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Amar Thelidji University-Laghouat
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

**The Conception of Power and its
Reception in/through David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas***

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the Degree of 'Magister' in Commonwealth Studies

Presented by:

Youcef Mekhanet

Board of Examiners:

Prof. Afkir Mohamed	University Amar Thelidji- Laghouat	Examiner
Dr. Mohammed Seghir HALIMI	University Kasdi Merbah- Ouargla	Supervisor
Dr. Nassima KAID	University Amar Thelidji- Laghouat	President
Dr. Nadhir KAOULI	University El Hadj Lakhdar- Batna	Examiner

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Thank you

Dedication

To my parents,

To my friends

And

All my beloved ones

Abstract

Power, as a modern concept, has become one of the most complex and elusive notions in the contemporary culture. The question of power acquisition is no longer related to the old notion of the sovereign and the ability to control life and death as it became related to many other elements that transformed power into a much complex concept. This dissertation will attempt to focus on the conception of power and its main modes throughout *Cloud Atlas*' narratives rather than the essence of such intricate concept. In order to pinpoint our research on a solid ground, firstly, this research will conceive power on the basis of two of the main relative doctrines of our time, will to power (Nietzsche) and biopower (Foucault). By adopting such views, an attempt will be taken to understand how power works and evolves within *Cloud Atlas*' societies and to what extent Mitchell's predictive fiction in *An Orison of Sonmi-451* is adequate to our contemporary conception of power. Secondly, this research will explore the conception of power as an innate phenomenon within the individual by following Nietzsche's doctrine of the *Urbarmensch* and Freud's psychosexual development theory to explore how an individual would evolve into the status of the *Urbarmensch* through the three metamorphosis and a psychologically healthy individual through the different stages of psychosexual development process.

ملخص

أصبح مفهوم القوة، كمصطلح حديث، واحدا من أكثر المفاهيم تعقيدا و غموضا في الثقافة المعاصرة . إن مسألة اكتساب السلطة و القوة لم تعد مرتبطة بالمفهوم القديم للسيادة من حيث القدرة على السيطرة على الحياة والموت بل أصبحت مرتبطة بالعديد من العناصر الأخرى التي حولت السلطة والقوة من مفهوم بسيط وخطي إلى مفهوم معقد و متشعب إلى حد كبير. سنحاول في هذه الأطروحة التركيز على مفهوم القوة ومظاهرها الرئيسية في أقصوصات رواية *Cloud Atlas* بدلا من تناول جوهر هذا المفهوم المعقد بحد ذاته. من أجل تأسيس هذا البحث على أرضية صلبة، أولا، هذا البحث سوف يتناول مفهوم القوة والسلطة من خلال مذهبين من المذاهب الفلسفية الرئيسية في عصرنا هذا. هذان المذهبان هما إرادة القوة لفريديريك نيتشه و السياسة الحيويّة لميشال فوكو. على ضوء هذا التوجه سنحاول أن نقوم من خلال هذا البحث بفهم منهج عمل السلطة و القوة وتطورها داخل مجتمعات رواية *Cloud Atlas* وإلى أي مدى واكب الخيال التنبئي لدافيد ميتشال في *An Orison of Sonmi-451* مفهومنا المعاصر للسلطة. ثانيا، هذا البحث سوف يقوم باستكشاف مفهوم القوة كظاهرة فطرية داخل الفرد باتباع نظرية الرجل الخارق لنيتشه حيث سيتم التطرق لمراحل تحول الفرد من رجل بسيط إلى ما يصفه نيتشه بالرجل الخارق. كما سيتم تحليل شخصيات البطلة للرواية كمراحل نمو نفسي للشخصية السوية وذلك بتطبيق نظرية النمو النفسي الجنسي لفرويد.

Résumé

Le pouvoir est un concept modern qui est devenu l'une des conceptions les plus inextricables et profonds de la culture contemporaine. La question de l'obtention du pouvoir n'est plus attachée à l'ancienne conception de la seigneurie et à la capacité de contrôler la vie et la mort, puisqu'elle est associée à d'innombrables autres composants qui ont transmué le pouvoir en un concept plein de complications (un concept nouveau). Cette thèse essaiera de se concentrer sur la notion du pouvoir et de ses principales caractéristiques dans les récits de Cloud Atlas plutôt que sur l'essence d'un tel concept profond.

Afin d'établir notre recherche sur des bases solides, premièrement, cette thèse se penchera le concept de pouvoir et d'autorité sur la base de deux principale doctrines clés illuminées de notre temps. Ces deux doctrines sont 'la puissance de la volonté' de Frederick Nietzsche et le 'Biopouvoir' de Michel Foucault. Compte tenu de cette tendance, on tentera de comprendre comment le pouvoir fonctionne et évolue dans les sociétés de Cloud Atlas, et dans quelle mesure la fiction prédictive de Mitchell dans *An Orison of Sonmi-451* est adéquate à notre conception contemporaine du pouvoir. Deuxièmement, cette recherche explorera la notion du pouvoir en tant que phénomène inné au sein de l'individu en suivant la doctrine de 'Surhomme' Ou ce qu'on appelle '*Übermensch*' de Nietzsche, et la théorie du développement psychosexuel de Freud pour scruter comment un individu évoluerait vers le statut 'surhomme' à travers les différentes étapes du processus de développement psychologique.

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Introduction

Before the coming about of society as a social structure, the most crucial question for humanity was to overcome and survive the arduousness of nature which was already difficult to put up with. Consequently, it was essential to create an organism that would ensure its survival and continuity. With the emergence of the primitive tribal communities, the question of survival, to some extent, became second to the question of hierarchy in those newly found communities. The predicament of power and authority became an everlasting conflict that marked human societies ever since.

In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche theorised a force in the human consciousness that functions to exercise power over others at any cost. He named such subtle force the will to power. For him, the concept of will to power is the true essence of humanity on earth; this particular drive is what urges human beings to survive and grow to accumulate more power. Consequently, forming a society is but another step towards overcoming resistance, which is nature in this case (Nietzsche, 1967, p.363).

Through time, nature had become no longer able to pose a serious threat to human society and survival. Thus, the threatening nature was no longer an important question for humanity, whereas the nature of will to power was still expanding its influence. Ultimately, the nature of will to power needed newer threats, crises and enemies which it found within the human societies.

Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004) is a polyphonic novel that explores such power conflict through different societies from different eras and continents. In an article entitled *Genesis* published in The Guardian, David Mitchell, discussing *Cloud Atlas*, claimed to have been "besotted by the

philosopher's theory of the *will to power*" (2005, p.01) which indicates the way he perceives the concept of power in his novel.

Mitchell explores the conception of power and how it morphs accordingly to adapt along with the structure and tendency of each type of society. From the historical journal of Ewing's adventures to the science fiction of Somni's world, the conception of power is shaped according to the predatory element of subduing others. The element of subjugating other human beings has mutated from the 'benign' imposition of virtues that classified races in the name of God and civilization into the mechanization of the designed 'others' as an assembly of different specialized fabricant workers.

Despite the distinct differences between the narratives in time, setting, and society, the drive of will to power is evident throughout the whole Novel. Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* trajectory trails the development of Capitalism to one of its very possible logical endpoints. Mitchell, continually, attempts to set a sort of criticism to the current trajectory of humanity's evolution by highlighting the similarities between indigenous slavery in colonial times, the illegal immigrant of the sweatshops of 1970s America and the literal cloning of an entire work force in the consumerist society of Nea So Copros.

Nietzsche perceived the history of human evolution as the history of will to power (Alistair Moles, 1990, p.122). Such driving force is a cosmological phenomenon that fuels the wheel of progress in all things and especially the human race. In this regard, the novel will be approached on the basis of the doctrine of will to power and the concept of the *Übermensch* (the ultimate form of a human being for Nietzsche) which are considered as the main pillars in this research.

Several works related to the will to power and Capitalism were conducted on *Cloud Atlas*. Respectively, one can mention *David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas: "Revolutionary or Gimmicky?"* (2010) by Sarah Jane Johnston-Ellis and *Power, Culture and Resistance: Is 'Cloud Atlas' an Anti-Capitalist Novel?* (2013) By Ailsa Martin. The former examined the novel through its complex narrative and Metafictionality and implementing Nietzsche's will to power and Foucault's theories of power and knowledge to highlight Mitchell's political concerns regarding relations of power between individuals and between factions. As for Ailsa Martin, the focal point was more on Capitalism from a Foucauldian point of view and especially his vision of Biopower to argue whether this novel could be seen as an anti-Capitalist work of fiction.

Both works approached the novel's narrative as to some extent separate short stories and examined them based on their allusion to our contemporary reality. The works also examined power relations and will to power from the macro and micro perspective but not from within the protagonists' themselves. The present research will include both the will to power and Capitalism. However, this research will be approached from a different theoretical angle that will examine the protagonists and their societies as a long process of evolution that is driven by the will to power. This research will be based not only on the two previous mentioned concepts but also on Nietzsche's *Übermensch* and Freud's Psychosexual development theory in order to examine how the conception of power is shaped and perceived in the contemporary world from both angles of the individual and society equally.

Approaching *Cloud Atlas* from a philosophical perspective is not something neoteric, because researchers have already tackled it before. Yet, what differs is the point of view which remains the personal element of the research. An essential personal motivation is our society's tendency

towards Consumerism as a contemporary phenomenon. This may sound trivial to many, but it would be necessary to say that people in our society do not pay attention to the outcome of such phenomenon that is profoundly reshaping the identity of the youth. To some extent, today's youth is facing an identity crisis that is caused by the persistent bombardment of Consumerism and its most essential machine which is advertisement. Thus, it would be worthy to attempt to tackle such influence of consumerism on a given individual in a novel that is both, according to critics, ingenious and popular around the world due to its movie adaptation which it would prove vital to the process of raising the students' awareness concerning Consumerism as a phenomenon that is altering them gradually.

Philosophical and psychoanalytical, as well as biological approaches are important in this study, because my reading of *Cloud Atlas* is grounded on Nietzsche's cosmological point of view of our world. Such view not only relates the will to power to the social and cultural elements of humanity but also to the organic and biological dimension of any living organism including the human being. However, the biological approach within this research will be limited to the basic level of functionality of such organic entities like pathogens. Since this research would be grounded on the basis of examining both the individual and society as an organism in the process of development, it is essential to approach the individual from psychoanalytical perspective and more precisely as the final outcome of Freud's psychosexual developments stages.

Rich with references to Nietzsche's philosophy, the novel *Cloud Atlas* could be approached analytically as the manifestation of will to power across time and settings in which the narrative spots the light on some of the crimes qualified as atrocious. Those crimes are committed by a

small faction of individuals within a given society in order to maintain and increase their ardent believe in the possession of power despite the on-going resistance of the masses.

This struggle for power makes the essence of this study and makes an adequate platform whereby many questions could be asked. In this sense, it is legitimate to ask how the conception of power changes from a story to another and the way how protagonists came to hold any type of power. Other questions, like the one related to the extent to which the conception of power in *Cloud Atlas* is adequate to the contemporary society, could be also set forward.

The conception of power in *Cloud Atlas* seems to fit the contemporary society in its depiction of nowadays ever-growing Consumerism. Today's conception of power, in so far as it is relevant to the ability to effectively subjugate individuals in a subtle manner through various ideologies such as Consumerism and biopower, came as a result to a long process of evolution which is alluded to the narrative of *Cloud Atlas*. Despite the overwhelming nihilistic tone of the novel, Mitchell offers a silver lining in the allusion to Nietzsche's *Übermensch* concept. The process of over-coming is the journey that *Cloud Atlas*'s protagonists went through to get back some of the power they lost to the state.

The first chapter, which is entitled *Towards a new Brow*, will first establish the theoretical background for this research through providing a genesis of power as a concept through the vision of Nietzsche, Foucault, Bourdieu and Sigmund Freud. Second, it will contextualises the novel *Cloud Atlas* with reference to the postmodern map in order to argue its eligibility to be a part the postmodern cannon. This chapter is rather an attempt to defend Mitchell's literary production as a postmodern novel through its fragmented structure, refusal of Grand Narrative, metafiction and intertextuality.

The second chapter, which is entitled *Metamorphosis of society: Metamorphosis of Power*, deals with Nietzsche's claim of will to power as, or as Dean Reesor, (2008) explains it to be "a cosmological principle driving both biological and cultural evolution" (p.vi). In fact, it is about perception of society as an organic complex entity (organism) in which pathogens within the human body are seen as symbolic references to the non-conformist or 'dysfunctional' individuals, classes, or institutions within a given society. The six narratives will be analysed as fragments that represent both the evolution of society and the conflicting human desire to obtain and then consolidate power which led to the constant reshaping of the conception of power and social hierarchy.

The third chapter, which is entitled *Becoming the Ubermensch*, emphasizes on the conception of power on the micro level and precisely from within. For Nietzsche, the ideally powerful individual is not the physically strong or even the one with power over others; it is the psychological and spiritual strengths that represent the ultimate power, and what matters more is one's hold over own self than over others. In this regard, *Cloud Atlas's* narrative would be approached as an allusion to the fragmented structure of the postmodern self. It will be analysed through the implication of the concepts of Freud's psychosexual development and Nietzsche's three metamorphoses in order to examine the inner conflicts that lead to such fragmented-self and the way how this self could possibly emerge as a harmonious unit that exerts with power known as the Ubermensch.

Chapter one

Towards a new Brow

Introduction

David Mitchell's most celebrated work *Cloud Atlas* (2004) is perhaps one of the main works that clearly defy the aesthetic classifications for literature value. When this novel was first published in 2004, it was met with positive reviews from critics. This bestseller novel won, amongst others, the British Book Awards for literary fiction as well as being short-listed for many other literary awards including the prestigious Booker Prize. Yet, it was not admitted in the highbrow bookshelf as literary success on the market is valued as artistic failure: "The literary field is the economic world reversed." (Bourdieu Pierre, 1993, p.194). David Mitchell refused to ascribe to such classification as he and most postmodern authors saw those standards as no longer applicable in an era that is characterized by the breakaway from all conventions.

Due to its diversity in narrative styles, settings, and protagonists, *Cloud Atlas* novel is open for a wide range of critical analysis, yet not much research has been undertaken on it as it is still classified in the low brow bookshelf. However, this fact comes as no surprise considering that it is only thirteen years old, and so much fiction is being published nowadays. An attempt will be taken in this chapter to analyse *Cloud Atlas* as a postmodern production to argue its position in the literary field and its eligibility to become part of the postmodern cannon.

This chapter will also explore power as a modern concept that has become one of the most complex and elusive notions in the contemporary culture. The fact that this dissertation will attempt to focus on the conception of power and its main modes throughout *Cloud Atlas'* narratives rather than the essence of such intricate concept, acquires a genesis in order to pinpoint the research on a solid ground. This genesis will define power on the basis of two of the main relative doctrines of our time, will to power (Nietzsche) and biopower (Foucault) for the sake of contextualizing the process of analysis and findings in chapter two and three.

I. The Genesis of the Conception of Power in *Cloud Atlas*

Power is possibly one of the most eluding concepts in philosophy even though one could set up an endless parade of great names from Plato and Aristotle through Machiavelli and Hobbes to Nietzsche and Foucault to demonstrate that a large number of leading social theorists have devoted a good deal of attention to power and the phenomena associated with it. One could also argue that the reason such concept could not be clearly defined is because of its elusive form. For such reason, a full discussion of power as a concept is beyond this work's scope. However, this research will be concerned with how the conception of power is depicted and perceived in and through *Cloud Atlas*.

Power in *Cloud Atlas* is hard to define and pinpoint because of its different facets and forms which are linked to many elements like morality, knowledge, status and wealth. According to his *theory of Capital*, Bourdieu came to define such elements as different types of capital that are synonyms to 'quantified power'. The conception of power in *Cloud Atlas*' societies is revealed to be closely connected not just to Bourdieu's forms of capital but to different ideologies like Foucault's biopower as well as Nietzsche's philosophy of will to power, master/slave morality, and the vision of the *Urbarmensch*. Due to its complex narrative, the novel offers deep structures of power relations on both the macro and micro level. Yet, the aforementioned theories still cannot cover the conception of power for the individual and his conflicting elements from within. Hence, it is necessarily to adopt Freud's theory of psychoanalysis and psychosexual development in order to cover as much aspects of power as possible in *Cloud Atlas*' Universe.

I.1. Foucault and the conception of power

Prior to the nineteenth century, political rights ensued the classical theory of sovereignty in which the “right of life and death was one of sovereignty’s basic attributes.” (Foucault, 1978, p.140). Michel Foucault was the one who coined the concept of *biopower* to refer to the new mode of sovereignty. Unlike the old mode in which it was up to the sovereign to determine whether the subject had the right to be alive or dead, *biopower* as a modern concept became associated with ‘control’ rather than ‘death’. According to Machinal, biopower refers to a power of “exercising control over the life of populations or classes without taking into account the individual dimension.” (2011, p.139).

Foucault perceived it as the “explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations.” (Foucault, 1978, p.140). Under a strategy of biopower, the activities of the individual body become subjugated to the control of the governmental regime in which the body is considered as the core of multiple relations of power and agency. Foucault argued that a strategy of biopower operates at two distinct but simultaneous levels, at once an “anatomy-politics of the human body” and a “biopolitics of the population” (Ibid). To administer the behaviour of both individuals and the population group, “two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed.” (Ibid, p.139). These two poles, wrote Foucault, are based on the treatment of “the body as a machine”, and the “species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life” (Ibid), respectively.

The function of a strategy of biopower that Foucault conceived is not “to kill, but to invest life through and through.” (Ibid), not only that but also to organize the activity of the population so the operation of the state runs smoothly. However, what is most productive for the governmental system is not necessarily what is preferable for the individual citizen.

Referring to the treatment of the body as a dehumanised machine, Foucault claimed that “supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls” (Ibid) aimed at “the parallel increase of the body’s usefulness and its docility.” (Ibid). These twin characteristics, usefulness and docility, are the most desirable in an individual body to an administrative governmental system.

I.2. Bourdieu’s theory of capital

Biopower and Capitalism are closely linked. Foucault wrote that biopower not only “operated in the sphere of economic processes”, it “was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism.” (Ibid, p.141). In a sense, capital is another manifestation of the accumulation of power. According to Bourdieu’s theory of Capital, ‘capital’, as a term, can best be seen as to be synonymous with ‘quantified power’. Being able to read, for example, is a competence that adds a certain amount of cultural capital to a person; but the amount of capital one gains by being literate is much smaller in a society in which almost everybody is able to read, than in a society where being literate is the exception rather than the rule. There are three main types of capital which are crucial to understanding relationships of power both in reality and in *Cloud Atlas*:

Capital can present itself in three fundamental guises: as economic capital, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights; as cultural capital, which is convertible in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications; and as social capital, made up of social obligation (“connections”), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility.’ (Bourdieu, 1986, p.16)

Economic capital is perhaps the simplest of all three guises. It is concrete and immediately convertible from/into money. It also can be a possession of material objects such as houses, lands, cars...etc. However, the other two forms might need to be discussed further.

Cultural capital, in its embodied state, consists of any form of knowledge and any kind of skills that is deemed relevant in a given society; including the ability to operate tools or machinery, various social skills needed for social interaction, and knowledge of that society's laws and rules. Cultural capital is gained through various means: siblings, environment, skills, and knowledge picked up through either direct experience or through formal or informal schooling, etc. Cultural capital also comes in objectified forms: "pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc." (Ibid, p.17) and in institutionalized forms like diplomas and P.H.Ds. Hence, cultural capital, unlike economic or social capital, cannot simply be instantaneously transmitted (purchased, gifted, or exchanged) in its non-objectified form. Nonetheless, cultural capital is not autonomous from either social or economic capital.

As for social capital, it "is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to [...] membership in a group - which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a "credential" which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word." (Ibid, p.25). In other words, it is the sum of our affiliations to groups and factions that would provide us with credentials (qualifications, recommendations, testimonial...etc.) that would directly affect individuals and their other forms of capital. For instance, Sander stated that "the folk wisdom that more people get their jobs from whom they know, rather than what they know, turns out to be true." (2002, p.213). In this case a social capital was converted into an economic capital through an affiliation to a certain group in society. However, we cannot claim that the affiliation or its impact can always be positive. By being a member of a 'stigmatized' or negatively connoted group, your "real" capital might be re-evaluated negatively by the rest of society. We might conclude that society, as a whole, overrates and 'relativize' one's real capital.

This discrepancy between ‘real’ and ‘perceived’ capital, brings us to symbolic capital, another form of capital which is completely different in nature than the three forms of capital previously discussed. Symbolic capital is “capital - in whatever form – in so far as it is represented, i.e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and recognition.” (Bourdieu, 1986, p.27). In other terms, symbolic capital can be associated with ‘prestige’. It is different from other three types because it is very much open for (re)interpretation and is much less rooted in reality as it also derives its meaning mainly from mental constructions. Thus, such capital can never exist on its own.

For instance, a war hero may have symbolic capital, maybe for being extremely patriotic, which would bulk his chances in case he would run for political office. A former soccer player who, as a player, has accumulated a certain amount of cultural capital would be given a job as a coach. This job was mainly given to him due to his historical status. He is perceived (by the people who hold him in reverence) to possess more cultural capital (coaching skills in this case) than he actually does. This difference between the amount of cultural capital he actually possesses and the amount he is perceived to possess, is symbolic capital: it does not really exist in reality; it is only a fictional mental construct. Adding these four main types of capital to the theoretical framework, would definitely deepen our understanding of the interpersonal relationships and relations of power in *Cloud Atlas*.

I.3. Nietzsche’s philosophy and Power

In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche theorised a force in the human consciousness that functions to exercise power over others at any cost. He named such subtle force ‘the will to power’:

“The will to accumulate force is special to the phenomena of life, to nourishment, procreation, inheritance-to society, state, custom, authority.....The only reality is

the will to grow stronger every center of force-not self-preservation, but the will to appropriate, dominate, increase, grow stronger.”

- Nietzsche, 1968, p.398 -

According to him, it is within us all and it is the backbone of our world; “This world is the will to power-and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power-and nothing besides.” (Nietzsche, 1968, p.581). As a theory, the will to power is a way to explain such behaviour which Nietzsche believes that it exists among both the most powerful and the most impotent as both groups always tend to desire more power. According to Kaufmann, it is not the possession of power that is enjoyed, but rather the pursuit for more power that is both enjoyed and desired. (Walter Kaufmann, 1974, p.159)

In addition to the fact that *Cloud atlas* spins around a large scale of humanity’s history, David Mitchell relied heavily on Nietzsche’s theory of *will to power* in writing it (see chapter two). Thus, the latter can be read as an exploration of the human persisting desire to obtain and then consolidate power throughout the history.

Mitchell’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s theory is that the *will to power* upholds even if we (humans) cannot acquire “this power for ourselves; we will ally ourselves to a leader or a faction who can” (Mitchell, 2005) give us access to it. Mitchell also believes that through the creation of the Russian doll narrative structure, each story can be seen as been “eaten by its successor and later regurgitated by the same” to mirror and underline the overarching theme of the novel, which is “the nature of predation in the pursuit of power.” (Ibid).

