition of ever-greater accumulation and falls at the hands of his former employee.

From these findings, an anti-hero may be defined as "a character who confronts perilous circumstances that culminate in his downfall, owing to character flaws that outweigh his positive traits."

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Abstract

This study examines the concept of the anti-hero in Don DeLillo's Cosmopolis. In the absence of a clear definition of an anti-hero, such a character is best defined negatively—by showing what he is not. Our strategy compares and contrastsfour epic conventions—the invocation of the Muse, the hero's journey, the descent to the underworld, and the unique use of weaponry—to show how DeLillo's protagonist, Eric Packer, functions as an anti-hero in juxtaposition to Odysseus in Homer's The Odyssey and Belinda in Alexander Pope's The Rape of the Lock. Methodologically, this article draws on Julia Kristeva's intertextuality, which reads texts in relation to other texts, and Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody as "repetition with ironic, critical distance," which emphasizes difference rather than similarity. Our analysis reveals that although all three authors deploy these conventions, their aims and effects diverge : Homer uses them to celebrateOdysseus as a hero, Pope to satirize petty actions in a mock-heroic register, and DeLillo to chart his anti-hero's downfall. From these findings, we define an anti-hero as "a character who confronts perilous circumstances that lead to his downfall because his character flaws outweigh his virtues."

Keywords

Anti-hero, hero, intertextuality, mock-hero, parody

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في مفهوم البطل المضاد في رواية دون ديليلو كوزموبوليس. نظرًا لغياب تعريفٍ واضحٍ للبطل المضاد، يُعرَّف هذا النوع من الشخصيات سلبًا، أي بإبراز ما لا يمتلكه من صفات بطولية. تعتمد منهجيتنا على المقارنة والمقابلة لأربع تقاليد ملحمية : استدعاء المُلهمة، رحلة البطل، الهبوط إلى العالم السفلي، والاستخدام المميز للأسلحة، لنبيّن كيف يصبح إريك باكر بطلًا مضادًا مقابل شخصية أوليس في الأوديسة لهوميروس وبيلينداً في سرقة خصلة الشعر لألكسندر بوب. تستند الدراسة إلى التناص لدى جوليا كريستيفا، الذي يقرأ النصوص علاقةًبنصوصٍ أخرى، وإلى نظرية المحاكاة الساخرة عند ليندا هتشيون بوصفها "تكرارًا مصحوبًا بمسافة نقدية"، مما يبرز الاختلاف بدلاً من التشابه. تكشف نتائجنا أن جميع هؤلاء المؤلفين يستخدمون هذه التقاليد الملحمية، لكن أهدافهم ونتائجهم تختلف : يوظف هوميروس التقاليد لتأبين أوليس كبطل، ويستخدم بوب الأسلوب للسخرية من أفعال شخصياته التافهة، في حين يحوّل ديليلو تلك التقاليد إلى أداةٍ لرسم سقوط بطله المضاد.وبناءً على ذلك، يمكن تعريف البطل المضاد بأنه « شخصية تواجه ظروفًا محفوفة بالمخاطر تؤدي إلى سقوطها، وذلك لأن عيوبها تتجاوز مكامن قوتها ».

الكلمات المفتاحية

البطل المضاد، البطل، التناص، البطلة الساخرة، المحاكاة الساخرة

Résumé

Cette étude analyse la notion d'anti-héros dans Cosmopolis de Don DeLillo. Faute de définition explicite de l'anti-héros, ce personnage se définit mieux par son absence de traits héroïques. Nous comparons et mettons en contraste quatre conventions épiques – invocation de la Muse, voyage du héros, descente aux Enfers, et maniement singulier des armes – pour montrer comment Eric Packer, protagoniste de DeLillo, s'inscrit comme anti-héros en miroir d'Ulysse dans L'Odyssée d'Homère et de Bélinda dans Le Rapt de la mèche d'Alexander Pope. Notre démarche s'appuie sur l'intertextualité de Julia Kristeva, lisant les textes en relation avec d'autres textes, et sur la parodie de Linda Hutcheon, entendue comme une "répétition empreinte d'une distance critique" soulignant la différence plutôt que la similitude. Notre lecture révèle que, si tous trois recourent à ces conventions, leurs objectifs et leurs effets divergent : Homère célèbre Ulysse en héros, Pope tourne en dérision les actions futiles de ses faux-héros, et DeLillo dépeint la chute tragique de son anti-héros. Au terme de cette étude, l'anti-héros se définit comme « un personnage exposé à des situations périlleuses conduisant à sa chute, du fait que ses défauts l'emportent sur ses qualités ».

Mots-clés

Anti-héros, héros, intertextualité, héroï-comique, parodie