# DAVID MITCHELL'S <u>CLOUD ATLAS</u>:
# A MULTITUDE OF ICONIC SIGNS

**Pamukkale University**
**The Institute of Social Studies**
**Master of Arts Thesis**
**Department of English Language and Literature**

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**June 2014**
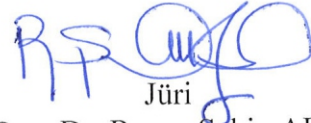**DENİZLİ**

# YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ ONAY FORMU

Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı öğrencisi Cenk TAN tarafından Doç. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL yönetiminde hazırlanan "David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas: A Multitude of Iconic Signs (David Mitchell'ın Cloud Atlas Romanında Çoklu İmgeler Döngüsü)" başlıklı tez aşağıdaki jüri üyeleri tarafından 10.06.2014 tarihinde yapılan tez savunma sınavında başarılı bulunmuş ve Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABSTRACT

## DAVID MITCHELL'S <u>CLOUD ATLAS</u>:
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TAN, Cenk
M.A. Thesis in English Literature
Supervisors: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL
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June 2014, 100 pages

Semiotic elements pertaining to Marxist and anti-consumerist theory that are embedded in David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u> forms the main topic of this thesis. Thanks to its perfectly constructed postmodern structure and its coherent themes, <u>Cloud Atlas</u> could be regarded as one of the most striking and thought-provoking novels of the 21$^{st}$ century British fiction. Although the novel consists of six stories that are completely disparate in terms of content, setting, location and genre, David Mitchell ultimately manages to create a unified whole; a grand story conveying a general message out of these six different narratives.

Chapter one presents Marxist literary theory in detail with its most prominent theorists and philosophers such as Marx, Gramsci, Althusser and Terry Eagleton. Closely connected to Marxism, this chapter also scrutinizes consumerism from a Marxist perspective by referring to texts and theories from philosophers Jean Baudrillard and Zygmunt Bauman. Chapter two contains a detailed analysis of semiotics as a study and approach to literary texts. The study of semiotics is presented with the founding philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce and his successors Charles Morris, Ferdinand de Saussure and finally the contemporary author Umberto Eco. The third and last chapter begins with a general semiotic analysis of <u>Cloud Atlas</u> through which the connection between its semiotic structure and its general themes and ideology is revealed. In the same chapter, the specific semiotic signs that help contribute to the novel's Marxist-consumerist ideology are exposed.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse the semiotic characteristics in David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u> in terms of Marxist literary theory, mainly within the scope of the theme of oppression and struggle for change. To that end, this study aims to expose the specific semiotic signs that are embedded within the novel.

**Key Words:** 21$^{st}$ Century British Novel, Dystopian fiction, Semiotics, Signs, Icons, Symbols, Consumerism, Science Fiction, David Mitchell, <u>Cloud Atlas</u>.

# ÖZET

## DAVID MITCHELL'IN <u>CLOUD ATLAS</u> ROMANINDA
## ÇOKLU İMGELER DÖNGÜSÜ

TAN, Cenk

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı ABD

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Haziran 2014, 100 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın ana konusu David Mitchell'ın <u>Cloud Atlas</u> romanında bulunan çeşitli göstergebilimsel imgeleri, Marksist ve tüketim karşıtlığı kuramları açısından irdelemektir. Bu bağlamda <u>Cloud Atlas</u> romanı iki temel kuram ve yaklaşım ışığında incelenecektir: Marksizm ve Göstergebilim. Romanda bahsedilen ana imgelerin, Marksist ve tüketim karşıtı imgelerle birlikte açığa çıkarılması hedeflenmektedir.

Birinci bölüm, Marksist kuramı ve önde gelen kuramcıları ayrıntılı bir şekilde inceleyip, analiz etmektedir ve bu bağlamda birinci bölüm her kuramcının öne sürmüş olduğu kavramların ayrıntılı tanımlamasını yapmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, göstergebilimi tanımlamakta ve onun tarihsel geçmişini ve gelişiminde rol oynayan tüm kuramcılara değinmektedir. Üçüncü ve son bölümün amacı ise <u>Cloud Atlas</u> romanını ayrıntılı biçimde incelemektir. Bu incelemenin hedefi, romanın genel yapısı hakkında bilgi vererek, romandaki Marksist ve tüketim karşıtı ögeleri açığa çıkarıp, romanı göstergebilimsel açıdan ele almaktadır. Ayrıca, göstergebilim kuram ve yaklaşımını romana uygularken, romanda mevcut tüm göstergebilimsel ögeleri (işaret, sembol vs.) ayrıntısıyla açıklamaktadır.

Çalışma sona erdiğinde, <u>Cloud Atlas</u> romanındaki göstergebilimsel imgeler ve bu imgelerin anlamlarıyla örtüşen kuramlar incelenmiş olacaktır. Tüm bu imgelerin ve sembollerin derin anlamlarının uygun kuramlarla ayrıntılı bir şekilde analiz edilmesi ve bu analizin sonucunda yazarın imgeler sayesinde aktarmış olduğu derin felsefi ve ideolojik mesajların açığa çıkarılması da çalışmanın amaçları arasındadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** 21. Yüzyıl İngiliz Roman, Distopya, Göstergebilim, İşaret, Semboller, Bilim Kurgu, Tüketim Karşıtlığı, David Mitchell, <u>Cloud Atlas</u>

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# INTRODUCTION

David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is a contemporary, 21<sup>st</sup> century novel which forms the main subject of this study. The scope of this thesis aims to analyse David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u> in light of Marxist literary theory and using the semiotic approach. The present thesis consists of three chapters; Marxism as a literary theory, Semiotics as a study and approach and finally the comprehensive semiotic analysis of <u>Cloud Atlas</u> including argumentation of the above mentioned theories.

The contemporary British author David Mitchell was born in Southport, UK in 1969. Mitchell spent his early years in Malvern, Worcestershire where he earned a degree in English and American literature followed by an MA. Degree in comparative literature at the University of Kent (WEB_3, 2011). He worked as an English teacher in Italy and Japan before moving back to the UK. In Japan, he met and later married his present day wife Keiko. Mitchell currently lives with his wife and two children in Ireland. In his novels, the deep influence of the Japanese and Eastern cultures can be observed. In an essay for Random House publishing, he stated that

I knew I wanted to be a writer since I was a kid, but until I came to Japan to live in 1994 I was too easily distracted to do much about it. I would probably have become a writer wherever I lived, but would I have become the same writer if I'd spent the last 6 years in London, or Cape Town, or Moose Jaw, on an oil rig or in the circus? This is my answer to myself. (WEB_2, n.d.)

Mitchell's first novel <u>Ghostwritten</u> was published in 1999, followed by <u>Number9dream</u> which was shortlisted for the 2002 Man Booker Prize for fiction (WEB_3, 2011). His third novel <u>Cloud Atlas</u> was published in 2004 and was soon after shortlisted for the 2004 Man Booker Prize for fiction.

David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is a dazzling, postmodern work of art which tells six interconnected stories set in six different time periods. The novel spans from the 19<sup>th</sup> century up until the post-apocalyptic future of 2344. Moreover, all the six narratives are written in different genres but nevertheless, the dominant genre of the novel itself is speculative and mainly dystopian fiction. <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is a spectacular novel due to the complex narrative structure which is brilliantly designed and the ethical and philosophical themes that it successfully touches upon. In an interview

with the Washington Post in 2004, Mitchell was asked where he had got his inspiration from for writing Cloud Atlas, upon which he replied that

three important sources spring to mind. First, If on a Winter's Night a Traveller, by Italo Calvino -- an experimental novel in which a sequence of narratives is interrupted but never picked up again -- made a big impression on me when I was an undergraduate. Second, a mention of the Moriori people in Jared Diamond's multidisciplinary Guns, Germs, and Steel led to a trip to the Chatham Islands and an encounter with New Zealand historian Michael King's A Land Apart. His idea that there is nothing inevitable about civilization caught my curiosity. Third, a book by Frederick Delius's amanuensis, Eric Fenby, Delius: As I Knew Him, was worlds away from the Moriori but gave me the idea of Fenby's evil twin, and the struggle between the exploited and the exploiter. (WEB_6, 2004)

Hence, it becomes clear what inspired David Mitchell to write a novel as Cloud Atlas.

Concerning the themes that are mentioned in Cloud Atlas, David Mitchell comments that

Perhaps all human interaction is about wanting and getting. (This needn't be as bleak as it sounds -- a consequence of getting can be giving, which presumably is what love is about.) Once I had these two ideas for novellas, I looked for other variations on the theme of predatory behaviour -- in the political, economic and personal arenas. These novellas seemed to marry well with the structure I had in mind: Each block of narrative is subsumed by the next, like a row of ever-bigger fish eating the one in front. (WEB_6, 2004)

Thus, it becomes obvious how Mitchell centred the novel on themes like greed, oppression and power relations in many areas of life. To that end, Mitchell makes widespread use of ideology in Cloud Atlas. Whether overtly mentioned or covertly implied, these ideological messages find their way to the reader through the use of semiotic signs which are so plentifully present in the novel.

The critic George Gessert names David Mitchell, a genius and acknowledges Cloud Atlas as an extraordinary book, claiming that he has a tremendous ability for language and style (Gessert, 2005: 425).

Therefore, in the first chapter of this thesis, the literary theory of Marxism is analysed beginning with founding philosophers' Marx and Engels' theories and then touching upon prominent Marxist critics that have helped to shape Marxist thought such as the Italian theoretician Antonio Gramsci, the French philosopher Louis Althusser and the contemporary British critic Terry Eagleton. Following the background of Marxist theory, the chapter also conducts a meticulous study on the

Marxist interpretation of consumerism by approaching texts of Jean Baudrillard and Zygmunt Bauman.

As consumerism has a significant place in the novel, this ideological notion is analysed and criticised through the authentic perspectives of these distinguished philosophers.

Furthermore, the second chapter presents a detailed outline of semiotics as a study and approach to literary texts. In general, semiotics refers to the study of signs which are used to decode all possible meanings from any given text. Signs have a variety of forms such as icons, indices and symbols. Hence, the first contributors to the systematic study of semiotics which consist of Charles Sanders Peirce, Charles William Morris, Ferdinand de Saussure and Umberto Eco are presented and evaluated thoroughly. The leading and most effective semiotician of our modern days, Umberto Eco defines semiotics in his own words and claims "to define as a sign everything that, on the grounds of a previously established convention, can be taken as something standing for something else" (Eco, 1976: 16). To that end, every concept that represents something else in any form of literary text is interpreted as a sign.

The third and last chapter of the thesis focuses on a detailed analysis of David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas. First, a comprehensive plot overview of the six stories within Cloud Atlas is given. Following the plot overview, specific references related to the Marxist and consumerist ideology within the novel are revealed where concrete examples related to theories of remarkable philosophers such as Gramsci's "Civil Society and Hegemony", Althusser's "Ideological State Apparatus and Repressive State Apparatus", Lafargue's arguments from The Right To Be Lazy, Jean Baudrillard and Zygmunt Bauman's views regarding consumerism and Timothy Bewes' notion of Reification are all applied to the novel Cloud Atlas. In addition to ideology, the major themes of the novel such as oppression, exploitation, struggle for change, reincarnation, hope and persistence are also touched on. It is also demonstrated how each narrative in Cloud Atlas manages to convey similar themes despite the serious differences in content, setting and genre.

The ideological study is then followed by the semiotic analysis of the novel in general and the analysis of the novel's semiotic signs in detail. Consisting of six different narratives, a brief outline of the novel's narrative structure is presented and

scrutinised using the semiotic approach. This complex, Russian Doll type of postmodern structure is associated with the notion of fragmentation, which is in its turn related to the novel's main and most dominant themes of oppression and struggle to achieve change in the world order. To that end, the specific signs, icons and symbols that have been implicitly made use of in the novel are thus exposed and explained thoroughly. Moreover, covert references made to other major works of literature such as <u>Fahrenheit 451</u>, <u>Fight Club</u> and <u>Brave New World</u> are also described in detail. In addition to the semiotic elements, <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is also analysed from a linguistic perspective where it is demonstrated how the use of specific language helps to contribute to the novel's general themes and ideological content.

Naturally, after the novel was released, various articles and theses had been written on <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. A noteworthy Master of Arts thesis written on the novel is called "David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u>: "Revolutionary or Gimmicky?"" by Sarah Jane Johnston-Ellis at Massey University, New Zealand. This particular thesis focuses on themes such as Nietzsche's Will to Power, predation, eternal recurrence and studies intertextual elements within <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. Another notable article written by Sandrine Sorlin in Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American studies of Université Paul Valéry- Montpellier III is called "A Linguistic Approach to David Mitchell's Science-Fiction Stories in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>." This article effectively analyses the science-fiction stories from a linguistic perspective. Lastly, a different article published in the Journal of Religion and film of the University of Edinburgh, Ting Guo studies and questions the phenomenon of reincarnation in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. In addition, A. Fuat Firat analyses the notion of fragmentation in his article "Postmodernism and the marketing imaginary". These creative and thought-provoking articles and theses are made use of and thus referred to in this thesis.

In short, the contemporary 21st century fictional novel of <u>Cloud Atlas</u> will be closely scrutinised and the semiotic signs which the novel contains related to Marxist and consumerist theory will be meticulously exposed in this study.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**MARXIST THEORY**

Marxism is known as the ground-breaking political, philosophical and economic theory of the 19ᵗʰ century. Put forward by German philosophers Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820-1895), Marxism is a broad worldview that aims to do away with capitalism and establish a classless society. Up until our modern times, Marxism has deeply influenced and shaped our societies. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels, 2002: 219). According to Marx, back in earlier times, there were many different classes within the societies. In ancient Rome, there were the knights, the plebeians, the patricians, the slaves and in the middle ages there were feudal lords, serfs, apprentices, vassals, journeymen and guild-masters (Marx & Engels, 2002: 219). Thus, the classification within the classes has always existed in the form of social ranks. The classification of upper vs. lower classes has always existed. Despite this, efforts were made to change this duality. In Elizabethan England a new class by the name of Yeoman came to exist. The Yeomen were a middleclass between the peasants and the nobility who were similar to the peasants but free land-owners whom acted as an intermediary group between the landlords and the peasants and also not only contributed significantly to the wars against the French but also lead the peasants to become dissatisfied in time (Fletcher, 1919: 26).

However, up until the 19ᵗʰ century, most of these classifications vanished and all the classes were split up into two new opposite fronts: the Bourgeoisie and the Proletariat (Marx & Engels, 2002: 220). By using the term 'Bourgeois', Marx means the ruling class, the modern capitalists, the owners of the means of social production and employers of wage labour and by the proletariat, he means the working class, the ones who are obliged to sell their labour in order to live (Marx & Engels, 2002: 219). Marx claims that the Bourgeoisie has become so powerful that it has taken under control the priests, the lawyers, the poets, the scientists and simply transformed them into mere workers and it has even taken hold of the family and simplified family relations into money relations (Marx & Engels, 2002: 222). In addition to that, the Bourgeoisie also constantly keeps changing the means of production and thereby

changing the relations of the society. In consequence, the Bourgeoisie shapes and dominates the relations within the society (Marx & Engels, 2002: 222-223). It is the one and only dominant force in the society that defines everything. On the other hand, Marx defines the proletariat or the modern working class and asserts that

as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class developed – a class of labourers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only as their labour increases capital. These labourers who must sell themselves piecemeal, are a commodity, like every other article of commerce, and are consequently exposed to all the vicissitudes of the competition, to all the fluctuations of the market. (Marx & Engels, 2002: 226-227)

Marx claims that since proletarians' labour is sold as a regular commodity and just like every other commodity, it is completely vulnerable to all the risks and hazards of the free market economy (Marx & Engels, 2002: 227). Thus, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are always opposed to each other and are in a never ending struggle. The relation of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is equal to that of the oppressor and the oppressed which in its turn could be interpreted as a duality of constant struggle.

The terms base and superstructure are unique in Marxism and possess a significant place in Marxist thought. As Marxism mainly deals with the economy and the shaping of the society through the economy, it is vital to understand the relationship between base and superstructure. The social relations between the people are connected with the way they produce their material life (Eagleton, 1976: 2). In earlier times, such as the middle ages, the social relations involved that of the labourers with the feudal lords. In our modern times, this relationship remained similar despite changing the names of the two opposing camps: the capitalists (Bourgeoisie) and the working class (Proletariat) (1976: 3). In short, the relations of production are called "the economic base" whereas from this base springs up certain forms of laws, art, politics, legal and administrative institutions which are called "superstructure" (1976: 3). According to Marx, all kinds of values are present in the superstructure including all forms of 'ideology'. In the <u>Dictionary of Marxist Thought</u>, the concept of superstructure is

not used only to indicate two dependent societal levels, namely the state and social consciousness. At least once the terms seems to refer to the consciousness or world-view of a class: 'upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life." … "Nevertheless, most of the time the

metaphor is used to explain the relationship between the three general levels of society, whereby the two levels of the superstructure are determined by the base. This means that the superstructure is not autonomous, that it does not emerge out of itself, but has a foundation in the SOCIAL RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION. (Bottomore, 1991: 45)[1]

As the Bourgeoisie controls the means of production, they also naturally help shape the superstructure of the society. Therefore, the dominant ideology of a certain society always belongs to the Bourgeoisie or the ruling class (Eagleton, 2006: 3). As a result, it can be claimed that the Bourgeoisie has tremendous control and power over the Proletariat.

While establishing the philosophical theory of Marxism, Karl Heinrich Marx was not alone. He had the loyal support of his political companion Frederick Engels. Upon their meeting in Paris, Marx and Engels decided to write a joint work. Both were deeply influenced by Hegel and were active in a group called The Young Hegelians (Marx & Engels, 2002: 50). Engels wrote many books. Among his most famous books is The Condition of the Working Class in England (1845). The book mainly examines the conditions of the English proletariat and the terrible effects of the Victorian industrial England on the working class (2002: 62). In the same year, Engels joined Marx in Brussels and worked mutually on their never finalized manuscript called The German Ideology. (Marx & Engels, 2002: 64) This was a noteworthy effort of the young intellectuals to differentiate themselves from all the other 'Young Hegelians'. Later on, in 1847, Engels wrote The Principles of Communism which served as a draft to the Communist Manifesto. Though it was written in a 'catechism' form at first, Marx and Engels later thought that it would be better to convert it into a manifesto. He conveyed this message to Marx in a letter where he uttered that they had better

think over the Confession of Faith a bit. I believe we had better drop the catechism form and call the thing: Communist Manifesto. As more or less history has got to be related in it, the form it has been in hitherto is quite unsuitable. I am bringing what I have done here with me; it is in simple narrative form, but miserably worded, in fearful haste. (Engels, F.)[2]

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[1]Original Emphasis
[2]Retrieved
from:http://webspace.webring.com/people/lq/qfish/EngelsFrederickThePrinciplesofCommunism.pdf, (accessed on 14.11.2013)

Engels had many radical views. On several occasions he expressed the need to overthrow Christianity by stating that: "The Christian world order cannot be taken any further than this." (Marx & Engels, 2002: 61) After the annihilation of feudalism and the rise of industry, western world-view dramatically transformed into subjectivity, individualism and this mainly resulted in the hegemony of property which Engels relates as the fault of Christianity and claims that Christianity goes hand in hand with the exploitative property based mentality (2002: 63). He makes the connection between theology and free trade capitalism by claiming that

it was necessary to overthrow the mercantile system with its monopolies and its hindrances to trade, so that the true consequences of private property would have come to light [and] the struggle of our time could become a universal human struggle… [for] just as theology must either regress to blind faith or progress towards free philosophy, free trade must produce the restoration of monopolies on the one hand and the abolition of private property on the other… Once a principle is set in motion, it works by its own impetus through all its consequences, whether the economists like it or not. (Marx & Engels, 2002: 63)

Through this quotation it is obvious that Engels is pleading for the need to abolish free trade and private property as he considers them to be the sources of all forms of discrimination.

The most prominent Marxist who contributed to Marxist theory shortly after the death of Marx and Engels was Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci was born in 1891 into a poor family of seven children in Sardinia, Italy (Gramsci, Hoare &Nowell-Smith, 1971: 24). Having serious health problems, Gramsci's spine was malformed and as a result he became a short, hunch-backed man (1971: 25). Later on, Gramsci received a scholarship from the University of Turin where he developed his political interest (1971: 27). Antonio Gramsci contributed greatly to Marxism. He not only formulated existing Marxist concepts but also developed new, distinct concepts.

One of the concepts he formulated is his theory of the State. In Gramsci's Prison Notebooks, he refers to the State as not an end in itself but rather as an instrument, an apparatus which Chantal Mouffe explains in her work, Gramsci and Marxist Theory as: "It does not represent universal interests, but particular ones; it is not a separate and superior entity ruling over the underlying society." (Mouffe, 1979: 24) According to Gramsci, there's no single definition of the State. Gramsci describes the State in the West as: "An outer ditch, behind which there stand a powerful system

of fortresses and earthworks" whereas elsewhere, "the State is defined as political society + civil society" and again "as a balance between political society and civil society" (Gramsci, Hoare, & Nowell-Smith, 1971: 447). In yet another passage, Gramsci points out that "in concrete reality, civil society and State are one and the same" (1971: 447).

Another significant concept that was further developed by Gramsci is his conception of Civil Society. According to Gramsci, the concept of Civil Society is not related to the structure (base) but rather to the superstructure (Mouffe, 1979: 30). In his Prison Notebooks, about the conception of Civil Society, Gramsci asserts that

what we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural 'levels': the one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or 'the State'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the State and 'juridical' government. (Mouffe, 1979: 30)

To give another example from the history, Gramsci points out that the church in the middle ages could be considered as a clear example of Civil Society as the church during the middle ages is conceived as: "The hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group." (1979: 30) For Gramsci, Civil Society comprises "the whole of ideological-cultural relations and the whole of spiritual and intellectual life". (1979: 30-31) Furthermore, Civil Society also embodies the educational system, political parties, family, media, sports teams, the legal system and even children's parties and shopping trips, therefore the broadest definition of Civil Society is stated as: "The ensemble of organisms commonly called "private" and thus, Civil Society becomes a matter of individual values rather than a matter of organized cultural institutions (Jones, 2006: 32).

It is worth noting that Gramsci developed his own concept of Civil Society not from Marx but explicitly from Hegel and he explains what is meant by Civil Society in Hegelian terms as: "The political and cultural hegemony of a social group on the whole of society, as ethical content of the state" and as a result, Gramsci's Civil Society is directly related to superstructural terms whereas Marx's understanding of Civil Society is related to the whole of economic relations or the structure (base) (Mouffe, 1979: 31-32). This is due to the difference between Marx's and Gramsci's conception of the relations between structure and superstructure for in Marx's

conception, the structure is the subordinating moment whereas the superstructure is the subordinate one while on the contrary for Gramsci, the exact opposite is true as he wrote in his Prison Notebooks: "It is not the economic structure which directly determines the political action, but it is the interpretation of it and of the so-called laws which rule its development." (1979: 33) In an article published in 1918, Antonio Gramsci put forward that

between the premise (economic structure) and the consequence (political organization), relations are by no means simple and direct: and it is not only by economic facts that the history of a people can be documented. It is a complex and confusing task to unravel its causes and in order to do so, a deep and widely diffused study of all spiritual and practical activities is needed. (Mouffe, 1979: 33)

Another concept that is associated with Antonio Gramsci is the concept of Hegemony. Actually, Gramsci was not the creator of the concept of hegemony as Lenin used the term long before Gramsci (Jones, 2006: 42). According to Lenin, the concept of hegemony is regarded as "the leadership of the proletariat over the peasantry" and it was accepted as a political leadership which was thought of in terms of a class affiliation (Mouffe, 1979: 179). However, it was in his article called Notes on the Southern Question that Gramsci first mentioned about hegemony where Gramsci also emphasized the fact that the working class was obliged to liberate itself from corporatism so that they could have the Southern intellectuals at their side (1979: 178).