For Nietzsche, the *will to power* is a primal drive that is common to every organism in the world. More often than not, this primal drive manifests itself in the most appalling and destructive ways. Many people dedicate their entire lives to the accumulation of wealth and

power, nations make wars to enslave other nations, nations make laws to enslave their citizens (Kaufmann, 1974, p.222). Fundamentally, one organism can only obtain more power through the suppression of another. Power can only be enjoyed as superiority to another being. *Cloud Atlas* shed some light on how consuming this primal drive can be, and the extreme lengths that both individuals and groups will go to acquire and then protect their power.

According to Nietzsche's idea of Will to Power, the ultimate thing in all living beings is growth. For Nietzsche, "It can be shown that every living things does everything it can, not to preserve itself, but to become more." (Nietzsche 1968, p.31). In another passage of his famous book *The Will to Power*, he says "To have and want to have more growth, in one word-that is life itself." (Ibid, p.34). To say that all things have an insatiable desire to manifest power is to say that they have an insatiable desire for unending growth. Nietzsche saw *will to power* not only as the essence of life but as the essence of the universe itself as he saw universe as an eternal generating and regenerating entity.

Although accurate information about the exact origin of society¹ is not known, it is widely accepted that man has been living in society since time immemorial. According to the Greek philosopher Aristotle "man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual." (Stuart Duncan, 2012). Man cannot live alone as he must satisfy certain natural basic needs in order to survive. He has to enter into relationships with his fellowmen for living a life to its fullest. No man can break the shackles of mutual dependence as many of his basic human qualities such as survival, procreation, and language require the existence of such organized community.

¹ Society is an abstract term that connotes the complex of inter-relations that exist between and among the members of the group. Society exists wherever there are good or bad, proper or improper relationships between human beings. (Rajendra & Rachana Sharma, 1997, P.39)

Aristotle also stated that “Anyone who either cannot lead the common life or is so self-sufficient as not to need to, and therefore does not partake of society, is either a beast² or a god” (Ibid). Logically, he refers to the savants and philosophers who isolate themselves to devote their time and efforts to their work.

Unlike Aristotle who understood the human essence to be reason (Kristen Wells, 2013, p.56), Nietzsche claims it to be the *will to power* (Ibid). He sees it as a cosmological principle driving both biological and cultural evolution:

[Anything which] is a living and not a dying body... will have to be an incarnate will to power, it will strive to grow, spread, seize, become predominant - not from any morality or immorality but because it is living and because life simply is will to power... 'Exploitation'... belongs to the essence of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will to life. (Ibid, p.57).

For Nietzsche, will to power is the true essence of humanity on earth. This particular drive is what urges us to survive and grow to accumulate more power. Consequently, forming a society is but another step towards overcoming resistance (individuals, groups, or other societies) which prevents the individuals from acquiring higher levels of power. He says:

[...] every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (--its will to power :) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement ("union") with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on. (Nietzsche, 1967, p.363)

Raymond Geuss reinforces this vision as he believes that “its [will to power] proper scope includes both smaller and larger entities that grow and become predominant through their own struggles and desires.” (Wells, 2013, p.56). Therefore, societies, on the macro level, could be observed as a manifestation of structured forms of the will to power. On the basis of

² Many social-contract theorists, such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke defined it as “The state of nature” which denotes the hypothetical conditions of what the lives of people might have been like before societies came into existence.

Nietzsche's claim of will to power as "a cosmological principle driving both biological and cultural evolution." (Dean Reesor, 2008, p.VI), society is an organic complex entity (organism). According to W. Cunningham:

the expression of life in human society, in so far as life as will to power can in any intelligible sense be said to express itself in human society in so far, that is to say, as society may legitimately be said to be organic. (Watts Cunningham, 1919, p.484).

The formation of societies led to the emergence of hierarchal structures of power that gave authority and dominance to certain individuals over the others within such societies. Nietzsche classified those individuals, according to their moralities, into two main types which form altogether the fabric of the modern western society.

Master/slave morality

In his famous book *Beyond Good and Evil* (1909), Nietzsche identified two types of moralities that exist not only on the macro level of civilized societies but also within the psychology of the individual. For him, "Master-morality values power, nobility, and independence: it stands "beyond good and evil." (Lee & John Archie, 2004, p.267) whereas Slave-morality values sympathy, kindness, and humility which is regarded by Nietzsche as 'herd morality'. He also argued that the history of society is the history of the conflict between these two viewpoints in which the herd always attempts to enforce its values universally but the noble master transcends their 'mediocrity'. (Ibid)

Nietzsche's quest to trace the origins of Western moral thought led him to believe that the moral malaise of the modern societies is rooted in the triumph of Christianity over the Greeks. Following that victory, the core idea of morality, and of good and bad, became inverted, or 'transvalued'. (Zubayer Alam, 2016, p.20). Nietzsche observes that in the modern world:

[...] we think of 'good' as meaning an act that is altruistic or just, or in Nietzsche's language 'unegoistic', and 'bad' as describing that which is cruel or unjust. It is morally good to protect the weak, give alms to the poor, and treat all

people with dignity and respect. It is morally bad to be self-regarding, to be cruel to those with less power, deliberately to harm or injure. (Ibid)

For Nietzsche, however, these meanings of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ are not the original connotations for such terms as they meant quite differently to the early Greeks who associated ‘good’ and ‘bad’ with different types of qualities than those in the modern culture. The nobility was ‘good’, as well as the traits of character that are necessary to be noble and aristocratic such as courage, strength and pride. Whereas, ‘bad’ is associated with the ‘herd’³, and to the traits of the masses such as vulgarity, untruthfulness and cowardice. (Ibid)

Accordingly, the master morality for Nietzsche is centred on the noble type of man who transcends himself above other ‘mediocre’ beings of the herd:

The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the judgment: What is injurious to me is injurious in itself; he knows that it is he himself only who confers honour on things; he is a creator of values. He honours whatever he recognizes in himself: such morality equals self-glorification [...] the noble man also helps the unfortunate, but not—or scarcely—out of pity, but rather from an impulse generated by the superabundance of power. (Lee & John Archie, 2004, p.271)

Nietzsche believed that the slave morality came as a reaction to all the suffering and oppression the masses of the herd went through by the hands of the few noble masters:

Supposing that the abused, the oppressed, the suffering, the unemancipated, the weary, and those uncertain of themselves should moralize, what will be the common element in their moral estimates? Probably a pessimistic suspicion with regard to the entire situation of man will find expression, perhaps a condemnation of man, together with his situation. The slave has an unfavourable eye for the virtues of the powerful; he has a skepticism and distrust, a refinement of distrust of everything “good” that is there honoured—he would fain persuade himself that the very happiness there is not genuine. On the other hand, those qualities which serve to alleviate the existence of sufferers are brought into prominence and flooded with light; it is here that sympathy, the kind, helping hand, the warm heart, patience, diligence, humility, and friendliness attain to honour; for here

³ The herd is the name Nietzsche often gives to the common, mediocre masses. He sees them as herd animals, lacking any individual will and living by group instincts. Nietzsche often speaks of "herd morality" as the democratic will to render everyone equal in mediocrity.

these are the most useful qualities, and almost the only means of supporting the burden of existence. Slave-morality is essentially the morality of utility. (Ibid, p.p.267-268)

Eventually, this contrasting connotations of the same terms of good and bad gave birth to the famous antithesis of “good and evil” which led to many conflicting ideologies. For example, “According to slave-morality, therefore, the “evil” man arouses fear; according to master morality, it is precisely the “good” man who arouses fear and seeks to arouse it, while the bad man is regarded as the despicable being.” (Ibid, 268). Perhaps, the main difference between the master and slave morality for Nietzsche is the ability for an individual to create and determine his own values. Nietzsche referred to this type of individuals several times in his books as the *Übermensch*, but he never fully discussed it in details.

The *Übermensch*

Friedrich Nietzsche is widely known for his enigmatic philosophy. A standout free thinker who wrote bold aphorisms such as ‘God is dead’, and ‘There is no fact only interpretations’. He questioned and criticized the traditional understanding of grounded concepts like truth, morality, knowledge, power, modernity, justice and even the privileged position of questioning philosophy in such a radical way. One of the most profound ideas that Nietzsche put into the landscape of western philosophy is his idea of the *Übermensch*. Nietzsche was and still a philosopher of existence and revolutionary ideas. All the philosophical questions he raised in his notorious books are basically centred on the basic ontological problem known as the ‘Human Being’.

Nietzsche’s reluctance to clearly define exactly what he meant with *Übermensch* has inspired several interpretations. For Hollingdale, the *Übermensch* is a man who succeeded to bring order to the chaos within. For Kaufmann, a symbolic man that created his own values. As for Carl Jung, he is a new ‘God’. Heidegger saw it as representation of humanity that

surpassed itself, while for the Nazis, it became an emblem of the master race. (Alam, 2016, p.5)

For Nietzsche, there can neither be any single truth nor interpretation (Nietzsche, 1977, p.472). Thus, limiting the definition of the *Urbemensch* will be totally contradictory to his philosophy. However, in accordance this research, this concept will be approached from the philosophical standpoint of the will to power.

Often mistaken with the comic hero *superman*, The German word *Urbemensch* consists of two words. One is 'Uber' which means 'beyond' and another is 'mensch' meaning human being. So if we connect the English meaning of these two German words, the meaning becomes 'Beyond man' or 'Over man'. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1978), Nietzsche said:

I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him? ...what is the ape to man? A laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment. And just the same shall man be to the overman: a laughing-stock or a painful embarrassment. (1977, p.138).

Thus, the *Urbemensch* or Overman is a vision of the human ultimate evolution and progress. It can be approached as the overarching purpose to the process of evolution of will to power. According to Nietzsche: "Man is a rope stretched between animal and overman - a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking back, a dangerous trembling and stopping." (Ibid, p.140). Therefore, *Urbemensch* is the idea of a man who aims to become more than a mere man, aims to surpass his humanity by bettering his animalistic urges in order to become something more superior than a human being, and thus to ascend over the normality of the man. Nietzsche spoke through Zarathustra to state that "[...] life confided the secret to me: behold, it said, I am that must always overcome itself." (1977, p.13). For him, In order to pass and ascend that 'rope of man', one must propel himself forward by consistently practice the art of self-overcoming.

The meaning of the *Urbemensch* could never be fully grasped without understanding his antithesis concept of the 'Last Man'. Nietzsche viewed the formation of western states as the formation of decadent states. In his words "the state is where slow universal suicide is called life." (1968, p.91). According to him, those individuals living in these decadent states formed societies that are also decadent. Members of those societies have no individual will power, no wish, and no desire as these societies managed to suppress every possible side of their individuality (wishes, desires, and will to power) for the sake of preserving their collective existence. Nietzsche believed that the purpose of all western culture is simply to "[...] breed a tame and civilized animal, a *household* animal, out of the beast of prey of man". (Nietzsche, 2006, p.23). Nietzsche calls such individuals who are created by these modern states the 'Last Man'. This last man has no great aspiration as he merely seeks to earn a living, to be comfortable, and to be content. Nietzsche describes the last men as those with "no shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse." (Nietzsche, 1977, p.144).

So in direct contrast with this notion of 'the last man', the *Urbemensch* is the idea of a man who has great aspirations in life, who wants to be someone greater even though it would leave his comfortable life. He is someone who wants to rule, dominate and if necessary disobey. Above all he is someone who has his own individual desire, wish and will power. In a single sentence *Urbemensch* is someone who has total control over himself and who has already overcome the corruption of his will to power.

I.4. Freud's Psychoanalysis Theory

Psychoanalysis is one of those rare breakthroughs that had the effect of radically transform the human self-understanding. Around the beginning of the 20th century, Sigmund Freud held the torch of an intellectual revolution that was led by individuals like Darwin and Nietzsche.

Such revolution shook the human conceit to the core regarding its privileged position in the universe and in nature. Freud's theory completed the assault on human pretence of superiority by demonstrating that even human reason is not that 'reasonable' after all. For Freud, human psychology is, in fact, besieged and driven by irrational, unconscious motivations.

One of the main factors that would influence our reasoning and behaviour is the tripartite division of the mental kingdom which actually is considered as one of the pillars of the psychoanalysis theory. As a complementary to the Iceberg theory of the psyche, the Id, Ego, and Superego structural model of the mind proved to be essential, even to modern psychology, when it comes to the studies of the unconscious and conscience development of the human personality.

Freud related our complex behaviours and tendencies to be the direct result of those three agencies or 'provinces' and the complex relationship between them. The oldest and most primitive of the three is called the id. As we are born with it, this psychic apparatus represents the biological foundation of personality which embodies all our basic instinctual drives, particularly sexual (libidinal) drives⁴. The unconscious id knows no reason nor logic, and the only law it follows is the pleasure principle⁵ which makes it unresponsive to the demands of reality. The ego, however, is the outcome of the id's unfulfilled immediate gratification that emerges as a result of the direct influence of the external world. Such repressed desires would create psychological tension that needs to be discharged. The ego is the 'executive' branch of the personality which regulates the discharge of such drives and tensions so that the satisfaction would occur according to the norms and demands of reality. According to Freud,

⁴ Libido is a term used by in psychoanalytic theory to describe the energy created by the survival and sexual instincts. According to Sigmund Freud, the libido is the "source of all psychic energy"; thus making it the primary component of personality and the driving force of all behaviours.

⁵ In Freudian psychoanalysis, the pleasure principle (German: Lustprinzip) is the instinctual seeking of pleasure and avoiding of pain in order to satisfy biological and psychological needs. Specifically, the pleasure principle is the driving force guiding the id.

“[...] the ego represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the *id* which contains the passions.” (Freud, 1923, p.24). Unlike the *id*, the ego operates according to the reality principle in which reason and common-sense are the subtle forces behind any behaviour.

The superego is a further differentiation within the ego which represents its ideals. The superego emerges as an outcome of the oedipal drama as the child adopts the authority of parental figures through introjection or identification to be his superego apparatus. Whereas the *id* operates in pursuit of pleasure, and the *ego* is governed by the reality principle, the superego drives the psychic apparatus to pursue idealistic goals and perfection which makes it the source of moral censorship and of conscience.

Psychosexual development

Freud's theory of psychosexual development is not just one of the most renowned theories, but also one of the most controversial ones because of how he related the development of personality to his notorious claim of the child's early sexuality and its relation to the development of triplet apparatuses of the *id*, *ego*, and superego. Freud believed that personality begins to develop as early as the birth of the child. This development is characterized by the shift of the pleasure-seeking impulses of the *id* from an erogenous zone to another. For Freud, the shift between these erogenous zones of the mouth, anus, phallus and genitalia is what determines our psychological development towards maturity. Therefore, Freud divided the psychosexual development stages according to these erogenous zones into the five oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital stages.

In Freud's psychoanalysis theory, the psychosexual development stages are crucial for the healthy growth of the human personality. Freud believed that if the child experiences any kind of incapacity to transit normally from any psychosexual developmental stage into another, he or she would experience anxiety that would continue to exist and influence his or her choices even in the period of adulthood.

The first of the five stages is the oral stage which lasts up to eighteen months starting from the birth of the child. Sucking, including tactual stimulation of the mouth and swallowing, is the main source of pleasure for the child during this stage. With the appearance of the teeth, the child begins to use both his mouth and teeth to derive pleasure from biting and chewing. Since the child's primary concern is about seeking pleasure, he/she needs immediate gratification of the needs which are adequately met by breast feeding from the mother. Thus, the mother becomes the source of gratification and the first love object for the child. (Gracious Thomas, 2011, p.183).

The second stage which is the anal stage begins when the child reaches a year and half of age and ends when he/she is around three years old. According to Gracious:

During the initial part of anal stage there is pleasurable sensation of excretion and later there is erotic stimulation of the anal mucosa through retention of feces. This stage is divided into two sub stages i.e. the anal expulsive period and the anal retention period. The anal expulsive phase overlaps with the closing stages of oral period. Here the mode of deriving pleasure for the child is the expulsion of feces. The expulsion of the feces removes discomfort and produces a feeling of relief. (Ibid, p.184)

Later in this stage, the child starts to go through the toilet training. This training would be his/her first experience with the external regulation of an instinctual impulse or what is known as delayed gratification. The child is required to be able to delay the pleasure that comes from relieving anal tensions during the anal retention period. Toilet training puts a lot of pressure on the child as he/she "[...] has to learn to derive pleasure from retention than expulsion." (Ibid). This stage is vital due to its crucial impact in the forming of the child's personality as the child "[...] learns to bring the erotic gratification resulting from defecation to social control." (Ibid, p.191). Any failure in resolving anal conflicts of toilet training leads to "[...] constellation of character traits, which are called anal character. Anal character is characterized by traits like excessive devotion to details, and unevenness of character leading

to easy anger outbursts.” (Ibid)

The third stage, known as the phallic stage, begins when the child reaches his third year and continues until his fifth. During this stage, the sexual identity begins to take shape as the “child plays with its genitals and relieves tension and derives pleasure.” (Ibid, p.184). The child begins to form his/her own gender identity through activities like urination. After the formation of gender identity, the controversial sexual conflict of Oedipus and Electra complexes⁶ in boys and girls, respectively, begins to appear.

Freud believed that close to the age of five, the infantile sexuality starts to gradually decline. This decline comes as a normal outcome to “the fear of the social consequences and because of the realization that the love object is unattainable.” (Ibid, 186). Following the phallic stage and around the age of five or six, the child begins to be less concerned with sexual matters and more concerned with interests in the outward world. Hence, the literal meaning of the word latency stage. In this stage, the sexual urges are diverted into recreational, academic and social pursuits and the child learns to behave according to society’s norms and ideals. Many psychoanalysts perceive this stage to be more of a transitional period than one of the psychosexual stages, because, generally, the child’s sexual drive is dormant at this age.

The last stage which is called the *genital stage* begins with the onset of adolescence. During this period, sexual drives resurface all over again and takes new intensity as it would be manifested in more mature form. According to Gracious, this stage is characterized by:

Sexual attraction, socialization, group activities, vocational planning and preparations for marrying and raising a family begin to manifest. By the end of adolescence these concerns become fairly well established. The person becomes

⁶ The Oedipus complex is named after the Greek king of Thebes who killed his father and married his mother. Oedipus complex consists of a sexual attachment for the parent of the opposite sex and a hostile feeling for the parent of the same sex. The boy wants to possess his mother and remove his father. According to Electra complex girl wants to possess her father and displace the mother. These feelings express themselves in the child’s fantasies during the act of masturbation. The emergence of the Oedipus and Electra complexes are considered to be the chief events of the phallic stage. (Gracious Thomas, 2011, p.185)

transformed from a pleasure seeking, self-loving infant into a reality oriented, socialized adult. The principal biological function of the genital stage is that of reproduction. (Ibid, p.187)

With the end of the adolescence period, the individual would have been passed through a series of dynamically distinguished stages during this short life span. This process of psychosexual genesis plays a decisive role in the formation of any personality in which the end result is either a healthy or a psychologically unbalanced individual. These stages will be used and further discussed in the third chapter as part of the general analysis of the transformational journey of the protagonists.

II. Exploring the genre: *Cloud Atlas* as a postmodern novel

Postmodernism came as a reaction to the aesthetic guidelines, conventions, and restrictions imposed by *Modernism*. One of the main restrictions is the clear cut between high and low culture, between highbrow and lowbrow literature. In his work *Theory of the Novel*, George Lukács argued that the novel is a major form of literary art that thrived as the successor of the epic. This new narrative mode, which is grounded on what he labelled as *transcendental homelessness*⁷, proved to be apt for an age after ‘the death of God.’ (Robert Scholes, 2006, p.10). Lukács saw the novel as a serious work of art that is losing its dignity by the presence of trivial narrative modes. The most prominent among them all is the mere entertainment literature. He considered such narratives that plagued the novel out of all other literary genres as a curse of having an evil twin:

a caricatural twin almost indistinguishable from itself in all inessential formal characteristics: the entertainment novel, which has all the outward features of the novel but which, in essence, is bound to nothing and based on nothing, i.e. is entirely meaningless.’ (Lukács, 1971, p.73).

⁷ It is a philosophical term coined by George Lukacs in his 1920 work *Theory of the Novel*. Lukacs describes the term as "the urge to be at home everywhere." He labeled modern novels, especially those of German Romanticism, as the artistic expression of this philosophy of trying to make oneself feel welcomed in any place or situation. (Lukacs, George, 1974, p.41)

Umberto eco related *postmodernism* to “the sense that the past is restricting, smothering, and blackmailing us” (Stefano Rosso, 1982, p.2). His views were shared by many postmodern authors including David Mitchell who refused to ascribe to “people putting books into categories. They talk of highbrow and lowbrow but I prefer ‘no brow’. I mean, who cares? I am more interested in whether a book is any good or not. That’s what counts” (Sara Keating: 2014). He indulged further on the matter stating that:

When you are reading, you should just, well, not be thinking at all. Are you held by the narrative? Are you nourished by the ideas? Are you pleased by the style? Are you mostly oblivious or admiring of the structure? If you are, great: the author has reeled you in and it is working. That’s all – and it’s a huge all – but that is all I am concerned with. How it is read: I cannot possibly control that. It’s a bit like asking a duck-billed platypus what type of a mammal he should be. He is just busy going about business as duck-billed platypus. (Ibid)

Cloud Atlas came to be classified as an ambitious work under the postmodern umbrella: ‘*Cloud Atlas*’ is a twenty-first century novel....it represents a midpoint between the future idea that everything is fragmented and the past idea that there is a beginning, a middle, and an end.’ (Erin Overbey, 2012).

According to Edwin Turner, Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas* is a postmodern work through its contradictions, fragmentation, and its daring playfulness in which Mitchell danced on the fine line between ingenious creativity and chaotic insanity. Edwin Turner stated that:

Cloud Atlas is a postmodern novel through and through. It riffs on genre and style with a keen awareness of textuality, an overt reliance on intertextuality, and a formally experimental schema that, as one of its principals puts it, might be “Revolutionary or gimmicky.” It lovingly pairs the high with the low, the philosophical with the vulgar, the musical with the mud, and its best moments do so seamlessly and gracefully. (2010)

Postmodernism is an aesthetic or cultural manifestation that is notoriously difficult to define and delimit. There are two extremes when dealing with defining *Postmodernism*. One could either claim that *Postmodernism* is not there, and *Postmodernism* is just an aspect of

Modernism. Or that all that is new is categorized as postmodern. However, all new texts cannot be automatically taken as postmodern. They may be modern or new, yet it is not enough.

Postmodern characteristics may be found in older texts, but not to the extent to which they, as a whole, might be dubbed ‘postmodern’. For a work to be postmodern, it has to include most of the five prominent features of: hybridity, the break away from the grand narrative, fragmentation, metafiction and intertextuality.

II.1. *Cloud Atlas* as a polyphonic hybrid Novel

Cloud Atlas encompasses six interrelated narratives that infuse together to create a story covering vastly discrepant times, geographies, ethnicities, genders and philosophical beliefs thus offering a ‘common’ picture of humanity across distance and history. It explores, in a unique palindromic style, the interweaved lives of six protagonists from different eras and cultures in an intricate system of embedding as each tale is read (or observed) by the main character in the next in a form of a written or recorded document or as an instance of oral storytelling. Each story is interrupted in a whim with the following narrative only to be re-continued again further down the novel. Thus, the narrative of *Cloud Atlas* is formulated as follows ‘1,2,3,4,5,6,5,4,3,2,1’ with each number represents one of the narratives.

II.1.1. *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing* as a diary

David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas* begins with the first narrative that is titled *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing*. This story takes place around 1850 in the South Pacific, and is written in the form of journal entries that recalls Herman Melville’s tales of the South Seas (John Mullan, 2005). Adam Ewing, a young notary from San Francisco, is a part of an

expedition to the Chatham Islands aboard a Dutch ship. During his time on the islands, Ewing witnessed the horrifying treatment of the native Moriori at the hands of the conquering Maori. He also meets and befriends an eccentric English doctor, Henry Goose who will continue the journey with him on the ship *Prophetess*. When the ship sails, Ewing finds that the man who he saw being flogged in the islands, called Autua, has stowed away in his cabin. Ewing helps Autua and presents him to the captain, whom reluctantly takes him on as part of the crew in exchange for his passage. Further in their journey, he falls ill, realizing at the last minute that Dr. Goose – who may not be a doctor at all – is actually poisoning him instead of curing him to steal his possessions. He is rescued by Autua, and having been saved by a slave, resolves to devote his life to the abolitionist movement. In a form of diary novel that mimics the workings of real life situation, *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing* is later published by Ewing's son Jackson.

II.1.2. *Letters from Zedelghem* as an Epistolary Narrative

The second narrative, entitled *Letters from Zedelghem*, takes place in 1931, and is set in Zedelghem, near Bruges, Belgium. Mitchell now switches to epistolary correspondence style, as the story of Robert Frobisher, a young musical amanuensis, is told entirely through letters that he writes to his friend and lover, Rufus Sixsmith. In spite of being cut off by his father and on the run from various minor offenses, He decides to follow his dream of being a world famous composer. In order to do so, he travels to Zedelghem, Belgium, to offer himself as amanuensis for an aging, but famous, composer named Vyvyan Arys, who is slowly dying of syphilis. Frobisher helped him compose his music, rejuvenating his spirit. He also developed some of his own compositions, and looted and sold antique books he found in the castle, among which he found *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing*. Later on, before falling in love with Arys's daughter Eva who did not share his requite love, Frobisher was already involved

sexually with Ayrs's wife Jocasta. Ayrs envies Frobisher and eventually began to steal his musical ideas and compositions through blackmailing him to reveal his scandalous affair with Jacasta to the musical world which would destroy his reputation and any further possible chance of ascendance in their social ladder. Frobisher became despondent, and left Ayr's chateau to finish his own magnum opus, *The Cloud Atlas Sextet*. Eventually, he finished his composition in a hotel room. Finally, before committing suicide, Frobisher sent his Sextet to Sixsmith with his last letter.

II.1.3. *Half Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery* as a Detective Narrative

Letters from Zedelghem gives way to the third section, *Half Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*. Here, for the first time, Mitchell switches to straight forward prose, overtly fictional in a pulp detective thriller style. The story takes place in the fictional city of Buenas Yervas, California, in 1975. The main character is one Luisa Rey, a young, idealistic journalist. She accidentally met the same Rufus Sixsmith who was employed as an atomic engineer for the Seaboard Corporation. While they were stuck in the elevator, Rufus confided to her that the new nuclear power plant is not as safe as they advertise it to be. The story is filled with action as a hitman, hired by his unscrupulous employers, would murder Sixsmith before ultimately turning his attention to Luisa Rey. Right after Sixsmith death, Luisa Rey finds his damning safety report, along with Frobisher's letters and a recording of the *Cloud Atlas Sextet* next to his body in his hotel room. After many evaded attempts on her life by the hitman, she succeeded to publish her report exposing the corruption of the Seaboard Corporation, and attracting a lot of media attention, reporters, government officials, and Hollywood scriptwriters.

II.1.4. *The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish as a Comic Narrative*

The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish is the following narrative which takes place in the present-day London. The main protagonist is Timothy Cavendish, a 65-year-old vanity publisher, struggling to keep his business afloat. Mitchell once again changes his narrative style to an autobiographical comedy related to the reader in first person narrator.

Cavendish tells the story of how he rose from minor publisher to literary mogul when one of his clients, a gangster Dermot Hoggins, a writer of the autobiographical *Knuckle Sandwich*, murdered an uncomplimentary critic, making his book a great success. Soon after, Hoggins' brothers came knocking on his door to collect their brother's share from the royalties. Out of money and fearing for his life, Cavendish tried to get help from his brother Delholme who refused to lend him money and tricked him to take asylum at a house in the country.

Cavendish fled London by train towards his asylum, carrying with him the manuscript for a novel *Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*. However, the asylum turned out to be an elderly home care he cannot leave. Cavendish suspected that this was his brother's revenge for his endless pleas for financial aid, and maybe for sleeping with his wife, a long time ago. He found himself trapped and subjected to the harsh and humiliating treatment of the devilish nurse Noaks. Eventually, he befriended some of the residents of the nursing home for the sake of planning an escape (which they did) from the home care. From Edinburgh, Cavendish managed to scrap up the remains of his publishing business, and made a deal with Dermot's brothers, cutting them into the future royalties of the *Knuckle Sandwich the Movie*. He started writing his memoirs, in which he plans to describe his picaresque nursing home adventure possibly to make a film script of his own. Finally, he contacted the author of the *Half-Lives* to deliver the second part of the manuscript.

II.1.5 *Orison of Sonmi-451* as a Dystopian Novel

With *An Orison of Sonmi-451*, Mitchell moves into science-fiction territory. The exact year is not known, but it is a distant enough future in which cloning technology has been discovered and perfected. This latter discovery lead to the invention of ‘fabricants’, human clones who are created solely to perform tasks that humans no longer wish to do and function essentially as genetically-engineered slaves. The story takes place in a dystopian futuristic state in the East Asia, called Nea So Copros⁸. A totalitarian society populated the state, where consumerism has become the law and religion, and the huge ‘pureblood’ consumer class is served by genetically engineered ‘fabricants’. This story is narrated in the form of an interrogation on an interview between the protagonist Sonmi~451 and a young ‘archivist’ who showed interest in recording her story before her execution.

Sonmi~451 was a server in a fast-food restaurant chain called Papa Song’s, living and working nineteen hours a day with the other fabricants assigned to the restaurant. Servers have no leisure time nor free will to make their own decisions. They cannot leave Papa Songs restaurants even if they wanted to, as everything including the elevators that represents the only access point to the restaurants are technology-based to be controlled only by purebloods with their ‘soul’ chips. The fabricants are kept pacific through a ‘manufactured religion’⁹, a series of authoritarian ‘catechisms’¹⁰, and a promise that after twelve years of unquestioned serfdom, they would be sent to retire in a paradise called ‘Xultation’.

Sonmi~451 was a typical fabricant till another server named Yoona-939 started to act strangely. She took risks, broke the rules, and voiced doubts about Papa Song and their world.

⁸ present day Korea

⁹ A created religion for all fabricants that work for Papa Song Company. Consumerism is the heart of such religion in which *Papa Song* is a revered god to prey to, the manager is a ‘seer’ to obey, and where the consumer is always righteous and sanctified.

¹⁰ A summary of the principles of Christian religion in the form of questions and answers, used for religious instruction. However, in this narrative, those catechisms are of Papa Song’s fabricated religion not Christianity.

Yoona got a hold of a picture book (which Sonmi-451 describes as a “broken Sony”) and eventually tries to escape, only to be killed by the police. But Yoona’s awakening (which Sonmi and the archivist refer to as an “ascension”) has triggered something similar in Sonmi-451, and later with help she was able to effectively escape. She was taken to Taemosan University to be studied, where she gets involved with the subversive underground organisation called the Union. After realising that ‘twelvestarred’ fabricants do not retire in Hawaii, but are instead secretly killed and processed to be a source of food, bio-matter and Soap, Sonmi~451 is inspired to write her fabricant rights or catechisms referred to as Declarations.

Subsequently, she was apprehended, prosecuted, and interrogated for the government archives. She revealed that she knew everything that happened to her was in fact instigated by the government, to create an artificial enemy figure to encourage the oppression of fabricants by purebloods. Yet, she believes her Declarations will be inspirational nonetheless. Her last wish before being executed was to finish watching the film of *The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish* which she watched only its half with Hae-JooIm before being interrupted by the enforcers.

II.1.6. *Sloosha'sCrossin' an' Ev'rythin' After* as a Post-apocalyptic Novel

The final story in *Cloud Atlas*, *Sloosha'sCrossin' an' Ev'rythin' After*, takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity has reverted to tribalism. It is in the middle section of *Cloud Atlas* which makes it the only story told without interruption. It is also told in first person narrator. Instead of print or film autobiography, Mitchell uses oral storytelling which is appropriate to this story given to the fact that it happened in a post-apocalyptic world where humanity has no access to technology beyond fire and basic tools. The storyteller and the protagonist Zachry, a member of a peaceful tribe on the big island (present day Hawaii), tells

the story of his life, starting with the death of his brother and father at the hands of Kona savages (cannibalistic tribe).

Zachry believes this to be his first encounter with ‘Old Georgie’, the devil in his primitive belief system. What is learned from the narrative is that Zachry’s religion is monotheist which is centred on a Goddess named Sonmi. Zachry’s village was later visited by a ‘prescient’ named Meronym. The Prescients are worshipped as entities like angels or demi-gods, though in reality they are just a group of people who still have access to some of the advanced technology that was wiped out in the apocalyptic event that happened between the time of Sonmi and this section.

Zachry disliked Meronym, who has a code, seemingly similar to Star Trek’s ‘Prime Directive’¹¹ to not use her technology to intervene in the islanders issues. But Zachry convinced her to try and heal his sister Catkin when she was stung by a scorpion fish, and in return he approves to accompany her as a guide for her attempt to climb, Old Georgie’s reputed lair, Mauna Kea. On the top of the mountain, they find a long-abandoned observatory. Later, Zachry’s tribe was captured by Kona raiders, but Meronym rescued him and managed to escape across the island to be rescued by Meronym’s people.

In fact, it is revealed that Zachry passed this story down to his children, and that Meronym owned the egg-shaped “Orison” that contained the goddess Sonmi-451, which is, actuality, the holographic projection of Sonmi-451’s interview with the archivist.

¹¹ The Prime Directive, used in five of the six *Star Trek*-based series, prohibits Starfleet personnel from interfering with the internal development of alien civilizations. This conceptual law applies particularly to civilizations which are below a certain threshold of technological, scientific and cultural development; preventing starship crews from using their superior technology to impose their own values or ideals on them. (retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Directive)

II.2. The Breakaway from Grand Narrative

Grand narrative or metanarratives is a term developed by Jean-François Lyotard to explain a theory that tries “[...] to give a totalizing, comprehensive account to various historical events, experiences, and social, cultural phenomena based upon the appeal to universal truth or universal values.” (New World Encyclopedia, 2004). Lyotard saw *Postmodernism* as “incredulity toward metanarratives” (1979, p.p xxiv-xxv) in which literary works began to doubt universal truths and structures like Marxism, religious beliefs and universal reason.

Among all the popular novels of the last decade, David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas* (2004), is one of the more daring ones in exploring the narrative possibilities of the novel by its complex structure of interlinked narratives. This complex narrative structure is seen as breaking away from the boundaries of conventionality of the grand narrative. Mitchell states through Frobisher that “All boundaries are conventions, national ones too. One may transcend any convention, if only one can first conceive of doing so.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.216)

Cloud Atlas works at undermining the very idea of grand narrative that is written around already established truths. According to Norfolk, the novel is “a set of immaculate pastiches mechanically joined together by a cascade of ontological downgrades, each real world becoming an artefact in the next.”(2004). The novel’s postmodernist distrust in grand narrative is mirrored in its fragmentariness as Mitchell uses a structural principle which derives from chaos theory which is based on elements that are contradicting with grand narrative. (Dragos Moraru, 2004, p.43).

As a collection of interrelated narratives, *Cloud Atlas* novel breaks from the grand narrative’s tendency towards the absolute truth. Each real world becomes an artifact in the next which questions its legitimacy to be true and real. As a part of the transition from modern

to postmodern, Lyotard suggests that grand narrative or metanarrative should succumb to 'petits récits', or more modest and "localized" narratives. (New World Encyclopedia, 2004).

Cloud Atlas's clear breakout from the norms of the grand narrative is just a fragment from a bigger picture. According to Helene Machinal: "*Cloud Atlas* presents the reader with a number of characteristics that are typical of postmodern writing, not least of which include generic hybridity, a fragmented structure, interrupted narratives, and an emphasis on illusion and simulacrum." (Maria Beville, 2015, p.3)

Vincent Cavalier went even further to consider that Mitchell's work to be a head of its time when it comes to its revolutionary value. According to him, *Cloud Atlas*:

[...] has been read for its transcendence of postmodernist techniques in framing posthumanist themes, its imaginative uses of discursive techniques in reflecting on the narrative structure of identity, its utopian impulses, and for a postcolonial critique considered as a work of speculative fiction.' (Vincent Cavalier, 2014, p.5).

The fragmented structure of *Cloud atlas* narrative could be seen as a main insinuation to the attempt to replace grand narrative with focusing on specific local contexts and narratives as well as the variety of human experience. Such fragmented form would bring to existence a "multiplicity of theoretical standpoints" (Michael Peters, 2001, p. 07) rather than grand, all-encompassing theories of grand narrative.

II. 3. The fragmented narrative structure of *Cloud Atlas*

The fragmented novel has been prevailing in the literary world for the last century. Similar to *Cloud Atlas*, this new type of fragmented novels is distinguished, for Michael David Lukas, by its 'multiplicity of voices.' He described it as 'a strange literary beast' that re-emerged as "a hybrid of the short story and traditional novel. This newly reinvigorated genre — let's call it the polyphonic novel." (Ted Gioia, 2013)

Cloud Atlas' intricate structure appears to be loose, but is actually tight in a much knitted way. The most prominent narrative technique by which *Cloud Atlas* accomplishes its puzzling quality and narrative unity is by a labyrinthine relation of narrative embedding. This narrative embedding was seen to be structured through two distinct artistic forms of The Matryoshka Doll and Mise-En-Abyme, and apparently referred to in the title through the *Cloud Atlas* sextet.

The Cloud Atlas Sextet

One of the most obvious clues the novel provides about its narrative composition is found in *Letters from Zedelghem*. *Cloud Atlas* parallels the Cloud Atlas Sextet which is composed by the young musical amanuensis Robert Frobisher. For each of the six protagonists, there is an instrument in the sextet. In the first part of Frobisher's magnum opus, each instrument interrupts the solo of its successor to be re-continued again in the second part of the sextet:

[...] A sextet for overlapping soloists': piano, clarinet, 'cello, flute, oboe, and violin, each in its own language of key, scale, and colour. In the first set, each solo is interrupted by its successor; in the second, each interruption is recontinued, in order. Revolutionary or gimmicky? (Mitchell, 2004, p.209)

While each story could be read separately, each one is also still a part of the whole novel as every story is embedded with links to the preceding one. The most obvious link is the 'comet-like birthmark' that all protagonists share except for Zachry. The genre of each vary remarkably as does the narrative style employed to suit the time and setting of each section. Just like Frobisher's magnum opus, each protagonist introduces a theme, a motif that would amalgamate to create a work of art in which each is inextricably entwined with the other. Without each theme, without each story, or each instrument in the case of the Sextet, the meaning would be incomplete, unfinished. Yet, the sextet failed to imitate the structure in one aspect as "music cannot be used to illustrate the narrative hierarchy (*Cloud Atlas*) due to its strictly linear nature, it can only go forward in time." (Ivan Radoš, 2015, p.24).

The Matryoshka Doll Variations

There was another musical piece admired by Frobisher called “Matryoshka Doll Variations” (Mitchell 2004, p.23). It was the work of his employer Vyvyan Arys. One can easily imagine this set of wooden dolls of decreasing size placed one inside the other as a structural principle of the novel. If one takes these nested wooden dolls as an equivalent to the stories in *Cloud Atlas*, each one nesting in another, then a decision is needed to be made upon which story is the largest and which is the smallest.

Normally, due to its position and the fact that it is the only uninterrupted story in the novel, ‘*Sloosha’s Crossin’*’ should be the smallest. However, by the logic of the narrative hierarchy, it should be the largest one as it encases all other stories. The problem with such analysis is that *The Pacific Journal* would be the smallest, which it cannot be, because it is divided in two parts.

The Pacific Journal could be seen as the largest doll, but only on the level of narrative discourse, as the plot, the novel begins and ends with this story, therefore it is the largest doll, and all other dolls are encased in it, with *Sloosha’s Crossin’* being the smallest doll. However, such an analysis does not consider the level of content and the story as it clearly goes in revert direction.

In an interview, Mitchell himself indicates another source to his inspiration for the narrative structure:

I read about an Egyptian Goddess who gave birth to a pregnant daughter, whose embryo in turn was already pregnant and so on to infinity. That’s just beautiful. It seems to be a beautiful model for time as well. Every possible moment is contained in this moment, regressing on to infinity. (Moraru, 2014, p.126)

Mise-En-Abyme

Perhaps the best theory that parallels *Cloud Atlas*’s narrative structure is McHale’s “Mise-En-Abyme”. According to him, it is determined by these three criteria:

First, it is nested or embedded representation, occupying a narrative level inferior to that of the primary, diegetic narrative world; secondly, this nested representation resembles (copies, says Hofstadter) something at the level of the primary, diegetic world; and thirdly, this “something” that it resembles must constitute some salient and continuous aspect of the primary world, salient and continuous enough that we are willing to say the nested representation reproduces or duplicates the primary representation as a whole. Such a salient and continuous aspect might be, for instance, the story at the primary level, or its narrative situation (narrator, narratee, act of narration, and so on); or the style or poetics of the primary narrative text. (McHale Brian, 1987, p.125)

He also suggests that mise-en-abyme structures could be found in all periods, in all genres and literary modes. But, what makes it a postmodern aspect is its development and extensive use primarily in postmodernist writing: “mise-en-abyme is another form of short-circuit, another disruption of the logic of narrative hierarchy, every bit as disquieting as a character stepping across the ontological threshold to a different narrative level.” (Ibid). Rados further discusses this transformation as he states that:

there is a shift of the dominant in the narrative fiction, from epistemological to ontological narrative strategies, which involve paradoxes of various kinds, deconstruction of narrative logic, mise-en-abyme and various other recursive structures, all aimed at confusing the reader about the ontological and narrative status of the story ‘foregrounding the ontological dimensions of the Chinese box of fiction. (Ivan Radoš, 2015, p.11).

For McHale, such narrative structure and strategies provoke and foreground typical postmodern questions like:

What is a world?; What kinds of world are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ?; What happens when different kinds of world are placed in confrontation, or when boundaries between worlds are violated?; What is the mode of existence of a text, and what is the mode of existence of the world (or worlds) it projects?; How is a projected world structured? And so on. (Ibid, p.p.11-12)

It is undeniable that *Cloud Atlas* is, to a great extent, a postmodern work of fiction. With its complex narrative, it poses such ontological questions, and in the same time does not provide a clear answer for any of those questions. (Ibid, p.12).

I.4. Metafictionality of the novel

According to Patricia Waugh, metafiction is “a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.” (Waugh Patricia, 1984, p.02). Waugh argues that metafictional novels tend to be constructed on the principle of a fundamental and sustained opposition between the construction of a fictional illusion (as in traditional realism) and the laying bare of that illusion:

[...] in other words, the lowest common denominator of metafiction is simultaneously to create a fiction and to make a statement about the creation of that fiction. The two processes are held together in a formal tension which breaks down the distinctions between ‘creation’ and ‘criticism’ and merges them into the concepts of ‘interpretation’ and ‘deconstruction. (Ibid, p.06)

Cloud Atlas exhibits quite clearly features that are common to metafiction. It consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. Thus it became self-aware and self-reflexive. In this regard, Timothy Cavendish, as an experienced editor and a publisher of fiction, is a metafictional character in the novel. As he reads the manuscript for the novel called *Half-lives*, he states:

As an experienced editor I disapprove of backflashes, foreshadowings and tricky devices, they belong in the 1980s with MAs in Postmodernism and Chaos Theory. I make no apology, however, for (re)starting my own narrative with my version of that shocking affair. (Mitchell, 2004, p.152).

At this moment in his narrative, Cavendish finds himself simultaneously in the place of the reader, editor, and a metafictional critic of another embedded narrative which signifies the metafictionality on this narrative.

The novel is full of similar instances of metafictionality due to its interlinked structure. Each character is not just a character in his/her own novel, but also a writer of his/her own

narrative, a reader, and a critic of other narratives. For example, when Frobisher reads the journal of Adam Ewing, he is sceptical of its authenticity:

Ewing puts me in mind of Melville's bumbler Cpt. Delano in "Benito Cereno", blind to all conspirators-he hasn't spotted his trusty Doctor Henry Goose (sic) is a vampire, fuelling his hypochondria in order to poison him, slowly, for his money. Something shifty about the journal's authenticity- seems too structured for a genuine diary, and its language doesn't ring quite true- but who would bother forging such a journal, and why? (Ibid, p.64)

Ewing's journal was published and possibly modified by his own son who has the last word in the novel: "Here my father's handwriting slips into spasmodic illegibility. —J.E." (Ibid, p.289). Zachry's tale was also retold by his son but the reader is totally unaware till after the story has been told which leaves the reader wandering about its authenticity. In that sense, the novel is framed on both sides by its exposed fictionality.

Furthermore, the fact that Frobisher composed the *Cloud Atlas* Sextet in such form to resemble the narrative structure of the novel itself is a self-reflective metafictional element. It serves as a reminder to make the reader aware of the ultimate fictionality of the stories.

II.5. Intertextuality of *Cloud Atlas*

Intertextuality is one of the most frequently used terms in contemporary literary theory. According to Kristeva, Barthes, and other pioneers of the field, every text has its meaning only in relation to other texts. Through the lenses of modern literary theory, texts are not independent when it comes to the aspect of meaning. Those texts would invite the reader to plunge into a web of textual relations and a network of other texts. (Kalogirou & Economopoulou, 2012, p.01). *Cloud Atlas*'s text is no exception to this rule.