Gramsci's conception of hegemony went far beyond that of Lenin's. The term is defined as: "the indissoluble union of political leadership and intellectual and moral leadership, which clearly goes beyond the idea of a simple class alliance." (Mouffe, 1979: 179) Thus Gramsci's notion of hegemony is different in the sense that it is much more general in scope compared to that of Lenin's as Lenin applied the term hegemony only to the proletariat whereas Gramsci used it in a general sense to refer to the dominant classes (1979: 179). About this notion Gramsci claims that

the following historical and political criterion is the one on which research must be based: a class is dominant in two ways, that is to say it is dominant and ruling. It rules the allied classes and dominates the opposing classes. (Mouffe, 1979: 179)

Gramsci goes a step further and relates his notion of hegemony to the role of the Jacobins in the French Revolution. He develops this and adds that

not only did they organise a bourgeois government, i.e., make the bourgeois the dominant class – they did more. They created the bourgeois State, made the bourgeois into the leading, hegemonic class of the nation, in other words gave the new State a permanent basis and created the compact modern French nation. (Mouffe, 1979: 179)

Thus Gramsci implies that the Jacobins transformed the bourgeoisie into a hegemonic class by force and therefore, it is Antonio Gramsci who for the first time applied the term hegemony to the bourgeoisie (Mouffe, 1979: 179-180). Gramsci thereby established the breaking off of the Marxist understanding of hegemony from economic roots and applied it to a much broader, general perspective. Gramsci describes hegemony as the moment that

one becomes aware that one's own corporate interests, in their present and future development, transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate groups too… Placing all the questions around which the struggle rages on a "universal", not a corporate level, thereby creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate ones. (Mouffe, 1979: 180)

This is vital in the Gramscian conception of hegemony for it is regarded as a comprehensive merge of political, economic, moral and intellectual objectives that will be presented by one specific group and groups allied through the dominant ideology when that ideology succeeds in spreading through the rest of the society and thereby manages to shape not only the political and economic objectives but also the intellectual and moral values. (Mouffe, 1979: 181)

After early Marxists such as Gramsci, many other Marxists followed in their footsteps and some even took their theories one step further by adding new concepts to their previously established doctrine. One of those renowned and respected Marxists is Louis Althusser. Born in French Algeria in 1918, Althusser was a notable Marxist philosopher who contributed greatly to Marxist theories. As a matter of fact, Althusser seriously developed concepts that were put forward by Antonio Gramsci.

One of his most noteworthy contributions to Marxism is his book called On Ideology. In this work, Althusser introduces many new concepts and relates his views on concepts such as law, state and ideology. Althusser claims the State to be a "Repressive State Apparatus." (1984: 11) By that, he means all the legal and political means that the State has authority over. He adds that the government, the police, the army, the courts and the prisons form specific examples to this concept. According to Althusser, the State uses these to strengthen the domination of the ruling class over the

working class. (1984: 11) He gives the massacres of the Paris Commune, the Bloody Sunday and the Resistance of Charonne as specific historical examples related to the Repressive State Apparatus. (1984: 13) Besides the Repressive State Apparatus, he adds another concept which he calls the Ideological State Apparatus. Althusser defines these and comments that

I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions. I propose an empirical list of these which will obviously have to be examined in detail, tested, corrected and reorganized. With all these reservations implied by this requirement, we can for the moment regard the following institutions as Ideological State Apparatuses: the religious ISA, the educational ISA, the family ISA, the legal ISA, the political ISA, (the political system, including the different parties) the trade-union ISA, the communications ISA, (press, radio and television etc.) the cultural ISA. (Literature, the arts, sports, etc.) (Althusser, 1984: 17)

Althusser goes a step further and states the differences between the Repressive State Apparatuses and Ideological State Apparatuses. Firstly, he claims that while there exists one Repressive State Apparatus, there are on the other hand multiple Ideological State Apparatuses. Secondly, he adds that the Repressive State Apparatuses generally belong to and function in the public domain whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses usually function in the private domain. All the institutions that generate and spread all forms of ideology are private institutions such as political parties, churches, newspapers, unions, etc. (Althusser, 1984: 18).

Another main difference between the two is the fact that the Repressive State Apparatuses operate by using violence whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses operate by using ideology as a means to reach their goals. (1984: 19) Althusser emphasizes that there's no such thing as a purely Ideological State Apparatus. In that sense even the Ideological State Apparatuses such as schools, families and churches have their own systems of penalization and each institution has its own form of punishment such as expulsions, censorships etc. (1984: 19) The Bourgeoisie successfully use both the Repressive State Apparatuses and the Ideological State Apparatuses in order to impose their views on the working class. Althusser claims: "To my knowledge, no class can hold State power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and in the State Ideological Apparatuses" (Althusser, 1984: 20).

All in all, Althusser relates the significance of controlling both State and Ideological Apparatuses and clearly emphasizes that without their presence, it becomes impossible to exercise long time power over the masses.

Besides these concepts, Althusser also gives a definition of Ideology as a vital concept. First, he states that <u>The German Ideology</u> written in 1845 by Marx and Engels does give us an explicit definition of ideology but that this definition is not a Marxist one. (Althusser, 1984: 32) Althusser also claims that any kind of ideology always expresses class positions. Furthermore, Althusser maintains through <u>The German Ideology</u> that ideology has no history for in <u>The German Ideology</u>, ideology is regarded as a pure illusion or a dream and thus, ideology is nothing else than an illusionary composition which stands completely outside positive reality. (Althusser, 1984: 33-34) It is therefore that Marx and Engels claim that ideology has no history of its own. To make things more obvious, Althusser relates this example to Freud's conception of the unconscious.

Althusser defines ideology as the "Representation of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence." (1984: 36) Just as ideology is an abstract and imaginary concept, it is appealing for humans due to its illusionary charm. Althusser moves on to his central thesis and asserts that: "All ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, by the functioning of the category of the subject" (1984: 47).

Althusser explains his thesis by stating that ideology operates in such a powerful way that it eventually turns people into simple, concrete subjects. It is at the end that ideology conquers and finally transforms people into mere subjects (1984: 48). This is what he means by the interpellation of the individuals as the concrete subjects. According to him, this process is finalized when the subjects recognizes him/herself. In the end, Althusser concludes that goodness prevails and that everything will be just fine: Amen – "So be it." (Althusser, 1984: 55).

All in all, having compared and contrasted Antonio Gramsci with Louis Althusser, it could clearly be claimed that both men's theories are closely related to each other. Gramsci's concept of hegemony results from the dominant grip upon the Civil Society for according to him, those who control the Civil Society can easily become hegemonic and exercise serious power over the masses.

Althusser, on the other hand, by putting forward his concept of the Ideological State Apparatus, actually develops Gramsci's notion of hegemony. In consequence, Gramsci's concept of hegemony is relevant to Althusser's notion of the Ideological State Apparatus and their most common characteristic is the fact that they both mention elements related to culture, society and ideology. Establishing control of the bodies that determine a society's culture, ideology and religious views results in the exertion of extreme power over the people.

Thus, both men emphasize the importance of controlling the cultural and ideological elements in a society before grasping the official state institutions. In addition to their common quality, Althusser adds the next step in getting total control over the society which he calls the Repressive State Apparatus. These consist of official state institutions that enforce the government's ideology upon the people. When comparing Gramsci and Althusser to Marx himself, it is worth noting that both Gramsci and Althusser have seriously expanded and enriched Marx's theory of "superstructure" as both of these men's theories have been derived from Marx's notion of superstructure. Unlike Marx, Gramsci and Althusser believe that superstructure has priority over the base in shaping the society. Marx, on the other hand strictly asserts that it is the economic base which has great influence over the superstructure.

In addition, one of the most recent Marxist thinkers who contributed to Marxist criticism is Terry Eagleton. Being a prominent literary theorist and critic from Britain, Eagleton re-interpreted Marxism and theories belonging to earlier Marxists in notable ways. In <u>Marxism and Literary Criticism</u>, Eagleton discusses that Marxism is not simply "sociology of literature" but rather a means to analyse any form of literary work to its fullest extent and he also adds that the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel's philosophy had a deep effect on Marx's own aesthetic thought (Eagleton, 1976: 2). Furthermore, Eagleton emphasizes Marxism's historical approach by claiming that the "originality of Marxist criticism, then, lies not in its historical approach to literature, but in its revolutionary understanding of history itself." (Eagleton, 1976: 2) Terry Eagleton defines ideology as non-understandable

unless we grasp the part it plays in the society as a whole—how it consists of a definite, historically relative structure of perception which underpins the power of a particular social class. This is not an easy task, since an ideology is never a simple reflection of a ruling class's ideas; on the contrary, it is always a complex phenomenon, which may incorporate conflicting, even contradictory, views of the

world. To understand an ideology, we must analyse the precise relations between different classes in a society; and to do that means grasping where those classes stand in relation to the mode of production. (Eagleton, 1976: 3)

Eagleton argues that this analysis may seem rather complex to the average student of literature but nonetheless vital in the analysis of a given work of literature (Eagleton, 1976: 4). In addition to that, Eagleton also mentions the theory of reflectionism and he claims that reflectionism has always been a deep interest in Marxist theory more as a means of struggling against formalist theories that entrap the work of literature within its own narrow scope, isolated from history and also argues that the theory that literature reflects reality is insufficient by giving an example by Berthold Brecht who mentions a concept which he names broken mirrors,  according to which art does not reflect the whole reality as it is but reflects a rather fragmented, selected form of reality (Eagleton, 1976: 23).

Eagleton also refers to early Marxist critic Georg Lukács who claimed that rather than just reflect the reality, art must reflect the distortions that are peculiar to modern bourgeois consciousness (1976: 24). Terry Eagleton then moves on to discuss the place of art within the society. He states in a Marxist way that all forms of art including books, novels, poems, drama, plays etc. and all types of artists such as authors, novelists, actors do not simply represent an artistic world view or consciousness but are also commodities that are being sold on the market in order to make profit and in order to make this more obvious, Eagleton quotes from Marx's Theories of Surplus Value and mentions the following statement: "A writer is a worker not in so far as he produces ideas, but in so far as he enriches the publisher, in so far as he is working for a wage" while on the contrary he also adds that Marxist writers and critics see literature as a form of social production and activity rather than just commodity (Eagleton, 1976: 28).

In another work called Marx and Freedom, Terry Eagleton discusses that Marxism is the best means for individuals to reach freedom. He also claims that in a capitalist society, the energies of the workers are converted into an instrument that serves as profit for a select few and in a class society, the individuals are compelled to transform all that is least functional about him/herself into a basic tool of material survival (Eagleton, 1997: 20). According to Eagleton, that is also the reason why Marx wants to create a society in which labour would be automated as much as possible, so

that individuals would no longer be simplified to tools of production and would become totally free to build up their characters in a more complete way (1997: 21). Eagleton continues by pointing out that

under capitalist conditions, however, objects are reduced to commodities: they exist merely for the sake of their exchange-value, of being bought and sold. And as far as that goes, any two commodities of the same value are reduced to an abstract equality with each other. Their specific sensuous features are thus damagingly ignored, as difference is dominated by identity. (Eagleton, 1997: 22)

Eagleton claims that Marx wants to annihilate commodity exchange in the economic sense so that production is considered for actual use rather than just as profit, so as a matter of fact Marx is after de-commodifying the human individual so as to liberate it from the pragmatic mentality in which it is entrapped (1997: 23).

In Why Marx was Right, one of his most recent books, Eagleton deals with the prejudice that Marxism is finished and done with. In this work, he argues that Marxism is the biggest critique against capitalism and that as long as there is capitalism; Marxism must continue to exist as well (Eagleton, 2011: 2). Eagleton attributes Marxism's decline in the late 20th century to socialists' lack of faith (2011: 6). He goes on to argue that new capitalism has created an extreme inequality in the world and that it is not Marxism which is outdated but capitalism itself (2011: 8-9).

Eagleton also deals with the argument that socialism is only good as long as it is theoretical and that socialism brought nothing else than poverty and misery to the common people and that capitalism too has brought blood and tears but only that it has survived enough to forget about all atrocity because capitalism has also increased poverty and weakened the middle class (2011: 12-13). He notes that

capitalism, to be sure, has bequeathed us some inestimably precious goods along with these abominations. Without the middle classes Marx so deeply admired, we would lack a heritage of liberty, democracy, civil rights, feminism, republicanism, scientific progress and a good deal more, as well as a history of slumps, sweatshops, fascism, imperial wars and Mel Gibson. (Eagleton, 2011: 13)

Later on, Eagleton states that markets are not peculiar to capitalism and could exist within market socialism and what's more, he adds that market socialism abolishes private property, social classes and all forms of exploitation and it transforms the power to the actual producers (2011: 23-24).

Another argument Eagleton deals with is the notion that Marxism is a form of determinism and that it deprives individuals of their liberty and dignity (Eagleton, 2011: 30). Two major doctrines lie at the centre of Marx's philosophy: "the role of the economy in social life and the idea of a succession of modes of production throughout history." (2011: 31).

Eagleton also explains that Marx's famous saying that all history has been the history of class struggle should not be understood literally as what Marx meant through this famous statement is the fact that class struggle is that which is most fundamental to human history (2011: 34). Marx also strongly believed that material richness damages our moral values and according to him, history is by far not a story of advancement but rather a cycle of oppression and class struggle (Eagleton, 2011: 40). He further adds that the material and the spiritual are in a constant struggle and that without the material, the spiritual cannot be achieved (2011: 41). In that sense, the material has priority over the spiritual. Eagleton also responds against the common prejudice that Marxism is a deterministic philosophy (2011: 44). He points out that

Marx appears to regard the advent of socialism as inevitable. He says so more than once. In The Communist Manifesto, the fall of the capitalist class and the victory of the working class are described as equally inevitable. But this is not because Marx believes that there is some secret law inscribed in history which will usher in socialism whatever men and women may or may not do. If this were so, why should he urge the need for political struggle? If socialism really is inevitable, one might think that we need do no more than wait for it to arrive, perhaps ordering curries or collecting tattoos in the meanwhile. Historical determinism is a recipe for political quietism. (Eagleton, 2011: 46).

Thus, Eagleton strongly asserts that Marx's philosophy does not indicate that people should simply stay at home and wait for the necessary conditions of communism to arrive (Eagleton, 2011: 47). According to Eagleton, there is no specific proof about the fact that Marx is a determinist while on the contrary, he has always been a defender of the freedom of human actions (2011: 52).

In addition, Eagleton remarks that Marx believed that Germany in his time needed to go through a bourgeois rule before it could establish the rule of the working class but later he seems to have abandoned this belief and became a fervent proponent of the "permanent revolution" (Eagleton, 2011: 56). In addition, Eagleton comments about the differences between capitalism and socialism and claims that capitalism is

not necessarily an evil doctrine due to the fact that it is based on several dualities such as freedom vs. barbarism and slavery vs. emancipation (2011: 59). He notes that

capitalist society generates enormous wealth, but in a way that cannot help putting it beyond the reach of most of its citizens. Even so, that wealth can always be brought within reach. It can be disentangled from the acquisitive, individualist forms which bred it, invested in the community as a whole, and used to restrict disagreeable work to the minimum. It can thus release men and women from the chains of economic necessity into a life where they are free to realize their creative potential. This is Marx's vision of communism. (Eagleton, 2011: 59)

Moreover, Eagleton remarks that socialism expresses a certain break with the present for history needs to be broken and rewritten (2011: 73). If all that is happened until our present time is to be considered as prehistory, we are very likely to find common characteristics of class struggle between the exploited and the ruling classes (2011: 74). Finally, Eagleton explains Marx's notion of equality and states that it should not be interpreted in the literal sense as taking care equally of everyone's needs is the standard criterion for equality (Eagleton, 2011: 104). In that sense, socialism is more pluralistic than capitalism. (2011: 105)

Having analysed Terry Eagleton's views on Marxism, it could be stated that Eagleton, rather than putting forward new concepts and theories, preferred to develop arguments related to why Marx was right and why his ideas are still relevant in our modern day. Eagleton does a great job by focusing on the argument that capitalism always acts with a pragmatist mentality and reduces everything to material relations, which in its turn results in major degradation of spiritual and humanist values. Eagleton affirms that Marxism is still the best response and alternative against capitalism and we ought to be thankful for it.

## 1.1. Consumerism: A Critical View

After a detailed analysis of Marxism and Marxist theorists, the contemporary concept of consumerism will be analysed in detail as consumerism stands out as a major criticism in one of the prominent narratives in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>.

Jean Baudrillard is one of the noteworthy Marxist thinkers of the 20th century. In <u>The Consumer Society</u>, Baudrillard claims that humans are more than ever encircled by objects because humans engage less with each other but a lot more with objects including goods, furniture, machinery, gadgets etc. and by living together with objects, we have changed our lifestyle and become more functional (Baudrillard, 1998: 26). He implies that we are bound to living with objects in our modern days. Baudrillard goes on by stating that in our present consumer society, there's an abundance of objects or commodities (1998: 27). When compared to the past, this is indeed the case as today, the abundance of objects is parallel to the abundance of production. In addition, he also makes the resemblance between the drugstore and the shopping centre as we know it and conveys that as a place of synthesis, the shopping centre is a place where all kinds of objects or commodities are "culturalized" (1998: 28). About this notion, Baudrillard remarks that

there's a café, a cinema, a bookshop, places to buy trinkets, clothing and lots more in the shopping centres: the drugstore takes in everything in kaleidoscopic mode. If the department store offers the fairground spectacle of commodities, the drugstore presents the subtle recital of consumption, the whole 'art' of which consists in playing on the ambiguity of the sign in objects, and sublimating their status as things of use and as commodities in a play upon 'ambience'. This is generalized neo-culture, where there is no longer any difference between a delicatessen and an art gallery, between Playboy and a treatise on palaeontology. And the drugstore is to modernize itself to the point of introducing 'grey matter'. (Baudrillard, 1998: 29)

According to Baudrillard the drugstore can transform into a huge town and that is the case when the shopping centre becomes a giant shopping centre where everything related to life and leisure can be found (Baudrillard, 1998: 29). He also adds that all human activities such as those related to nature, work, culture and nature are now all combined and equalized under the activity of shopping by which he means that shopping stands far above and comprises all the other activities (1998: 30). In other words, shopping has priority over every other activity and aspect. Furthermore, mass media in the consumerist society provides us with a distorted image of the reality

as we are living under the shelter of signs and images in full denial of the reality (1998: 34).

Consumption thus deprives us from reality to the fullest extent and it creates its own, consumerist reality. He tries to convey that this distorted, artificial reality is also an ideological one. However, this leads to everydayness and passivity (1998: 35-36). Jean Baudrillard notes that consumerism also leads to an immense waste of goods and commodities and he also asserts that waste which often takes on the form of destruction gives humans a strong sense of existence; stronger than any other action (1998: 42). About wastage he includes that

we have to interpret the immense wastage of our affluent societies this way. It is that wastage which defies scarcity and, contradictorily, signifies abundance. It is not utility, but that wastage which, in its essence, lays down the psychological, sociological and economic guidelines for affluence. *Is not the fact that the glass packaging can be thrown away the mark of* **the golden age?** (Baudrillard, 1998: 46)[3]

He also mentions the fact that wasteful consumption has become a compulsory system nowadays, something that is a part of the economic system but what's more, the consumer society needs to destroy objects and goods in order to produce them in excess and that is also the reason why destruction could be considered as the best alternative for production (Baudrillard, 1998: 47). So, the myth of happiness is defined as a concept which is related to comfort, which can be measured and which relies on individual satisfaction (1998: 49). What he implies by this is the simple fact that consumption creates an artificial, fake form of happiness. Thus, consumption exploits people's feelings by utilising fake happiness.

Taking into consideration the concept of "growth", he asserts that growth represents a function of inequality and thus, he implies that without growth, there can be no inequality as it is an imperative element in the establishment of an unequal social order (Baudrillard, 1998: 53). Baudrillard also analyses the notion of needs. He discusses the system of needs and emphasises that

the truth is, not that `needs are the fruits of production', but that **the system of needs** is **the product of the system of production**. This is quite different. By system of needs, we mean that needs are not produced one by one, in relation to the respective objects, but are produced as *consumption power*, as an overall propensity within the more general framework of the productive forces. It is in this sense that the techno-structure

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[3] Original Emphasis

may be said to be extending its grasp. The order of production does not `capture' the order of enjoyment (strictly speaking, such an idea is meaningless) for its own ends. It *denies* the order of enjoyment and supplants it, while reorganizing everything into a system of productive forces. (Baudrillard, 1998: 75)[4]

Thus, the system of needs is a created need, as well as a power of consumption of the consumerist society. Just like the consumption equals happiness myth, the need for consumption is also another created myth. Baudrillard goes on by claiming that the entertainment of the individual has become a mandatory activity nowadays and asserts that an obligatory, artificial form of happiness is the result of such personal entertainment which is regarded as a must in our modern, consumerist society and without this personal satisfaction, the individual will have been deprived of this enforced form of happiness and as a result, the individual will find himself in an infinite cycle where he/she will do everything it takes to reach maximum personal satisfaction (Baudrillard, 1998: 81). Humanity has witnessed the age of production and has now moved on to the age of consumption (1998: 82). Baudrillard comments on this transformation and asserts that

the themes of Spending, Enjoyment and Non-Calculation (`Buy now, pay later') have taken over from the `puritan' themes of Saving, Work, and Heritage. But this is merely the semblance of a Human Revolution: in fact, it is an internal substitution, within the framework of a general process and a system which remain in all essentials unchanged, of a new system of values for an old one which has become (relatively) ineffective. What could become a new finality has become, when emptied of its real content, an enforced mediation of the reproduction of the system. (Baudrillard, 1998: 82-83)

Baudrillard also points out that advertising is meaningless as it only transmits significations and the significations it transmits are never personal, but differential as the result of "the industrial production of differences" (Baudrillard, 1998: 88). What is meant is that advertising functions through signs such as prestige, style, luxury, wealth and therefore it is characterized by its sign-value rather than use-value as it used to be with Marx. As a consequence, the complete system of consumption is controlled by the production of heterogeneous versions of merchandise (1998: 89).

Additionally, Baudrillard mentions the machine as the symbol of the industrial society and the gadget as the symbol of the post-industrial society along with the notion that in a consumer society, anything could be considered as a gadget and it is not defined in functional or symbolic terms, but rather as "ludic" (1998: 112-113).