Since each narrative is an integrated part of the succeeded one, *Cloud Atlas* is intertextual through its self-reflection and references that are embedded within each story. In addition, Mitchell explicitly used characters from his other works in *Cloud Atlas*. Both Timothy and

Denholme Cavendish appeared in Mitchell's earlier novel *Ghostwritten*, whereas Gwendolin Bendinks is the vicar's wife in his later novel, *Black Swan Green*. Additionally, Eva van Outryve de Crommelynck is also involved in *Black Swan Green*. She is depicted discussing her father, Vyvyan Ayrs and Frobisher in addition to playing the *Cloud Atlas Sextet* to Jason Taylor. (Johnston-Ellis, 2010, p.p.29-30)

On top of implementing characters from his own fictions, Mitchell structured his protagonists to be recognized from other works by other authors:

[...]Adam Ewing could be a character in Herman Melville's Moby Dick, the post-apocalyptic world of Sloosha's Crossin' is recognisable from Margaret Atwood's Oryx and Crake, and the character of Zachry could be traveling around Inland with Riddley, the major protagonist in Russell Hoban's Riddley Walker. (Ibid, p.30)

Mitchell deliberately assimilated the concept of 'Fordism', which is the state religion in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, in *Cloud Atlas*. In Huxley's Novel, all vehicles are called fords, the same as in Sonmi-451's narrative. During her period at the university, Sonmi-451 succeeded to download his work and read it (Mitchell, 2004, p.121) which further reinforces the already implicit intertextual reference to the *Brave New World* universe. The number in Sonmi's name '451' is an allusion to Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*. The figure '451°F' is the temperature in which books get burned. Similar to *Fahrenheit 451*'s world, old books, movies, and culture in general are destroyed, censored, and banned from any unauthorized use in Sonmi-451's narrative which highlights the intertextual value of such novel.

Moreover, Julia Kristeva who generally is perceived as being the inventor of the term *intertextuality* saw that "any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another." (1980, p.66). In the fourth narrative, Timothy Cavendish used one of the most famous quotations from the well renowned *Heart of darkness* novel by Joseph Conrad. In a very ironic way, Timothy shouted "Oh, the horror, the horror!" (Ibid, p.197) when he was chocking by 'mashed banana'.

Cloud Atlas proved to be a postmodern work through and through. David Mitchell's work of art is a clear defiance to the classification of literature. This novel won a couple of esteemed prizes and yet in the same time proved very successful in the economic sphere. The power of a novel such as *Cloud Atlas* is amplified because of its higher level of complexity do not require the reader to be a member of the elites in order to grasp the sense of its uniqueness. According to Ted Gioia "Instead of trying to keep up with the Pynchons and Gaddises, who only live in the penthouse, Mitchell occupies the whole building, even the boiler room and broom closet." (2013).

Conclusion

Cloud Atlas proved to be a postmodern work through and through. This polyphonic novel covers six different narrative genres in addition to different philosophical perspective which ensured its global scope. David Mitchell succeeded, to a great extent, to integrate the aesthetic and artistic standards of the highbrow with the attraction and popularity of the lowbrow literature. In *postmodernism* era, it is no longer the case that the economic success of any given literary production means necessarily a failure in the literary fields.

Mitchell wrote *Cloud Atlas* with a clear tendency for playfulness and experimentation with time, setting, genre, and narrative techniques. Time's linearity is discarded as much as the unity of setting in his works especially *Cloud Atlas*. Despite being one of the youngest British authors today, Mitchell succeeded to create a piece of art that could be held as part of the global literature which embraces the globalization element that is widely enjoyed today.

Cloud Atlas's significance was also characterized by its indulgence with the theme of power relations and how it is perceived, collected, and kept by the individual and social constructs. The analysis of the concept of power proved that such concept is a vast field of research by itself especially when it is applied on a universal work of art like *Cloud Atlas* which spins narratives of different societies with varied cultures and social constructs. However, it could be said that Mitchell associated his novel generally with ideologies of the modern renowned philosophers like Nietzsche and Foucault to approach the modern and contemporary social constructs of the western society.

The fact that this novel recounts the story of different societies under the process of change through long period of time made it open not just to the analytic approaches that are concerned with the social constructs of this societies, but also to the individual and his stance in this fluctuating and constant change. *Cloud Atlas* represents a narrative that symbolises the evolution of mankind towards Nietzsche's vision of the *Übermensch* on the macro level and Freud's vision of the healthy individual on the micro level.

Chapter two

Metamorphosis of society

Metamorphosis of Power

“No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.”

“The Only Thing That Is Constant Is Change”

Heraclitus

Introduction

John Donne famous quote “No Man is an island”, indeed, describes how human beings tend to live collectively. An Individual simply cannot live alone as he must satisfy certain natural basic needs in order to survive. Accordingly, humanity thrived through the formation of such societal institutions. However, magnificent civilizations came to existence only to perish on the long run in a vicious cycle in which history seems to repeat itself.

For Nietzsche, *will to power* is the true essence of humanity on earth. This particular drive is what urges us to survive and grow to accumulate more ‘power’. Consequently, forming a society is but another step towards overcoming resistance (individuals, groups, or other societies) which prevents the individuals from acquiring higher levels of power.

Like any other complex organism

Raymond Geuss reinforces this vision as he believes that “[...] its [*will to power*] proper scope includes both smaller and larger entities that grow and become predominant through their own struggles and desires.” (Kristen Wells, 2013, p.56). Therefore, societies, on the macro level, could be observed as a manifestation of structured forms of *will to power*. On the basis of Nietzsche’s claim of *will to power* as “[...] a cosmological principle driving both biological and cultural evolution.” (Dean Reesor, 2008, p.VI), society will be approached in this chapter as an organic complex entity (organism).

The point of interest here is not how such comparison is accurate, but on the way the structure of a society is similar to how different types of organic cells coexist and collaborate for the sake of the whole (the body). Through adopting this organismic analogy, social phenomena will be approached as biological evolutionary processes as Nevitt Reesor trusts that, “he [Nietzsche] believes processes in the two domains are isomorphic when considered at a sufficient level of generality.” (2008, p.69)

As the same as genes are transmitted through only the sex cells, culture and morality is transmitted through *memes*¹². Cultural evolution might be perceived the same as the biological evolution where the genes are those *memes* that reside in the artifacts “produced by the culture and the minds of individuals participating in it.” (Reesor, 2008, p.14). Therefore, each narrative is but an artifact, a meme for the next one in *Cloud Atlas*. The six narratives will be regarded as fragments that depict both the evolution of society and the human desire to obtain and then consolidate power which led to the constant reshaping of the conception of power.

¹² A meme is a neologism coined by Richard Dawkins. It is “an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture.” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). A meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena with a mimicked theme. Supporters of the concept regard memes as cultural analogues to genes in that they self-replicate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures. (retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meme>)

III.1. Towards the evolution of society: Metamorphosis of *Will to Power*

Power is possibly one of the most eluding concepts in philosophy despite the endless list of great names of philosophers and thinkers who showed a tremendous interest in such concept. It is only normal to perceive the concept of power as a difficult term to pinpoint due to its diverse forms and structures especially in the age of globalization and its complex societies.

Within the last two centuries, human societies witnessed a tremendous progress on the basis of form and complexity. According to R. Boyd “[...] human societies have even begun to exceed, in numbers of individuals and degree of complexity, the societies of ants, termites, and corals.” (1997, p.01). For Nietzsche, this process of evolution is a long period of experiments that altered organisms (communities and societies) in a progressive tendency towards reaching a stronger more complex yet a healthy adaptive organism that can circumvent newly prompted circumstances:

Evolution, according to Nietzsche's conception of it, is the history of the experiments of the will to power, which when confronted with new circumstances constantly makes use of them to create, at first more vulnerable (because badly adapted) but later more able, stronger and more complex organisms. (Moles 1990, p.122)

Dean Reesor explains that a society, like any other organism, is “[...] constituted by a stable hierarchy of wills to power” (2008, p.78). Nietzsche divided such hierarchies into two main pillars, the aristocracy (master) and the commons (slave or the herd). Each faction of the two is ultimately attempting to accumulate more power by imposing its own morality¹³. Hence, the internal constant conflict in any given society. Such conflicts of hierarchies tend to cause power to shift sides and modes due to this constant pressure as “[...] each component

¹³ Morality is the social organism's capacity for self-regulation, the exact analogue of the controlling mechanism by which the physiological organism governs and maintains itself. The purpose of morality is to effect a synthesis of disparate, mutually hostile units by inspiring obedience in lower levels of the (social) organism” (Gregory Moore, 2002, p.p.80.81).

part of the organism is striving to grow, to develop further at the expense of its neighbours. Such constant pressure inevitably means that old hierarchies dissolve and new ones form.” (Gregory Moore, 2002, p.43).

The French playwright Eugene Ionesco discussed one of the main structured forms of *will to power* in the modern societies through his most celebrated play *Rhinoceros* (1959). According to Ionesco, “[...] the modern man is a puppet, a jumping jack.” (As cited in Harwinder Kaur, 2016, p.2) in the hands of those who are in power. In his play, *Rhinoceros*, Ionesco refers to the wide spread of the totalitarian regimes of *Fascism* and *Nazism* in Europe after the Second World War. This play was written to criticize those regimes and how they spread their ideologies as quickly as the infectious “fell-disease of rhinoceritis” (Ibid, p.4) that morphed people into rhinoceroses in the play. The animal instinct taught those who caught the ‘disease’ that power is “[...] obtained by those who coalesce in numbers.” (Ibid) which led them all to conform except for the protagonist Berenger.

Ionesco’s Protagonist, Berenger, was not that intellectual, talented or that civilized individual, but he could sense the absurdity of his life and the uncontrollable metamorphosis¹⁴ of his society. Similar to Berenger, Mitchell’s protagonists were non-conformist individuals who refused to conform to their society. However, they differ as Berenger was resisting change whereas Mitchell’s protagonist sought to cause the change. Hence, they will be regarded as *Anti-Ionesconist* protagonists who are triggering the change in an already conformed society.

¹⁴ Metamorphosis is a process in which somebody/something changes completely into something different. (retrieved from oxford online-dictionaries)

In the same logical sense of such parallelism, the behaviour of *pathogens*¹⁵ within the human body will be taken as a symbolic reference to the *Anti-Ionesconist* or “dysfunctional” individual, class, or institution within a given society. This interpretation will be based solely on their functionality.

Mitchell’s protagonists were the heralds of change in their respective communities. Such ‘boat rockers’ (Mitchell, 2004, p.103) were shunned and disvalued because of their unconformity and determination in a way or another to shift the balance of power around them. According to Nietzsche “The herd may occasionally need individuals with certain strong and dangerous drives, like an enterprising spirit, foolhardiness, vengefulness, craftiness, rapacity, and the lust to rule.” (As cited in Reesor, 2008, p.73). However, these non-conformists tend to threaten the stability and longevity of their communities specially the structure of power. Therefore, they are disvalued by the herd or the conformist society eventually.

Through *Cloud Atlas*, Mitchell, to some extent, was able to capture a holistic historical account for the turbulent metamorphosis of power that coincided with the evolution of society itself. This novel exhibits different societies with different structures of power. From the British imperial colonies in the Pacific Journal, to the democratic United States of America and England in *Half-life* and the *Ghastly Ordeal* respectively; only to be followed by the two predictive narratives fictions of the corporate Nea So Copros that is based on our contemporary Consumerism and closing with the old system of the tribe of *Sloosha’s Crossin*.

¹⁵ Disease causing microorganisms, such as bacteria, fungi, and viruses. Most pathogens are parasites (live off the host) and the diseases they cause are an indirect result of their obtaining food from, or shelter in, the host. Larger parasites (such as worms) are not called pathogens.(retrieved from <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/pathogens.html>)

III.2. The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing

Cloud Atlas' first narrative is *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing* where a sea voyage is documented. The protagonist Adam Ewing wrote a journal to describe his return to California through the Pacific Ocean. This narrative is perhaps one of the few postmodern accounts that provides a critique to the dark colonial agenda and the Maori genocide in Chatham Islands. Mitchell explores the universality of the doctrine of *will to power* in the genocide of Moriori people on the hands of the Maori. In spite of the fact that Moriori tribes are of Maori origins, their culture, language, and traditions are completely different.

The Moriori are the indigenous people of the Chatham Islands. They were Maori Polynesians that settled in the islands from New Zealand in the 16th century. As they lived in isolation, a distinct language and culture were created and embraced. They lived by the law of Nunuku¹⁶ and believed in the existence of mana¹⁷. If a Moriori kills someone, he loses his mana and his place within the tribe. His excommunication would lead him to suicide out of despair. The Moriori knew no wars¹⁸ nor did they have a word for 'race'. Mr. D'Arnoq (a man of mixed race) even refers to them as "noble savages" (Mitchell, 2004, p.13) adding that they "lay closer to More's Utopia than our States of Progress governed by war-hungry princelings in Versailles & Vienna, Washington & Westminster" (Ibid, p.12).

The Maori, on the other hand, were cannibals who saw no moral issues in using violence for their own pursuit of more power and dominance. The Maori "Veni, vidi, vici"¹⁹ with neither mercy nor regards to their brethren. They killed, enslaved, and even feasted on the Moriori captors. Unlike D'Arnoq, Dr. Goose could not but admire them as the more civilized of the

¹⁶ A code of non-violence and passive resistance, banning warfare and cannibalism.

¹⁷ The equivalent of the Western concept of a 'soul'

¹⁸ "War was as alien a concept to the *Moriori* as the telescope is to the Pygmy" (Mitchell, 2004, p.13).

¹⁹ A Latin phrase meaning 'I came, I saw, I conquered'. It was first said by Julius Caesar after winning a battle in Asia Minor (now Turkey). Many people, especially in Britain, wrongly think he said it after defeating the Britons.

two: “the Maori have risen to the D-E-F of mercantilism, diplomacy and colonialism.” (Ibid, p.256).

This striking difference in worldview and morality that has grown naturally between these two factions could be associated to their tendency towards their *will to power*. It is commonly believed that “if an organism is threatened, it will defend itself, but only because its death would end its power.” (Zubayer Alam, 2016, p.09) which was not the case with the Moriori tribes. Nevertheless, Nietzsche related this behaviour to the slave-morality stating that “where the will to power is lacking there is decline. It is my contention that all the supreme values of mankind lack this will.” (As cited in Raymond Angelo Belliotti, 2013, p.128). Values such as “turning the other cheek” (Mitchell, 2004 p.07) and “Embrace your enemy [...] to prevent him striking you.” (Ibid, p.08) are few of those ‘supreme values’, labelled by Nietzsche as slave-morality, that lead to the Moriori’s demise.

For Nietzsche, the ultimate drive (*will to power*) in all living beings is growth or “to become more.” (1968, p.31). He said “if a being is not threatened it would seek to develop, to advance, to grow, to gain power. This is not greed, this is growth. This is reality.” (As cited in Alam, 2016, p.09). Unlike the Moriori, The Maori fully embraced such doctrine to the extent of annihilating their newly slaved population through destructive acts of cruelty and ‘predacity’. This historical event could be perceived as one of the primal “more vulnerable (because badly adapted)” (Moles, 1990, p.122) experiments in the history of society’s evolution.

Mitchell used the genocide to introduce the dominant theme²⁰ of his novel in which he highlights how “power is desirable in and of itself, works corrupting and is, to a high degree, addictive” (As cited in Ben van Eck, 2013, p.16). It could be also seen as an allegory to the

²⁰ “The book’s (*Cloud Atlas*) theme is predacity, the way individuals prey on individuals, groups on groups, nations on nations, tribes on tribes.” (David Mitchell, 2005)

dichotomies of slave versus master morality and spiritualism versus materialism of that time. The Maori's conception of the world and life is more materialistic and correlates value to earthly dominance like the takahi ritual²¹. The Moriori's view is more idealistic and more inclined to the spiritual world in which its primacy lies in the transcendental concept of mana rather than in the worldly possessions or power over others.

Perhaps one of the main reasons for The Maori's conquest was the fact that they were driven from their native land by invading colonists. Adam even thought that such committed atrocities was a result of a learning curve as he stated that "The Maori proved themselves apt pupils of the English in "the dark arts of colonization." (Mitchell, 2004, p.08)

The European dark arts of colonization were not that different from the Maori's. However, the English 'master' never sought the extinction of his slave populations as it would be a great loss of able free hands. This perspective, according to Foucault, is centred on perceiving the "body as a machine" (1990, p.139). For him, power is not "to kill, but to invest life through and through." (Ibid). Reesor also confirmed such view in his interpretation of Nietzsche's philosophy when he said that:

Mastery does not necessarily entail annihilation of the element that is overpowered. Rather the stronger element most often will sustain the distinct identity of weaker elements while at the same time forcing them to serve its own purposes. (Dean Reesor, 2008, p.63)

Despite the shared cruelty in both the Maori's and the European practices, the latter proved more efficient as they were able to invest more from dominating the Moriori tribes. Hence, we could observe this case as a more mature 'experiment' of the evolution of the binary conflict between the two hierarchies (master and herd) in the human society.

²¹ "A Maori ritual transliterated as "Walking the Land to Possess the Land." Old Rekohu was thus partitioned & the Moriori informed they were now Maori vassals." (Mitchell, 2004, p.08)

Even though violence is the most natural and instinctive method to bring another under one's power, it is not always the most successful approach. Nietzsche believed that 'harm', in fact, would make the further assertion of subjugation power even more difficult:

Every living thing reaches out as far from itself with its force as it can, and overwhelms what is weaker: thus it takes pleasure in itself. The increasing "humanizing" of this tendency consists in this, that there is an ever subtler sense of how hard it is really to incorporate another: while a crude injury done him certainly demonstrates our power over him, it at the same time estranges his will from us even more--and thus makes him less easy to subjugate. (Nietzsche, 1968, p.404)

During colonial times, the colour of the skin is what affiliates an individual permanently to a 'noble' or a 'slave' class. Even though other hierarchies emerged within each class, the highest black person in social power is still lower in the hierarchy than the lowest white person. One of those hierarchies with more social power, a group of natives, called the 'Guards of the Christ', was created to impose 'fear' as a deterrent, and enforce Horrox's will on the other slaves in the island. There are two main reasons why the Guards of Christ betrayed their own kind and chose to help their oppressor.

The first reason is to manifest their own *will to power*. Nietzsche said "where I found the living, there I found will to power; and even in the will of those who serve I found the will to be master." (Nietzsche, 1978, p.104). Such overcoming urge to be 'master' overlapping with the status of being domineered is what the hierarchy of *will to power* all about as Nietzsche argued again:

The weaker should serve the stronger, to that it is persuaded by its own will, which would be master over what is weaker still: this is the one pleasure it does not want to renounce. And as the smaller yields to the greater that it may have pleasure and power over the smallest. (Ibid, p.99).

The second reason is the economic capital represented in the form of credits at Mr. Horrox's store. Unsurprisingly, financial capital was an alien concept to the aboriginals,

because all what they needed for surviving was abundantly available in their surrounding nature. Mr.Horrox had to devise a new bargaining chip, which was ‘tobacco’:

Your typical Polynesian spurns industry because he's got no reason to value money. 'If I hungry' says he, 'I go pick me some, or catch me some. If I cold, I tell woman, "Weave!" ' Idle hands, Mr. Ewing, & we both know what work the Devil finds for them. But by instilling in the slothful so-an'-sos a gentle craving for this harmless leaf, we give him an incentive to earn money, so he can buy his baccy—not liquor, mind, just baccy—from the Mission trading post. Ingenious, wouldn't you say? (Mitchell, 2004, p.266).

Mr. Horrox's smoking school and the ‘Guards of Christ’ could be seen as the next step in the history of ‘experiment’ in Nietzsche's evolution of society. The lack of impetus for work within the slaves' population lead Mr. Horrox to improvise by imposing an addictive habit to subjugate them through it. Being hooked to the tobacco, the slaves would work harder as they would need credits to buy their ‘baccy’. Therefore, the need for violent impetus (whipping) that would sometimes handicap a slave i.e. reduces his productivity, would dramatically decreases.

Unlike the Moari's and the typical traditional European slavery practices, Horrox's smoking school is implying subtle and indirect techniques that proved more efficient and less violent. Such exploitive techniques will be discussed abundantly through the other narratives in which they are more prominent.

The worldview Adam aforementioned in his comment about the Maori practices is what in later years became known as Colonialism²². An ideology that “privileges white over black, Christians over ‘heathens’, men over women and rich over poor.” (Ben van Eck, 2013, p.60). For the first time in history, the difference in technological advancement between two parts of the world had such far stretching effects as to actually allow one part of the world to

²² The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically. (retrieved from oxford dictionaries)

completely dominate and enslave another. During this critical period of history in which Capitalism as a system comes to dominate western society, the “white, Christian, rich males.” (Ibid) were monopolizing all forms of power.

Such forms of power (all types of capital) were accumulated through a system of values and moralities created, by the elites²³, to legitimize their exploitive acts which deemed today ‘immoral’. One of the main values of such colonial worldview was “its insistence on divine approval of the atrocities perpetrated in colonial times.” (Ibid, p.14). A discourse is formed connecting and entwining religion with values of both Capitalism and colonialism. Preacher Horrox, being a man of the cloth, uses Christianity to justify the segregation and the exploitation of the other ‘races’:

[...] God, in our Civilizing World, manifests himself not in the Miracles of the Biblical Age, but in Progress. It is Progress that leads Humanity up the ladder towards the Godhead. No Jacob’s Ladder this, no, but rather ‘Civilization’s Ladder,’ if you will. Highest of all the races on this ladder stands the Anglo-Saxon. The Latins are a rung or two below. Lower still are Asiatics—a hardworking race, none can deny, yet lacking our Aryan bravery. Sinologists insist they once aspired to greatness, but where is your yellow-hued Shakespeare, eh, or your almond-eyed da Vinci? Point made, point taken. Lower down, we have the Negro. Good-tempered ones may be trained to work profitably, though a rumbunctious one is the Devil incarnate! The American Indian, too, is capable of useful chores on the Californian barrios, is that not so, Mr. Ewing?’ (Mitchell, 2004, p.269)

The idea of Horrox’s ‘natural order’ correlates with the concepts of *the Great Chain of Being*²⁴ and progress in the nineteenth century science (Alex Boren, 2015, p.30). Those concepts were meant to classify humans into separate races based on their level of ‘progress’ crowning the ‘white man’ as the Highest of all the races in which he embodies the role of the Shepard who tends, however he deems fit, to his flock (other races).

²³ The white Christian rich males.

²⁴ It is the idea that every type of being in the universe is ranked along a chain, beginning with minerals at bottom and going up through plants, animals, humans, and angels, with God at the top (retrieved from <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org>)

The core idea of the above-mentioned discourse is ‘God’ and his chosen people. According to Mr. Horrox “God, in our Civilizing World, manifests himself not in the Miracles of the Biblical Age, but in Progress.” (Ibid, p.269). He believes such progress, which is symbolized in the narrative as the musket, ensured that God’s chosen people (white race) would have the privilege to “hold dominion over the world” (Ibid, p. 270). Through attributing this discourse to undefinable, omnipotent, and all-knowing source (god), “the value system as a whole becomes completely unopposable without the opposer putting himself at risk of being labeled a heretic, a label that might as well have been a death sentence during this time.” (Ben van Eck, 2013, p.61).

Even though one cannot limit the conception of power in this period to the form of slavery, the latter is perhaps the one form that indeed eclipses all. Such practice was considered “natural” and morally accepted as Mr. Wagstaff claimed:

There exists a tribe of ants called the slave maker. These insects raid the colonies of common ants, steal eggs back to their own nests & after they hatch, why, the stolen slaves become workers of the greater empire & never even dream they were once stolen. Now if you ask me, Lord Jehovah crafted these ants as a model, Mr. Ewing. ’ (Mitchell, 2004, p.271)

However, the western society was already on the process of denouncing such practices due to the abolitionist growing resistance. There would be no better case study for such echoed issue than the American account. Abolitionism²⁵ was the issue of the hour back then and even Ewing himself became an abolitionist by the end of this narrative. Considered by A. Lincoln²⁶ as the second American Revolution, The Civil War brought the demise of the slavery regimes

²⁵Abolitionism is the American campaign in the 1800s to free the slaves in the southern states. Its members were called abolitionists, and many hid slaves who were escaping on the Underground Railroad. (retrieved from <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com>)

²⁶Also known as Honest Abe, the Rail-Splitter, or the Great Emancipator (1809-1865), 16th president of the United States (1861–65), who preserved the Union during the American Civil War and brought about the emancipation of the slaves.(retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com>)

in the south. Such revolution could be seen as another evolutionary ‘experiment’ in the history of human society.

In his book *Revolution, a Sociological Interpretation*, Michael S. Kimmel discussed revolution through the metaphor of a disease infecting a healthy organism. According to him, “The disease [revolution] develops slowly, manifests confusing symptoms at first, and culminating in a cathartic fever, after which it subsides and the body returns to normal, perhaps even strengthened by new immunities to the disease.” (1990, p.p.47.48). If the American society is conceived as the healthy organism, then the ‘planter aristocracy’²⁷ would be considered the pathogen that caused the ‘disease’. The fact that the American government was a liberal democracy whereas the planter class was an oligarchy brings up again Nietzsche’s discussion of ‘master-slave’ conflict within the human society. Nietzsche overly stated his views of democracy and any other egalitarian regime, as another outcome of the ‘slave revolt’, i.e., Christianity when he wrote that “The democratic movement is the heir to Christianity.” (Nietzsche, 2002, p.90). The cathartic fever, which refers to the Civil War, made the American society stronger as a nation that, to some extent, is ‘immune’ to the disease of seeming ‘inequality’ and ‘exploitation’.

The understanding of the phenomena that are altering the human society and distribution of power on the macro-level could never be satisfactory without fully analysing the power relations on the micro-level. Individuals like Autua, Ewin, and Dr. Goose, are both influencing and under the influence of such ‘determining’ powers.

Autua, the Moriori stowaway slave, the last of his kind, symbolizes the status of the black American slaves at that time. The scene when Ewing and Dr. Goose happen to witness Autua being flogged by his Maori master was a daily occurrence in the south states. Only later on,

²⁷ An oligarchy class that came to dominate nearly every aspect of the south colonies’ economic life. These same planters, joined by a few prominent merchants and lawyers, dominated the two most important agencies of local government—the county courts and the provincial assemblies. (retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com>)

we stump upon the reason why he was flogged when Ewing stroke a conversation with him: “Why, I asked, was he beaten so savagely in the Indian hamlet? A silence stretched itself out. “I seen too much o’ the world, I ain’t good slave.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.22). Such statement brings us to Foucault’s idea of power-knowledge relation. According to him “power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.” (Foucault, 1977, p.27).

Like many slaves in the south, Autua was able to collect certain relevant, even if not academic, knowledge and culture through his travels as a hired sailor with his uncle Koche. Being a Moriori, he had no social and financial capital nor had the chance to collect any. Nevertheless, it allowed him to see the world through different realities which opened his perception to new possibilities and choices. A privilege, his tribe did not have at that time. Like him, the slaves in the south were bond in a way or another to acquire a level of knowledge through their daily interactions. Furthermore, the *Underground Railroad*²⁸ provided them with a new alternative choice other than a lifetime of servitude. To some extent, knowledge and choice empowered Autua and those slaves in the south to gain some recognition and break the chains of *slavocracy*²⁹.

The power relation, between Ewing and Goose, is essential as each one represents a class that conflicts with the other on the basis of worldviews and values. Mitchell implanted such conflict even in the very essence of their names. Mohammed Halimi states that:

²⁸ Underground Railroad, in the United States, a system existing in the Northern states before the Civil War by which escaped slaves from the South were secretly helped by sympathetic Northerners, in defiance of the Fugitive Slave Acts, to reach places of safety in the North or in Canada. Though neither underground nor a railroad, it was thus named because its activities had to be carried out in secret. (retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com>)

²⁹ Slavocracy is a faction of slaveholders and advocates of slavery in the South before the American Civil War. (retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com>)

The name as well as the meaning of the literary characters is very important, in that a name gives a certain implication of the role assigned to a character in literature. In fact, it provides the meaning of the expected role application, as it is significant for the analysis of the character's behaviour. (2014, p.197)

Onomastics³⁰ theory, as the study of proper names, highlights such significance of the character's names and their behaviours. According to 'surnamedb' website, Ewing³¹ means of "noble birth" whereas his first name Adam³² is largely conceived as the name of the father of humanity in all monotheistic faiths (Islam, Christianity, and Judaism). Deriving from his high education, eloquence, and religious piety, his name could connote the meaning of a 'Christian believer of 'noble' origins'. Ewing's character symbolizes Nietzsche's notion of the hybrid as a repercussion to the "democratic mingling of classes and races." (Nietzsche, 2002, p.114). Such hybrid character "has inherited in its blood diverse standards and values" (Ibid, p.208) which according to him, plagues contemporary Western culture and society. Indeed Ewing's position towards radical issues like slavery was ambiguous and undecided, because of his hybrid identity that led to an inner conflict (master versus slave mores).

On the other hand, Goose³³ generally connotes the meaning of 'god' or 'good' whereas Henry³⁴ indicates the quality of 'household ruler', thus implies the meaning of 'good ruler of

³⁰ The study or science of names and naming. It is usually divided into anthroponomastics, the study of personal names, and toponomastics or toponymy, the study of place names, but onomastics is often interpreted loosely as the study of personal names. [From Greek onoma name]. (retrieved from <http://www.oxfordreference.com>)

³¹ Is of Scottish origin, from the Greek "Eugenios", well-born, noble. Attempts have also been made to derive the name from a proto - Celtic name; meaning "born of the yew". A yew is a tree characterized as a 'Sacred Tree of Transformation and Rebirth' in the Celtic culture. (retrieved from <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/ewing>)

³² This noble and distinguished surname is of pre-medieval origins. It derives from the Hebrew word "adama", meaning "earth", and as such is believed to the source from which God created man as recorded in the Old Testament section of the Bible. (retrieved from <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Adamini>)

³³ This is an English surname, but of Norman French origins. It has several possible origins including a derivation from a French personal name "Gosse" with the first element meaning god or good. (Retrieved from <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Gosse>)

³⁴ From the Germanic name Heimirich which meant "household ruler", composed of the elements heim "home" and ric "power, ruler". It was later commonly spelled Heinrich, with the spelling altered due to the influence of

the household'. Even though we know nothing of Goose's character other than his profession, one could deduce his affiliation with an aristocratic class from the way he dresses, the way he comports himself and his knowledge of social etiquette, etc. For Nietzsche, those individuals, like Goose, are masters or nobles in which the *will to power* manifests itself the strongest. Unlike the hybrids, they are pure in their values, they are self-overcoming and they are the closest to the *Übermensch*. He associated the instinctive qualities of the will with the human *ego* "the 'ego' subdues and kills: it operates like an organic cell: it is a robber and it is violent. It wants to regenerate itself--pregnancy. It wants to give birth to its god and see all mankind at his feet." (Nietzsche, 1968, p.798)

The same tendency could be observed in the behaviour of the pathogen within the human organism. It manifests its *will to power* through infecting and multiplying as much as possible. Also, Goose's peculiar laws³⁵ of morality that he uses to cast judgment on all aspects of his life establishes him as the embodiment of such instinctive doctrine of *will to power*:

Surgeons are a singular brotherhood, Adam. To us, people aren't sacred beings crafted in the Almighty's image, no, people are joints of meat; diseased, leathery meat, yes, but meat ready for the skewer & the spit."... " 'But why me, Henry, are we not friends?' Well, Adam, even friends are made of meat. 'Tis absurdly simple. I need money & in your trunk, I am told, is an entire estate, so I have killed you for it. Where is the mystery? 'But, Henry, this is wicked!' But, Adam, the world is wicked. Maoris prey on Moriori, Whites prey on darker-hued cousins, fleas prey on mice, cats prey on rats, Christians on infidels, first mates on cabin boys, Death on the Living. 'The weak are meat, the strong do eat. (Mitchell, 2004, p.249)

Through creating his own values to live by with no regard for the reaction of his society towards such values proves, according to Nietzsche, his 'noble' status: "The noble type of

other Germanic names like Haganrich, in which the first element is hagan "enclosure". (Retrieved from <https://www.behindthename.com/name/henry>)

³⁵ There are two laws Goose abides to: "The weak are meat, the strong do eat [...] the second law of survival states that there is no second law. Eat or be eaten. That's it." (Mitchell, 2004, p.271)

man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of; he passes the judgment [...] he is a creator of values.” (As cited in Archie, L. & Archie, J, 2004. p.271).

The central action in Ewing’s storyline revolves around Dr. Goose and his failed attempt to poison him. Goose manipulated him to believe he was infected with a parasite which would be killed solely through taking increasing doses of vermicide. Being saved from certain slow death by Autua, a runaway Moriori slave, from Dr. Goose, an aristocratic white man whose profession was to save lives, made him question all conventions established by the western society.

His trip for him was so symbolic and of an epiphany nature, as it altered his views radically about the entire world. Such voyage could be seen as a journey through time that began from the savagery state of the human race (Moriori genocide) and ending with the arrival at the civilized world (California) passing through a transitional phase in the Societies Islands where we witness a manifestation of a new phenomenon that will come to pass in the imminent future. The smoking school implication showed us how a group of individuals can be enslaved in a subtle way through a simple commodity. Such phenomenon is known today as Consumerism

With another allegory which employs ants, Mitchell implanted a hint of such phenomenon: “The table stood with each leg immersed in a dish of water. Mrs. Horrox explained, ‘Ants, one bane of Bethlehem. Their drowned bodies must be emptied periodically, lest they build a causeway of themselves.’” (Mitchell, 2004, p.264).

This allegory symbolizes how a given society could be exploited through their own drives and impetus towards fulfilling their *will to power*. By putting an ever changing ‘obstacle’ between them and their goals, you ensure their permanent unrelenting strive towards these goals. In the fifth narrative, Sonmi-451 listened to Abess, one of the rebels, making a comment

on how the survival of the whole government of Unanimity relies on such practices: “If consumers found fulfillment at any meaningful level [...] corpocracy would be finished.” (Ibid, p.185). Such metaphor marked the birth of a phenomenon that would evolve throughout the other narratives to reach its climax in Sonmi-451 world. All in all, Ewing’s visit to the societies Islands proved to be an allusion to what is coming; a story that paved the ground for the other narratives and represented the beginning of a historical cycle.

III. 2. Letters from Zedelghem

*“Homo homini lupus est”*³⁶

Around almost a century ahead, *Cloud Atlas*’ second narrative took place in Belgium between the two World Wars. This narrative is rather examining the micro power relations between few individuals instead of a whole society like the previous one. However, the relationship between Robert Frobisher and Vyvyan Ayrs symbolizes a power struggle that emerged due to the appearance of a new hierarchal structure within society.

Around this era, Capitalism has been greatly developed to the extent of taking a firm grasp on Western society as it became “the established, widely accepted worldview and completely dominates the organization of society, both politically and economically.” (Van Eck, 2013, p.65). Due to this worldview, the commodification of society and what Marx called *commodity fetishism* spread all over the world like a virus. Even abstract Commodities like aesthetic and cultural artifacts (such as compositions produced by Frobisher and Ayrs) are considered as products which are produced and increasingly consumed for its pleasure and entertainment.

³⁶ Latin proverb that means “Man is a wolf to his fellow man”

Like in the previous narrative, agents of capitalist economy are made known to be profiting from the ability to define themselves as the superior group that holds the power within the social discourse. Nonetheless, such old doctrines in Ewing's time that permeated slavery are not 'morally' acceptable in western society anymore. The abolition of slavery in this society did not mean, however, the end of the exploitation practices. According to Nietzsche: "all events in the organic world are a subduing, a becoming master, and all subduing and becoming master involves a fresh interpretation, an adaptation through which any previous 'meaning' and 'purpose' are necessarily obscured or even obliterated." (As cited in Reesor, 2008, p.04).

With the fall of old doctrines like slavery, a new hierarchy of power was needed to preserve the old power distribution between the master and herd castes within the society. Such phenomenon of mutual development between two organisms, master versus slave in this case, is known in biology as *coevolution*³⁷.

Vyvyan Ayrs is an old, celebrated composer who is spending his last days in a chateau in Belgium. Ayrs lost his touch as he did not compose anything of value for years due to his diminishing eyesight and poor health, as he claims. He was plagued with both "musical sterility" (Mitchell, 2004, p.241) and actual sterility, due to syphilis he contracted over a decade ago.

Even though he lost his talent, Ayrs still possesses high amount of accumulated power of capital. Hints like living in a massive chateaux, drinking fine wines, eating fine meals, etc. are all indicative of his high economic capital and wealth. Through the great fame of his old works, he was able to amass a high amount of social capital as well. He is connected to the

³⁷ In coevolution, when one species develops an evolutionary advantage, it triggers a change in a closely associated species. This change may then cause another evolutionary change in the first species. What is meant here with coevolution is how the success of the herd to develop an evolutionary advantage through removing slavery triggered another evolutionary change in the noble master individuals.

upper class families in the nearby city and befriended by “the highest echelons of the social field: internationally renowned composers and musicians, directors of concert halls, etc.” (Ben van Eck, 2013, p.21). The high accumulated amounts of different types of capital could correlate him with a status that is almost ‘aristocratic’. Even the name Vyvyan Ayrs could imply the meaning of a living heir³⁸, the living heir of the aristocratic caste.

On the other hand, Robert Frobisher, who has a foul and fragile reputation, is an indebted, homosexual and disinherited wayward son to a rich Englishman of the upper class. For some reason, he was probably expelled from Caius College, Cambridge before he finishes his musical education, and winds up in the service of Ayrs as an amanuensis on the basis of his talent.

According to Ben van Eck, Ayrs symbolizes the new upper class that emerged in the aftermath of the industrial revolution which Marx calls the *bourgeoisie*. Wallerstein defines such class as “those who receive a part of the surplus-value³⁹ they do not themselves create and use some of it to accumulate capital.” (Wallerstein, 1991, p.117).

The relationship between Vyvyan Ayrs and Robert Frobisher could be interpreted as how the bourgeoisie class is exploiting the *proletariat*⁴⁰. Frobisher, in this interpretation, is paid for his labour in the form of “boarding and social, economic and symbolic capital.” (Ben van

³⁸ **Vyvyan:** Introduced into England by the Normans after the 1066 Invasion, Vivianus formed the basis for a surprisingly wide variety of modern surnames which include: Vivian, Videan, Vidgen, Vidgeon, Vyvyan, Fiddian, Fidgeon and Phythian. The original meaning was alive or living. (retrieved from <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Vyvyan>)

Aeyrs: Firstly, Ayres may be a patronymic form of "Ayre", itself a nickname for a man who was well known to be the heir to a title or fortune, deriving from the Middle English "eir, eyr", heir (Old French "(h)eir", Latin "heres", heir). (retrieved from <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Ayrs>)

³⁹ According to Marx's theory, surplus value is equal to the new value created by workers in excess of their own labor-cost, which is appropriated by the capitalist as profit when products are sold. (retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surplus_value)

⁴⁰ The proletariat (/ˌprɒlɪˈtɛəri.ət/ from Latin proletarius) is a term for the class of wage-earners, in a capitalist society, whose only possession of significant material value is their labor-power (their ability to work). (retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proletariat>)

Eck, 2013, p.67). However, Ayers went even further by taking all the credits of their first musical collaboration the *Todtenvogel*. Again, the motif of parasitism is used here to indicate the predation factor of the will to power. Nietzsche argued that, like a parasite, “life always lives at the expense of other life.” (As cited in Morgan, 1941, p.62). In its basic form, a parasite needs another organism, a host, to live off, to suck the life-blood from. At first, the relationship was more of a *symbiotic mutualism*⁴¹ in which both of them benefited from the other. Still, Frobisher and Vyvyan were blinded by their narcissism and vanity at the expense of awareness of the other or the consequences of their manipulative actions. Reesor believed that “human individuals, like all inventions of the will to power, are egoistic and therefore more inclined to dominate one another than to cooperate.” (2008, p.71)

The prominent ‘experiment’ of the evolution of *will to power* at that time was perhaps the emergence of *fascism*⁴². Our narrative corresponds with the early 1930s in which Europe witnessed the rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi party in Germany where Ayrs was deemed as a “Jewish devil” (Mitchell, 2004, p.43). Such authoritarian regime would initiate the deadliest and most destructive war in the history of mankind, the World War II.

On their way back from the unsuccessful attempt to find Frobisher’s brother’s grave, Dhondt and Frobisher stepped upon a philosophical debate concerning the inevitable outcome of the *will to power*:

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,

⁴¹ Mutualism is the way two organisms of different species exist in a relationship in which each individual benefits from the activity of the other. Similar interactions within a species are known as co-operation. (retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutualism_\(biology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mutualism_(biology)))

⁴² It is a belief in natural social hierarchy and the rule of elites, and the desire to create a *Volksgemeinschaft* (German: “people’s community”), in which individual interests would be subordinated to the good of the nation. (retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/fascism>)

unions and the borders of states. The nation state is merely human nature inflated to monstrous proportions. (ibid, p.246)

Dhondt could foresee the upcoming global war as he expressed his fear to Frobisher that “the next war will be so big, nowhere with a decent restaurant will be left untouched.” (ibid, p.246). Despite the fact that the human history was never short when it comes to violent wars and conflicts, humanity, for the first time, gazed upon the possibility of its own annihilation in World War II. On this issue, Reesor observed that “if every living thing strives to subdue and incorporate every other living thing, how can the result be anything other than purely destructive competition leading to the eventual death of everything?” (2008, p.62)

Great leaps in science and technology modernized warfare as much as the living standards if not even beyond. Dhondt believed that “our will to power, our science, and those v. faculties that elevated us from apes, to savages, to modern man, are the same faculties that’ll snuff out Homo sapiens before this century is out!” (Mitchell, 2004, p.247). Frobisher even foreshadowed the ‘Fall’ of civilization to occur when “humanity’s powers of destruction overcome our powers of creation and our civilization drives itself to extinction.”(Ibid)

Fascism was condemned and demolished in the aftermath of W.W.II as Germany and Italy lost the war. However, it is claimed that fascism has left an heir to its legacy. Benito Mussolini, the leader of the National Fascist Party, stated that “Fascism should more appropriately be called Corporatism because it is a merger of state and corporate power.” (Mark Rich, 2008, p.15). Such claim by one of the main figures in fascist philosophy links such movement to corporate America in the following narrative and Sonmi-451’s Nea So Copros corpocracy.

III.3. HALF-LIVES: the first Louisa Rey mystery

Through a long process of evolution, the human sociality hit its pinnacle with the emergence of a phenomenon known as globalization. With time, the latter:

[...] has accelerated, from the colonization of the inhabited parts of the world to the appearance of nations, from conquests to independent countries, from sailboats and caravans to steamboats, truck fleet and cargo planes, from trade in a few commodities to global production and distribution networks and to the present explosion of international flows services, capital, and information. (Ian Goldin & Kenneth A. Reinert, 2006, p.ix).

Such phenomenon was mentioned as early as Ewing's narrative. On the first paragraph of the first page, Adam remarked when he met Dr. Goose for the first time that "if there be any eyrie so desolate, or isle so remote, that one may there resort unchallenged by an Englishman, 'tis not down on any map I ever saw." (Mitchell, 2004, p.08). However, globalization as we know it today hit its highpoint in the aftermath of W.W.II.

Around forty years after the Second World War, The third narrative of Louisa Rey took place in the fictitious city of Buenas Yervas, California. To the naked eye, the plot delivers a mundane typical detective thriller atmosphere as the powerless journalist Louisa Rey tries to topple a powerful megacorporation called Seaboard Inc. Yet, the narrative is embedded with a complex narrative critique of essential concepts of that era.

Perhaps one of the main issues that were introduced in this narrative is the growth of corporate power, media power, and the complex relation between the two. According to Foucault, the discourse of power in modern society is more complex "[...] than a linear top-down model of power relations, enforced by the elite class, the governmental system or the law", he writes "Power is everywhere... because it comes from everywhere" (As cited in Ailsa Martin, 2013, p.03).

Corporations and media outlets started to impose their dominance through their own 'specialized' capital (economic, social, and symbolic) on both the populace and the body of

governance within the western society. For Nietzsche, such new hierarchies of power came to being as a natural outcome of evolution:

When some unit of will to power or an oligarchy of equally strong units successfully masters a group of weaker units and is able to maintain a cohesive, hierarchical power structure in which each unit controls those weaker than itself, an individual organism emerges. (Ressor, 2008, p.64)

Seaboard Inc. wielded a great power within society through its main logistic element which is its economic capital. The latter provided Alberto Grimaldi, the head of Seaboard Corporation, with many morally grey methods like assassination, blackmailing, threats, and bribery to realize and preserve the HYDRA nuclear project. The power of money was clearly demonstrated when Seaboard applied pressure on Spyglass to discharge Louisa Rey as they own ‘Transvision’, the company that owns the magazine itself. For Galbraith, “perhaps the oldest and certainly the wisest strategy for the exercise of power is to deny that it is possessed.” (1973, p.05). Grimaldi wisely exercised his own will without being exposed directly by owning diverse businesses that would support his corporation from the shadows.

Ironically, Grimaldi was killed by his own hitman, Smokes, under the orders of his political rival Lloyd Hooks⁴³. Two days following his death, Hooks filled the CEO vacant seat which led Seaboard’s share price on Wall Street to leap 40 points. Such increase in value shows how much symbolic capital Hooks holds in the energy sphere.

A man who has literally everything, who accumulated large amounts of all types of capital (economic, social, academic, and symbolic), and yet still craving Grimaldi’s position. A figment from a Greek myth surfaces in his mind as soon as he was aware of Grimaldi’s death: “The sacred grove of Diana was guarded by a warrior priest on whom luxury was lavished but whose tenure was earned by slaying his predecessor. When he slept, it was at the peril of

⁴³ Before replacing Grimaldi, Hooks was the *Federal Power Commissioner*. He was also known as the *Energy Guru*.

his life. Grimaldi, you dozed for too long.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.217). By comparing himself to the slayer of the warrior priest, Hooks seems to embrace his new undeniable fate in which he would be slayed by his own predecessor. Mitchell is attempting to demonstrate how *will to power* can be an all-consuming drive, and how greed and hunger for power can never be satisfied.