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[4]Original Emphasis

This concept is used in the sense of playfulness in very many areas such as play of variants, of colours, of elements, of mechanisms etc. (Baudrillard, 1998: 114). Related to this conception, Baudrillard gives the example of the pinball machine and points out that

the player becomes absorbed in the machine's noise, jolts and flashing lights. He is playing with electricity. As he presses the controls, he has a sense of unleashing impulses and currents through a world of multi-coloured wires as complex as a nervous system. There is in his play an effect of magical participation in science. To grasp this, one has only to observe the crowd which gathers around the repair man in a café when he opens up the machine. No one understands the connections and circuits, but everyone accepts this strange world as an incontrovertible datum. There is nothing here of the relation of rider to horse, worker to tools or art-lover to work of art. The relation of man to object is strictly magical, which is to say that it is bewitched and manipulatory. (Baudrillard, 1998: 114)

This argument of his could perfectly be related to the ludic playfulness of our modern day technological devices such as smartphones and smart TV's. Just like Baudrillard describes them, they are nothing else than machines but nonetheless they successfully contaminate humans with powerful signals of synthetic happiness.

Besides these, Baudrillard also reminds us that in the consumer society, one concept stands far above others: the body which is virtually present everywhere, in all types of contexts: cultural, spiritual, physical, sexual and has been represented in form of capital and fetish as significant investment has been made in it by advertising for it is deliberately used as a powerful tool for marketing in the consumer society (1998: 129). All concepts related to the body such as: fitness, slimness and even sexuality and eroticism are offered for consumption (1998: 144).

Thus, everything can be turned into an object of consumption and every single physical and emotional weakness of human beings is exploited to the fullest extent. Finally, Baudrillard touches upon time that has become a commodity and a sign in ludic exchange value (1998: 158). Hence, time is also consumed just like any other commodity (1998: 114).

Another thinker that has deeply influenced theories about consumerism is the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman. In his notable study <u>Work, Consumerism and the New Poor</u>, Bauman conducts a detailed analysis of consumerism and all the notions related to it. Firstly, Bauman defines the work ethic and claims that

in order to get something which one needs to stay alive and happy, one must do something which is seen by others as valuable and worthy of being paid for; there are no 'free lunches', it is always *quid pro quo*, 'tit for tat'; you need to give first, in order to be given later. (Bauman, 2005: 5)

Secondly, Bauman discusses that this definition is morally wrong because of the fact that settling for less rather than more is quite unusual and foolish because the activity of working is according to Bauman an honourable activity for in our modern society, working is considered good whereas not working is considered bad because no matter what the conditions and the results are, working is regarded as the normal condition of human beings while on the contrary not working is conceived as an abnormal condition (Bauman, 2005: 5). According to Bauman, people were compelled to add meaning to work by setting higher goals, developing themselves and improving their skills and performances as these objectives were set and controlled by others and as a result, the work ethic was actually about "The surrender of freedom" (2005: 7). By all means, the concept of the work ethic was just a means to control people and make them feel more inferior while the work ethic promoted growth for growth's sake (2005: 8).

Moreover, forcing the poor and the idle to work was rather moral than economic for they were seen as an unprocessed human material waiting to be processed and given the right shape, by which he claims that the poor and idle were integrated in to the system and in that sense taken under control (2005: 10). The work ethic had not only settled problems related to labour-supply but had also got rid of the need to provide for those who were in many ways different and who couldn't make ends meet and thus, the sick, the disabled and the invalids were in that sense isolated (2005: 11). The conditions of the non-working poor were disparaged so that the miserable conditions of the working poor would seem appealing (2005: 12). Bauman adds that the work ethic is a European invention whereas on the other side in America, it was "the spirit of enterprise and the desire for upward mobility" that kept the American industry running (2005: 20).

After having defined and discussed the concept of work ethic, Bauman moves on to discuss consumerism and he defines consuming as using things up, playing or wearing them to satisfy our very needs for consuming also means destruction for after the process of consumption, the existence of goods come to an end (2005: 23). After the definition of consumption, Bauman explains what it means to live in a consumer

society and conveys that the society in the modern industrial period could be labelled as a producer society due to the fact that this was a type of society whose members existed mostly of producers whereas in our present day society, it is most frequently labelled as a consumer society; based on the capacity of consumption (2005: 24). What he implies is that in earlier periods, it was production that was considered as the basic activity of the society while on the contrary it has been replaced by the activity of consumption.

Consumption in a consumer society needs to be fast and it needs to provide sudden satisfaction (Bauman, 2005: 25). In order to attain a maximum level of consumption, consumers must never be given the chance to rest and they must be continuously exposed to new enticements so that they can keep on desiring for goods and eventually consuming again and again. (2005: 26). Bauman then makes a crucial comparison between the producer and consumer societies and remarks that

in the industrial phase of modernity one fact was beyond all questioning: that everyone must be a producer first, before being anything else. In 'modernity mark two', the consumers' modernity, the brute unquestionable fact is that one needs to be consumer first, before one can think of becoming anything in particular. (Bauman, 2005: 26)

Thus, in a consumer society, one must become a consumer first before assuming any other role in the society (2005: 26). In other words, the act of consuming surpasses every other activity and therefore, being a consumer is the primary and indispensable condition of existence nowadays. The only way of demonstrating one's existence is through consumption. The consumer society also brought significant changes in the working career and what used to be permanent for life jobs are now transformed into flexible, part-time jobs (2005: 27). This is because consumerism has destroyed the concept of lifelong guaranteed jobs and has replaced it with pro-market alternatives such as part-time jobs and jobs with flexible working hours.

Furthermore, the desire for an authentic identity goes hand in hand with consumption for just as consumer goods are of temporary use, so are the identity and likewise, identities are there to be desired but in a short while to be consumed and absorbed (2005: 28). A society that is made up of consumers despises all kinds of legal limitations and regulations that are forced upon their freedom of choice (2005: 29). After all, abundance in choice naturally leads to plenty of consumption. It is at the end, the notion of having more choice that has powerful seductive power and this

eventually leads to more consumption (2005: 30). About the notion of the freedom of choice, Bauman asserts that

it is the means, not the end that counts. Fulfilling the vocation of the consumer means more choosing, whether or not this results in more consumption. To embrace the modality of the consumer means first and foremost falling in love with choice; only in the second, and not at all indispensable place, does it mean consuming more. (Bauman, 2005: 30)

Thus, the whole notion of the freedom of choice is just another trick to get people to consume more (Bauman, 2005: 30). Bauman further notes that production as an activity is a collective task whereas consumption is a specifically individualistic one which produces unique differences between production and consumption and, thus, "the individuality of choice and consumption" is truly celebrated and the freedom of choice boosts the individual satisfaction that lies deep within the consumers who are always guided by aesthetic concerns not by "ethical norms" (Bauman, 2005: 31).

In a consumer society, normal life is considered as the life of a consumer with the freedom of choice to consume whatever he/she wants in order to lead a happy life whereas the poor in a consumer society are defined as the ones who lack the capacity to consume and are perceived as insufficient consumers (2005: 38). It is this particular insufficiency that leads poor consumers to internal exile which

is one of the most frequent complaints of the unemployed . . . unemployed man not only sees himself as bored and frustrated [but] seeing himself like that (as well as actually being so) also makes him irritable. Irritability becomes a regular feature of the day-to-day existence of the unemployed man. (Bauman, 2005: 38)

The average unemployed person easily gets depressed and isolated from the society because unemployment and poverty lead to boredom (2005: 38). While on the contrary, in a consumer society there is no place for boredom as consumerism is against boredom at all cost (2005: 39). Bauman quotes from Freud and points out that the state of happiness is only a momentary feeling, experienced at the moment of satisfaction while immediately after that satisfactory moment, it is boredom that prevails as there's no cure or medicine against boredom whereas the only medicine that could be found against it is money (2005: 39). By this, Bauman implies that money is presented as the ultimate and undisputed solution to boredom. In order to

cure boredom, one needs money that has to be spent in malls, shopping centres, theatres, and fitness centres etc. (2005: 39).

Those who lack the necessary money are as a result unable to overcome boredom and as a consequence, being an insufficient consumer leads to a terrible feeling of shame within the individual (2005: 40). What individuals already possess in turn is disparaged by the ones who have more, therefore the rich become objects of universal adoration and richness itself becomes the object of worship owing to the fact that richness is what guarantees us a happy and pleasurable lifestyle and along with the fortune comes the freedom of choice which is also worshipped universally and which consists of the freedom to choose their partners, their place to live and the content of their lives (Bauman, 2005: 40).

Bauman moves on to claim that there has been a significant shift from the word unemployed to the word redundant and whereas the word unemployment included the negative prefix -un which is more commonly used to denote abnormality, the word redundant does not in any way possess any negative connotation (2005: 69). It should be remarked that

there is no hint of 'abnormality', of deviation from the rule, a transient nature of the current misery – and no suggestion of the absence of jobs being but a temporary irritant that will be in due course done away with. Unlike the 'unemployed', who are temporarily out of a job but are presumed to be 'employable' and are expected to return to the ranks of the producers once the conditions return to normal and 'are right' again –the 'redundant' are superfluous, supernumerary, un-needed. Either they were born into a society that is 'full' (that is, does not need more people in order to produce things and services needed for its continuous existence), or have become unnecessary due to the later economic and technological progress. (Bauman, 2005: 69)

Thus, the term redundant has no negative connotation at all for the redundant are living in a society which does not need more production since everything is already overproduced hence redundancy is tolerated and considered a normal thing. In addition to that, Bauman also mentions the underclasses and explains the terms related to them. By the term lower class is understood an image of people who stand at the bottom but may one day climb up while the term Underclass evokes an image of people that stand outside the class hierarchy and that are beyond class distinction whereas the term working class refers to the honourable working people who contribute significantly to the society they are living in (Bauman, 2005: 71). The conception of the underclass is more associated with the people who are visibly feared

in the society as they are the ones who are considered completely useless and comprise mainly of alcohol/drug addicts, beggars, the locked up criminals, the homeless etc. (2005: 72).

It should be noted that the underclass simply refuses common values and it only feels left out (2005: 74). By that, Bauman implies that the underclass is in a way isolated from the rest of the society and he also adds that people choose freely to belong to and stay in the ranks of the underclass and as a matter of fact, the ones who belong to the underclass are the ones who made the wrong choices (2005: 76). Moreover, the poor are considered as an enemy of the consumerist society (2005: 78). What Bauman tries to indicate is the notion that the poor are unable to consume sufficiently and it is due to that reason that they are not even accepted in the society. He asserts that

those who cannot act on the desires so induced are treated daily to the dazzling spectacle of those who can. Lavish consumption, they are told, is the sign of success, a highway leading straight to public applause and fame. They also learn that possessing and consuming certain objects and practising certain lifestyles is the necessary condition of happiness; perhaps even of human dignity. If consumption is the measure of a successful life, of happiness and even of human decency, then the lid has been taken off human desires; no amount of acquisitions and exciting sensations is likely ever to bring satisfaction in the way 'keeping up to the standards' once promised: there are no standards to keep up to. The finishing line moves forward together with the runner, the goals keep forever a step or two ahead as one tries to reach them. (Bauman, 2005: 79)

As a consequence, poverty turns into a criminal issue rather than a social problem for the poor are not only the rejected individuals of the society but they are the absolute enemies of the consumerist society and connecting the poor with the criminals leads to the poor being cast out from the list of moral responsibilities (Bauman, 2005: 82). In other words, because the poor are now associated with criminals, they cease to exist as an ethical problem of our community. This, in turn serves as a justification to leave the poor to their fate. This also counts for the poverty in the world. All efforts to save the poor populations of the world result in short-lived, temporary consequences and are eventually doomed to fail (2005: 85). Moreover, Bauman asserts that

the well-tried, trusty tool of adiaphorization comes into its own: the sober, rational calculation of costs and effects. Money spent on these kinds of people is money wasted. And wasting money is one thing which, as everybody will readily agree, we

cannot afford. Neither the victims of famine as ethical subjects, nor our own stance towards them is a moral issue. Morality is for carnivals only – those spectacular, instantaneous, yet short-lived, explosive condensations of pity and compassion. When it comes to our (the affluents') collective responsibility for the continuing misery of the world's poor, economic calculation takes over, and the rules of free trade, competitiveness and productivity replace ethical precepts. Where economy speaks, ethics had better keep silent. (Bauman, 2005: 85)

All in all, he emphasizes that economics has priority over ethics; numbers surpass morality which can be interpreted as another justification for the ongoing misery of the poor.

Having analysed both Jean Baudrillard and Zygmunt Bauman, it could be claimed that both men's conceptions related to consumerism are perfectly compatible. For instance, taking the concept of happiness in a consumer society into consideration, Baudrillard's views are quite consistent with Bauman's ideas. Baudrillard relates happiness to one's individual satisfaction and comfort whereas Bauman relates happiness to the freedom of choice that results from material wealth.

So, in consequence, both philosophers share the notion that individuals are manipulated through the created belief that material wealth and private property makes them happy human beings. However, both men agree on the fact that this created form of happiness is nothing but synthetic and temporary.

Another common point both men agree upon is the fact that our modern day consumer society creates its own artificial reality where all perception is turned upside down. Nevertheless, the main difference between the two men is the very fact that, mainly due to his sociological background, while Bauman was analysing consumer society, he also took into consideration the condition of the poor, the idle (the one who aren't able to work), the unemployed and the ones whom he called the underclass. Bauman one by one explains the different connotations that each of these concepts possess. He thereby explains the difference between terms that are very close in semantic meaning but are perceived and interpreted differently in our society. The contrast between unemployed vs. redundant and underclass vs. lower class are some examples related to this difference. All in all, both theorists are in harmony regarding consumerism's harmful nature upon individuals.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**SEMIOTICS**

Semiotics is defined as "the theory of signification, that is, of the generation or production of meaning" and therefore semioticians are interested in the generation of meaning and how meaning is conceived (Martin, Ringham, 2000: 117). The theory of semiotics is based on the notion that meaning is not integrated in objects but rather constructed (2000: 117). By claiming that, it is meant that we give our own meaning and interpretation to any specific object. In other words, when we are faced with something, we simply evaluate it with the knowledge and values we possess (2000: 117).

A simpler definition of semiotics relates the concept to the study of signs. One of the most recent contributors to semiotics, Thomas Sebeok defined it however as "the study of the difference between illusion and reality." (Cobley, 2010: 3) Sebeok also points out that "all living organisms communicate by non-verbal communication with the exception of some members of the species Homo Sapiens who are capable of communicating by verbal means." (Cobley, 2001: 14) Sebeok adds that

the expression 'by verbal means' is equivalent to some such expression as 'by means of speech', or 'by means of script', or 'by means of a **sign language**' (e.g., for use in a deaf group), that are, each, manifestations of any prerequisite **natural language** with which human beings are singularly endowed. However, not all humans are literate or can even speak: infants normally do develop a capacity for speaking, but only gradually; some adults never acquire speech; and others lose speech as a result of some trauma (e.g., a stroke) or in consequence of aging. Such conditions notwithstanding, humans lacking a capacity to verbalize – speak, write, or sign – can, as a rule, continue to communicate nonverbally. (Cobley, 2001: 14)[5]

Sebeok asserts that the term "language" should only be used in the technical sense for human beings only while on the contrary metaphorical uses of language such as body language, language of flowers and animals should not be used in the same context (2001: 14). According to another semiotician, Terence Hawkes, any kind of non-verbal form of signs including gesture, clothes, perfume, posture, accent etc. convey messages (Hawkes, 1977: 102).

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[5] Original Emphasis

The first scientist who contributed greatly to the founding of semiotics is the American scientist and philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. First and foremost, Peirce claimed that logic was not the foundation of mathematics but was rather beneficiary to mathematics and in technical terms, the subjects of logical analysis are signs and sign activities which he calls semiosis and which he associates with human thought (Cobley, 2010: 89). Hence, Peirce possesses a pansemiotic view of the universe according to which he points out that "all which is reflected upon has a past" and therefore considers man and human thought as a sign (Nöth, 1990: 41). Peculiar to Peirce is his universal theory of system of categories according to which he specifies three categories called "firstness, secondness and thirdness" and consequently defines Firstness as "the mode of being of that which is such as it is, positively and without reference to anything else". (1990: 41)

Furthermore, Secondness is explained as "the relation of a first to a second" and defined as "the category of comparison, facticity, action, reality, and experience in time and space: "It meets us in such facts as another, relation, compulsion, effect, dependence, independence, negation, occurrence, reality, result." Finally, Thirdness is meant to be the category of mediation, habit, memory, continuity, synthesis, communication, representation, and signs." (Nöth, 1990: 41)

As a result, Peirce interprets the sign and everything connected to the field of semiotics as an element of Thirdness. Peirce then moves on to explain his conception of the sign and defines the sign as a triadic process, consisting of three elements: "triple connection of sign (representamen), the thing signified (object) and cognition produced in the mind (interpretant)". (Nöth, 1990: 42) Therefore, signs are not perceptible objects but they are concepts that only exist in the mind of the interpreter, so they depend solely on the interpreter. "Nothing is a sign unless it is interpreted as a sign" and thus, Peirce defines semiosis as "this process in which the sign has a cognitive effect on its interpreter" and that is also the reason why Peirce relates semiosis as the proper object of semiotic study (1990:42). The Representamen is the perceptible sign, what other semioticians such as Ogden and Richards called the symbol, was for Morris the sign vehicle, for Saussure the signifier and for Hjelmsev, the expression (1990: 42). In addition to the Representamen, the object represents what is signified using the sign and finally the interpretant is regarded as the significance or meaning given to any particular sign (Nöth, 1990: 43).

Moreover, Peirce also formulated a categorization of signs according to three trichotomies and in the second trichotomy, he identified the most basic division of signs as "icon, index and symbol". (1990: 44) He defines these terms and points out that

an icon is a sign which resembles the object it signifies. A portrait, for example, is an icon because it resembles the subject represented. A diagram of a house is the icon of a house. (Martin, Ringham, 2000: 73) An index is a sign that is physically linked to, or affected by, its object. A knock at the door indicating that there is someone at the door is another example of a sign seen as an index. Pointing my finger at a dog is the index of a dog. A high temperature may be seen as an index of illness. (2000: 76) Finally, a symbol is a sign (signifier) whose relationship to its object (signified) is entirely arbitrary or based on convention. An example would be the word 'cap' where there is no causal physical link or resemblance between the sign (the word car) and its object. (2000: 128)

In addition, Peirce was also known to be the father of pragmatism. The term was first elaborated in a series of six articles by Peirce, that were published in Popular Science Monthly and which is further defined as "a theory of meaning understood as the practical verifiability of the **truth** of an assertion." (Cobley, 2010: 297)[6]

A second influential Semiotician who followed in Peirce's footsteps was Charles William Morris. Although he defined semiotics as the science of signs, the term science can be misleading as semiotics contains no commonly accepted theoretical assumptions, models or empirical methodologies (Chandler, 2002: 13). His most significant contribution to semiotics was related to the threefold subdivision of the approaches of semiotics (Nöth, 1990: 48).

Morris divided semiotics into three distinct categories: syntactics, semantics and pragmatics. Hence, syntactics studies the relation between a given sign vehicle and other sign vehicles, semantics studies the relations between sign vehicles and their designata, and pragmatics studies the relation between sign vehicles and their interpreters (1990: 50). In addition, Morris developed two categories of semiotic studies he called pure semiotic: the metalanguage that applies to all sign situations and descriptive semiotic: the study of instances of semiosis (1990: 50).

Having been influenced greatly by Charles Sanders Peirce's theories, especially those related to pragmatics, it can be inferred that Charles Morris' semiotic

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[6] Original Emphasis

theories bare great resemblance to those of Peirce. One of their most visible common characteristic is the fact that both Peirce and Morris relied on behaviourism as their fundamental approach (Chandler, 2002: 9). In The Routledge Companion to Semiotics, Paul Cobley adds that

in *Signification and Significance* (1964), Morris develops his interest in values in addition to signs and indeed he establishes a close connection between semiotics and axiology. The Word **meaning** has a dual meaning, not only the **semantic** (signification) but also the valuative (significance). At the same time, in this book Morris's semiotics confirms itself as an 'interdisciplinary enterprise' (ibid.:1) focusing on signs in all their forms and manifestations, relatively to human and non-human animals, normal and pathological signs, linguistic and non-linguistic signs and personal and social signs. (**SP**) (Cobley, 2010: 270)[7]

Cobley implies that Morris defined semiotics in a very broad scope and relates that signs should be interpreted in the most general sense possible.

Another ground-breaking semiotician is the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce are commonly regarded as the pioneers of the modern "science of signs". (Sanders, 2004: 240) The main focus of Saussure's work was based on developing a general theory of sign systems he called "semiology" (Nöth, 1990: 56). In his most famous work Course in General Linguistics, Saussure drew an outline of what was yet to become semiology and conveyed that

It is therefore possible to conceive of a science *which studies the role of signs as part of social life*. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology. We shall call it *semiology* (from the Greek *sˆemeˆıon*, 'sign'). It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge. (Sanders, 2004: 241)[8]

Saussure first separated language into two terms he mentioned as "langue" and "parole". (Sanders, 2004: 5) By "langue", he referred to the potential language system which is present in the minds of a speech community and by "parole", he means the actual utterance or speech of the individual (Sanders, 2004: 5). The Cambridge Companion to Saussure points out that these terms have been used so often that they

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[7] Original Emphasis
[8] Original Emphasis

have become "naturalised" in the sense that "language system" is used to convey "langue" and "speech" to convey the term "parole" (2004: 5).

Saussure strongly believed that linguistics was at the core of Semiotics as he formulated the dual nature of the linguistic sign by claiming that it was composed of "signifier" and "signified" (Bouissac, 2010: 93). What Saussure meant through this was the fact the linguistic sign had two aspects: the physical sound or image that is represented by the signifier and the mental image which manifests itself through the signified (Bauer, 2007: 45). To give a specific example, the word bird is a signifier because there's no relation with the set of sounds uttered to say the word and the flying animal it represents which in turn is the signified.

Thus, the semantic meaning of any concept is identified as the signified whereas the referrer to that concept constitutes the signifier. The signifier and the signified together make up the sign and this is exactly where the arbitrariness of the sign comes into action. According to Saussure, the linguistic sign is completely arbitrary because there's no relationship between the sign or word we use and the meaning it refers to, so words mean in any language what they mean for no other reason that the speakers of that particular language agree that they mean so (Bouissac, 2010: 95).

As a result, it can be said that there's no relation between words belonging to different languages for otherwise if the words were established by certain objective qualities that they signify, all languages would be somewhat alike (2010: 95). Saussure went further to assert that language was a system and thereby set the fundamentals of structural linguistics and added that

language is a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the others. [ . . .] Content is really fixed only by the concurrence of everything that exists outside it. Being part of a system, it is endowed not only with a signification but also and especially with a value. (Nöth, 1990: 61)

The speakers of any particular language seem to think of their mother languages as consisting of words whose meanings they already know and they tend to relate this connection as a one-to-one connection with the exception of homonyms and synonyms (Bouissac, 2010: 97). On the contrary, when we decide to learn a second language, we suddenly realise that there is not always one-to-one connection between

words of the two languages as these words do not possess the same value in their particular languages (2010: 97). A specific example related to this was given by Saussure with the words sheep and mutton compared to the French word mouton for the English words have different meanings and refer to different objects whereas the French word includes all meanings and does not possess this semantic difference (2010: 97). Regarding the notion of value and signification, Paul Bouissac claims that

The value of each category of the pieces is determined by opposition to all the other categories with respect to their degrees and directions of mobility according to arbitrary rules. […] The whole system can be described as a set of relations between relations. This image, admittedly a simplification of the overwhelming complexity of language, leads us to try and specify how Saussure adumbrated his general conception of the *langue*, or language system of particular languages, and how he envisioned the representation of such a system in general that would be valid for all languages and constitute a definitive linguistic theory based on the notion of differential values. (Bouissac, 2010: 98)

Saussure's linguistic system which is referred to as the dyadic system can be compared and contrasted to Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic system. It could be claimed that both semiotic systems are similar in the sense that Peirce's object has its equivalent in Saussure's signified whereas Peirce's sign or representamen stands for Saussure's signifier. So, compared to each other, Peirce adds to his theory the factor of the interpretant or the cognition produced in the mind.