Mitchell implemented another Greek myth symbolism within the use of the term ‘Hydra’. The HYDRA-ZERO⁴⁴ nuclear reactor is in itself a symbol of the powerful yet destructive *will to power*. The reactor was built on Swannekke Island, the island that was labelled by the activists as “CANCER ISLAND” (Mitchell, 2004, p.60). The term Hydra was used by both Frobisher and Ewing in different contexts. For Frobisher, the many headed hydra was the Van de Velde's daughters whereas for Ewing this mythical monster was the human nature. According to Nietzsche, *will to power* is the main driving force in humans to achieve, follow ambition, and the striving to reach the highest possible position in life. Electricity is, to some extent, the *will to power* that drives our modern society forward. As a power source, this nuclear reactor fuels our 21st century evolving and extravagant lifestyle. However, such power source proved to be massively destructive on the long run. On the other hand, similar to the Hydra creature, all previous attempts by Louisa and other protagonists to defeat such violent drive, even though partially successful, went in vain as for every ‘head’ (manifestation) they cut, another two grow in its place.

There is also another instance related to the symbolism of nuclear power. In the fifth narrative, Sonmi-451 watches a Juche Boardman opening a “newer, safer, nuclear reactor, grinning as if his strata depended on it.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.231). Despite the tremendous achievements in sciences and technologies to the extent of driving flying cars, projecting

⁴⁴ In Greek mythology, the Hydra was a giant water snake with many heads. The number of heads is variously reported from as few as 5 to more than 100. The second of the 12 labours of Hercules was to kill the Hydra. However, when one of the Hydra's heads was cut off, two more grew in its place. The monster also had one **immortal** head. (retrieved from <http://www.mythencyclopedia.com/Ho-Iv/Hydra.html>)

advertisements on the surface of the moon and the ability to successfully clone specialized human beings, humanity seems to be still lacking in the field of safely harnessing the nuclear power which symbolizes the still ever going conflict towards taming the devastating impulses of the *will to power*.

As a young black journalist in the mid-1970s, Luisa Rey faced so many challenges to prove herself in the hostile, sexist, and racial work environment of Spyglass magazine. The drive to succeed her father, to escape being eclipsed by his journalism legacy is what made her risk her life and struggle through all these hardships. Lester Rey was one of only four or five journalists who grasped the war from the Asian perspective. He “covered Korea for Illustrated Planet, then became West Coast Herald’s Latin America man. He was in Vietnam for the battle of Ap Bac and stayed based in Saigon until his first collapse back in March.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.56).

Just like her father, Louisa decided to follow the ‘truth’ through another perspective other than what is provided by prominent power houses like Seaboard Inc. However, access to knowledge such as Sixsmith’s report is tightly monitored by the corporation and its unauthorized possession labelled as “a Federal Crime Under the Military & Industrial Espionage Act 1971.” (Ibid, p.84). According to Foucault, the holder of knowledge is also the holder of power, but power in itself could be used to acquire, limit or disseminate such knowledge. Thus, “those with power control both the right and the ability to access knowledge, the parameters surrounding the discourses of knowledge, and therefore the right to determine ‘truth’.” (Johnston-Ellis, 2010, p.75). Nearly all this narrative centres on Luisa’s efforts to create one ‘truth’, while Seaboard attempts to create another. As the holder of power, Seaboard was able to censor knowledge, like Sixsmith’s report, that would endanger its existence. They were also able to produce their own version of the ‘truth’ in which the

HYDRA project deemed as “one of the major engineering innovations in history.” (Ibid, p.62) and the cure for the nation’s “debilitating addiction” (Ibid, p.61) of oil.

Still, in the end, Louisa managed, with the help of others, to survive and expose the real ‘truth’ about Seaboard and Hooks in what came to be known as “Seaboardgate” affair. This marked a triumph and shift of power from Seaboard to the media. What puts the latter in a strong position of power is the ability to make or break the public opinion on what is ‘true’ and accepted in a society. However, for the sake of economic gain, editors like Grelsche abandon their integrity and hold the motto of “anything is true if enough people believe it is.” (Ibid, p.59). In a capitalist society, where media is privatized, corporations like Seaboard Inc. engulf media outlets to determine what is ‘true’ and what is not. For Nietzsche, this dynamic tension between different parts within an organism is what holds it together: “while every organism and organization represents a stable hierarchy, stability is not changelessness but rather a dynamic tension in which the balance of power may shift from time to time.” (Ressor, 2008, p.68).

Mitchell shed some light on another faction that gained notoriety during that period of time. Activist groups like Hippies⁴⁵ and Yippies⁴⁶ began to refute the mainstream tendencies like government policies and western lifestyle. Dr. Hester Van Zandt or how Louisa calls her, an aristocratic mongrel, is the leader of a similar activist group called Green Front. Hester⁴⁷ was, as her name indicates, the guiding star for Louisa’s investigation. Her insight on the role

⁴⁵ A 1960s and 1970s countercultural movement that rejected the mores of mainstream American life. Although the movement arose in part as opposition to U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War (1955–75), hippies were often not directly engaged in politics. They believed in peace, and were opposed to many of the accepted ideas about how to live, had long hair, and often lived in groups and took drugs. (retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hippie>)

⁴⁶ They are the activist counterparts of hippies. They were an American radically youth-oriented and countercultural revolutionary offshoot of the free speech and anti-war movements of the 1960s.

⁴⁷The name **Hester** is a Persian name that means a “Star”. (retrieved from <https://www.behindthename.com/name/esther>)

of media within the larger conflict between them and the corporations is a clear allusion to the power media wields:

The conflict between corporations and activists is that of narcolepsy versus remembrance. 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 a 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, 2004, p.74)

Activists like Dr. Hester were generally labelled as anti-social, and sometimes even as rebels because of their non-conformist attitudes towards the 'truths' imposed by the herd/state. Nietzsche discussed the concept of crime as a "revolt against the social order." (1968, p.391). In this respect, all truly great men, according to him, are, to some extent, rebels in their way of acting courageously against the conformity of the herd:

To be a rebel in view of contemporary society does not in itself lower the value of a man. There are even cases in which one might have to honor a rebel, because he finds something in our society against which war ought to be waged--he awakens us from our slumber. (Ibid, p.391)

The non-conformist (rebel) role within the society could be paralleled with the one of a pathogen within an organism. They both develop slowly in scrutiny, manifest confusing symptoms at first like 'widespread awareness' in Hester's quote above. Then the culminating in a cathartic fever (public outrage) that would strengthen the immune system in an organism and the public awareness in a given society.

On the other hand, Capitalism in this narrative is directly linked to the 'greed' that drives 'businessmen' and corporate leaders to maximize profit without considering the social

consequences of their actions. Corporate America is exposed as corrupt, whether it was the sweatshops that exploited illegal immigrant workers, or in the powerful corporations' boundless manipulation to fulfil their agendas by whatever means possible.

Companies grew to become corporations, and corporations became larger than some countries (MNCs⁴⁸). Today, "Corporations are as big as nations: of the 100 largest units concerned with production of goods and services, 51 are MNCs and the other 49 are nations. Only 23 nations are bigger than General Motors." (Richard & June Brinkman, 2002, p.08). In a globalized world "corporations have emerged as the dominant governance institutions on the planet, with the largest among them reaching virtually every country in the world and exceeding most governments in size and power" (David Korten, 1995, p.54).

Hooks statement that "whoever said money can't buy you happiness, obviously didn't have enough of the stuff." (Mitchell, 2004, p.217) culminates Mitchell's critique of the post-industrial western society in which economic capital gained an unprecedented value and influence. What is interesting is that, to some extent, he envisioned Trump's⁴⁹ rise to power when one of the Henderson triplets said:

I'd establish—I'm not afraid to say it—our country's rightful—corporate—empire...The Corporation is the future. We need to let business run the country and establish a true meritocracy....Not choked by welfare, unions, 'affirmative action' for amputee transvestite colored homeless arachnophobesA meritocracy of acumen. A culture that is not ashamed to acknowledge that wealth attracts power ...and that the wealthmakers—us—are rewarded. (Ibid, p.222)

The 45th President of the United States is more of a businessman than a politician. His agenda and presidential campaign is also economic oriented in which he calls for ruling the

⁴⁸ A multinational corporation (MNC) has facilities and other assets in at least one country other than its home country. Such companies have offices and/or factories in different countries and usually have a centralized head office where they coordinate global management. Very large multinationals have budgets that exceed those of many small countries. (retrieved from <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/multinationalcorporation.asp>)

⁴⁹ Donald Trump is an American businessman, television personality, politician, and the 45th President of the United States. He is a businessman who owns **The Trump Organization** which is worth 3.7 Billion dollars. (retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com>)

country as a ‘corporate business’. However, still new to his oval office, his policies is yet to be seen.

Mitchell’s emphasis on both media and corporation within this narrative could be seen as a fictitious narrative, which is stemmed from our contemporary reality that directly foreshadows the rise of Corpocracy in the fifth narrative of Somni-451.

III.4. The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish

The fourth narrative named *The ghastly ordeal of timothy Cavendish* gears down the pace of the action to set a lighter mood to the novel. Timothy is an editor in his twilight years who, because of his many wrong doings in the past, finds himself confined against his own will within the walls of a nursing home called Aurora House. Unlike the previous darker narratives, the plot of this one loops around his escape with a bunch of other elders from Aurora House presented in a light comic tone. While the previous narratives focus on the conception of power on a larger scale within the heart of society, this ‘prison break’ fiction rather focuses on recounting the hilarious escape of old aged group of people from Aurora House, a nursing institution that could be seen as another structure of societal control in the periphery of society on a much smaller scale.

The Aurora House is equipped with “state-of-the-art surveillance arrangements” consisting of “magnificent iron gates, opened and closed by a flash pneumatic stroke electronic gizmo [...] a surveillance camera and a two-way phone thingy” (Ibid, p.198), all designed to keep the elderly from escaping into the ‘world’, and to be left to die far away from the society. The idea of locking away the elderly in a type of a sophisticated prison indicates the new perspective society holds towards them:

[...] once you’ve been initiated into the Elderly, the world doesn’t want you back... “We—by whom I mean anyone over sixty—commit two offenses just by

existing. One is Lack of Velocity We drive too slowly walk too slowly talk too slowly The world will do business with dictators, perverts, and drug barons of all stripes, but being slowed down it cannot abide. Our second offence is being Everyman's memento mori⁵⁰. The world can only get comfy in shiny-eyed denial if we are out of sight. (Ibid, p.200)

In the Information Age we live in, speed is of the essence. Mrs. Costello believes that the elderly, because of their lethargic nature, are labelled as “a type of social ‘deviant’ that challenges the notion of youth as the preserve of power and knowledge.” (Johnston-Ellis, 2010, p.62). She criticized the lack of morality in the capitalist modern society that outcasts them whereas welcomes the chance to do business with “dictators, perverts, and drug barons of all stripes”. What is interesting is the way she described the already different and ‘dysfunctional’ elderly as anyone over sixty even though, in many cases, those who are that old can be still healthy enough to sustain themselves like Cavendish, and those who escaped with him. In a capitalist society where “contemporary workers are integrated to a system of production and consumption that demands their full commitment.” (Richard Box 2005, p.133), those who are over sixty are mostly retired. Such stereotyping of being ‘different’ and dysfunctional could be directly related to the loss of their social capital, because of the disengagement⁵¹ process, as they are no longer gears within the mega machine of a profit-oriented society that devalues any category of people that is less productive.

With the emergence of the nuclear family at the expense of the extended one, the elderly lost another aspect of their social capital within society. Their only value and power left to hold was their economic capital. The inheritance and wealth that their death could potentially

⁵⁰ **Memento mori** is a Latin phrase meaning 'remember you must die'. A basic **memento mori** painting would be a portrait with a skull but other symbols commonly found are hour glasses or clocks, extinguished or guttering candles, fruit, and flowers. Closely related to the **memento mori** picture is the vanitas still life. (retrieved from <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/m/memento-mori>)

⁵¹ Disengagement theory is the idea that society functions in an orderly way by removing people from positions of responsibility as they reach old age. It ensures the orderly operation of society by removing aging people from productive roles before they are no longer able to perform them. (retrieved from <http://www.sociologyguide.com/ageing/theories-of-ageing.php>)

bestow upon a relative, as is the case for the detestable hamburger franchise-owning Mr Hotchkiss, who only visits his mother in the hopes of discovering where she buried the family jewels prior to the onset of her dementia.

Their second offense is being “Everyman’s memento mori”, the greater reminder of the certain destiny of all men. The elderly became the constant memorandum of our mortality. According to Freud, we tend to deny the fact of our demise in which we are constantly reminded of when we encounter old people:

We cannot, indeed, imagine our own death; whenever we try to do so we find that we survive ourselves as spectators. The school of psychoanalysis could thus assert that at bottom no one believes in his own death, which amounts to saying: in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his immortality. (Sigmund Freud, 1918, p.41)

Aurora’s Nursing Home residents are controlled in a very subtle way through a regime of a ritual humiliation. He who defies or questions the regime of Nurse Noakes will suffer such ritual:

Residents, what do we do to Rotten Apples?” Gwendolin Bendincks rose and pointed her finger. “Shame on you!” Warlock-Williams seconded the motion. “Shame on you!” One by one those Undead sentient enough to follow the plot joined in. “Shame on you! Shame on you! Shame on you!” (Mitchell, 2004, p.203)

Adhering to Foucault’s conception of the ultimate model of punishment as a ‘reform’⁵², Nurse Noakes applied the same technique as Mr Horrox on the Guards of Christ in the first narrative. Aurora’s residents themselves became those who maintain the oppressive regime through the Residents’ Committee led by Gwendolin Bendincks and Gordon Warlock Willocks. An administrative body in charge of preserving obedience to the rules and regulations and scold those who would defy the ‘holders of keys’. From his early days, the committee attempted to ‘reorient him’ As Mrs Bendincks tells Cavendish:

⁵² 'reform', in the strict sense, as it was formulated in the theories of law or as it was outlined in the various projects, was the political or philosophical resumption of this strategy, with its primary objectives: to make of the punishment and repression of illegalities a regular function, coextensive with society; not to punish less, but to punish better; to punish with an attenuated severity perhaps, but in order to punish with more universality and necessity; to insert the power to punish more deeply into the social body. (Foucault, 1995, p.82)

boat-rockers are not welcome here [...] Aurora House does not expel [...] but you will be medicated, if your behaviour warrants it, for your own protection[...] Meals get provided, all your laundry is done. Activities laid on, from crochet to croquet... Aurora House is a ball! Just obey the regulations. (Ibid, p.103)

Box's own paraphrasing of Marcuse's theory about Capitalism as a "system [that] rewards conformity and compliance with material goods." (2005, p.133) is exactly what Nurse Noaks regime is trying to apply. Controlled in every aspect of their lives, Cavendish saw them as 'undead' people who are completely stripped out of their individuality through many oppressive techniques and sedative medication.

Ernie, one of the elderly who eventually escapes with Cavendish, describes his 'tribe' as "...the modern lepers." (Mitchell, 2004, p.200). Such symbolism resonates Foucault's theory on heterotopias⁵³. Aurora House isolates and tends to the needs of the elderly the same as the leper colony is organized to answer to the lepers' needs while protecting the rest of the society from possible infection. According to Foucault, spaces like hospitals, prisons, rest homes...etc. are called "heterotopias of deviation" in which society keeps those unwanted deviants in order to realize its utopian status. Aurora House could be linked to his example of the cemetery, a heterotopia for the dead:

The dead, it is supposed, bring illnesses to the living, and it is the presence and proximity of the dead right beside the houses, next to the church, almost in the middle of the street, it is this proximity that propagates death itself. (Foucault, 1984, p.6).

Even though they are not dead yet, society conceives the elderly under the same light. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons insisted on society to find roles for older people that are suitable to their old age. He voiced his concern about the condition and role of the elderly in the western society and USA in particular. He argued that: "the emphasis on youth and its

⁵³According to Foucault a heterotopia is the manner in which society and culture, having power on the one hand and the interest of realizing this power on the other, define the subject through his differentiation from general society. Prisons, mental institutions and even schools are such types of heterotopias, because they are separated from their surroundings, control movement in and out of them and inside of them. Thus, these heterotopias are able to control them. (retrieved from <http://culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.com/2011/05/foucaults-concept-of-heterotopia.html>)

[society's] avoidance of the subject of death, had failed to provide roles that adequately drew on the potential wisdom and maturity of its older citizens.” (Sociologyguide.com, 2017) Such tendency, according to him, could only end in “older people becoming discouraged and alienated from society.” (Anthony Giddens & Simon Griffiths, 2006, p.184)

III. 5. An Orison of Sonmi~451

Dystopian fiction has grown as a genre since Orwell's 1984 and continues to evolve until today. Like any other dystopian novel, *An Orison of Sonmi~451* narrative explores specific tendencies of our current societies but in a more drastic level. Readers shiver when they consider this totalitarian, dystopian society and the way it manipulates its people. Yet, the practices discussed in this narrative are in fact commentaries on practices present in our own contemporary world. Sonmi's story represents the sum of all fears concerning the negative aspects of Capitalism.

‘Nea So Copros’, a nightmarish world, is where this story took place. A sombre prediction of the result of uncontrolled Consumerism to the extent of a horrific but recognisably plausible extremes. Within such corpocracy, society is controlled and dominated in all aspects by large rich corporations that altered so many social, cultural, and political concepts. Citizens now became known as ‘consumers’ who have to spend a fixed ‘quota’ of money (Dollars) per month, depending on their ‘strata’. Failing to do so makes the consumer a ‘criminal’ as “hoarding is an anti-corpocratic crime.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.130)

Mitchell introduced this dystopian society through the eyes of Sonmi-451 in her final interview with an archivist who wanted to record her own version of the ‘truth’ about her ascendance to become the face of revolution against the corpocratic government of ‘Unanimity’. Sonmi-451 begins her interview by describing her daily ‘cycle’ (routine) when she was still a server:

A server is woken at hour four-thirty by stimulin in the airflow, then yellow-up in our dormroom. After a minute in the hy-giener 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, 2004, p.105)

Concluding from her description, a fabricant label turned out to be but a euphemistic term for a slave. Abuse against fabricants was greatly accepted by society as they were not even considered as humans. For the 'purebloods', they are nothing but soulless 'genomed' clones that are altered for a specific labour and with limited mental and cognitive abilities. Through limiting their existence within the walls of the diner and the use of chemical substances like 'amnesiads'⁵⁴ to sensor and supervise their bodies, Unanimity was able to create and control the ultimate productive citizen. Such ideology of treating the body as a dehumanized machine is what biopower is all about.

According to Foucault, these disciplinary acts and techniques are meant to organize the activity of the population so the operation of the state runs smoothly. By treating the body as a dehumanized machine, the governmental system can impose methods that are productive but not necessarily preferable for the individual citizen.

Foucault claimed that such "supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls" that aimed to "[...] increase of the body's usefulness and its docility." (Foucault, 1990, p.139). He believed that biopower and Capitalism are closely linked when he wrote that biopower not only "operated in the sphere of economic processes", it "was without question an indispensable element in the development of Capitalism. (Foucault, 1990, p.141).

⁵⁴*Amnesiads is a chemical inhibiting substance that is added to Soap to "nullify" memory. Fabricants will lose any newly learned terms and concepts from their previous cycle. (Mitchell, 2004, p.p.105.112)*

The cloning process went even further to include a new type of religion that is based on Consumerism in which Papa Song is a revered god to prey to, the manager is a 'seer' to obey, and where the consumer is always righteous and sanctified. Marx's reference to religion as "the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people." (Peter Thompson, 2009) is exactly defining the fabricants condition.

According to Nietzsche, religion is the product of the slave class against all what is related to the masters' morality. However in this narrative, religion is fused to the economic and political system that is based on 'Hyper-capitalism'. A system that is grounded in masters' morality which uses religion for its benefit to subtly control and motivate the fabricants and pureblood as well to embrace their objectification.

The concept of the 'Soul' is perhaps one of the main religious dogmas that were completely reversed in this narrative. Unlike in the religious teachings, the soul here is materialized. The new connotation of the word 'soul' in Nea So Corpus refers to chips that are implanted into the purebloods' fingertips. These absurd yet plausible chips are functioning both as powerful bio technique for efficient tracking of consumers, and debit cards that are always updated with their bank account. Hence, the 'soul' is no longer the spiritual essence of the human being and now "A Soul's Value Is the Dollars Therein." (Mitchell, 2004, p.181).

The 'soulring' is what differentiate you from a fabricant, your bank account is the main indication of your strata (upstrata, downstrata); it is the heart of this hierarchical structure. This alarming catechism signifies how economic capital became the essence of not just humanity but also of power.

Such reverse of roles for religion can be seen, to some extent, as another evolution of will to power. The rebranding of religion as a part of the consumerist ideology gives Unanimity

the ability to merge the two conflicting realms of the spiritualism and materialism which grants it total power and authority over the population.

In spite of being a dystopian futuristic world, Somni-451's narrative contains many recognizable links with our contemporary world. Today's large companies have apparently become so dominant in this dystopian world that they replaced generic terms that refer to objects like shoes, pictures, movies, coffee, and cars to their own names like Nikes, kodaks, disneys, starbucks, and fords respectively. Corporations privatized everything including the natural resources like water and air (Watercorp, and Aircorp). This could be taken as a criticism to the economically growing privatization of water by those global corporations like Nestlé as their chairman Brabeck-Letmathe declared in 2013 that "access to water is not a public right"⁵⁵.

The manipulation in language did not occur only on the level of generic terms but went further to other terms like exaltation, lighthouse, airplane, extent...etc. that lost a letter or two to become xultation, litehouse, aero, xtent. This aspect could be associated to the tight management of resources Unanimity follows. Letters that are not pronounced or clusters like 'gh' that can be replaced with a single letter (light = lite) were removed for the sake of more efficiency and the preservation of resources.

Contrasting with Rey's narrative, Media is moulded to be but another gear in the mega machine of corpocracy. Censored news and commercials represent the majority of the broadcasted material. According to Marcuse, in the contemporary society, "institutions of media, entertainment, education and politics reinforce the message that production and consumption is good and the resulting environmental degradation is acceptable." (Richard C.

⁵⁵ For more information about the his statement, visit <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-privatisation-of-water-nestle-denies-that-water-is-a-fundamental-human-right/5332238>

Box, 2005, p.36). The aforementioned remark is greatly applicable to the role of Media in Nea So Copros as media outlets report only commercials or what Unanimity asks them to report.

Consumerism and particularly conspicuous consumption⁵⁶ has been rising since the aftermath of W.W.II. Veblen, the one who dubbed the term conspicuous consumption, argued that “Consumption is evidence of wealth, and thus becomes honorific, and [...] failure to consume mark of demerit,” (Kerwin Charles & Erik Hurst & Nikolai Roussanov, 2008, p.1). Nowadays, the population became subjugated through such phenomenon. Just like in Sonmi-451’s world, one consumes to belong and fit into one’s society. Most of the individuals’ tendencies became also subjugated to the media manipulation. According to Bernays, “It is a sort of managerial aristocracy that quietly determines what we buy and how we vote and what we deem as good or bad.” (1928, p.03) “They govern us”, the author writes, “by their qualities of natural leadership, their ability to supply needed ideas and by their key position in the social structure.” (Ibid).