As a result of this comparison, we can clearly draw the conclusion that according to Peirce's theory, the interpretation of the sign by the individual gains enormous significance for it is according to this interpretation that the mind forms its meaning about the respective sign. Saussure on the other hand leaves out the issue of interpretation and sticks to the distinction of the signifier and the signified. Despite this similarity, there's on the other hand, in general terms, a significant difference between the two Semioticians. This difference is related to the fact that Peirce's triadic system connotes a more theoretical philosophy whereas Saussure's dyadic system and other conceptions related to semiotics form a rational, structural and systematic approach (Cobley, 2010: 104).

It is due to this differentiation that semiotics is separated into Saussurian and Peircian semiotics and from this distinction results two different traditions: Louis Hjelmslev, Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Julia Kristeva, Christian Metz and Jean Baudrillard belong to the semiological tradition of Saussure whereas Charles

William Morris, Ivor A. Richards, Charles K. Ogden and Thomas Sebeok are in the semiotic tradition of Charles Sanders Peirce (Chandler, 2002: 14).

However, the leading semiotician who, in his own way merged these two traditions is the renowned Italian author Umberto Eco who is regarded as the world's most famous semiotician due to his best-seller novel <u>The Name of the Rose</u>. According to Eco, semiotics is a field which "studies all cultural processes as *processes of communication"*. (Nöth, 1990: 326)[9] Eco rejects the ontological perspective of semiotics and defines semiotics in his own way and proclaims

to define as a sign everything that, on the grounds of a previously established convention, can be taken as something standing for something else. In other terms I would like to accept the definition proposed by Morris (1938) according to which "something is a sign only because it is interpreted as a sign of something by some interpreter… Semiotics, then is not concerned with the study of a particular kind of objects, but with ordinary objects insofar (and only insofar) as they participate in semiosis". The only modification I would introduce into Morris's definition is that the interpretation by an interpreter, which would seem to characterize a sign, must be understood as the *possible* interpretation of by a *possible* interpreter. (Eco, 1976: 16)[10]

Eco also touches upon the significance of the code in the process of signification. The meaning of this term has been discussed by many philosophers and interpreted as "linguistics competence, a language, a system of rules, world knowledge or encyclopedic competence, a set of pragmatic norms and so on." (Eco, 1984: 164) Eco himself on the other hand goes on by claiming that the term code is nothing else than a metaphor which points out the familiarities among diverse concepts (1984: 165). Thus, a code serves the function of a tool that associates the sign and its content and as a result codes are vital in our daily communication as there are as many codes as there are subject matters and occupations such as the codes of medical semiotics, legal semiotics etc. (Guillemette & Cossette, 2006)[11]

Furthermore, Eco strongly points out that semiotics is an interdisciplinary field and a continuing process of cognition that relies on our experiences and cultural proficiency by meticulously blending linguistics with philosophy and literary theory (Cobley, 2010: 211). It is exactly this interdisciplinarity that helped to shape Eco's

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[9] Original Emphasis
[10] Original Emphasis
[11] Retrieved from
http://www.signosemio.com/eco/semiotic-process-and-classification-of-signs.asp
(accessed on: 25.01.2014)

views related to semiotics in general and caused to establish his unique style, distinct from other semioticians such as Peirce and Saussure.

In his work, <u>The Absent Structure</u>, Eco seriously criticized the fundamentals of structuralism and blames structuralists for their effort to discover structure and relating them with the status of objective reality (Nöth, 1990: 326). Eco interprets and utilizes the concept of structure only for the sake of determining the semantic meaning in the process of communication. He claims that the subject matter of semiotics is semiosis and defines semiosis by asserting that

semiosis is the process by which empirical subjects communicate, communication processes being made possible by the organization of signification systems. Empirical subjects, from a semiotic point of view, can only be defined and isolated as manifestation of this double (systematic and processual) aspect of semiotics. This is not a metaphysical statement but a methodological one; physics knows Caesar and Brutus as spatio-temporal events defined by an interrelationship of elementary particles and must not be concerned with the motivation of their acts, nor with ethical evaluation of the result of these acts. Semiotics treats subjects of semiosic acts in the same way: either they can be defined in terms of semiotic structures – or from this point of view – they do not exist at all. (Eco, 1976: 316)

By defining semiosis, Umberto Eco reveals one of his most common qualities with Charles Sanders Peirce which is the concept of unlimited semiosis. Having been greatly influenced by Peirce, Eco also shares the view that the process of semiosis is a virtually infinite one which can be repeated in an endless cycle. In other words, as signs can have unlimited meanings, their interpretation also can continue in a virtually unlimited manner. This is due to the fact that signs and their content are interrelated. For instance, the sign green as in the traffic sign signifies go for every common driver or pedestrian, the sign go can be related with the sign drive which in its turn can be related with the sign stop the car and so on. This endless relation of signs results in a complete stream of knowledge which Eco calls encyclopedia. Therefore, semiosis should be considered in its broadest, cultural sense, not only in a linguistic manner (Desogus, 2012: 512). In his article, "The encyclopedia in Umberto Eco's Semiotics", Paul Desogus notes that

the global encyclopedia is an uncoordinated system that collects the knowledge of different epochs and cultures. […]The global encyclopedia does not distinguish good knowledge from bad knowledge: it registers what can be articulated in the content of a sign in all possible contexts. Indeed, according to Eco, semiotics studies the processes of signification of all kinds of texts, including those that lie or contradict scientific knowledge. In fact, for Eco, semiosis does not necessarily reflect any universal truth.

Signs have a conventional nature; they don't reflect reality and, thus, they can also be used to lie (Eco 1976: 7). In semiotic terms, good and bad knowledge, truth and lie are semiotic constructions that refer to a specific local encyclopedia and depend on a negotiation among the members of a linguistic community. (Desogus, 2012: 512).

Thus, Eco emphasizes that signs do not necessarily have to reflect the universal truth; they might as well be incorrect or simply based on false or incorrect information. Moreover, Eco's encyclopedia is a basic tool which allows us to determine the cultural forms that set up the structure of every kind of semiotic object of analysis and which helps us to confirm the rightness of the sign-function (2012: 520).

All in all, having discussed and analysed Peirce, Morris, Saussure and Eco's theories related to semiotics, it can be concluded that Peirce and Morris laid the foundations of semiotics in philosophical and pragmatic terms, whereas Ferdinand de Saussure established his own school which dealt with semiotics from a specific, linguistic perspective. Umberto Eco, on the other hand, is the unique semiotician who combined and developed theories of especially Peirce and Morris and thereby developed a totally distinct approach to semiotic analysis. What makes his semiotic analysis so unique is the fact that Eco not only relies on words or linguistic elements as the subject of semiotic analysis, but also on everything that is non-linguistic that signifies a code or meaning. It could easily be said that he has brought a more general interpretation to semiotics and thereby widened the scope of the so far quite limited field of semiotics better known for its linguistic and scientific approach. Applying this scientific approach to works of literature and to all culturally related aspects has been a new method that was first put forward by Eco and later successfully followed by others. He was the first author who demonstrated to the world that semiotics was a perfectly relevant method for works of literature. Therefore, thanks to Umberto Eco, semiotics has gained a general and more cultural interpretation and application.

To sum up, many prominent philosophers and theoreticians have contributed to the creation and development of semiotics and from two main schools of semiotics, there rose Umberto Eco's distinctive interpretative semiotics which will be applied to the novel. Hence, in the following chapter, David Mitchell's ground-breaking, postmodern novel Cloud Atlas is studied in the light of Marxist and semiotic theories to point out to which degree the novel is equipped with semiotic signs of Marxist connotation.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**CLOUD ATLAS**

David Mitchell's <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is an exemplary postmodern work which combines six different stories and unites them into one grand story that eventually provides us with the summary of humanity's so far known past and probable future. Set in a tremendously wide scope between the 19th century and the post-apocalyptic era, Mitchell recounts stories of disparate but yet similar characters living in different time-periods. Moreover, the novel is so rich in signs enabling the present study to carry out a semiotic analysis in which the main focus will be on signs of Marxist connotation.

To begin with, an outline of the novel's plot and narrative structure will be presented herewith in order to analyse the novel's semiotic content clearly in the upcoming pages. As mentioned above, <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is a postmodern novel which contains six dissimilar stories set in six different epochs. Despite the fact that they are different, all the six narratives are interconnected through certain specific characters and elements that will be pointed out in the following pages.

As a consequence, through this narrative structure, there comes to being one supreme story that is composed by the meticulous combination of these six stories. It should also be mentioned that every story in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>, except Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After[12] is divided into two chapters. Thus, every story is told in two chapters except Sloosha's Crossin' and the reason of this is the fact that this story acts as the apex of the novel in terms of narrative structure. Sloosha's Crossin' which is set in the post-apocalyptic time period represents the utmost future and is therefore connected with elements from the previous narratives. Each narrative is written in a different form of a work of literature.

The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing is the first story which takes place in the year 1849 and the protagonist, Adam Ewing is an ambitious notary from San Francisco who is currently waiting in the Chatham Islands for his ship to be repaired. While on the island, Ewing sees a native (Moriori) slave, Autua being tortured and

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[12]The chapter "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After" will be referred to as "Sloosha's Crossin'"

empathizes with him. Later the ship departs on voyage to Hawaii and Autua secretly boards the ship and hides in Ewing's cabin. In the meanwhile, Dr. Goose who is Ewing's only friend on the ship diagnoses him with a chronic ailment and gives him medicine that will aggravate the illness. Later on, it will be revealed that Dr. Goose is a corrupt physician who is after stealing Ewing's possessions.

Finally after Autua is caught by the crew, the captain acts in a racist way and expresses the urgent need to dispose of him. However, Ewing does his utmost best to convince the captain to make Autua perform a trick that actually requires three or four sailors. Autua surprisingly succeeds in performing the trick and buys himself a ticket as a new member of the crew. Following that, just as Dr. Goose had mentioned, Ewing becomes ill aboard the ship and suddenly, the chapter ends as if it were a missing journal or diary.

The second chapter of The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing takes place at the end of the novel as the last chapter and is quite symbolic for it represents the completion of a cycle in terms of narrative structure. Thus, the novel begins and ends with the same story and by establishing that Mitchell completes his grand narrative which is symbolically structured in the shape of a repetitive cycle. In the second part of the story, Ewing is still aboard the ship and starts becoming ill again. Seeing hallucinations makes him psychologically weaker as he does not have the energy to respond to an incident that results in a sailor hanging himself from the mast.

Meanwhile, with his health deteriorating, he notices that Dr. Goose dismisses Autua from Ewing's cabin and Ewing thereby realizes that Goose actually has seriously evil intentions. Dr. Goose repeats his fatal motto: eat or be eaten and tells Ewing that he will be dead within an hour. Having realized that he has been poisoned, he is immediately saved by Autua the slave who acts quickly to eliminate the impact of the poison. Having been saved by a slave causes Adam Ewing to join the abolitionist cause. The chapter (and the novel) ends with Ewing's conversation with Haskell Moore, his father-in-law. To Moore's disapproval, Ewing informs him that he's leaving for the East to join the abolitionist cause.

The second narrative in Cloud Atlas is Letters from Zedelghem. It is present in the second and tenth chapters of the novel. Set in 1931, in the Belgian town of Zedelghem near Bruges, the story is told in the form of nine letters written by the

bisexual British musician Robert Frobisher to his friend and lover, Rufus Sixsmith in Cambridge. The story begins with Frobisher fleeing from a hotel room in London without paying the bill due to the simple fact that he's broke. He is in fact a brilliant music student who has been dismissed from school. After the hotel scene, Frobisher goes to Belgium to attend the renowned and wealthy British composer, Vyvyan Ayrs who is suffering from a fatal illness and is in a bad condition. His aim is to hide there and benefit from his compositions. After an audition, he is accepted by Ayrs and then meets his wife, Jocasta. After a period of flirting, Robert and Jocasta become lovers. Owing to his illness, Ayrs comes close to blindness and this makes it easier for Frobisher to continue his affair with Jocasta.

In the second chapter of the story, the medical condition of Ayrs has become worse and this ultimately provided Frobisher the freedom he needed to make his own music. In the meantime, Ayrs openly steals a refrain from Frobisher's Cloud Atlas which happens to be the name of one of his favourite compositions. Meanwhile, Frobisher meets Eva, Ayrs' daughter who's back from Switzerland and also starts flirting with her. Later on, things change and Frobisher and Ayrs gradually fall out with each other. After a dispute with Ayrs, Frobisher decides to leave the castle. The finale of the chapter is the letter where Frobisher describes his plans of shooting himself through the head. His suicide marks the ending of the narrative.

The third story in Cloud Atlas is entitled Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery. It is integrated in the novel in the third and ninth chapters. Set in 1975 in California, the narrative is written in the style of a thriller or mystery novel. A character that makes his second appearance in the novel is Rufus Sixsmith, the former lover of Robert Frobisher in the previous narrative. This time, Sixsmith appears as an old man, at the end of his life. Coincidentally, he meets a young journalist whose name is Luisa Rey in an elevator due to a power cut. The two start talking and Rufus tells her about his niece, Megan and about the fact that the nuclear power plant he's assigned to inspect as a scientist is actually unsafe. Then, Luisa goes to the plant and in Sixsmith's room; she meets Isaac Sachs, an engineer who also fears the plant's safety.

After a short while, Luisa hears that Rufus has committed suicide but is suspicious and thinks he is assassinated. Upon finding Sixsmith's hotel room, Luisa

discovers Frobisher's secret letters from the 1930s that Sixsmith was reading. On her way back to the magazine, she is suddenly pushed off a bridge by a hitman working for Seaboard Corporation. This marks the ending of chapter three.

In the ninth chapter, the fact that Luisa survived the assassination is now revealed to the reader. In the meantime, while Isaac Sachs, the engineer is flying back from Philadelphia with Grimaldi, the CEO and nine others, a bomb explodes viciously killing everyone travelling inside the plane. After surviving from the car assassination, everyone thinks that Luisa is dead and she agrees to keep it that way by moving in with her mother. However, Hester van Zandt, the head of an anti-nuclear activist group has a friend who betrays Luisa and reveals to Joe Napier, the head of security that Luisa is still alive and well. He meets Luisa and warns her about the dangerous situation. He doesn't harm her as Luisa's father was a famous police officer who had saved Napier's life. Luisa later finds out that Seaboard has been sold to another corporation called Trans Vision. This corporation then buys Spyglass, the magazine Luisa was working for and urges the boss to fire her. Not really surprised after everything that has happened, Luisa is later chased by the corporation's hired assassin together with Napier.

Finally, they manage to escape and Napier arranges a meeting with Sixsmith's niece so that Luisa can get hold of the report that proves the power plant's unsafe conditions. Later the assassin appears again and this time confronts Joe Napier. The two men shoot each other leaving two fatalities behind. At the end of the story Luisa and Sixsmith's niece expose the report about the Hydra project to the press and upon this, the Seaboard administrators are found guilty and convicted of crime. Meanwhile, Luisa requests the rest of Sixsmith's letters from Megan.

The fourth narrative in Cloud Atlas is called The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish and is written as a comedy. It appears under the fourth and eighth chapters in the novel. The story takes place in present time in the 21$^{st}$ century and mainly tells the story of a 65 year-old publisher called Timothy Cavendish. As a small publisher from Britain, Cavendish is a lonely man who struggles with debt. One of his clients, the malicious writer of Knuckle Sandwich, Dermot Hoggins attends an award ceremony where he suddenly gets his hands on the critic Felix Finch and throws him off the building. After this shocking event, Hoggins' book, Knuckle Sandwich

becomes a best-seller and this causes Cavendish to make lots of money. Still in debt, he needs money and his brother Denholme ultimately sends him to a place called Aurora House to hide near Hull. The next day, he realizes his brother's terrible prank and finds out that Aurora House is not a hotel but a nursing home for the elderly people. Trying to flee in despair does not work as the papers he signed were papers of legal admission which he openly agreed to. He attempts to flee a couple of times but is every time caught by the man-like nurse Noakes. In the meantime, he meets with other guests of Aurora House who try to convince him that it is actually not such a bad place. Despite everything, Cavendish is still resolute and focused on fleeing the place he considers to be nothing else than a prison for old people.

In chapter eight, recovering quickly from his stroke, Cavendish is trying to figure out an escape plan from the nursing home. In the meantime, he reads a mystery book that he has brought with him entitled: Half-Lives: The first Luisa Rey Mystery. He also makes new friends and meets up with Ernie and Veronica to chat and spend time together. While they are together, they also discuss their escape plans from the facility. One night, Cavendish secretly finds an available telephone and calls his brother's house. He is sadly informed about the sad fact that his brother drowned himself in the pool and that his wife, Georgette lost her mind.

Finally, they convince the rich son of a patient to come to the facility using the excuse that his mother is better now and wants to see him. Later, they tell nurse Noakes that Cavendish has died in his room in order to get her there and lock her up. The fugitives run out of the facility and drive away with the car that the rich son had brought to the nursing house. Despite a furious chase with nurse Noakes, the elderly group manage to get away. The group drives to the city and at the centre; they enter a local supporter bar where they are being followed by a worker from the nursing house called Withers. The chapter ends with Cavendish moving to Edinburgh and reaching his former secretary Mrs. Latham who gives him the great news that Knuckle Sandwich is soon to be on cinema and that money will be made from the film. Cavendish finally finishes reading the first part of the mystery novel starring Luisa Rey and decides to get in touch with its author with intentions to publish the so far exciting manuscript of the story.

The fifth and probably the most crucial story in <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. It appears in the fifth and seventh chapters in the novel. This narrative is constructed in the form of an interview between an archivist and a fabricant clone. Set in the distant future, in the year 2144, the story is written as dystopian fiction and includes most of the elements of science-fiction novels. This story stands central to the novel as it represents the last time period before the big downfall or the apocalypse that as we can understand from the last story has taken place sometime after this stage.

The setting is a united, consumer driven Korea which is governed by a totalitarian regime called Nea So Copros where corporations possess the ultimate power. The Unanimity is the name of the government which struggles against the underground rebel organisation called The Union. The society is made up of normal human beings referred to as purebloods and clones referred to as fabricants. Fabricants are genetically engineered and employed in the worst jobs possible as a serious work force. People are forced to consume on a regular basis and the society is strictly divided into strata.

Chapter five begins with Sonmi's testimony revealing that fabricants are the slaves of the future. They work nineteen hours a day, see no daylight and report to their managers called seers. Gradually, Sonmi's ascension begins to show itself as she starts questioning her life and becomes aware of the very tragic fact that she is just a product, a genetically fabricated slave. The next day, she finds out that she is the only one who has been woken up by the stimulin soap that is given to the fabricants through the ventilation. Suddenly, she meets a man in black clothes who calls himself Chang and tells her that he is there to get her out of the diner. Chang takes her to Taemosan University where she stays for six months and receives formal education. At the university, she is visited by Hae-Joo Im who takes her out to restaurants, malls and even to Papa Song, the diner where she used to work. At her visit there, Sonmi is bothered to observe her old surrounding which is an obvious result of her ascension process. Hae-Joo also takes her out to the movies where they watch a comedy called The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish. While watching the film, Hae-Joo's accomplice comes up telling them that professor Mephi has been caught. Upon this, Sonmi and Hae-Joo run out of the theatre to Chang who is waiting for them outside.

Chapter seven or the final part of the story begins with Hae-Joo's testimony to Sonmi about the very fact that he is a member of an underground anti-government organisation called The Union. Hae-Joo and Sonmi flee to a slum called Huamdonggil where they find a safe place to hide from the Unanimity's violence. On their way, they go to a place where fabricants are produced. Sonmi starts questioning why the Union would go into such trouble to save one common fabricant like her. Hae-Joo tries to give answers to Sonmi's questions and tells her that The Union is after revolution due to the simple fact that Nea So Copros is a corrupt society and because it is slowly ruining the planet by pollution, contamination and global warming. He also tells her that the Union is trying to establish an army of ascended fabricants.

Later, they arrive in Pusan, where they meet the Union leader, An-Kor Apis. Later, Sonmi is taken to Papa Song's Golden Ark by Hae-Joo. This is the so called place where fabricants are taken when they receive twelve stars on their collar, after twelve years of loyal service. Propaganda tells fabricants that twelve stars earn one's "xultation" in Hawaii. Sonmi and Hae-Joo enter a room where they see hundreds of fabricants waiting in line for their so called trip to Hawaii. In another room, they see a fabricant taken to a seat where she is put on a helmet that almost instantaneously kills her. Following this cruel ceremony, her body is taken by a machine to the next room to be processed. Shocked to see this brutal killing, Sonmi now grasps that everything she has been through so far was carefully structured and designed by the Unanimity. The death of hundreds of thousands of fabricants was thus nothing else but a regular stage in a vicious cycle. The two move on to the third room where they witness the savage exploitation of fabricants' dead bodies in order to produce more soap for fabricants and material to be used in newly produced fabricants.

Finally, Sonmi is arrested by the forces of Unanimity and taken away. She then realises that everything was meticulously planned by the Unanimity to show to the people that they still possess the power to crush any kind of unwanted fabricant uprising. Sonmi is put on trial and convicted to death by the Unanimity. Sonmi is granted a last wish and that is to finish the film that she started watching with Hae-Joo. Finally, Sonmi is executed the way all fabricants are executed. She is seated in a stool and put on a helmet which kills her silently but instantaneously through the neck. Sonmi has been killed and the Unanimity's evil setup has been quite successful.

What makes this chapter so vital to <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is the fact that it represents the climax of the grand story. It is the point in the grand story which takes place just before the Apocalypse. Thus, in terms of scientific and technological advancement, it is the era when humanity is at its ultimate peak. On the other hand, humanity has reached a disastrous level of moral and humanitarian decay which will eventually cause its inevitable catastrophic downfall through several nuclear attacks.

The sixth and final chapter in Cloud Atlas is Sloosha's Crossin' an Ev'rythin' After. This chapter will simply be referred to as Sloosha's Crossin. The story is also significant as in terms of the narrative structure, it is the middle story of the novel and unlike the other chapters, this story is not divided into two chapters, but written in one, single chapter.

The story is set in the distant future in the year 2344, following the fall. The reader is not informed as to how the fall happened but it is presumed that a nuclear holocaust took place which destroyed most of the earth's inhabited places. Through the post-apocalyptic setting, it is inferred that humans have gone backwards to a primitive lifestyle in the nature. Humans now live off nature in small tribes. The story takes place in the island of Ha-why (Hawaii) and the chapter is told in the form of a (verbal) narrative. Through the island of Hawaii, a connection is established with the previous chapter: An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. In that particular chapter, Hawaii was mentioned as a place of paradise where the fabricants would spend their time of xultation after earning twelve stars for twelve years of service. However, in reality Hawaii survives after a nuclear apocalypse takes place but is now far away from being a paradise. On the contrary, the island has become a nightmarish place of struggle and survival.

The protagonist, Zachry[13] is a member of the peaceful valleymen tribe who also is a young goat herder teenager. The valleymen live under the threat of the savage and ruthless Kona tribe. The chapter begins with Zachry seeing his father killed and his brother being kidnapped by the cruel Kona tribe. Zachry then reveals some details

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[13]Zachary also Zechariah: in the New Testament, the husband of Elizabeth and the father of John the Baptist. Meaning: Yahweh (God) has remembered. Zacharias: a Hebrew minor prophet of the late 6th century BC. and an Old Testament book telling the prophecies of Zechariah which are concerned mainly with the renewal of Israel after the Babylonian Captivity. (WEB_8, n.d.)

about his family and about the God whom they believe in, simply referred to by the valleymen as Sonmi.

As a result, it is revealed to the reader that Sonmi, who was just a fabricant clone in the previous chapter, has become a God in this chapter but no clue is given as to how and why this happened. Moreover, every year, technologically advanced group of people called Prescients come to the island in order to trade with the valleymen. The Prescients send a woman named Meronym to the valleymen and decide that she should stay with Zachry's family for one year to observe their customs and lifestyle. However, Zachry is sceptical about her and believes that she is some sort of a spy. Having heard that the God they believe in is not a God but actually a fabricant, Zachry begins having hostile feelings towards Meronym again due to the fact that she mocked his God and faith. Later, the valleymen are woken up by an unexpected Kona attack. Many are slaughtered viciously by the Kona and Zachry is taken captive.

After a short while, while they are camping, suddenly all of the Kona members are killed almost instantaneously by Meronym who has come to the rescue. They set free all the other captives and head back home. Zachry hears that Meronym is summoned by the Prescients and agrees to accompany her safely to the meeting point on the Northwest of the island. Before taking her there, Zachry intends to go through his village and after doing so finds out that the Kona had been there first, ruining the village and slaughtering everyone living there including Zachry's family. At that particular moment, Meronym offers that Zachry ought to join her, leaving the island forever so as to make a fresh start. Not having anyone left on the island, Zachry agrees to go along with her and the two set out to the meeting point on the Northwest of the island. On their way to the coast from the mountains, they are faced with a vicious Kona attack again. Ending up crossing a bridge, the Kona cause the bridge to collapse due to their heavy armour and weaponry. Thus, Meronym and Zachry get rid of the Kona forever and safely reach the meeting point where a kayak awaits them. The chapter is finalized with an open ending as with every other chapter in the novel.

In conclusion, consisting of six disparate stories, it is clear that the last two narratives are of vital significance to Cloud Atlas. Zachry's chapter is very significant for the novel as it represents the apex or the peak of the grand story. Sloosha's Crossin' and An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 are the two chapters that are of the utmost

significance to the novel's grand story. What these chapters also have in common is the very fact that both of them take place in the distant future. Both of these narratives provide a look on our distant future and provide a prospect of humanity's possible future. On the other hand, the previous narratives give us a review of past events experienced earlier in human history. Each of the narratives points to a common theme which is oppression and struggle. In each of the narratives, a character is struggling against an oppressive force. What is also striking about this chapter is the fact that humans have gone backwards in civilization and lifestyle. Along with primitivism, the level of violence within the humans has also increased which results in slaughter and cannibalism. Through the usage of open endings at the end of each chapter, David Mitchell leaves the door open for all kinds of possible changes that humanity could be faced with.

## 3.1. Marxist and Consumerist Ideology in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>

First and foremost, it will be revealed that the Marxist signs aim to criticise our modern-day consumerist society. Consequently, the focus will be on the dystopian story of An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. Set in the year 2144, in the dystopian society of Nea So Copros, in Neo Seoul, the narrative starts in the form of an interview between an archivist and a clone called Sonmi ~ 451. Corpocracy, on the other hand is the name of the official state ideology enforced upon people of all strata (classes). The term corpocracy is a term obviously created from the words: autocracy and corporatism.

Hence, this sign connotes the absolute, totalitarian reign of the corporations upon the society. With corpocracy as the official state ideology, Nea So Copros is an economically powerful nation of a united Korea and its surrounding areas. The sign Nea So Copros in its turn stands for a new world order that could be interpreted as New Corporatist Order. In this specific chapter, it is indicated that many of the world's territories have now become uninhabitable due to several catastrophic events such as floods and rises in ocean level. A dialogue related to this issue in the chapter adds that

Nea So Copros is poisoning itself to death. Its soil is polluted, its rivers lifeless, its air toxloaded, its food supplies riddled with rouge genes. The downstrata cannot buy drugs to counter these privations. Melanoma and malaria belts advance northward at forty kilometers a year. Those production zones of Africa and Indonesia that supply Consumer Zones are now 60-plus percent uninhabitable. Plutocracy's legitimacy, its wealth, is drying up. The Juche's Enrichment Laws are mere sticking plasters on haemorrhages and amputations. Its only other response is that strategy beloved of all bankrupt ideologues: denial. Downstrata purebloods fall into the untermensch sinks; xecs parrot Catechism Seven, "A Soul's Value is the Dollars Therein". (Mitchell, 2012: 341)

Thus, as with the other parts of the world left uninhabitable, Nea So Copros is now witnessing the same process. Mitchell puts emphasis on the deadly effects of the consumerist society on our earth and gives us the message that consumers will eventually end up consuming the earth which will result in the destruction of our planet.

Furthermore, the futuristic, corpocratic society of Nea So Copros implements a very strict class distinction which is simply referred to as strata throughout the novel. The word comes from the Latin stratum which refers to any social class of the society. A stratum is a sign used to convey discrimination and segregation within the society. There are many strata in Nea So Copros: xecs, lower strata (untermensch) and middle strata (seers). Since Nea So Copros is a consumer driven society, the strata are thus also based on economic power in general and the power to consume in specific.

Thereby, remembering Marx and Engels' famous saying "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" (Marx & Engels, 2002: 219). Mitchell fully concurs with this as he clearly points out that despite all industrial progress and technological development in the year of 2144, nothing much has changed regarding human classes. What was true and valid three or four centuries ago is still the case due to the fact that class struggle lies at the centre of human history. Only the names and the setting changes, the rest is just a repetition of history.

In Cloud Atlas, the themes of oppression and exploitation are strongly emphasised in all ages through different characters and settings. Among the many references made to this theme in the novel is

the first of 'Goose's Two Laws of Survival.' It runs thus, 'The weak are meat the strong do eat.' " ... Henry grinned in the dark & cleared his throat. "The second law of survival states that there is no second law. Eat or be eaten. That's it. (Mitchell, 2012: 508)[14]

Oppression is in general a theme that runs deep in Cloud Atlas. It appears in each of the stories as in each narrative, the protagonist struggles and strives for change against an oppressive force that is represented by the antagonist or antagonists. Surprisingly, some protagonists manage to succeed in their struggle for change where others simply do not.

In the first story, Adam Ewing struggles against an immoral doctor who is doing his best to kill him. Ewing's getting saved by a slave causes him to devote himself to another, greater cause: the abolition of slavery. Ewing survives the evil doctor and undergoes an immense change in character at the end of the narrative where he decides to devote himself to collaborate with the abolitionists. The second

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[14]Original Emphasis

narrative has Robert Frobisher as the protagonist. Oppression here is caused by the composer Vyvan Ayrs because working for the nasty, old man turns into a nightmarish experience for the young Frobisher as he tries to shoot Ayrs in vain and deserts his castle at the end. Frobisher's quest does not end in success for he ultimately commits suicide. In this story, the theme of oppression is touched upon within the scope of personal human relations.

The next story has Luisa Rey as the protagonist who combats the Seaboard Corporation in general and their accomplices (hitmen) in specific. The corporation's catastrophic, nuclear plans act as a major oppressive force against which Luisa successfully struggles and manages to defeat at the end of the story. In Cavendish's narrative, the protagonist, Cavendish battles against the oppressive force of the elderly: the nursing home called Aurora House. His staying there is no different than imprisonment as he quickly finds a way to escape the place. He too succeeds to escape and achieve success as it is also the case with Luisa.

The dystopian narrative of Sonmi is perhaps the most obvious one in terms of the oppressor and the oppressed due to the very nature of dystopian fiction. The fabricant Sonmi tries to overcome the forces of the Unanimity which she ultimately fails and ends up being executed. However, her name and legacy survives for ages to come. The last and apex story of the novel, Sloosha's Crossin' has a boy named Zachry as the protagonist who tries to survive multiple massacres by the vicious Kona tribe. At the end, Zachry does survive and flees together with Meronym. Hence, it is clear that no matter what the time or place is, each story in Cloud Atlas bears a clear reference to the theme of oppression. Another overt reference to the theme of oppression appears in these lines related to

power. What do we mean? 'The ability to determine another man's luck.' ...how is it that some men attain mastery over others while the vast majority live and die as minions, as livestock? The answer is a holy trinity. First: God-given gifts of charisma. Second: the discipline to nurture these gifts to maturity, for though humanity's topsoil is fertile with talent, only one seed in ten thousand will ever flower -- for want of discipline. Third: the will to power." … "What drives some to accrue power where the majority of their compatriots lose, mishandle or eschew power? …The only answer can be 'There is no why.' This is our nature. 'Who' and 'what' run deeper than 'why.'" (Mitchell, 2012: 131-132)[15]

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[15]Original Emphasis

Through these lines, the theme of oppression is analysed through the notion of power relations. The will to power which is an overt reference to Nietzsche's philosophy is what causes people to oppress each other for ages. Mitchell claims that it is in human's nature to exploit power but gives the covert message that it does not necessarily have to be so as this can often lead to serious catastrophes. The overt reference to Nietzsche's theory can be found in the lines where it is noted that

Another war is always coming, Robert. They are never properly extinguished. What sparks wars? The will to power, the backbone of human nature. The threat of violence, the fear of violence, or actual violence is the instrument of this dreadful will. You can see the will to power in bedrooms, kitchens, factories, unions, and the borders of states. Listen to this and remember it. The nation-state is merely human nature inflated to monstrous proportions. QED, nations are entities whose laws are written by violence. Thus it ever was, so ever shall it be. (Mitchell, 2012: 462)

What is meant in these lines is the fact that power is what drives human relations and that violence lies in the true nature of humanity. Trying to change this is futile for it represents the natural order of the world. This is the mentality of the greedy, capitalist world order. Human nature is questioned within this aspect. However, a possible and probably the only solution to the above mentioned Social-Darwinist, catastrophic world order is stated at the end of the book where it is acknowledged that

if we believe that humanity is a ladder of tribes, a coliseum of confrontation, exploitation & bestiality, such a humanity is surely brought into being… If we believe that humanity may transcend tooth & claw, if we believe diverse races & creeds can share this world as peaceable as the orphans share their candlenut tree, if we believe leaders must be just, violence muzzled, power accountable & the riches of the Earth & its Oceans shared equitably, such a world will come to pass. (Mitchell, 2012: 508)

Thus, the only possible solution is conveyed through these lines where it is believed that a peaceful, just and equal world is not just a dream, but a doable target which depends on humans' mentality concerning the best feasible order to this world.

Furthermore, as a postmodern novel, Cloud Atlas also possesses qualities of historiographic metafiction which was defined by Linda Hutcheon who claimed that

it is this very separation of the literary and the historical that is now being challenged in postmodern theory and art, and recent critical readings of both history and fiction have focused more on what the two modes of writing share than on how they differ. They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly

conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. But these are also the implied teachings of historiographic metafiction. (Hutcheon, 1988: 105)

Cloud Atlas is a typical example of "historiographic metafiction" due to the very fact that historical figures and events have been incorporated into fiction. (Hutcheon, 1988: 105) Throughout the novel, there are various references to historical events and figures as historical contextualization has been commonly employed. Reality has been represented multiple times through the use of historically correct incidents as well as characters.

The famous Russian novelist Alexander Solženicyn is one such figure who has been mentioned in the novel. Solženicyn was a Russian novelist of the Soviet era who was arrested and put into a labour camp for possessing and spreading anti-Soviet ideas. He then wrote about his many years of suffering in his now famous book The Gulag Archipelago. In the book, Solženicyn not only recounts the experiences of a prisoner in a labour camp but also touches upon philosophical issues such as freedom, oppression and ideology. He also gives literary references and remarks that

Macbeth's self-justifications were feeble – and his conscience devoured him. Yes, even Iago was a little lamb, too. The imagination and spiritual strength of Shakespeare's evildoers stopped short at a dozen corpses. Because they had no ideology. Ideology – that is what gives evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination. That is the social theory which helps to make his acts seem good instead of bad in his own and others' eyes.... That was how the agents of the Inquisition fortified their wills: by invoking Christianity; the conquerors of foreign lands, by extolling the grandeur of their Motherland; the colonizers, by civilization; the Nazis, by race; and the Jacobins (early and late), by equality, brotherhood, and the happiness of future generations.... Without evildoers there would have been no Archipelago. (Solženicyn, 1974: 173-174)

In this quotation, Solženicyn claims that it is ideology which is the driving force for people to act out and justify their evil deeds (1974: 174). Without ideology, totalitarian forces wouldn't be as determined and motivated as they have been throughout history. In Cloud Atlas, Alexander Solženicyn appears in The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish where Cavendish mentions Solženicyn's famous line: "Unlimited power in the hands of limited people always leads to cruelty." (Mitchell, 2012: 182) This reference is made in order to imply that oppression has always existed throughout the ages and that unlimited power always leads to chaos. Another reference to a historically correct figure is the man called Alberto Grimaldi. In reality, Grimaldi

was a famous Italian film producer who produced many famous films including The Good, the Bad and the Ugly, Last Tango in Paris and Gangs of New York. In Cloud Atlas, on the other hand, Grimaldi appears in Half-Lives: The first Luisa Rey Mystery as the CEO of the Seaboard Corporation. He is also in charge of the Hydra Project and owns Swanneke Island. He is also the man who is the political enemy of Lloyd Hooks, who eventually eliminates Grimaldi by sabotaging their plane and later on taking over Seaboard Corporation.

All in all, the reason why David Mitchell chose the specific name of Alberto Grimaldi is unclear. There are many more references to historically correct figures and events in Cloud Atlas. Slavery in 1849 is one of these and the rise of nuclear power plants of the 1970s is another one. To sum up, there are many more examples related to historiographic metafiction in Cloud Atlas for in this postmodern novel, historical truths are integrated into fiction.

Having analysed Antonio Gramsci's concept of Civil Society earlier, it is worth remembering that Gramsci defined Civil Society as "the whole of ideological-cultural relations and the whole of spiritual and intellectual life". (Mouffe, 1979: 30-31) He thereby included political parties, religious institutions, shopping centres, family, media and all these types of institutions as belonging to the concept of Civil Society. Consequently, in Cloud Atlas, there are many examples that could be related to Gramsci's notion of Civil Society. In fact, Civil Society can be observed in each of the given narratives.

In the first narrative, The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing, the ship in which Adam Ewing is voyaging is an example of Civil Society. Like every ship, it has a crew, a hierarchy and strict rules that every member of the crew has to follow. The ship even possesses ideology as it is the captain who is in charge and who defines the ideology to be implemented. As the time period is 1849, blacks are viciously exploited as slaves. The captain of the ship is persuaded by Adam Ewing not to kill Autua, who is a black slave on the ship, but to allow him to work on the ship as a member of the crew. As the captain is persuaded by Adam Ewing, he thus overrules the dominant ideology of the century and implements his own ideology by giving him a chance and sparing his life.

Another example of Civil Society in this narrative is the cotton plantation where Adam Ewing ends up in the second part of the narrative. The plantation, just like the ship, is an example of Civil Society which is governed by strict rules and a dominant ideology. In the second story, Letters from Zedelghem, the château Zedelghem belonging to Vyvyan Ayrs where Frobisher ultimately gets stranded is another example of Civil Society. As master of the château, Ayrs controls the château, including everyone else living in it. At first Frobisher, who is only working for Ayrs is left nothing to do but to follow his strict orders. However, this does not last long for Frobisher seeks his opportunity to overturn the struggle of power inside the castle.

In the third story, we are for the first time introduced to a corporate organisation whose name is Seaboard Corporation. The corporation, together with its vast crew of administrators, scientists, workers and illegal affiliations is a basic example of Civil Society. Despite the fact that some scientists share serious concerns about the nuclear power plant project, Seaboard Corporation does everything in its power to manipulate the truth and even assassinates the scientists in order to make sure that they would not stand in their way. Sending a hitman after Luisa is another effort by the corporation to eliminate all its opposition.

In addition, in The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish, Aurora House, where Cavendish finally gets stuck is an obvious form of Civil Society. The nursing home, along with nurse Noakes and other authoritative figures, the elderly people, its rules and legislations presents a serious type of Civil Society where Cavendish ultimately manages to flee from. The fifth story presents a state of the art, futuristic underground fast food restaurant as a major example of Civil Society. Papa Song has multiple fabricants working nineteen hours a day under the supervision of managers called seers. Fabricants are controlled strictly by Papa Song which sets the rules in this micro-structured world. In the sixth and last narrative of Cloud Atlas, Zachry belongs to a tribe of valleymen which share a communal lifestyle. The valleymen, with their shared belief, common values and strong type of solidarity represent another typical example of Civil Society.

Another concept that was stressed by Antonio Gramsci was the concept of hegemony. Gramsci described his notion of hegemony as the cultural, ideological, political, economic and ethical values of a specific group (Mouffe, 1979: 179). This

group eventually becomes dominant over other subordinate groups and thus has the ability to claim total control of the society by reshaping and manipulating other groups' values. There are thus many examples related to hegemony in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>.

The first and most obvious example of hegemony is the Unanimity in Nea So Copros. The Unanimity, also referred to as the Juche, is the name of the government and official ideology of the state. It is openly hegemonic for it sets the political and economic standards to be followed by every common citizen. As a dominant force, the Unanimity's criteria can neither be discussed nor changed by anyone else. As the Unanimity's official ideology is corpocracy, an extreme form of consumerism is thus applied to all the people. Citizens are thus branded with a microchip commonly referred to as soul. The people's consumption is thereby under close surveillance of the government as under the Enrichment Laws, they have to reach a certain spending quota every month. The Unanimity is thus the hegemonic group that makes the decisions and dominates the society, leaving out and even eliminating those who disagree with their values and those who support other opposing ideologies. In the end, the Unanimity creates a group they call the Union and set up a plot which contains an artificial underground struggle against their own authority. All this is done to demonstrate to the society how dominant and invincible they truly are. Sonmi comments about the hegemony of the Unanimity and states that

it is a cycle as old as tribalism. In the beginning there is ignorance. Ignorance engenders fear. Fear engenders hatred, and hatred engenders violence. Violence breeds further violence until the only law is whatever is willed by the most powerful. What is willed by the Juche is the creation, subjugation and tidy xtermination of a vast tribe of duped slaves. (Mitchell, 2012: 360-361)

As it is obvious from this quotation, what is willed by the most powerful becomes the law of the hegemony and ultimately becomes reality. Another example related to Gramsci's hegemony is the Seaboard Corporation in the mystery-thriller Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery. The corporation controls and manipulates everything and does all in its hand to ensure the final outcome of the Hydra Project which is in reality proven to be unsafe. In spite of all its hegemonic influence, the corporation's efforts end up to be in vain. In addition to these, the house of Haskell Moore, Adam Ewing's father-in-law, is another representative of hegemony because it exercises serious authority over a certain number of slaves. The house containing the family is dominant and holds the family's ideology above everything. Closely related

to Gramsci's notion of hegemony in the novel is the renowned Russian author Alexander Solženicyn who once claimed that "Unlimited power in the hands of limited people always leads to cruelty" (Mitchell, 2012: 182). Thus, it could also be concluded that hegemony always leads to abuse.

In addition to Antonio Gramsci, another prominent Marxist critic who has contributed greatly to Marxist thought is Louis Althusser. As mentioned earlier, compatible with Gramsci's notion of Civil Society, Althusser's concept of the Ideological State Apparatus[16] (ISA) is interpreted by him in a general scope as all of the culturally and ideologically related private bodies of the society such as the family, the church, schools, parties, unions, organisations etc. (Althusser, 1984: 17). As Althusser's notion of the ISA shares seriously common characteristics with Gramsci's concept of Civil Society. Thus, all the examples related to Civil Society in Cloud Atlas could also be provided regarding Althusser's notion of the ISA.

As a result, there are many references concerning the ISA in Cloud Atlas. In An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, the corporations that have a strong grip on the society are a clear example of ISA. They provide strong ideological backup for the government's (Unanimity's) Repressive State Apparatuses[17]. The corporations totally abide the laws that are put forward by the governmental authorities. The ISA function of the corporations is visible in this chapter where it is mentioned that

Huamdonggil is viewed as a chemical toilet where unwanted human waste disintegrates, discreetly; yet not quite invisibly. Untermensch slums motivate downstrata consumers by showing them what befalls those who fail to spend and work like good citizens. Entrepreneurs take advantage of the legal vacuum to erect ghoulish pleasure zones within the slums, so Huamdonggil pays its way in taxes and bribes to the upstrata. MediCorp open a weekly clinic for dying untermensch to xchange healthy body-parts for euthanizing; OrganiCorp has a lucrative contract with the conurb to send in a daily platoon of immune-genomed fabricants – not unlike disastermen – to mop up the dead before the flies hatch. (Mitchell, 2012: 332)

Thus, there are many more corporations in Nea So Copros. Each corporation specializes in a specific area and do their ultimate best to serve the governmental authorities. As mentioned above, MediCorp is a corporation which exchanges body parts for the ones who are about to die, the hopeless, downstrata people. OrganiCorp is

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[16] The term Ideological State Apparatus will be mentioned as ISA.
[17] The term Repressive State Apparatus will be mentioned as RSA.

another firm that collects useful organs to reuse them for the creation of new fabricants. Nothing is wasted in this society.

All in all, these corporations only exist as long as they conform to and serve the dominant ideology and laws of the Unanimity.

Another notion that was mentioned by Althusser was the Repressive State Apparatus. By the RSA, Althusser meant the political and legal bodies of the State which often exercise brutal force over those who oppose them (Althusser, 1984: 11). The RSA's thus function in the public domain whereas the ISA generally function in the private domain (1984: 11).

Having gained ideological support from the various ISA's, it becomes easier for the RSA's to exercise force over those marginal parts of the society that reject the government's ideology. The presence of the RSA's are obvious everywhere, especially in this chapter:

Hae-Joo led me to a stylish café platform where he bought a styro of starbuck for himself and an aqua for me. He xplained that under the Enrichment Laws, consumers have to spend a fixed quota of dollars each month, depending on their strata. Hoarding is an anti-corpocratic crime. I knew this already but did not interrupt. He said his mum feels intimidated by modern gallerias, so Hae-Joo usually works through the quota." (Mitchell, 2012: 237)

The government or the Unanimity is legislating laws to enforce their predominant ideology upon the people. That ideology is an extreme form of consumerism and in order to enforce it, the Unanimity is legislating specific laws such as the enrichment laws according to which people are obliged to spend a certain amount of money every month. Those who do not abide the laws that are legislated by the Unanimity are faced with ruthless sanctions and ferocious punishments. The Unanimity has police and paramilitary forces everywhere around the country, severely punishing those who don't abide their laws. All in all, all of the Unanimity's forces act as a form of RSA in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the contemporary English Marxist critic Terry Eagleton claimed in his work called Marx and Freedom, that Marxism is the best means for individuals to reach freedom and that in a capitalist society, the energies of the workers are transformed into a means that serves as profit for a select

few and in a class society, the individuals are compelled to transform all that is least functional about him/herself into a basic tool of material survival (Eagleton, 1997: 20).