Even though Capitalism proved to be unequal arrangement, the oppressed population did not rise against those aristocratic masters like Karl Marks predicted once. According to Herbert Marcuse’s analysis, this system protects itself because it is:

[...] successful in containing individual desires for change by providing workers with the necessities of life and a surplus of consumer goods, resulting in a population that, except for a radical few, are happy with the status quo. In this administered, “one-dimensional” life, people fulfil their function as producers in the economic system, kept unaware of alternatives by those with wealth and power. (Box, 2003, p.244)

The definition of the one-dimensionality of life within the capitalist system parallels the lifestyle of ‘consumers’ in Sonmi-451’s narrative. Individuals are conditioned to disperse

⁵⁶ Conspicuous consumption is a term introduced by the Norwegian-American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen in his book "The Theory of the Leisure Class" published in 1899. The term refers to consumers who buy expensive items to display wealth and income rather than to cover the real needs of the consumer. (retrieved from <http://www.conspicuousconsumption.org/>)

their discontent through mindless consumption which Ailsa Martin calls “repressive desublimation⁵⁷” (2013, p.08). The latter is another technique of biopower that encourages individuals to subconsciously modify their own behaviour for the good of the state. Unfortunately, this case is not just fictitious in Sonmi-451’s narrative, but it is also part of today’s reality. Following the aftermath of 9/11, President W. Bush urged Americans to “go out and shop” to get over this shocking event. (Peter Feaver, 2013)

A pending crisis is slowly starting to emerge, but such crisis is different from those that have come before. It is not partially beneficial nor a healthy aspect of evolution of will to power. It is a phenomenon that greatly altered the sensitive equilibrium of the balance of power between the two factions (noble master / the herd). Consumerism is a slow but subtly consuming crisis that began with Adam Smith’s Capitalism and “its imminence would not be foretold by riots, protests, or upheavals” because “our perception of the crisis is clouded by a proclivity for self-adulation and self-congratulation. And yet there is a crisis, nonetheless.” (Frantz Gregory, 2000, p.01).

Gregory saw rampant Consumerism as a cancer that is spreading slowly through the western society especially the American one. Just like in Sonmi-451’s world, Gregory argued that such phenomenon is what led to today’s “stultifying conformity, and vanishing of critical thinking.” (Ibid). Truly similar to Mitchell’s depiction in his trajectory fictitious world of Sonmi-451, humanity is entering the endgame stage in which human beings, as organisms, became corrupted to the extent of becoming cancerous ‘cells’ and their cities cancerous tumours that are causing so much corruption and harm to earth; the same as cancer does to a healthy organism.

⁵⁷ Repressive desublimation, the subconscious alteration of socially transgressive desires (like taboo sexuality) into socially acceptable ones that support the conventional capitalist system (like purchase of consumer goods), can be thought of as a technique of biopower, encouraging individuals to modify their own behaviour for the good of the state without being aware of this modification. (Ailsa Martin, 2013, p.8)

Conclusion

Mitchell concluded his universal narrative with a final chapter from a post-apocalyptic world hundreds of years after Sonmi-451's death. It focuses on the journey of Zachry and Meronym in a devastated world caused by the Fall which reduced much of the world's technology, civilization, and populace. Mitchell's chronological exploration of the will to power that led to the Fall between the two last narratives alludes to the implication that all people are accomplices in the destruction of the planet, human values and ultimately humanity. Reesor posed the same question about Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power: "If every living thing strives to subdue and incorporate every other living thing, how can the result be anything other than purely destructive competition leading to the eventual death of everything?" (2008, p.70).

Nietzsche's notorious concept of will to power is still often misconceived as simply a desire for power. His concept is the intrinsic essence of humanity; it is the essence of life and not something that we choose to have or not. Simply, will to power is rather a characteristic of everything that lives. The question is not whether this will to power would bring humanity's demise or not, but rather what kind or what quality of will to power will choose to manifest. Just like the nuclear energy in HYDRA reactor, the will to power could provide immense amounts of energy and vitality or even greater amounts of destruction. Similar to the failing HYDRA reactor, Nietzsche believed that the new coming conditions of the western societies would fail to contain the will to power.

Undoubtedly, the evolution of humankind will involve a transformation of will to power. However, the outcome of this evolution depends on how will to power is manifested. Such will could only be tamed and harnessed through becoming an *Urberson* and not to fall in the abyss of the *Unterson*. In *'Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After'*, Mitchell implemented a silver lining into this storm of chaos in the form of the Prescient Meronym. Such character depicts Nietzsche's vision of human progress through the on-going strive of *self-overcoming* towards reaching the status of the *Urberson*.

Chapter Three

Becoming the Übermensch

Introduction

“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.”

— Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching—

The concept of power is generally related to the capacity to control and dominate others. Such dominance results in forcing others to submit to the will of the power holder. This arrangement is usually beneficial to the holder of power, but not necessarily always beneficial to those being dominated. For Nietzsche, however, the ideally powerful individual is not the physically strong or even the one with power over others, it is the psychological and spiritual strengths that represent the ultimate power, and what matters more is one's hold over her/himself than over others.

Nietzsche's ultimate philosophical purpose lies in illuminating individuals to set their own values and to affirm themselves. Those individuals are autonomous and free from the constraints of both the internal and external worlds. To achieve such status of autonomy, one must “overcome the psychology of the unconscious or to try to establish a balance between conceptually structured mental states (beliefs, thoughts, desires, feelings) and unconscious drives, impulses, sensations” (Stanković Pejnović, 2014, p.01). For him “life itself is the will to power” (Nietzsche, 2002, ph.13)⁶⁰ and the greatest obstacle to self-overcoming is thus not others' resistance, but the self's; it is an attempt towards overcoming one's will to power.

⁶⁰ The paragraph in the book will be indicated by ph.

This conception of will to power parallels, in a sense, Sigmund Freud's definition of the id apparatus. Both concepts allude to the impulses that drive the human being to live and grow. Freud's emphasis on strengthening the ego apparatus to resist and tame the id's libidinal impulses could be seen also as a process of self-overcoming.

Fredrick Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud are certainly two of the main thinkers to influence the modern construction of the self and society. Their ideas hold significant importance due to the involvement of those ideas with the internal realm of the individual. For him, the self is primarily concerned with the management of these conflicts. The individual is constantly attempting to maximize instinctual gratification while minimizing guilt and punishment. His theory has, therefore, been characterized as a conflict management model of the inner world.

Freud emphasized the importance of the childhood phase, particularly the first five years of life, for the typical development of a psychologically healthy adult. He came to believe that the child goes through five stages of growth that are centred on his sexual drive. Those stages are known as Polymorphous perversity (Oral, Anal, and Phallic sub stages), latency, and then the genitals stages. For the development of a strong and resilient ego around the age of adulthood, those stages must be overcome effectively.

Similar to Freud, Nietzsche saw the overcoming of the inner conflicts as the true source of power. His approach, yet, is more of a philosophical one as he believed that the instinctual will to power is generally in conflict with social moralities. Those who are free from such societal constraints are autonomous and "capable of understanding the meaning of hidden drives and of controlling them." (Pejnović, 2014, p.05).

Nietzsche's ultimate teaching is grounded on the concept of the Ubermensch. The latter is "an individual who has overcome his animal nature and organised the chaos of his passions,

sublimated his impulses and given style to his character; he who has “disciplined himself into wholeness, [...] created himself and became the man of tolerance, not from weakness but from strength.” (Johnston-Ellis, 2010, p.85).

Cloud Atlas’s narrative form could be seen as an allusion to the fragmented structure of the postmodern self. In order to examine the inner conflicts that led to such fragmented-self and to know how this self could possibly emerge as a harmonious unit that exerts with power known as the Ubermensch, the novel will be read and analysed on the basis of the implication of the psychosexual development’s concepts and the three metamorphoses.

IV. Becoming the Ubermensch: the overcoming of the self

“Of three metamorphoses of the spirit I tell you: how the spirit becomes a camel; and the camel a lion; and the lion, finally, a child.”

(Friedrich Nietzsche, 1977, p.151)

“The body is a great reason, a plurality with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd” (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1978, p.34).

The concept of Ubermensch can be approached from different orientations. Perhaps one of the main ideas that are associated with such enigmatic concept is Ubermensch as the overarching purpose to the process of evolution of will to power. According to Nietzsche: “Man⁶¹ is a rope stretched between animal and overman - a rope over an abyss. A dangerous crossing, a dangerous on-the-way, a dangerous looking back, a dangerous trembling and stopping.” (Nietzsche, 1977, p.140). Therefore, Ubermensch is the idea of a man who aims to become more than a mere man, a man who aims to surpass his humanity by bettering his animalistic urges to become something more superior than a human being, and thus to ascend over the normality of the ‘Man’. Nietzsche spoke through Zarathustra to state that “life confided the secret to me: behold, it said, I am that must always overcome itself.” (1977, p.13). For him, In order to pass and ascend that ‘rope of man’, one must propel himself forward by consistently practicing the art of self-overcoming.

The Self-overcoming refers to a process by which Life overcomes itself. It occurs within the individual and produces a new type of organism that is biologically the same but intrinsically different. When self-overcoming transpires within the individual, it implicates a transformative

⁶¹ Man is capitalized here to make distinction between man as a human being, which normally is not capitalised, and Nietzsche’s meaning of ‘Man’ as a state of being of the modern individual.

change which heralds the rise of a new type of individual despite the physically indistinguishable forms between the old and the new. (Reesor, 2008, p.p.64.65).

Nietzsche introduced the process of self-overcoming as the ‘three metamorphoses’ in the same book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1978). The metamorphoses describe the process of spiritual transformation that characterizes his vision of becoming the overman. The speech of the three metamorphoses is nothing less of a spiritual transformation saga that is symbolically represented by the camel, the lion and the child.

On the level of characterization, *Cloud Atlas*’s narrative comprises six different protagonists with completely elaborate settings and time frames instead of the widely common form of a single protagonist. However, approaching this novel as a philosophically symbolic and spiritual transformational journey, one can draw a parallel between the different protagonists and Nietzsche’s three metamorphoses of the spirit to further explore the concept of the self-overcoming. Since all protagonists are linked through the recurring comet-shaped birthmark, they will be considered as symbolic manifestations of the spiritual journey Meronym, the last character to hold the birthmark, went through to reach its final status of ascendance.

IV.1. Meronym as the camel: Ewing and Frobisher

“What is difficult? asks the spirit that would bear much, and kneels down like a camel wanting to be well loaded. What is most difficult, O heroes, asks the spirit that would bear much, that I may take it upon myself and exult in my strength?”
(Friedrich Nietzsche, 1977, p.138)

As the most religious and straight protagonist of them all, Ewing symbolises the free spirit in its camel stage. Adam Ewing, a church goer who reads the bible every Sabbath⁶² (see Mitchell, 2004, p.27) and a professional notary who does his work by the book, is the typical citizen for any society. Through the whole journey, one can see Ewing carrying many burdens concerning the convictions of his society like racism and colonialism despite his sympathy towards the tribesman of the Pacific Islands (see Ibid, p.17). Furthermore, His consciousness and high sense of morality led him to help the slave stowaway Autua regardless of the risks to his own life (see Ibid, p.21). Concerning the camel stage of the metamorphosis, Nietzsche said that:

We carry faithfully what one gives us to bear, on hard shoulders and over rough mountains. And should one sweat one are told: 'Yes, life is a grave burden.' But only man is a grave burden for himself! That is because he carries on his shoulders too much that is alien to him. Like a camel, he kneels down and lets himself be well loaded. Especially the strong, reverent spirit that would bear much: he loads too many alien grave words and values on himself, and then life seems a desert to him. (Ibid, p.319)

The last straw that broke Ewing's back was the failed attempt on his life by Dr. Goose. Being saved by Autua was a sort of revelation that made him question all the firmly grounded truths and values preached by his society. Nietzsche stated that: “all these most difficult things the spirit that would bear much takes upon itself: Like the camel that, burdened, speeds into the desert, thus the spirit speeds into its desert.” (Nietzsche, 1977, p.152). Ewing had to revise his convictions and

⁶² Sabbath is a day set aside for rest and worship. According to Exodus 20:8, the Sabbath is the seventh day of the week observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening, commanded by God to be kept as a holy day of rest, as God rested from creation. (retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabbath>)

values all over again through speeding into his ‘godless deserts’ (Ibid, p.229) in which no values nor morals uphold. In the last page on the narrative, the reader witnesses the foreshadowing of the lion’s metamorphosis:

Upon my return to San Francisco, 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: ...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 it along with him! & only as you gasp your dying breath shall you understand, your life amounted to no more than one drop in a limitless ocean! (Mitchell, 2004, p.281).

Adam Ewing decided to revolt against the dominant system of values that permeates slavery despite the calculated futility of such quest. However, According to Nietzsche, such environment is what provokes the metamorphosis of the lion:

In the loneliest desert, however, the second metamorphosis occurs: here the spirit becomes a lion who would conquer his freedom and be master in his own desert. Here he seeks out his last master: he wants to fight him and his last god; for ultimate victory he wants to fight with the great dragon. (Nietzsche, 1977, p.152).

The narrative ends with Ewing’s statement: “Yet what is any ocean but a multitude of drops?” (Mitchell, 2004, p.281) which indicates his determination to confront his own Dragon, The ‘many-headed hydra of human nature’ with no regard for the consequences. However, the narrative does not indulge on the outcome of such conflict as it was cut here and followed directly by Frobisher’s.

Nietzsche defined the great dragon as a creature of values, a giant creature that is revered and called by many names:

Who is the great dragon whom the spirit will no longer call lord and god? "Thou shalt" is the name of the-great dragon. But the spirit of the lion says, 'I will.' "Thou shalt" lies in his way, sparkling like gold, an animal covered with scales; and on every scale shines a golden 'thou shalt'. (Ibid, p.153)

In parallel with Ewing's character, Frobisher had been also a heavy spirit. Frobisher had been facing his own great 'Dragon' manifested in his disinheriting 'pater' and his exploiting employer, the famous composer Vyvyan Ayrs. Both of them were trying to impose their wills upon him, but ultimately, he managed to break their hold and escape their 'thou shalt'. Yet, Robert Frobisher proved too coward to morph into a lion. He had the chance to kill his beloved Ayrs but he could not. For Nietzsche, in order to kill the dragon, one must become a lion and see it as a prey:

Verily, to him it is preying, and a matter for a beast of prey. He once loved "thou shalt" as most sacred: now he must find illusion and caprice even in the most sacred, that freedom from his love may become his prey: the lion is needed for such prey. (Ibid)

Instead, Frobisher was stagnated as a camel till the burden broke him down and decided to end his life. He might have failed to overcome his Dragon, but he managed to pour his essence into his 'many-headed sextet: "Cloud Atlas Sextet holds my life, is my life, now I'm a spent firework; but at least I've been a firework." (Mitchell, 2004, p.262).

Even though they were not able to morph into a lion and overcome the great Dragon, Ewing and Frobisher left their legacies behind, legacies (Ewing's diary and Frobisher's sextet) that herald the coming of the overman:

I love all those who are as heavy drops, falling one by one out of the dark cloud that hangs over men: they herald the advent of lightning, and as heralds, they perish. Behold I am a herald of the lightening and a heavy drop from the cloud; but this lightning is called overman (Nietzsche, 1977, p.142).

Like the first heavy drops of rain from a dark cloud, Ewing and Frobisher were the harbingers of the forthcoming storm, a storm of change that would alter the existence of the Novel's coming protagonists.

IV.2. Meronym as a lion: Luisa Rey and Timothy Cavendish

Rufus Sixsmith, the only character that lived through two narratives, felt that he has known Luisa for years when they met in the elevator (see Mitchell, 2004, p.54). No wonder he felt such way as Luisa Rey shares many qualities with Robert Frobisher, but they are just as different as they are similar. The two are marked by the comet-shaped birthmark. They both have a father complex⁶³, but for Luisa, it is the other way around. Whereas Frobisher's Pater is cold and oppressive, Luisa's father, Lester, is a heroic cop and a stellar journalist. He gave Luisa huge shoes to fill and she bluntly admitting it: "What kind of a mockery of his life would it be if his daughter bailed when things got a little tough?" (Ibid, p.57).

Unlike Frobisher, Luisa had no problem with rejection due to her job as a journalist. She also chose to fight back and overcome her own dragon which was not the case with Frobisher. Again, the motif of the 'Hydra' is used to symbolize the 'thou shalt' beast. Luisa's Dragon is Seaboard Corp. and its project the 'HYDRA Nuclear Reactor' (Ibid, p.59). According to Nietzsche, the dragon is:

An animal covered with scales; and on every scale shines a golden 'thou shalt'. Values of thousands of years old, shine on theses scales; and thus speaks the mightiest of all dragons: 'All value of all things shines on me. All value has long been created, and I am all created value. Verily, there shall be no more 'I will.' Thus speaks the dragon. (Nietzsche, 1977, p.153).

Seaboard Corp.'s 'thou shalt' was their ability to "extinguish awareness by dumbing down education, owning TV stations, paying 'guest fees' to leader writers, or just buying the media up" (Mitchell, 2004, p.74), and thus imposes its own will upon all society. The corporation proved to be

⁶³ Father complex in psychology is a complex—a group of unconscious associations, or strong unconscious impulses—which specifically pertains to the image or archetype of the father. These impulses may be either positive (admiring and seeking out older father figures) or negative (distrusting or fearful). (retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Father_complex)

a mighty adversary as it bought the spyglass magazine to discharge Luisa and, ultimately, silencing her. The corporation even attempted to murder her many times. Yet, she emerged stronger and stronger after every attempt. Luisa was on the process of becoming a lion:

My brothers, why is there a need in the spirit for the lion? Why is not the beast of burden which renounces and is reverent, enough? To create new values-that even the lion cannot do; but the creation of freedom for oneself for new creation-that is within the power of the lion. The creation of freedom for oneself and a sacred "No" even to duty-for that, my brothers, the lion is needed. To assume the right to new values-that is the most terrifying assumption for a reverent spirit that would bear much. (Nietzsche, 1978, p.153).

Luisa emerged as a lion and decided to fight back Seaboard Corp. and the society which labelled her as nothing but a helpless woman. Luisa survived several assassination attempts and went to expose the dealings of corporate America as she brought the Seaboard Corp. down and succeeded to destroy the HYDRA project. Thus, proving herself worthy of her father's legacy.

The same as Luisa, Timothy Cavendish was also labelled by society. Around the age of retirement, an individual like Cavendish would be initiated to the 'elderly tribe' and "once you've been initiated into the Elderly, the world doesn't want you back." (Mitchell, 2004, p.199). The 'elderly tribe' generally inhabit nursing homes like the Aurora House and are controlled through a totalitarian regime based on sedation through medication: "Boat rockers are not welcome here [...] Aurora House does not expel [...] but you will be medicated, if your behaviour warrants it, for your own protection" (Ibid, p.103). Against the 'thou shalt' of his society that wants him to be a part of the 'Undead' (Ibid, p.197), Cavendish created his own freedom and said the sacred 'No'. Thus, he morphed into the much needed lion. In the end, Cavendish managed to escape with the help of others, and then to defeat his own dragon manifested in Nurse Noakes. Within the last lines of his narrative, one could witness the foreshowing of the final metamorphosis, the becoming of the

‘Child’: “Middle age is flown, but it is attitude, not years, that condemns one to the ranks of the Undead, or else proffers salvation. In the domain of the young there dwells many an undead soul. They rush about so, their inner putrefaction is concealed for a few decades, that is all.” (Ibid, p.214).

Cavendish began to assess values as he became the master of his own ‘deserts’. He decided not to come back to London and live in exile till the moment of his glorious return, just like Solzhenitsyn’s⁶⁴ return to Russia: “outside, fat snowflakes are falling on slate roofs and granite walls. Like Solzhenitsyn laboring in Vermont, I shall beaver away in exile, far from the city that knitted my bones. Like Solzhenitsyn, I shall return, one bright dusk.” (Ibid).

IV.3. Meronym as a Child: Sonmi-451

The third and final metamorphosis is the becoming of the ‘Child’. To complete the cycle, the lion must become a child as there is no happiness in fighting dragons all one’s life. According to Nietzsche, the child metamorphosis is needed, because it is only him who can create new values to replace the old ones:

But say, my brothers, what can the child do that even the lion could not do? Why must the preying lion still become a child? The child is innocence and forgetting a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, sacred ‘Yes’. For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred ‘Yes’ is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world. (1978, p.153)

Sonmi-451 also raises some interesting philosophical questions, particularly about happiness. She is lost in existential crisis as she learns more and more yet continues to be subjected to the

⁶⁴ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (11 December 1918 – 3 August 2008) was a Russian novelist, historian, and short story writer. He was an outspoken critic of the Soviet Union and communism. He was allowed to publish only one work in the Soviet Union, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962), in the periodical *Novy Mir*. He realized he had to publish in the West, most notably *Cancer Ward* (1968), *August 1914* (1971), and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973). He was eventually expelled from the Soviet Union in 1974, but returned to Russia in 1994 after the state’s dissolution. (retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleksandr_Solzhenitsyn)

whims of the university and government who owns her: “What was knowledge for, I would ask myself, if I could not use it to better my existence? How would I fit in on Xultation nine years and nine stars later with my superior knowledge? Could amnesiads erase the knowledge I had acquired? Did I want that to happen? Would I be happier?” (Mitchell, 2004, p. 224). Can Sonmi-451 ever fit in with “where she came from” again, or should she, now that she has evolved? She puts it simply and eloquently upon her return to the dinery: “Kelim-889 cleared the table next to us; she had already forgotten me. My IQ may be higher, but she looked more content than I felt” (Ibid, p. 231).

Being the youngest of all protagonists (3 years old), the fabricant Somni-451 is the embodiment of the ‘Child’ through and through. For Nietzsche, a child-like spirit is vital to the process of creating new values. For him, maturity, means rediscovering the seriousness the child has when he plays and interacts innocently with the outside world. (Nietzsche, 1978, p.48). Somni-451’s excitement when watching Cavendish’s movie on a Sony, traveling around Nea So Copros, and reading books for the first time in her life all simulate the child’s reactions and seriousness when he encounters new playful experiences in his life.

The lion becomes a child when the individual who says ‘I will’ ceases to uphold his values contrary to the law of ‘Thou Shalt’. Instead, the individual affirms them after ‘forgetting’ and through an innocent ‘game of creation’. Somni-451 ceased to be a lion and morphed into a child after her visit to the Golden Ark. She decided to leave the struggle against the ‘Juche’ doctrines and write her own values known as the Catechism: “Ascended fabricants need a Catechism, to define their ideals, to harness their anger, to channel their energies. I am the one to compose this declaration of rights.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.193).

For the child, life is no longer a reactive struggle to defeat other forces, life is a celebration of one's powers, and a constant act of pure assertion. The child-like spirit knows the essence of life and the innocence of everlasting creation. Sonmi-451 was already a child-like spirit when she was captured and interrogated. Her wise and calm answers and her vision for the future all affirm her newly gained power:

But if you knew about this conspiracy, why did you cooperate with it? Why did you allow Hae-JooIm to get so close to you? Why does any martyr cooperate with his judases? Tell me. One see a game beyond the endgame. I refer to my Declarations, Archivist. Media has flooded Nea So Copros with my Catechisms. Every schoolchild in corpocracy knows my twelve "blasphemies" now. My guards tell me there is even talk of a state wide "Vigilance Day" against fabricants who show signs of the Declarations. My ideas have been reproduced a billion fold. But to what end? Some ... future revolution? It can never succeed. As Seneca warned Nero: No matter how many of us you kill, you will never kill your successor. (Ibid, p.195).