Eagleton pointed out that

under capitalist conditions, however, objects are reduced to commodities: they exist merely for the sake of their exchange-value, of being bought and sold. And as far as that goes, any two commodities of the same value are reduced to an abstract equality with each other. Their specific sensuous features are thus damagingly ignored, as difference is dominated by identity. (Eagleton, 1997: 22)

Thus, Terry Eagleton argues that under capitalism, everything, including goods, services, and all kinds of labour are simply reduced to mere commodities and what matters for any given commodity is its price and exchange value (Eagleton, 1997: 20). The concept of commodification can be clearly observed in Cloud Atlas. In An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, everything is reduced to mere commodities and simply exists for the sake of their value in the society. As a result of this, all other factors have no importance but the value. It is the value (price) of every commodity that counts. All the other factors such as culture, identity, human rights etc. have no place in the corpocratic society. At the beginning of the chapter, Sonmi describes the a typical day of a fabricant and confesses that

a server is woken at hour four-thirty by stimulin in the airflow, then yellow-up in our dormroom. After a minute in the hygiener and steamer, we put on fresh uniforms before filing into the restaurant. Our seer and aides gather us around Papa's Plinth for Matins, we recite the Six Catechisms, then our beloved Logoman appears and delivers his Sermon. At hour five we man our tellers around the Hub, ready for the elevator to bring the new day's first consumers. For the following nineteen hours we greet diners, input orders, tray food, vend drinks, upstock condiments, wipe tables, and bin garbage. Vespers follows cleaning, then we imbibe one Soapsac in the dormroom. That is the blueprint of every unvarying day. (Mitchell, 2012: 188-189)

As Sonmi describes her daily routine, it is quite noteworthy that fabricants' lives have taken a mechanic twist. Each and every day for them is identical. Being genetically created clones, their lives, identities or emotions have no value whatsoever except for the daily hard labour they toil for their fast food corporation. The seers act as supervisors who ensure the preservation of this endless mechanical cycle. Thus, the fabricants are reduced to simple commodities in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451.

Closely related to commodification is the concept of "Reification." (Bewes, 2002: 3) According to Timothy Bewes, reification is simply defined as "the moment

that a process or relation is generalized into an abstraction, and thereby turned into a 'thing'" (2002: 3). It can be stated that reification and commodification stand very close to each other but the basic difference between these concepts is the fact that commodification refers to Marx's notion of product and exchange value whereas reification refers to a more general notion where concrete things are created in the favour of governments' political interests. It includes governments, creating their own enemies and wars. About this complicated concept, Timothy Bewes points out that

reification refers to the generation of a 'phantom objectivity', meaning that a human creation – an institution or an ideology, say – takes on the character of 'a force that controls human beings'. In the broader socio-political sphere, reification is what happens in every instance of racism and sexism when the objects of prejudice are perceived not as human beings but as things or 'types'. It is what happens in 'property booms', when houses are turned into investment opportunities rather than places of residence; or in situations of modern warfare, when a complex of competing state interests is represented as a force for 'good' in confrontation with a force of 'evil'. In each case, reification is the process in which 'thing-hood' becomes the standard objective reality; the 'given world', in other words, is taken to be the truth of the world. (Bewes, 2002: 4)[18]

In Cloud Atlas, both reification and commodification are clearly visible in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. In the corpocratic society of Nea So Copros, everything is converted into a product with a simple exchange value. Everything can be sold and bought as a simple commodity. Even dying organs and dead fabricant bodies have a certain value, nothing is wasted here. Economic activity thus stands far above humane values. Reification, on the other hand is also present as the Unanimity who controls every single entity in the society, creates a bogus enemy they call the Union. Along with that, they also invent a fake struggle which finally results in the humiliation of the Union's armed units.

The notion of reification is also present in the other chapters of the novel. In Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery, the powerful corporation called the Seaboard Corp. is reified through its manipulations to keep on with the Hydra Project that will ensure the construction of a nuclear power plant. The Seaboard Corporation thus exercises serious power over the government and the mass media doing everything possible to ensure the functioning of the power plant which is actually proven to be unsafe. In this chapter, a character named Hester van Zandt talking to Louisa notes that

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[18] Original Emphasis

the corporations have money, power, and influence. Our sole weapon is public outrage. Outrage blocked the Yuccan Dam, ousted Nixon, and in part, terminated the monstrosities in Vietnam. But outrage is unwieldy to manufacture and handle. First, you need scrutiny; second, widespread awareness; only when this reaches critical mass does public outrage explode into being. Any stage may be sabotaged. The world's Alberto Grimaldis can fight scrutiny by burying truth in committees, dullness, and misinformation, or by intimidating the scrutinizers. They can extinguish awareness by dumbing down education, owning TV stations, paying 'guest fees' to leader writers, or just buying the media up. The media—and not just The Washington Post—is where democracies conduct their civil wars. (Mitchell, 2012: 125)

This quotation openly exemplifies how the American corporations of the 1970s are reified and what concrete methods these corporation used such as manipulating the mass media, buying writers, making the media publish positive news, lobbying for their strategic aims, in this case nuclear energy, manipulating truths etc. to reach their ultimate goal. Reification is clearly visible in many other stories in Cloud Atlas where any kind of authoritative entity exercises power and pressure to gain political benefit and to accomplish their objectives. In the second chapter of Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery, Hester van Zandt comments that

I'd establish our country's rightful - corporate - empire. Because if we don't do it, the Japs'll steal the march. The corporation is the future. We need to let the business run the country and establish a true meritocracy. Not choked by welfare, unions, "affirmative action" for amputated transvestite colored homeless arachnophobes... A meritocracy of acumen. A culture that is not ashamed to acknowledge that wealth attracts power, and that the wealthmakers, *us*, are rewarded. When a man aspires to power, I ask one simple question: does he think like a businessman?" Luisa rolls her napkin into a compact ball. "I ask three simple questions. How did he get that power? How is he using it? And how can it be taken off the sonofabitch? (Mitchell, 2012: 420)[19]

Hester comments again about the reification of corporations and stresses how significant this is for the United States. He regards this as a very simple fact, almost as a natural phenomenon. Besides being considered natural, it is also necessary for in case the Americans do not engage in this, the Japanese or others will certainly do. Hester, thereby reveals the greedy nature of the western corporatists and attributes the so called benefits of reification to America, assigning it a national purpose.

He also mentions the term meritocracy; a term that was first put forward by the British sociologist Michael Young in 1958, in his famous work The Rise of the Meritocracy. In the book, a sociologist in the year 2034 looks back and reflects on the

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[19] Original Emphasis

past 160 years of education in the United Kingdom where he satirically deals with the IQ driven education system that came to exist in England during the years of war (Celarent, 2009: 322). However, Young implies that this system is doomed to fail and in general defines meritocracy as a system in which the merit of individuals would lead them to their rise as administrators and governors in the society (2009: 322). Hester van Zandt thus envisions such a meritocratic society where those individuals who have what it takes (intelligence, wealth, power etc.) control the society and its most crucial institutions.

In addition to Bewes, another philosopher who contributed to the Marxist criticism of the consumerist society is Jean-Baudrillard. According to Baudrillard's The Consumer Society, consumption deprives us from our real world and by distorting the actual reality, creates its own, artificial and distorted type of reality (Baudrillard, 1998: 35-36). Moreover, this distortion is an ideological one. The same is true for Cloud Atlas.

In An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, the society's official lifestyle is based on consumption. Citizens are forced to consume a certain amount of money on a monthly basis. As consumption becomes a lifestyle, people eventually get lost in this lifestyle and lose their own identities. In this story, nobody revolts against this consumerist order, on the contrary, everyone is caught up in their lies and lives in a world of consumerist fantasy. The Unanimity therefore gets obliged to invent an enemy they call the Union. Furthermore, the myth of happiness as mentioned by Baudrillard is also clearly visible in this chapter (1998: 49). People are forced to believe that the more they consume, the happier they will become. An artificial form of happiness is thus created in the consumerist society. Along with that, the need to consume is also created by the state or Unanimity.

Other than Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman is another influential thinker who shared serious views on consumerism. Firstly, he mentioned that being able to work is generally considered as the normal state of human beings whereas not being able to work is considered an abnormality (Bauman, 2005: 5). This is exactly the case in Cloud Atlas where the society is divided into strata and distinctions between the strata are very sharp. The downstrata consist of economically insufficient people who aren't able to provide for themselves and their families. They live in the slums, often close to

ground zero where the risk of a flood or other natural disaster is higher than anywhere else. The downstrata are also referred to as the Untermensch or the lower people. The untermensch are those who are not able to work and thus not able to consume which makes them inferior over others. They belong to the ones who have committed the biggest sin by not working and not consuming.

Working like a machine is a common theme in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. In each story, there's hard labour. The notion of hard work reaches its peak in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 where capitalism and consumerism also reach their ultimate peak. A French philosopher of the 20th century, Paul Lafargue defended the exact opposite in his famous work <u>The Right to be Lazy</u> where he argued that "in a capitalist society, work is the cause of all intellectual degeneracy, of all organic deformity." (Lafargue, 1907: 10) Lafargue also argues that in the ancient world, no free man ever knew the concept of hard labour and adds that

the Greeks in their era of greatness had only contempt for work: their slaves alone were permitted to labor: the free man knew only exercises for the body and mind. And so it was in this era that men like Aristotle, Phidias, Aristophanes moved and breathed among the people; it was the time when a handful of heroes at Marathon crushed the hordes of Asia, soon to be subdued by Alexander. The philosophers of antiquity taught contempt for work, that degradation of the free man, the poets sang of idleness, that gift from the Gods. (Lafargue, 1907: 12)

Thus, Lafargue argues that the concept of hard labour is actually a concept that did not exist during ancient times, a concept that has been created (1907: 12). The ancient Greeks did not labour, their slaves did and this time of art and philosophy flourished to become the antiquity. According to Lafargue, work is a burden for the free men, hindering and eliminating all forms of creativity (1907: 12-13).

In <u>Cloud Atlas</u>, as mentioned above, the notion of hard labour appears in every story. In two stories is the notion of hard work noteworthy: The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing and An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. Both stories share a common characteristic which is none else than slavery. In the Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing, hard labour is carried out by the slaves working in the plantations whereas in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, hard labour is carried out by the fabricants whom represent the slaves of the dystopian future. In a dialogue between Sonmi and the archivist, Sonmi reveals details about her daily hard labour and the archivist asks her

you have no rests? Only purebloods are entitled to "rests," Archivist. For fabricants, "rests" would be an act of time theft. Until curfew at hour zero, every minute must be devoted to the service and enrichment of Papa Song. Do servers—unascended servers, I mean—never wonder about life outside your dome, or did you believe your dinery was the whole cosmos? Oh, our intelligence is not so crude that we cannot conceive of an outside. (Mitchell, 2012: 188-189)

Sonmi's answer reveals the inhumane working conditions they are faced with every single day. Their hard labour is identified with torture rather than just hard work. Even a little pause to rest is not tolerated by the exploitative, corporatist employers. Workers need to be devoted to their work at every single second. This is exactly what Paul Lafargue predicted in The Right to be Lazy. Lafargue mentions children working in factories for twelve hours a day and claims that his epoch has been called the century of work whereas it actually is the century of pain, misery and corruption (Lafargue, 1907: 17). Sonmi's misery is no different than the ones Lafargue had described in his works.

A final theme that appears in Cloud Atlas is that of hope and persistence. These two notions are to be found in every story in the novel. As mentioned before, some protagonists in Cloud Atlas succeed in their quests whereas others do not. However, every protagonist attempts and does his/her best to achieve his/her goal. Analysed within the scope of quests, one narrative stands far above others: An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. Sonmi's quest is not only the most significant one but also the most highlighted one due to the dystopian and science-fictional nature of its narrative. Rafaella Baccolini defines dystopia as a bleak

depressing genre with no space for hope in the story, only outside the story: only by considering dystopia as a warning can we as readers hope to escape such a dark future. Both Winston Smith and Julia, the main characters of George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four, are crushed by the totalitarian society; there is no learning, no escape for them. But recent novels such as Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale, Le Guin's The Telling, and Butler's Kindred and Parable of the Sower, by resisting closure, allow readers and protagonists to hope: the ambiguous, open endings maintain the Utopian impulse within the work. (Baccolini, 2004: 520)

Indeed, Sonmi's narrative is a bleak, depressing dystopia that has an unhappy ending. Baccolini goes on to claim that dystopian fiction consists of classical dystopia and critical dystopia and states that

in classical dystopia, memory remains too often trapped in an individual and regressive nostalgia, but critical dystopias show that a culture of memory-one that moves from the individual to the collective-is part of a social project of hope. But the

presence of Utopian hope does not necessarily mean a happy ending. Rather, awareness and responsibility are the conditions of the critical dystopia's citizens. A sense of sadness accompanies the awareness and knowledge that the protagonist has attained. Instead of providing some compensatory and comforting conclusion, the critical dystopia's open ending leaves its characters to deal with their choices and responsibilities. (Baccolini, 2004: 521)

Thus, it can be asserted that the dystopian narrative of An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 falls under the category of critical dystopia as it implies the message of hope to the readers. Despite the fact that her quest was a setup by the authorities, her fierce struggle acts as an inspiration for all those who are willing to follow in her footsteps. Just as it is mentioned in this quotation, the unhappy, open ending provides to attain a collective awareness towards hope for change and hope together with persistence are notions which are insistently stressed in Cloud Atlas. Whether, people prevail or not, they should never refrain themselves from persevering and should never lose their hope.

**3.2. Postmodern Qualities in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>**

Taking into consideration <u>Cloud Atlas</u>' narrative structure, it can be put forward that the novel is postmodern in many ways. The novel contains six different narratives in the structure of "ABCDEFEDCBA" (Johnston-Ellis, 2010: 13). It is thus clear that six stories are embedded into one main, grand story. This narrative structure is significant for the novel's general, philosophical theme as like the theme itself, the novel's structure also draws a circle beginning from story A (The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing) to its middle point, story F (Sloosha's Crossin') and finally going the same way backwards and ending with the first story which is again story A (The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing).

Thus, the narrative structure is created in a circular shape, emphasizing a return to previous settings and creating an endless cycle. In his work called <u>Postmodernist Fiction</u>, Brian McHale emphasizes this type of postmodern narrative structure and remarks that

this ingenious transformation suggests something like a functional equivalence between strategies of self-erasure or self-contradiction and strategies involving recursive structures – nesting or embedding, as in a set of Chinese boxes or Russian *babushka* dolls. Both types of strategy have the effect of interrupting and complicating the ontological "horizon" of the fiction, multiplying its worlds, and laying bare the process of world-construction. A recursive structure results when you perform the same operation over and over again, each time operating on the product of the previous operation. For example, take a film, which projects a fictional world; within that world, place actors and a film crew, who make a film which in turn projects its *own* fictional world; then within *that* world place another film crew, who make another film and so on. (McHale, 1987: 112-113)[20]

Consequently, it is obvious that this postmodern Russian doll or Chinese boxes type of structure is visible in <u>Cloud Atlas</u> as each narrative is meticulously connected with the other. Just as Brian McHale mentioned in the quotation above, each chapter creates its own distinct world and setting. This is clearly visible in <u>Cloud Atlas</u> for each story takes place in a different time period and in a different place. Story A (The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing) marks the beginning and ending of the grand story. Story B has connections with stories A, C, D, E and most probably story F as well. The first connection B-A is established when Frobisher finds and begins to read the

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[20] Original Emphasis

first half of The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing in the library of the Zedelghem Château. He reveals that

poking through an alcove of books in my room, I came across a curious dismembered volume, and I want you to track down a complete volume for me. It begins on the 99th page, its covers are gone, its binding unstitched. From what little I can glean, it's the edited journal of a voyage from Sydney to California by a notary of San Francisco named Adam Ewing. Mention is made of the gold rush so I suppose we are in 1849 or 1850. This journal seems to be published posthumously, by Ewing's son. …. To my great annoyance, the pages cease, mid-sentence, some forty pages later, where the binding is worn through. Searched high and low in the library for the rest of the damned thing. No luck. ….A half read book is a half-finished love affair. (Mitchell, 2012: 64)

The second connection B-C is obvious to the reader as Frobisher and Rufus Sixsmith are lovers in story B, whereas Rufus Sixsmith appears to be one of the central characters in story C as well (Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery). What's more, in story C, Sixsmith reads the letters that were written to him by Frobisher during the 1930s. Later on, Luisa gets hold of these nine letters. The connection between stories B-D is a slight one as it is revealed to the reader that Frobisher has a comet-shaped birthmark on his body and so does Timothy Cavendish from story D. In fact, the comet-shaped birthmark creates a connection between all the stories as the main character in each of the six stories carries the birthmark. It is essentially symbolic in the novel for it represents the infinite cycle of actions that are caused by similar human figures in different time periods. It is a clear reference to humanity's endless cycle and thus also to the phenomenon of reincarnation. The birthmark appears in each of the six protagonists. "It helps to demonstrate the rebirth of a soul in different characters and according to this concept; things do not exist alone, autonomous or isolated, but instead through a web of interconnectedness." (Guo, 2013: 3) All characters and all actions happening through the initiative of these characters are thus interconnected and no action or character can be isolated from the others.

The B-E connection is rather obvious as Vyvyan Ayrs, the composer wakes up one night from a nightmare in which he sees an underground café with identical waitresses feeding on soap. This is a clear reference to the dystopian story of An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. The final connection in story B is maintained through a reference to the last story which is story F (Sloosha's Crossin'). As he was about to leave Zedelghem, Frobisher experiences a strong compulsion to cut Ayrs' throat while

he is sleeping but resists to do so. This is a reference to Zachry cutting the throat of the Kona tribe's chief in his sleep as an act of revenge. All in all, there are many more similar connections between the six chapters in Cloud Atlas.

This typically postmodern Russian Doll or Chinese Boxes type of structure is closely connected to the postmodern notion of fragmentation which is clearly observed in Cloud Atlas. The concept of fragmentation refers to all the basic notions that are present in our daily, capitalist society. It embodies concepts such as alienation from human values, reification and isolation of the individuals. The more people get caught in their careers, the more chaotic their lives become. This aspect of capitalist society is quite easy to observe as people get more and more obsessed with making money and pursuing their careers. Venkatesh defines the notion of fragmentation and claims that in fragmentation

there is no unified subject, that there is no need to converge to a unified truth (for none exists). and that human condition, physical, mental or social, is fragmented, reassembled, and reconstructed without our looking for grand meanings and themes. (Venkatesh, Sherry, & Firat, 1993, p. 221)

Hence, within fragmented narratives, there is no ultimate truth and every aspect and element of the novel including structure, plot, setting, genre etc. is fragmented, divided or disintegrated into multiple units and later rebuilt from this fragmentation. A. Fuat Firat and Nikhilesh Dholakia assert in their article that

the chaos, the disjointedness, the disconnectedness of the elements and moments of life become increasingly noticeable. Indeed, many complain about the fact that their frenetic work lives and home lives pull them in multiple chaotic directions, and that it is difficult to find a common thread. Generally, this urge to find connections among disparate moments of existence, connections that coalesce into a single and uniform identity, is a modernist urge. Postmodernism frees the individual from such an obligation. Postmodernism, instead, calls for a playful, if critical, engagement with the potentials of experiencing different modes of being and finding meaning in the existence of the 'other' (Caputo, 1997), typically through participation in the construction of communities. (Firat, 2006, p. 131)

These are indeed elements that are seriously relative to Cloud Atlas. The fact that each narrative presents different stories, set in different time periods and places and written in different genres is an obvious example of a fragmented structure. The six narratives which are present in the novel recount stories from the western civilisation of the 19th century, up to the chaotic, post-apocalyptic distant future. As the period moves forward in time, the stories become more chaotic and disconnected.

What begins with oppression through slavery continues with corporate oppression, corporate totalitarianism and ends in the last story with cannibalism. The final story is the narrative where the chaos and oppression reach their ultimate peak. A. Fuat Firat also notes in his article that

this condition attests to the implausibility of the centrality of the human subject, assumed in modern thought. Postmodernism questions the supposed human control over human destiny, and over objects that surround humanity. Instead, postmodern discourse accentuates the control that the objects and constructed structures come to exert over the human subject (Baudrillard, 1983b; Foucault, 1973). In the end, there is confusion and confounding of the subject and the object. There is blurring of differences postulated between objects and the subjects in modernity. Specifically, the relationship between the subject and the object becomes complicated, rendering untenable the assumed superiority of the subject. Often, for example, objects exert power over the subjects as objects of desire (Baudrillard, 1990). Furthermore, examples of the objectification of human beings abound (Guilbert, 2002; Levine, 1998; Sacks, 1982). (Firat, 2006, p. 131)

Thus, fragmentation as a postmodern element is commonly utilised by David Mitchell in Cloud Atlas. The fragmented structure of the novel helped to contribute to the novel's general, anti-capitalist theme in order to highlight the very fact that humans are getting alienated from life and nature and that this capitalist order is gradually leading us to chaos and doom.

Uncertainty is another notion that is related to fragmentation. The uncertain and unpredictable nature of our existence is emphasised in the novel. The only fact we can be sure of is that we are born, live and finally perish from this world. All the rest is a compilation of unpredictable deeds and actions. Our choices thus make our lives unique as it is through our choices that we determine how to live our lives.

Moreover, a chronological cycle is also embedded within Cloud Atlas which is generated from the postmodern narrative structure. The chronological cycle is established with every chapter taking place in a different time period: 1849-1936-1973-2012-2144-2321-2144-2012-1973-1936-1849. In consequence, since the middle story (F: Sloosha's Crossin') is the apex of the novel, narratives progress in a chronological order beginning from the 19th century until its peak in the post-apocalyptic future in the 24th century. Then, having reached its peak in terms of both chronology and narration, this time, the narrative goes backwards in chronological order, thus resembling a cycle again and finishing off again at the starting point in 1849. The image of a cycle is created again. In semiotic terms, this is very noteworthy

for this specific sign of the cycle is a recurrent theme in the novel. The cycle is a reference to humanity's infinite circle. The past, present and the future all consist of our repetitive actions. Only the names of the people and the setting change, the actions and the themes stay the same throughout the ages.

In addition to the chronological structure, the locational structure is also worth noting in Cloud Atlas as each narrative takes place in a different setting: South Pacific – Belgium – California – Britain – Korea – Hawaii – Korea – Britain – California – Belgium – South Pacific. Once again, with Sloosha's Crossin' being the middle narrative, Hawaii becomes a central location and setting to the novel's grand story. Hawaii is also connected to the previous narrative where the fabricants were fooled into dreams of so called xultation in Hawaii. In this narrative, however, their dreams of reaching paradise have been deconstructed as Hawaii has become a primitive, nightmarish, post-apocalyptic place where only the strongest survive. It is also interesting that Hawaii is spelled as Ha-why which semiotically embodies a covert implication to the questioning of the cruel Social-Darwinist statement of: "The weak are meat the strong do eat." (Mitchell, 2012: 508)

Furthermore, the narrative structure analysed in terms of protagonists is devised as: Ewing – Frobisher – Luisa – Cavendish – Sonmi – Zachry – Sonmi – Cavendish – Luisa – Frobisher – Ewing. It should not be forgotten that all these protagonists carry the comet-shaped birthmark on their bodies which suggests their interconnectedness by reincarnation throughout these time periods. As Hawaii (Ha-why) possesses a central place in terms of location, so does Zachry in terms of a protagonist. Zachry is the protagonist of the middle story and thus represents a very significant role in the novel's grand story.

Of all the protagonists, Zachry is the only one who is able to live to see the world after the fall and thus also the only one who is aware of the long process humanity has come through. The lines where it is mentioned that Zachry

watched clouds awobbly from the floor o' that kayak. Souls cross like clouds cross skies, an' tho' a cloud's shape nor hue nor size don't stay the same, it's still a cloud an' so is a soul. Who can say where the cloud's blowed from or who the soul'll be 'morrow? Only Sonmi the east an' the west an' the compass an' the atlas, yay, only the atlas o' clouds. (Mitchell, 2012: 308)

These lines make him the protagonist who has witnessed the brightest view regarding humanity's long journey through centuries (Childs & Green, 2013: 152). These lines also possess a reference to the title of the novel upon which Childs and Green assert that

just as clouds are amorphous, ever-changing coalescences of water molecules, so too, Mitchell suggests, is the human species at once infinitely diverse and bound together in a global community that cuts across the boundaries of ethnicity, 'race' and nation. (Childs & Green, 2013: 152-153)

Lastly, the narrative structure also provides us another interesting fact related to <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. Each chapter in the novel is presented or formulated in a specific genre. Thus, every narrative is presented in a different genre but with the same theme. The structure created in terms of genre follows the order of: 19th century voyage diary-epistolary love letters-mystery thriller-comedy-dystopian science-fiction-storytelling and the genres going backwards again as it is with the narrative structure explained earlier. The cycle that was established in terms of narrative structure, chronology and setting is now established in terms of genre. Brian McHale claims that this characteristic is typically postmodern and adds that

if recursive structure is to function in a postmodernist poetics of ontology, strategies obviously must be brought to bear on it which foreground its ontological dimension. One such strategy, the simplest of all, involves *frequency*: interrupting the primary diegesis not once or twice but *often* with secondary, hypodiegetic worlds, representations within the representation. […] The primary diegesis is interrupted so often, by nested representations in such diverse media (novels-within-the-novel, films-within-the-novel, still-photographs-within-the-novel and so on), that the fiction's ontological "horizon" is effectively lost. (McHale, 1987: 113-114)[21]

This is exactly the case in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. All of the narratives and genres are nested within each other. For example, it could be stated that at least one character in each story finds and reads a written document (letter or book) related to another story. So, as mentioned above, there are representations within the representation. This postmodern technique creates spontaneous associations within the six sub-stories and significantly contributes to the existence of the grand story and main theme which is emphasized by <u>Cloud Atlas</u>.

Furthermore, in terms of chronology, it can be observed that as time advances and as we find ourselves in the post-apocalyptic distant future of the 24th century, the

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genre used in the story (Sloosha's Crossin') is transformed from written genres (all of the earlier genres) into plain, verbal storytelling. Hence it is conveyed that all of the written genres (letters, stories, comedies, thrillers etc.) are eventually doomed to disappear due to wars, clashes, natural disasters etc. This message is clearly given in the previous chapters where all of the written, other genres are mentioned to be found incomplete or damaged. For instance, Frobisher finds Ewing's diary but half of it is missing. This is a recurrent sign in the novel. To that end, it is verbal storytelling that ultimately survives all these catastrophes. Despite its primitivism, storytelling appears to be the most sustainable genre there is.

Another common postmodern quality of all stories that are present in Cloud Atlas is the fact that all six stories have an open ending and are thus open for interpretation. The author, David Mitchell uses the postmodern technique of open endings specifically to point out that just like stories do not possess clear conclusions, our actions are also open for interpretation and change. Despite the fact that history is a repetition of our actions, human beings still possess the capability to change and shape their own destiny. In addition, open endings also refer to alternative, multiple endings which are left to the imagination of the reader.

Just as each of the stories in Cloud Atlas, contains different characteristics in terms of narrative structure, genre and chronology, the stories are also disparate in terms of linguistic structure. Especially in two stories that take place in the distant future: An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 and Sloosha's Crossin', the vernacular qualities are obvious. In all of the stories in Cloud Atlas, the language used by David Mitchell is in perfect harmony with the context and style of the story. Firstly, the story of Sonmi takes place in a dystopian future and shares serious science-fictional qualities. The fabricants are given code names which refers to the very fact that they are nothing else than soulless machines, simple numbers with no significance. Sonmi ~ 451, Yoona ~ 939, Wing ~ 027 are some examples of fabricants with code names. About the usage of language in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, the French linguist Sandrine Sorlin notes that

we are presented with an exceedingly modern world composed of purebloods, xecs, genomicists, syntaxists, aides, tellers, archivist and fabricants, who have been given mathematical names, like Yoona ~ 939, Wing ~ 027, or Sonmi ~ 451, the fabricant interviewed in the story, in the purest science-fiction tradition (we need only think of Zamyatin's We). The text is strewn with unfamiliar technological and medical words

(kalodoxalyn, stimulin, amnesiads, xenon, neon, carbdiox, ascension catalysts, soporifix, medics, aircon inflows, Medicorp, biocosmeticians, healant), sometimes in the form of abbreviations or capital letters (sync, EyeSats, Xultation, AdV). It is permeated with signifiers belonging to the rigorous field of science. (portion, encompass, approx, milligrams) (Sorlin, 2008: 76)

Indeed, the usage of scientific and hi-tech names is a very common element for any science fiction story. However, some abbreviations draw serious attention. One of these is the usage of the letter "X" as the first letter through the removal of the vowel. For instance: the word "executive" is written as "Xec", the word "exultation" is formulated as "Xultation" and "extra" is written simply as "Xtra". The constant and deliberate usage of the letter "X" is a covert reference to the notion of death and extermination. This reference is valid both individually and collectively. In an individual context, it can be said that this corpocratic, authoritative society and government will eventually cause people's death. In a collective context, overconsumption and corpocracy will sooner or later cause the major downfall due to nuclear disasters of all sorts. This downfall is not mentioned in detail in the novel as we do not know how and when it exactly happened. All we are allowed to know is the fact that the downfall happened somewhere between the dystopian future of Nea So Copros and the post-apocalyptic narrative of Sloosha's Crossin'. The letter X is thus a constant reminder of death and extermination as those are exactly what the humanity is going to face unless there comes significant change.

In addition to those linguistic elements, there are constant references to brand names which emphasize the power and influence of the corporations. In fact, brand names are known to become synonymous with the subjects they refer to. Sorlin comments about this noteworthy fact and puts forward that

in this dystopian near future Korea (Nea So Copros) run by corporations, what is a brand in our reality has now become a common name without any capital letters: 'traffic jams' are now called fordjams. People are equipped with their sony, they wear nikes and rolex. The Media use nikons. In this consumerdom, everything has been de-sacralized, or rather, only one thing is sacred: business. Even the contents of the Encyclopaedias have been translated into the new consumerist language: there are now only encyclopaedia of consumable. Music takes the form of scientific programming: "programmable violin". Commitment is now synonymous with "Investment". (Sorlin, 2008: 77)[22]

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This type of specially created consumer-language is an overt indication to the extreme degree that the consumer-based society ultimately has reached. The widespread use of these technological and brand names help to constantly re-emphasise the dominant ideology of the ruling regime. In The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism, Stuart Sim associates this notion with postmodernism and points out that

in the postmodern world the basic dictum is: I shop therefore I am, we need to reflect on the question of what happens to those who cannot shop and are therefore excluded from the basis of social identity. This is of particular importance as the old principles of the welfare state are challenged by new values of consumerism. (Sim, 2001: 63)

Besides the consumerist-mania in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, there are also constant references to class differences conveyed through directional vocabulary "upstrata, instreamed, coerced into, untermensch, downcurved to, switchbacked up into, parallel to, etc." (Sorlin, 2008: 80) These terms emphasise totalitarianism and strict adherence to hierarchy within the society. Everyone's class or stratum is immutable and there is no tolerance for any kind of change among the strata.

In the second narrative which is referred to as Sloosha's Crossin', the vernacular speech has taken a significant, backward twist. There is an immense difference in language compared to the previous chapter. As with many post-apocalyptic stories, humanity has gone backwards to primitiveness, living off nature, hunting and performing tribal rituals. This primitiveness has shown itself in all aspects of the valleymen's lives. They hunt animals to survive and opposing tribes are in constant struggle with each other. This primitive lifestyle has also reflected itself in the valleymen's language. The technological and scientific language of the corpocratic Nea So Copros has deteriorated and transformed into some kind of primitive, non-grammatical language. The decay in civilization is clearly visible in language as well. In the example given below of the post-apocalyptic writing in Sloosha's, the reader witnesses an inner dialogue between Zachry and his inner Satan, old Georgie:

"Bet you're sorryin' you din't jus' cut that rope on the wall o' my closure now Zachray, yay? All this woe'n' grief you could o'voided. – I didn't listen to that liar's liar. The Kona'd o'attacked anyhow, yay it weren't nothin' to do with me defyin' that Dev'lish Buggah. I picked up a pot to hurl at Old Georgie but when I taked aim the fat rat'd dis'peared." (Mitchell, 2012: 315)

As it can be observed, this kind of post-apocalyptic writing has many peculiar qualities. First of all, there is no grammatical unity within this writing. Secondly, the widespread usage of the apostrophe, which at times makes the text difficult to understand, is clearly observed in almost every single sentence. This can have multiple interpretations. Sandrine Sorlin interprets this widespread usage of the apostrophe and claims that

there are two contradictory forces in this post-apocalyptic writing, reflecting the atoms at work in their contradictory activities of fusion and fission. The reading is axed by the apostrophes: they indeed tend to make the reader halt, as they sharply cut the rhythm. At the same time the sounds are sometimes so close that they seem to blend into a kind of fusing whole, to the point of being almost unreadable. The alphabetical atoms are indeed tending towards fusion, creating new, unfamiliar linguistic entities: *'n'kin'n'age'n'all*. The survivors of the Apocalypse try to grasp what certain ancient technological words used to refer to, by translating them into familiar words: a *tel'scope* is thus defined as "the furthest seeing eye"; *'lectric* has to be comprehended in known words: "Smart magic like a heart works the body. (Sorlin, 2008: 76-77)

The fact that there is no grammatical unity also refers to the idea that order and civilization have come to a halt in this chaotic world. Chaos and struggle refer to the postmodern notion of fragmentation. This aspect of chaotic struggle can be observed in the language as well. Rules are twisted and even the regular word order of any given sentence is often disrupted and turned upside down. Another characteristic of this apocalyptic writing is that certain words have no clear ending. They are thus chopped before their last letter. This, on the other hand refers to humanity's ambiguous and uncertain future as well as to open endings. Humanity has come a long way reaching civilization but no matter what happens, there is always the possibility of regression. This uncertainty clearly shows itself in the language they utter.

Furthermore, humanity's return to nature is also clearly visible in the language they utter. The scientific and highly technological vernacular speech of the dystopian Nea So Copros has degenerated into a primitive form of English but with humanity's return to nature, most signifiers are expressed with direct elements belonging to the nature. The disrespect for nature in the dystopian world has transformed into respect after the nuclear war. With science and technology being destroyed, humans are now holding on to what is most precious to them: "mother nature". This can obviously be observed in their speech for "observatories" is written as "observ'trees" in Sloosha's Crossin'.

There is an overt reference to nature in most of the expressions uttered:

"my eyes got owlier", "slipp'ry as cave fish, heavy as a cow, cold as stones", "she din't b'have like no queeny-bee", "lornsomer'n a bird in a box in a well". Nature proves to be a rich linguistic source for the survivors in their description of human movements, for instance: "hawkeyeing me", "to spider up the crumbly ridge." (Sorlin, 2008: 78)

Humans are living in harmony with nature and through the language they use, the reader acknowledges that humans now belong to the nature, not that they dominate nature as they used to do in the so called dystopian past. The strong presence of nature and natural elements in their language reveals the tremendous influence of nature on the humanity. Even regular, daily expressions are uttered with natural references. As there are lots of references to nature in their vernacular speech, onomatopoeic sounds are also clearly noticeable in this chapter:

ockadoodlydooing, "an'blissweed'll lead you b'tween the whack-crack an'boom-doom an' pan-pin-pon till we...", "an' suddenwise whoah a whip binded my legs t'gether an' whoah up I flew an' whoah down my head dropped an 'aieee the pavestones smashed my skull." (Mitchell, 2012:304)

It is worth noting that the post-apocalyptic language in this chapter is still in process and in progress just as the humanity itself and therefore, instantaneous descriptions of actions and events are very common in this chapter (Sorlin, 2008: 82). All in all, having compared the two chapters of Sonmi ~ 451 and Sloosha's Crossin', it can be concluded that the languages used in the two chapters are thus disparate and extremely contradictory but yet in full compliance with their specific setting and context.

**3.3. Semiotic Signs in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>**

As a postmodern work of literature, <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is very rich in semiotic signs and symbols. The novel is truly loaded with semiotic elements right from its beginning till the very end. Some of the main and most vital signs will be analysed in this chapter.

Firstly, the title of the novel <u>Cloud Atlas</u> will be analysed as it is rich in semiotic terms. The title of the book is mentioned in a couple of chapters in the book. In Sloosha's Crossin', Zachry narrates that he

watched clouds awobbly from the floor o' that kayak. Souls cross like clouds cross skies, an' tho' a cloud's shape nor hue nor size don't stay the same, it's still a cloud an' so is a soul. Who can say where the cloud's blowed from or who the soul'll be 'morrow? Only Sonmi the east an' the west an' the compass an' the atlas, yay, only the atlas o' clouds. (Mitchell, 2012: 308)[23]

This quotation serves as a reference to the title of the book which draws a similarity between clouds and souls. Clouds never stay the same, as they are intangible. So are souls. Souls have no form. Perhaps the body is their only form. When the body is terminated, souls continue to live on in other forms and bodies. This continues in an eternal cycle which is another reference to the phenomenon of reincarnation. Zachry questions what the soul will become tomorrow and ultimately seeks refuge in his faith, led by Sonmi the Goddess. According to Zachry, Sonmi is the only one who can provide the atlas of clouds. Another reference to the title of the book is present in The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish where Timothy recounts that

three or four times only in my youth did I glimpse the Joyous Isles, before they were lost to fogs, depressions, cold fronts, ill winds, and contrary tides... I mistook them for adulthood. Assuming they were a fixed feature in my life's voyage, I neglected to record their latitude, their longitude, their approach. Young ruddy fool. What wouldn't I give now for a never-changing map of the ever-constant ineffable? To possess, as it were, an atlas of clouds. (Mitchell, 2012: 373)

This is another reference to the title of the book, this time uttered by another protagonist Timothy Cavendish. He expresses his desire for the nature and the environment to remain the same forever. In that sense, the title of the book <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is an oxymoronic expression. Cloud is symbolic for human souls that keep

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appearing at the surface of the world in an endless, recurring cycle. However, to possess an atlas of clouds is something that is virtually impossible. About this notion, Sarah Jane Johnston-Ellis comments that

the very name of Cloud Atlas attempts to assign permanence to and fix meaning upon an intangible and fluid substance (Hrubes 150), and ultimately the futility and failure of that attempt. How could one chart the clouds? To possess a permanent atlas of clouds would be to impose an individual script (interpretation) upon the clouds' ineffable changeability, to presume that an individual will or human nature is fixed, and thus, perhaps, to resign oneself to Nietzsche's theory of eternal recurrence, the eternal hourglass of existence. (Johnston-Ellis, 2010: 115-116).

Thus, Johnston-Ellis emphasises the idea that with the title Cloud Atlas, the message conveyed to the reader is the specific fact that despite everything human nature is actually fixed. In an interview to BBC radio, the author of the novel, David Mitchell commented that

literally all of the main characters, except one, are reincarnations of the same soul in different bodies throughout the novel identified by a birthmark...that's just a symbol really of the universality of human nature. The title itself "Cloud Atlas," the cloud refers to the ever changing manifestations of the Atlas, which is the fixed human nature which is always thus and ever shall be. So the book's theme is predacity, the way individuals prey on individuals, groups on groups, nations on nations, tribes on tribes. So I just take this theme and in a sense reincarnate that theme in another context. (WEB_1, 2007)

To that end, Mitchell reveals that the cloud which is impalpable refers to the constantly changing expression whereas the atlas relates to the determinate nature of humanity. All in all, it is suggested that human destiny which is predetermined and fixed shall forever keep repeating itself in an everlasting cycle. Furthermore, the title of the novel also appears in the brilliant music composed by Robert Frobisher which he names The Cloud Atlas Sextet. In an interview with The Paris Review, Mitchell revealed the specific reason why he chose this title and commented that

Cloud Atlas is the name of a piece of music by the Japanese composer Toshi Ichiyanagi, who was Yoko Ono's first husband. I bought the CD just because of that track's beautiful title. It pleases me that *Number9Dream* is named after a piece of music by Yoko's more famous husband, though I couldn't duplicate the pattern indefinitely. (Mitchell, n.d.)

In addition to the title, the most frequently occurring sign in Cloud Atlas is with no doubt the comet-shaped birthmark. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the comet-shaped birthmark is a symbol that appears on the body of every protagonist of

each of the six stories in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. Its references are quite obvious and in harmony with the novel's main emphasis. As each protagonist has the comet-shaped birthmark somewhere on his or her body, this powerful symbol leads the reader to think that all of the characters are somehow connected to each other. This symbol refers to the metaphysical phenomenon of reincarnation. Similar characters live and die throughout different time periods in human history and experience similar events during their lifespan. This in turn, refers to an endless cycle of characters and events.

The comet itself is a symbol that represents the phenomenon of reincarnation. By observing which characters possess the comet-shaped birthmark, the reader can comprehend the connections between the various characters through reincarnation. The choice of a comet as a signifier is obvious due to the fact that comets are just like humans in that sense; they come to exist, become stronger and finally cease to exist. A comet's and a human's lifespan are limited but nonetheless the existence and termination of comets is an infinite cycle similar to the cycle of birth, life and death of every single human being. Every character that possesses this sign has his or her own moment of discovery of the comet-shaped birthmark. In the third story, Luisa

puts the chain on and replays the encounter. She turns on the shower and undresses. Her bathroom mirror is half hidden by a shelf of shampoos, conditioners, a box of sanitary towels, skin creams and gift soaps. Louisa shunts these aside to get a clearer view of a birthmark between her shoulder-blade and collar-bone. Her recent encounter with Hal is displaced. Coincidences happen all the time. But it is undeniably shaped like a comet. The mirror mists over. Facts are your bread and butter. Birthmarks can look like anything you choose, not only comets. You're still upset by Dad's death that's all. (Mitchell, 2012: 124)

This is the scene when Luisa examines her birthmark. She focuses on the comet shape of the birthmark and thinks that the comet shape is a result of her imagination. She reflects that birthmarks can come in all kinds of shapes. The mist on the mirror is a sign of Luisa's blurred memories concerning the past. She still has difficulty getting over her past. Her rational side implies that she should concentrate on facts only.

The name of the third chapter: Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery is a covert reference to the comet-shaped birthmark. The expression Half-Lives is critical here for it refers to the very fact that our lives which we assume to be authentic are half in the sense that somewhere, in some other time period, someone else is living the

other half of our lives. That someone else somewhere out in the space is the reincarnation of our very souls. Thus, the title Half-Lives is an overt reference to the phenomenon of reincarnation which is stressed through the symbol of the comet-shaped birthmark that appears in every protagonist in each of the six stories. Will McMorran comments about the comet-shaped birthmark and adds that it

offers a symbol for connectivity that binds together and transcends the individual stories to make of the novel a unified whole. The birthmark is the author's signature – a sign of the author's hand, and a sign that the novel is a novel, rather than a collection of short stories; it has thus the same function within the text as the paratextual naming of the title 'Cloud Atlas' on the front cover. (Dillon, 2011: 168)

In addition to the name of the third chapter, another significant sign is the tilde sign (~) appearing in every fabricant's name such as Sonmi ~ 451, Yoona ~ 939 and Wing ~ 027. As a mathematical sign the tilde (~) is used to mean approximate to, similar to or equivalent to (WEB_7, n.d.). Thus, the names of the fabricants are assigned to them according to their line of mass production. As they are mass produced, hundreds of thousands of fabricants are manufactured and branded with codenames. Their alpha-numeric codenames consist of two components: the line of mass production and the version. As a result, as mentioned in the novel, there are many more Sonmis employed as fabricants in other sectors of Nea So Copros. This also counts for Yoonas and Wings and other mass produced fabricants.

What is significant in Sonmi's numeric code 451 is that there is an overt reference to Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451. In Bradbury's dystopian masterpiece, books are strictly forbidden in the society and burned upon sight. The book opens with

It was a pleasure to burn. It was a special pleasure to see things eaten, to see things blackened and changed. With the brass nozzle in his fists, with this great python spitting its venomous kerosene upon the world, the blood pounded in his head, and his hands were the hands of some amazing conductor playing all the symphonies of blazing and burning to bring down the tatters and charcoal ruins of history. With his symbolic helmet numbered 451 on his stolid head, and his eyes all orange flame with the thought of what came next, he flicked the igniter and the house jumped up in a gorging fire that burned the evening sky red and yellow and black. He strode in a swarm of fireflies. He wanted above all, like the old joke, to shove a marshmallow on a stick in the furnace, while the flapping pigeon-winged books died on the porch and lawn of the house. (Bradbury, 1953: 3)

The numbers 451 in Fahrenheit 451 refer to the combustion degree of paper. Guy Montag, the protagonist of the novel conforms to the authoritarian regime and applies their laws passionately akin to the Unanimity's forces and most citizens of Nea

So Copros. The method of destroying the books in <u>Fahrenheit 451</u> is by burning only. However in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>, there aren't many references to burning except in Sloosha's Crossin' where Zachry's village gets burned down by the Kona. In An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451, burning as an act of destruction is not present. In spite of this, mainly due to <u>Fahrenheit 451</u>'s success, the numbers 451 have come to be associated with death and extermination.

Thus, combining the fabricant Sonmi with the numbers 451 acts as a foreshadowing of death. The reader knows at beforehand that somehow Sonmi will eventually die. In other words, she is doomed even from the beginning of the story. Nevertheless, her death is just a part of an everlasting cycle as even when fabricants are executed, they are recycled into newly manufactured fabricants or more soap. The execution of fabricants is expressed in detail as a vicious scene where

the server slumped, her eyeballs rolled backwards; the cabled spine connecting the helmet mechanism to the monorail stiffened; the helmet rose; the server sat upright; was lifted off her feet into the air. Her corpse tapdanced; the xcited smile frozen in death tautened as her facial skin took some of the load. One worker hoovered bloodloss from the plastic chair; another wiped it clean. The monorailed-helmet conveyored its cargo … through a flap and into the next chamber. A new helmet lowered itself over the plastic stool, where the three Aides were already seating the next xcited server. (Mitchell, 2012: 359)

As it can be noticed, the execution is just a part of a daily routine that is repeated over and over again by the officials of the Unanimity. This has become so common that nobody even questions what is going on there. Furthermore, in <u>Fahrenheit 451</u>, books are a means to enlighten people and to emancipate them from ignorance whereas in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>, Sonmi ~ 451 acts as the figure who takes on the responsibility of enlightening the society and conveying the truth concerning the corpocratic, consumer-driven, totalitarian society of Nea So Copros.

Another crucial symbol in the novel is the substance of soap in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. Soap is the only nutrition the fabricants are allowed to consume. At the beginning of the chapter, Sonmi mentions soap for the first time when she describes her daily routine:

at hour five we man our tellers around the Hub, ready for the elevator to bring the new day's first consumers. For the following nineteen hours we greet diners, input orders, tray food, vend drinks, upstock condiments, wipe tables, and bin garbage. Vespers follows cleaning, then we imbibe one Soapsac in the dormroom. That is the blueprint

of every unvarying day... But it is true, we rarely wonder about life on the surface. Additionally, Soap contains amnesiads designed to deaden curiosity. (Mitchell, 2012: 188-189)

It is not exactly revealed to the reader whether the substance called soap is actually soap but as far as we know, the fabricant's nutrition called soap contains several chemicals including amnesiads as mentioned in the quotation above. Under normal conditions, soap is a chemical product used for cleansing. Thus, using the soap cleans the body and thereby renews it every time. In this case, soap similarly cleans and renews fabricants' memories and cerebral functions but does this to an extreme degree.

In consequence, it becomes obvious why the fabricants are only given soap as food. Soap acts like a drug that resets their memory every day and keeps them under unconditional control. They not only forget newly acquired knowledge but they also become apathetic to their daily mental and physical suffering. Soap is a tool used by the corporations to keep fabricants under strict control and to prevent them from revolting and this constitutes a flawless system where everyone within the corporation is submissive and under slave-like control. It is worth noting that soap as food is mentioned beforehand in The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish where nurse Noakes threatens Timothy to wash out naughty words coming out of his mouth with soap. This is a foreshadowing to the occurrence of soap in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451.

Naturally, the first novel that comes up to our mind with a reference to soap is Chuck Palahniuk's Fight Club. The connotation of soap as a substance and as a marketable product in Fight Club has some similarities with the mention of soap in Cloud Atlas. What is in its original use a product meant to cleanse people becomes in reality something completely contradictory. Thus the original positive denotation is replaced by a seriously negative connotation. In other words, in both novels soap is deconstructed and interpreted in a totally opposite sense.

In Cloud Atlas, soap serves as a narcoleptic drug in order to keep fabricants submissive forever. In Fight Club on the other hand, Tyler Durden manufactures soap from the fat of rich people and further sells them back to rich people. By doing that, he seems to take revenge on the upper class and he truly seems to enjoy doing this for he regards this as an act of justice. Tyler constantly stresses the fact that in order to make good soap, one needs human fat. In addition to that, glycerine, a substance present in

soap is often used as an explosive. Thus, soap could also be used for terrorist acts such as blowing up buildings.

In the novel, Tyler gives a long but effective speech about soap's history and makes the following speech:

"You have to see," Tyler says, "how the first soap was made of heroes." Think about the animals used in product testing. Think about the monkeys shot into space. "Without their pain, their death, their sacrifice." Tyler says, "we would have nothing." (Palahniuk: 53)[24]

It is obvious that soap stands at the centre of Fight Club just like it possesses a significant place in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 in Cloud Atlas. That being the case, it could be concluded that in both novels, there are serious parallelisms on how the concept of soap is presented and further deconstructed.

An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 also possesses major similarities to Aldous Huxley's masterwork, Brave New World. The dystopian story of Sonmi bears significant resemblances with the dystopian world of Brave New World. David Mitchell must have been quite impressed by Huxley's masterpiece. There are many common elements between the two novels. In Huxley's novel, babies are being genetically engineered similarly to Cloud Atlas where fabricants are manufactured in a wombtank. Drugs are another common element that is highlighted in both novels. In Brave New World, the drug's name is Soma. When it is taken, all types of possible emotional and rational reactions including questioning life in general are thereby repressed and taken under control.

In Cloud Atlas, on the other hand, the fabricants are forced into consuming a daily amount of soap, which acts as a repressive substance to make them more resilient, submissive and so to abuse them in a much more efficient way. Another similarity is the strict class distinction that exists in both novels. In Cloud Atlas, there's a constant reference to class differences which is referred to by the term strata. Terms like untermensch, downstrata, fabricant, lower strata and upstrata reveal how fiercely this segregation is implemented in this society. In Brave New World, it is more or less the same for there also exists a very vicious class distinction. Here, the

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[24] Original Emphasis

classes are named Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Epsilon. This class difference is mentioned in the novel where it is claimed that

alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas. Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta. (Huxley, 2010: 32)

Since the people are conditioned to do what is expected from them, their submissiveness is constantly kept under control through the drug Soma that they need to take frequently. Hence, every class lives happily and does not question its existence even if it is a very miserable one. This form of happiness is naturally an artificial one. The Epsilons could be compared to the fabricants in Cloud Atlas in the sense that both are slaves fooled into thinking that they are happy (through soap and soma) and that they will be rewarded for their services. (xultation or fake paradise and exile)

Finally the presence of brand names in both novels is a seriously striking resemblance, especially that of Ford. In Cloud Atlas, Ford is mentioned as the common and dominantly used car brand whereas in Brave New World, Ford has been turned into a God. Expressions such as: Oh Ford and By Ford are thus common in Huxley's masterpiece. Henry Ford, as the first manufacturer of the modern car has been deified as he is also the first who has initiated mass production. In Cloud Atlas, brand names such as Ford refer to the powerful growth that these corporations have enjoyed and the ultimate domination of their markets. Another common element is that both stories are set in a consumer based society and in both of them, there exists an obligatory consumer spending quota. As a result, both novels share quite similar qualities with their dystopian nature taken into consideration.

Besides the earlier mentioned references, there are many other signs and symbols in Cloud Atlas. One of these is the dystopian city of Neo-Seoul. Neo-Seoul is the name of the dystopian (year 2144) equivalent of our present day South-Korean city of Seoul. The city's construction and evolution are symbolical of the values that it has come to represent. This is clearly noticeable in the construction of the city which has been going on an upwards direction for quite a long time since the ocean has risen and left the lower parts of the city under water. The city's upward evolution is thus very

symbolic of the sharp distinction between the strata of the consumerist society and how fatal that distinction actually becomes. The roads and buildings are constructed upwards, so the city keeps rising up in the air. Thus, in order to survive, one needs to rise up to the higher strata as only the untermensch and the downstrata live on the lower parts of the city and are under constant danger of death. This underworld is also the place where The Union gets organised. As implied earlier, directional terms (up, down, lower, upper etc.) are seriously emphasized in this chapter and these are all overt references to the class differentiation within the corpocratic society.

Additionally, the city of Neo-Seoul is inevitably pronounced as New Soul which is again a symbolic reference to the phenomenon of reincarnation. This could be interpreted both in an individual and in a collective meaning. Individually, it is directly related to reincarnation as emphasised earlier through the comet-shaped birthmark and other implications such as the title: Half-Lives. The collective meaning however, is a more general and comprehensive one as what is inferred through New Soul is the fact that after this consumerist, segregationist society, there will emerge a new world with renewed minds and with complete respect towards nature and all its elements. As it is obvious from Sloosha's Crossin', this New Soul does emerge in terms of nature.

Neo-Seoul being the capital city, the country where it belongs to is referred to as Nea So Copros. This name is an indication to the extremist form of consumerism of the dystopian regime. Moreover, Nea So Copros represents a formulation similar to a major business or corporation. Thus, the name itself suggests an allusion to the greedy and ruthless, extreme form of consumerism which is being applied in the country. The reason why David Mitchell chose Korea as a setting for this dystopian narrative cannot be a coincidence.

For quite a long time, South Korea has been considered the fastest booming capitalist country in the world. With its flourishing and constantly progressing economy, South Korea was regarded by the author as a suitable candidate for a consumerist dystopia of this sort. Nea So Copros has a very strict hierarchy which divides the society into strata. The lowest stratum is called the untermensch. These are the unwanted sub-humans that are not worthy of living a decent life and thus are doomed to live in the lower parts of the city such as Huamdonggil, which is described as a filthy place that contains all the waste of the society. Above the sub-humans are

the Fabricants which are the clones that are employed in every sector ranging from restaurants to construction and cleaning. Above those, are a vast majority of the consumer society who are referred to as purebloods or the true consumers who are fooled into living a life of mandatory consumption. An artificial feeling of happiness surrounds these people as they are constantly deceived by the regime and its representatives. At the top of the Corpocratic chain are the Juche who also constitute the corpocratic board. These are the administrators of the Unanimity.

The Juche on the other hand is a reference to the totalitarian, political regime of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea or commonly referred as North Korea. As a result, David Mitchell's Nea So Copros represents a unified Korea in both literal and figurative senses. In the literal sense, the two Korean nations are combined into one single state with one ideology. In the figurative sense, however, Mitchell combines South Korea's sophisticated capitalism with North Korea's extreme form of totalitarianism and creates the corpocratic state of Nea So Copros. Thus, the Juche is a reference to the authoritarian North Korean regime. The official web-site of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea defines the Juche and states that

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is guided in its activities by the Juche idea authored by President Kim Il Sung. The Juche idea means, in a nutshell, that the masters of the revolution and construction are the masses of the people and that they are also the motive force of the revolution and construction. The Juche idea is based on the philosophical principle that man is the master of everything and decides everything. It is the man-centred world outlook and also a political philosophy to materialize the independence of the popular masses, namely, a philosophy which elucidates the theoretical basis of politics that leads the development of society along the right path. (WEB_4, 2011)

This declaration by the North Korean government not only defines The Juche but also reveals up to a point the fact that the Juche is the master of the revolution and therefore acts as the extreme authority in the North Korean society. In other words, The Juche represents the North Korean state in person and has every right to make decisions in the name of the North Korean people. According to Grace Lee, there are disparate and contradictory views regarding the Juche ideology. One of these is the fact that

Kim's unstable power during and immediately following the Korean War caused him to deploy ideological purges in order to consolidate his political position, using the juche principle of national solidarity as a domestic instrument of personal cult-building. To this end, Kim Il Sung forbade any other ideology from being discussed or

taught in North Korea. Since the content and application of the juche ideology were very ambiguous until the late 1960s, Kim Il Sung was the only one who could successfully wield and implement the philosophy. Thus, implementing and executing policies based on Juche effectively consolidated Kim Il Sung's absolute political power and indirectly provided ideological justification for his dictatorship in North Korea. (Lee, 2003: 108)

In this quotation, Lee mentions the idea that the Juche was created as a set of idealistic, socialist principles but that eventually all the historical developments led North Korea and its leader, Kim Il Sung to consolidate his power and to obtain absolute authority using the Juche ideology. Grace Lee concludes by claiming that the North Korean concept of the Juche seriously deviates from the Marxist-Leninist principles and that in economic and military terms, the philosophy has been far from successful whereas in cultural and political terms, the Juche has proven to be effective by avoiding influence from the Soviet Union and China and thus preserving the autonomy of the North Korean culture despite seriously isolating the country from the rest of the world (2003: 112).

Another significant symbol that appears throughout Cloud Atlas is the number six (6). The number six appears almost everywhere in the novel. To begin with, the novel itself consists of six narratives. Robert Frobisher's musical composition was named The Cloud Atlas Sextet. A Sextet is a musical composition which is meant to be played by six musicians and instruments. Despite the fact that the six instruments are disparate and sometimes play different tunes, a very harmonic unity is established when they are playing all together. This is also the case for Cloud Atlas as a postmodern novel. All of the six narratives in the novel are set in different genres, time periods and content but nonetheless, when these six narratives are united into one grand story, a stunning unity and wholeness is obtained.

The character of "Rufus Sixsmith" is another reference to the number six in the novel. Sixsmith and Cavendish are two characters who are exactly 66 years old and Cavendish owes the Hoggins brothers 60,000 pounds (WEB_5, n.d.). Furthermore, the fabricants are obliged to abide by The 6 Catechisms which represent six principles that are absolute and that can under no condition be questioned or overruled. These Catechisms are created in conformity with the consumerist ideology of the state of Nea So Copros. Moreover, in Sloosha's Crossin', Meronym meets Zachry when he is sixteen years old and she intends on staying there for six months (WEB_5, n.d.).

There are many more similar references to number 6 in the novel. In consequence, what does the number six symbolise? According to A Dictionary of Symbols, the number is defined to be

symbolic of ambivalence and equilibrium, six comprises the union of the two triangles (of fire and water) and hence signifies the human soul. The Greeks regarded it as a symbol of the hermaphrodite (33). It corresponds to the six Directions of Space (two for each dimension) (7), and to the cessation of movement (since the Creation took six days). Hence it is associated with trial and effort (37). It has also been shown to be related to virginity (50), and to the scales. (Cirlot, 1971: 233)[25]

Thus, it is no surprise that David Mitchell chose the number six to reoccur in the novel so many times as it stands for the human soul which is a theme that is so significant to Cloud Atlas. Basically, the whole novel is about the human soul and about the phenomenon of souls travelling through different time periods and through different bodies. In Biblical terms, number 6 has many meanings including man's weakness, Satan and creation of universe. As a result, the number six is in that way connected to the comet-shaped birthmark and the notion that it represents which is none else than reincarnation and the creation and the end of times.

Moreover, the reference to perseverance and effort is clearly present in Cloud Atlas. In each of the stories, every protagonist attempts very hard to resist and combat the system they are exposed to. The most obvious example of this would be Sonmi who does her best to join the Union to cause an underground revolution which eventually fails. Other characters also experience similar trials and where some succeed, others fail. Adam Ewing is one character who succeeds. At the last page of the book, Ewing's final confession is of great significance where he utters that

I shall pledge myself to the Abolitionist cause, because I owe my life to a self-freed slave & because I must begin somewhere. I hear my father-in-law's response: 'Oho, fine, Whiggish sentiments, Adam. But don't tell *me* about justice! Ride to Tennessee on an ass & convince the rednecks that they are merely white-washed negroes & their negroes that they are black-washed Whites. Sail to the Old World, tell 'em their imperial slaves' rights are as inalienable as the Queen of Belgium's! Oh, you'll grow hoarse, poor & gray in caucuses! You'll be spat on, shot at, lynched, pacified with medals, spurned by backwoodsmen! Crucified! Naïve, dreaming Adam. He who would do battle with the many-headed hydra of human nature must pay a world of pain & his family must pay along with him! & only as you gasp your dying breath

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[25] Original Emphasis

shall you understand, your life amounted to no more than one drop in a limitless ocean!' Yet what is any ocean but a multitude of drops? (Mitchell, 2012: 529)[26]

Adam Ewing is one of those characters who succeeds to change and manages to resist the natural order to this world at the end of the narrative.

David Mitchell thereby gives the readers the message of how crucial it is to try and struggle for any kind of change in the system. Thus, striving for change in the society is not always futile for it is always worth fighting for one's beliefs and ideals in order to achieve change in the society. This message regarding change is very Marxist in the sense that continuing change has always been emphasised by Marx and others who followed in his tradition. The hope and belief for change is mentioned in the lines at the end of the novel where it is mentioned that

history admits no rules; only outcomes. What precipitates outcomes? Vicious acts & virtuous acts. What precipitates acts? Belief. Belief is both prize & battlefield, within the mind & in the mind's mirror, the world. If we believe humanity is a ladder of tribes, a colosseum of confrontation, exploitation & bestiality, such a humanity is surely brought into being, & history's Horroxes, Boerhaaves & Gooses shall prevail. You & I, the moneyed, the privileged, the fortunate, shall not fare so badly in this world, provided our luck holds. What of it if our consciences itch? Why undermine the dominance of our race, our gunships, our heritage & our legacy? Why fight the "natural" order of things? Why? Because of this:—one fine day, a purely predatory world shall consume itself. Yes, the devil shall take the hindmost until the foremost is the hindmost. In an individual, selfishness uglifies the soul. For the human species, selfishness is extinction. Is this the doom written within our nature?" (Mitchell, 2012: 528)

The natural reaction to fight the notion that the natural order to this world has always been and shall ever be so is conveyed through these statements. The overt message that the world shall one day consume itself and the difference in outcome between individual selfishness and collective selfishness is given and explained in detail. It is stated that collective selfishness will eventually cause human extermination. This is one of the strongest messages implied in Cloud Atlas.

Another significant meaning of the number six is the biblical creation of the universe which took six days just as Cloud Atlas was written in six chapters and six different time periods. To that end, the grand story of Cloud Atlas represents a covert reference to the creation and everlasting cycle of humanity. However, the open ending

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[26] Original Emphasis

suggests the similar, ongoing struggles that humans will face for many more years to come.

All in all, having analysed the most prominent semiotic signs appearing in Cloud Atlas, it is concluded that the novel is firmly equipped with signs, each of them possessing critical value for the interpretation of the specific narratives as well as of the grand story of the novel Cloud Atlas.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated that the 21$^{st}$ century British contemporary novel <u>Cloud Atlas</u> exemplifies various semiotic signs which possess connotations associated with Marxist and consumerist theories. It has been observed through the novel that the semiotic elements that are nested within the novel all point out to a major criticism of capitalism which stands as a symbol for an unjust and unequal future world order that will eventually cause humanity's downfall. This study thus deconstructs the novel <u>Cloud Atlas</u> from a Marxist perspective, applying the semiotic approach.

Firstly, in its concern to the main argument of this thesis, severe criticism towards consumerism has been observed in <u>Cloud Atlas</u>. This criticism has mainly been provided through the dystopian narrative called An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. This study asserts that <u>Cloud Atlas</u> maintains various covert implications supporting Marxist and anti-consumerist arguments. By creating a dystopian society which is ruled by an extreme form of consumerist, authoritarian ideology, Mitchell implies that the future of our present-day western societies might not be as bright as often predicted. The narrative that follows this dystopian story embodies typical post-apocalyptic characteristics which point out to the very harsh result that the previously mentioned extreme form of consumerism will ultimately cause the world's and humanity's downfall. Hence, the author presents a possible consequence of what our present day economic system of capitalism might evolve into.

In addition, this study finds that within the six disparate narratives of <u>Cloud Atlas</u>, there exist many common elements including a similar theme; that concerning oppression and struggle for change, a similar ideology; that against capitalism (thus also consumerism) which is regarded as the main reason for oppression and injustice and that of reincarnation; the notion that human life is nothing but a repetition of similar events manifested by the same souls throughout different time periods.

In the Marxist and ideological analysis chapter, it is pointed out that the novel contains many instances of Marxist ideological conceptions. The ship and the cotton plantation in Adam Ewing's narrative form examples to Antonio Gramsci's notion of Civil Society. In addition, the château Zedelghem, Aurora House in The Ghastly

Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish and Papa Song's fast food chain in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451 are also instances of Civil Society. Gramsci's concept of hegemony is also visible in Cloud Atlas in the shape of the Unanimity in Sonmi's narrative and in the Seaboard Corporation in Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery. Furthermore, the corporations that are constantly emphasized in Sonmi's story are an example of Louis Althusser's Ideological State Apparatus whereas the Unanimity with their oppressive Enrichment Laws forms a sample of Repressive State Apparatus.

In addition, the vicious exploitation of fabricants at Papa Song forms a great association with Terry Eagleton's notion of commodification while on the other hand, the power and influence of the corporations to manipulate the State is linked to Timothy Bewes' conception of Reification.

As with Jean Baudrillard's theories concerning consumerism, there are many references to the happiness myth in Sonmi's dystopian society where an artificial happiness is provided through the created need of consumption. Following in Baudrillard's footsteps, Zygmunt Bauman scrutinized the lower classes which were unable to consume just like it is in Sonmi's Nea So Copros where the unfortunate have been labelled with insulting words such as downstrata and untermensch. Finally, Paul Lafargue's theory that hard work eventually leads to exploitation and slavery is clearly visible in Papa Song where the fabricants are exploited to the fullest extent.

Moreover, Cloud Atlas also demonstrates that it is very rich and vivid in terms of semiotic signs. From its title, to the unique forms of language and carefully selected vocabulary in some of its chapters, the novel forms an excellent example of semiotic analysis. It is proven that the specific language used in certain narratives help to further highlight the setting, content and covert inferences related to these stories. This is obviously the case in An Orison of Sonmi ~ 451. The story is set in the dystopian future of 2144 where technology along with consumerism has reached its ultimate peak. Thus, the language used in this chapter is not solely hi-tech but also loaded with implications towards consumerism for brand names have replaced names of products and corporations have taken over the stage as the ultimate rulers. In the post-apocalyptic future of Sloosha's Crossin' on the other hand, the language used is a non-grammatical, primitive type of vernacular which directly implies the primitive nature that humans have regressed to. Along with the primitivism, a return to nature is

established which is also clearly perceived in the valleymen's language. All the expressions and terms are created from terms borrowed by the nature. The frequent use of the apostrophe is an indication of fragmentation and primitivism.

In addition to the language, the various semiotic signs within the narratives are also defined and explained thoroughly. It is thereby proven that the comet-shaped birthmark is a symbol referring to the phenomenon of reincarnation and the numbers 451 in Sonmi ~ 451 are a covert reference to Fahrenheit 451 and thus a foreshadowing of death. The tilde sign: ~ is used to highlight Sonmi's status as a fabricant or a mass-produced commodity. Moreover, soap as a major symbol in Sonmi's story stands for a narcoleptic drug that is used to keep the fabricants submissive and on duty. The soap symbol is not only a reference to Fight Club where soap is also deconstructed in a similar way but also to Aldous Huxley's Brave New World where it is compared to the narcoleptic drug Soma which is similarly used to prevent people from questioning the system and establishing conformist masses.

The city of Neo-Seoul is a combination of North Korean totalitarianism and South Korean type of advanced capitalism but as it is pronounced as New Soul, it is also a foreshadowing to the new humanity which is to emerge after the fall. Finally, the number 6 is a reoccurring symbol which is a reference to the creation myth and the everlasting cycle of humanity. In short, the specific language and semiotic signs used throughout the novel reveal the conditions, lifestyle and ideology of the given narratives.

Fragmentation is a very significant quality of Cloud Atlas as it is a concept that describes our modern society in the best and most realistic manner. Fragmentation represents notions such as alienation from the society, reification, isolation and commodification. Thus, as Cloud Atlas' narrative structure consists of six different stories taking place in six different locations and time periods, it could be asserted that the Russian Doll structure is closely related to the notion of fragmentation. To that end, it is also closely associated with the themes of the novel.

The major themes of Cloud Atlas are oppression, struggle for change and freedom, reincarnation, hope and persistence. Fragmented structure is a symbol for a society which is alienated from humane values and from justice, as well as equality and fraternity. In Cloud Atlas, it is inferred that capitalism breeds greed by isolating

and estranging individuals from humane values and slowly addicting them to the accumulation of power and money which will lead us to a chaotic world. Fragmentation is applied even in linguistic terms where the speech and words are virtually broken into multiple pieces with the widespread use of the apostrophe in the chapter of Sloosha's Crossin'. Besides fragmentation, open ending is another technique commonly used in <u>Cloud Atlas</u> in order to accentuate the unknown future of humanity as well as to leave the ending open for the reader's interpretation.

Moreover, the novel also possesses several characteristics regarding historiographic metafiction such as overt references to the Russian novelist Alexander Solženicyn and Italian film producer Alberto Grimaldi as well as references to certain historical notions such as slavery and the rise of nuclear energy. In conclusion, <u>Cloud Atlas</u> is a contemporary, fictional novel that uses various semiotic signs to convey strong criticism towards our present-day consumerist society which acts as a grave warning for those not yet aware of the perils we are faced with.

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