Even though the catechisms were not mentioned in the novel, David Mitchell introduced some of them as 'Sonmi-451's revelations' in the movie adaptation of *Cloud Atlas* that he co-authored in 2012:

To be is to be perceived. And so to know thyself is only possible through the eyes of the other. The nature of our immortal lives is in the consequences of our words and deeds that go on apportioning themselves throughout all time. Our lives are not our own; from womb to tomb, one are bound to others, past and present, and by each crime and every kindness one birth our future. (Cloud Atlas, the movie 2012).

Sonmi-451 was the culmination of all pervious characters. She was the last heavy drop from a dark cloud that befell before the final stage of the storm. She was one of the last 'dancing stars' in the world of Last man: "Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer give birth to a star. Alas, the time of the most despicable man is coming, he that is no longer able to despise himself. Behold, I show you the last man. (Nietzsche, 1978, p.143).

According to Nietzsche, the Last Men is the antithesis of the Overman. They are who “have invented happiness,” say the last men, and they blink. They have left the regions where it was hard to live, for one needs warmth. One still loves one's neighbor and rub against him, for one needs warmth.” (Ibid). Because of the last men, Nietzsche believed that “The earth has become small, and on it hops the last man, who makes everything small. His race is as ineradicable as the flea-beetle; the last man lives longest.” (Ibid).

Nietzsche's description of the last man matches to a great extent the population of ‘consumers’ in Nea So Copros. In this dystopian world, every hard labour was done by the fabricants. Everything was provided to be consumed, and everything became easy (see Mitchell, 2004, p.129). Even the concept of aging has disappeared as the elderly do not exist in Nea So Copros. Consumers visit the facescaper, a face plastic surgeon, and, like Seer Rhee's wife at seventy years of age, she looks only about thirty years old (Ibid, p.108). These last men are motivated by nothing more than a life of complacency, apathy and their ultimate desire is for comfort. Everything can be bought, and can then be thrown away when a new model becomes available for purchase. These consumers sought no conflict nor pain that would push them to grow. They cherish this life as an invention of happiness. They are who “[...] have invented happiness” (Nietzsche, 1978, p.143) and became those who Nietzsche described by: “No shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse.” (Ibid, p.144).

IV.4. Meronym as the Ubermensch

Nietzsche called for humanity to strive towards excellence, for self-overcoming, and for the overman status so the herd of the last man would not take control:

The time has come for man to set himself a goal. The time has come for man to plant the seed of his highest hope. His soil is still rich enough. But one day this soil will be poor and domesticated, and no tall tree will be able to grow in it. Alas, the time is coming when man will no longer shoot the arrow of his longing beyond man, and the string of his bow will have forgotten how to whirl. (Ibid, p.143).

In Sonmi-451's narrative, the herd of the last men took control. Yet, her catechisms brought the revolution that triggered the 'Fall' of the last men's civilization after her execution. In *Sloosha's Crossin' An'Everythin' After*, the sixth and the last narrative in *Cloud Atlas*, Humanity has regressed to tribal primitive societies after the destruction of all technologies in the Fall. In disparity with the previous narrative, Sonmi-451, a slave in one time, morphed from a fabricant into the main worshipped god of the Valley tribes in which her catechisms became the law for Zachry and his fellow 'valleymen' (Mitchell, 2004, p.138). Unlike the other protagonists, Zachry did not bear the comet-shaped birthmark. In the chronological timeline of *Cloud Atlas*, Meronym is the final character to bear the comet-shaped birthmark. Thus, she is the one who should be seen as the ultimate outcome of the three metamorphosis, the Ubermensch or precisely the Uberfrau⁶⁵, and not Zachry.

Meronym was one of the prescient people who continue to possess knowledge, technologies, and social history from before the 'Fall'. The Prescients visit the Valley Tribes 'twice a year' in their advanced floating ship to barter with Zachry's tribe (Mitchell, 2004, p.139). Meronym was asked by the valleymen why the Prescients are all coloured "brewy-brown'n'black" (Ibid, p.140). She told

⁶⁵ German for 'Over-woman'

them that her “ancestors b’fore the Fall changed their seeds to make dark-skinned babbits to give ’em protection ’gainst the red-scab sickness, an’ so thembabbits’ babbits also got it, like father like son, yay, like rabbits’n’cukes.” (Ibid, p.142). According to Reesor:

Should the ruling powers degenerate, should they weaken in strength or will, or should new, more effective types and configurations of power emerge, the dominant structure may falter and eventually collapse. New hierarchical power structures can then arise to perpetuate the struggle. In addition, changes in the environment may shift the competitive advantage to different organisms, or new, more powerful types of organisms may evolve and usurp the position of other, relatively weaker organisms. (2008, p.76)

So in striking contrast to Mr Horrox’s 18th century ‘Civilization’s Ladder’ that crowns the white-skinned Anglo-Saxon man over the other races specially dark-skinned ones has been toppled, and dominance has shifted to those they repressed for so long in this post-apocalyptic future. Meronym, as the embodiment of the Ubermensch, made it perfectly clear to the kids of the tribe that: “Smart’n’Civ’lize ain’t nothin’ to do with the color o’ the skin, nay.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.145). Meronym also preached to Zachry about the difference between the savage and ‘civ’lized’:

Savages ain’t got no laws, I said, but Civ’lizeds got laws. Deeper’n that it’s this. The savage sat’fies his needs now. He’s hungry, he’ll eat. He’s angry, he’ll knuckly He’s swellin, he’ll shoot up a woman. His master is his will, an if his will saysoes “Kill” he’ll kill. Like fangy animals. Yay that was the Kona. Now the Civ’lized got the same needs too, but he sees further. He’ll eat half his food now, yay, but plant half so he won’t go hungry morrow. He’s angry, he’ll stop’n think why so he won’t get angry next time. He’s swellin, well, he’s got sissesan daughters what need respectin so he’ll respect his bros sisses an daughters. His will is his slave, an if his will say-soes, “Don’t!” he won’t, nay’. (Ibid, p.171)

Her description alludes to the difference between Man and Overman, the difference between those individuals who could exert their will to power to create higher more refined selves, and those whose their will to power mastered them instead. This narrative could be seen as a reboot of Adam’s Ewing 19th century narrative in which Mitchell gathered the two societies from the extreme

milestones of humanity's history. However, in this narrative, there is no colonization nor slavery. Such huge discrepancy between the primitive valleysmen and prescients simulates the difference between Man and Overman for Nietzsche:

Behold, I teach you the overman. Man is something that shall be overcome. What have you done to overcome him? All beings so far have created something beyond themselves; and do you want to be the ebb of this great flood and even go back to the beasts rather than overcome man? What is the ape to man? A laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. And man shall be just that for the overman: a laughingstock or a painful embarrassment. (Nietzsche, 1978, p.13)

Just like Man is to Overman, the Kona tribe is to the prescients. Meronym and her people survived the Fall, because they overcome themselves. In other words, they mastered the everlasting hunger of the will to power:

Old Uns tripped their own Fall... But Old Uns'd got the Smart! I mem'ry she answered, Yay, Old Uns' Smart mastered sicks, miles, seeds an made miraclesord'nary, but it din't master one thing, nay, a hunger in the hearts o humans, yay, a hungerfor more. More what? I asked. Old Uns'd got ev'rythin. (Mitchell, 2004, p.153)

Unlike the consumers in Sonmi-451's narrative (Last man), the prescients respected nature and earth. The Overman, for Nietzsche "is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the overman shall be the meaning of the earth! (Nietzsche, 1978, p.31). The overman should be one with nature and universe, and "[...] to sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing" (Ibid) for Nietzsche and his overman.

To be an overman is to hold onto the master morality, therefore, the nobleman is the closest individual to such image. Meronym chose to take Zachry from Big Isle, to save his life, albeit against the instructions of her superiors. According to Nietzsche: "The noble man helps the unfortunate too, although not (or hardly ever) out of pity, but rather more out of an impulse

generated by the over-abundance of power. In honoring himself, the noble man honors the powerful as well.” (2002, p.116).

So in direct contrast with this idea of the last man, one can say that Ubermensch is the idea of a man/woman who has great aspirations in life, who wants to be someone greater and does not seek a comfortable life. He is someone who wants to rule, dominate and if necessary disobey. Above all, he is someone who has his own individual desire, wish, and will to power. Above all, he is one with earth, nature and the universe.

For Nietzsche, the idea of the Ubermensch is the single arching goal of all humanity. Yet, what keeps humanity from achieving such vision is the will to power. The clash between reason and instinctive impulses is an everlasting battle. Just like Nietzsche, Freud was immensely interested in “The idea of self-overcoming, mastery over oneself, of self-making and the attempts at this idea of self-realisation.” (Johnston-Ellis, 2010, p.86). He associated the same ‘clashing with reason’ impulses with the id apparatus as a part of his psychoanalysis theory. Through this theory, one can come into a conclusion on how to understand individuals and their ability to overcome themselves by overcoming their id libidinal drives.

V. Re-Construction through fragmentation: the ascendance of the self

“The poor ego has a still harder time of it; it has to serve three harsh masters, and it has to do its best to reconcile the claims and demands of all three...The three tyrants are the external world, the superego, and the id.”

(Freud, 1932)

Fragmented in various aspects like voice, time, setting...etc. Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* came out, to some extent, with an air of nonconformist tendency. At the level of characterization, this novel offers us multiple protagonists with completely elaborate settings and time frames instead of the widely used norm of a single protagonist. Mitchell succeeded, in a very subtle way, to link those protagonists with a thread that kept the whole novel from falling apart. Each protagonist in the novel, except Zachry, is marked by a “comet-shaped birthmark” (Mitchell, 2004, p.71) that links them and their stories together. The recurrence of the distinctive birthmark draws attention to what such symbol refers to. Many conclusions were drawn like the use of Nietzsche's idea of eternal recurrence⁶⁶ and the concept of reincarnation⁶⁷ of the same soul.

The concept of eternal recurrence is refuted by the fact that the protagonists had the capacity to take different choices and therefore to alter the outcomes of their lives. However, the reincarnation concept could be plausible explanation since the comet-shape birthmark does exist

⁶⁶ Eternal recurrence—or, more completely, the eternal recurrence of the same—is the idea that everything that has happened or will happen (including one's own life) has already occurred infinitely many times and will occur infinitely many more, without the slightest alteration in detail. (John Nolt, 2003)

⁶⁷ Reincarnation is the philosophical or religious concept that an aspect of a living being starts a new life in a different physical body or form after each biological death. It is also called rebirth or transmigration, and is a part of the Samsāra doctrine of cyclic existence. (retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reincarnation>)

even in the last narrative. At the end of *Sloosha'sCrossin'*, Zachry's son revealed that Meronym indeed had this birthmark: "he even b'liefed Meronym the Prescient was his presh b'loved Sonmi, yay, he 'sisted it, he said he knowed it all by birthmarks an' comets'n'all." (Ibid, p.174).

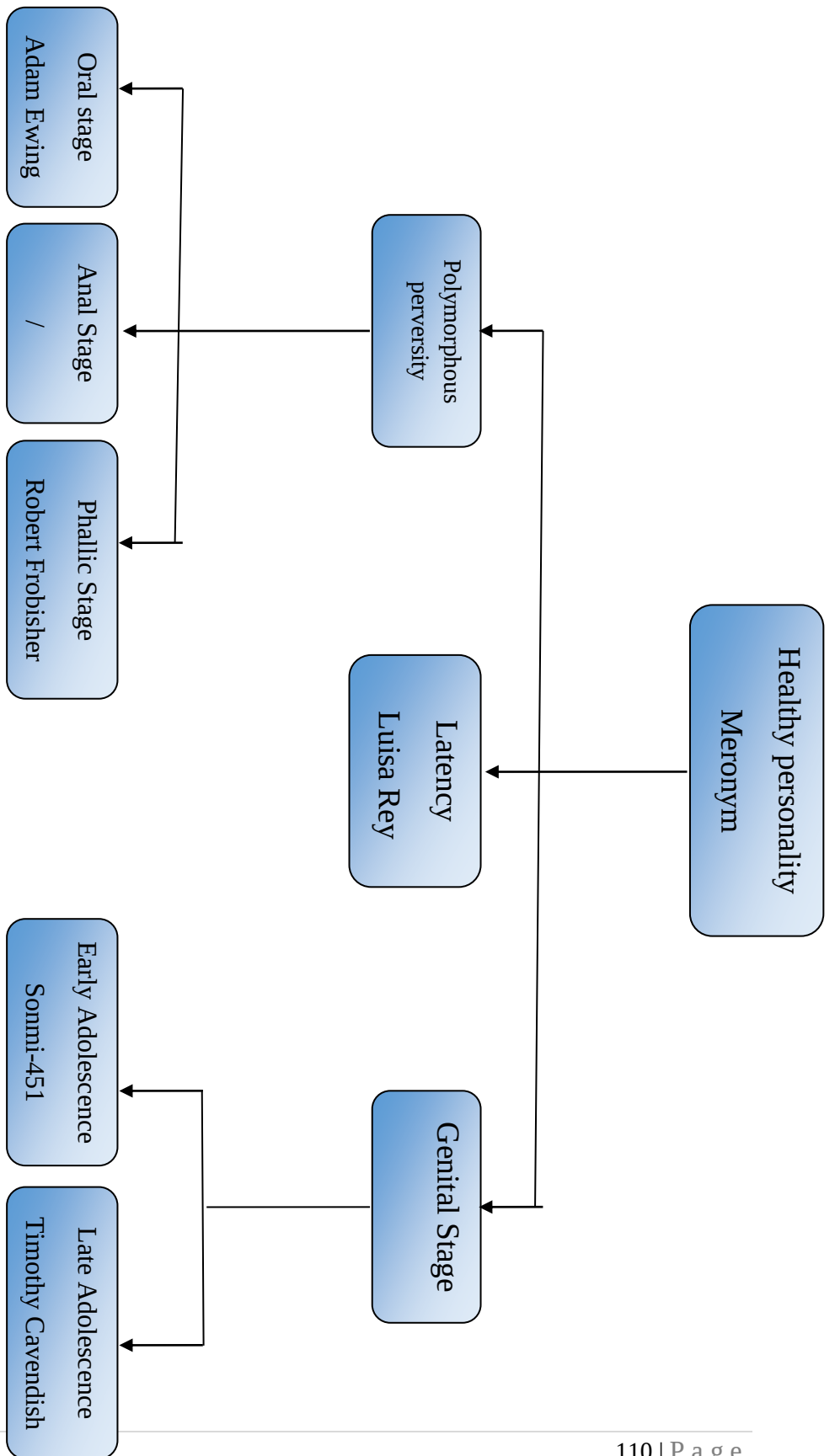
Instead of the protagonist Zachry, Meronym, the "brewy-brown'n'black" (Ibid, p.140) prescient explorer who is visiting Zachry's tribe, is the one marked by the comet-shape birthmark. Meronym was a fifty years old peaceful woman, who possesses a sense of wisdom towards life, history, graceful patience, and got the 'Smart' (Ibid, p.141). In retrospect to the former narratives, Meronym could be seen as the outcome of the process of previous reincarnations.

Throughout this process, each soul can be thought of as a 'fragment' of a greater whole. Even the name 'Meronym'⁶⁸ indicates such connotation as it means a part of a larger whole. During each reincarnation, the fragment, represented by the protagonist, seeks to fully realise itself as an individual in its own right, but in the same time strives unconsciously to achieve higher level of existence. Thus, those protagonists could be analysed as 'fragments' that can be re-constructed to form a unitary entity of a single character. The fragments of such 'character' will be analysed on the basis of the Freudian psychosexual development theory from the psychoanalysis school.

Freud presented us with a fragmented picture of the individual, divided into warring 'factions' known as the ego, id, and the super-ego. According to him, all individuals are born with the id apparatus whereas the ego and super-ego develop through different stages and experiences during the early life of the child. Such process of development is called the psychosexual development stages of personality.

⁶⁸ Meronym is a term which denotes part of something which is used to refer to the whole of it, e.g. faces when used to mean people in I see several familiar faces present. (retrieved from <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/meronym>)

Freud came to believe that the child goes through five crucial stages, known as the oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital stages. According to his theory, the child must pass these stages in order to develop properly. The tripartite division of personality (id, ego, and super-ego) along with these stages of psychosexual development will be taken into consideration in the process of analysing *Cloud Atlas*'s protagonists. The working plan goes as follows:



V.1. Adam Ewing: the oral stage

Mitchell's first narrative is centred on three main characters. The protagonist Adam Ewing, the stowaway slave Autua, and the estranged Dr. Henry Goose. This peculiar character of Dr. Goose is the first person the reader comes in contact with in *Cloud Atlas*. Moreover, the narrative begins with offering more information about him rather than introducing the protagonist Adam Ewing. Opening the whole novel with this character could only emphasises its significance.

Dr. Goose could be associated with the psychic apparatus of the id. Being introduced first even before Adam Ewing, who logically symbolises the ego apparatus, could be related to the fact that the id is the first to come into existence as all individuals are born with it. The similarities between Dr. Goose and the id is further reinforced when his actions in the beach are examined:

Had the doctor misplaced anything on that dismal shore? Could I render assistance? Dr. Goose shook his head, knotted loose his 'kerchief & displayed its contents with clear pride. "Teeth, sir, are the enameled grails of the quest in hand. In days gone by this Arcadian strand was a cannibals' banqueting hall, yes, where the strong engorged themselves on the weak. The teeth, they spat out, as you or I would expel cherry stones. But these base molars, sir, shall be transmuted to gold & how? An artisan of Piccadilly who fashions denture sets for the nobility pays handsomely for human gnashers. Do you know the price a quarter pound will earn, sir? (Mitchell 2004, p.8)

In the Oral stage of the psychosexual development, the erogenous zones of the child are pinpointed around the mouth. In this scene, the unrelenting search for 'human teeth' and their significance to Dr. Goose symbolizes the sub-stage called oral biting stage in which the child, controlled by the id in this stage, derives immediate gratification from his teeth (biting and shewing) in addition to his mouth (sucking and swallowing). (Gracious Thomas, 2011, p.183)

There are certain traits that correlates Dr. Goose to the id. His careless demeanour towards many savage acts, his guiltless pursuit of his desires with no regards to the external world like poisoning

Adam to rob him, and his only governing law of “The weak are meat the strong do eat.” (Ibid, p.270) indicate the blind selfish pleasure principle of the id.

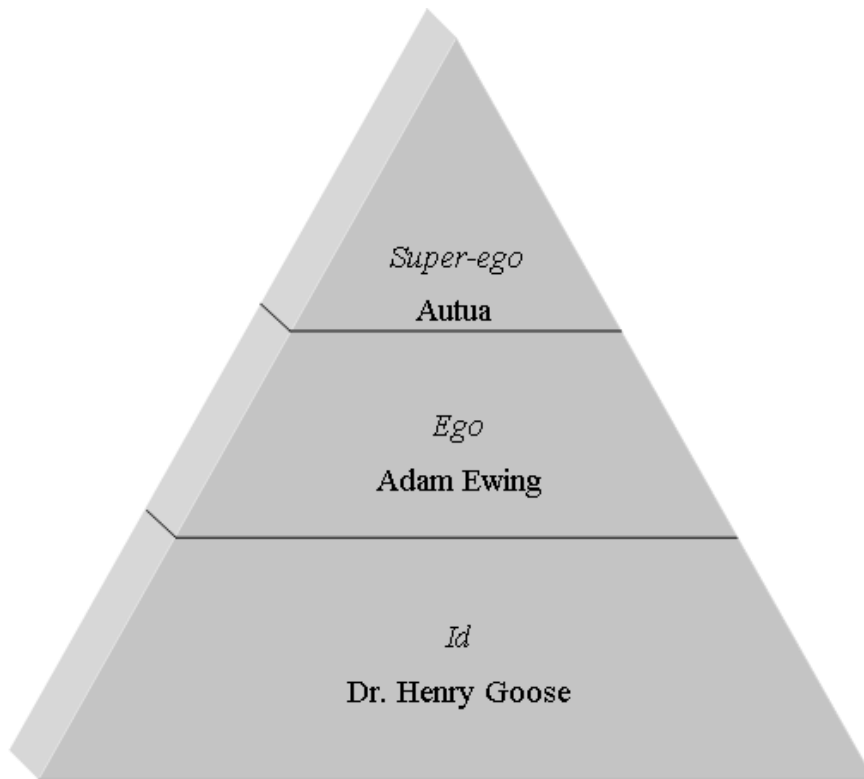
Similar to the development of the child in the oral stage, the narrative switches to focus more and more on Adam Ewing. As the child interacts more with the external world, the ego begins to grow and develop from within the id itself. According to Freud, “it is easy to see that the ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world.” (1923, p.24).

During the progression of the storyline, one comes to know that Adam is a rational and a pious gentleman who works as a notary in California (Mitchell, 2004, p.11). Being considered as rational, realistic, and a preserver of the law is what the ego is all about. However, for most of the narrative, Adam was under the control of Dr. Goose’s whims and impulses to the extent of being almost killed by him which shadows the weakness of the ego compared to the id in the early years of child development.

Such attempt of murder by Dr. Goose could be analysed in two ways. The id is compulsive and seeks for immediate gratification, but the emergence of the ego created a rivalry and a new obstacle in his way. For Dr. Goose, gratification is the economic capital that is symbolized by gold in Ewing’s money chest. For the sake of gain access to such desires, he had to weaken and eliminate the ego from his path. Thus, the emergence of the first conflict between those psychic apparatuses which will lead to anxiety.

The character of Autua stayed incognito for most of the narrative. Yet, its role at the end was essential to the survival of Ewing. It was Autua who saved Ewing from the intoxicating grasps of Dr. Goose. By introducing this character to the equation, a new psychoanalytic stage that is characterized by the emergence of the third apparatus known as the superego is initiated. Accordingly, the division of the personality on the basis of the characters of this narrative is as

follows:



In the phallic stage, the ego becomes very weak under the id's pressure as the Oedipus/Electra complex occurs. The emergence of the Oedipus and Electra complexes is considered to be the chief event of the phallic stage. However, most adults cannot remember this stage because of its traumatic experience. This stage will be discussed abundantly in the coming narrative.

Being a Moriori man, Autua's idealistic beliefs added to his seriousness when it comes to his high sense of duty and morality represent the traits of the superego apparatus. Because it emerged at a time when the ego was still vulnerable, it retains a dominant position over the ego itself. After being saved, Ewing decided to dedicate his life to the cause of abolitionism as a tribute of respect to Autua. Additionally, the disappearance of Dr. Goose after the final violent and cathartic conflict could be associated with the end of the Oedipus/Electra complex in which the superego succeeds to

suppress the faulty sexual desires of the child towards his/her mother/father. The culmination of this complex ushers the beginning of the 'latent stage' in which sexual desires are dormant and diverted to other purposes for years.

V.2. Robert Frobisher: the repressed phallic stage

Freud associated our consciousness with our own awareness. He believed that our behaviour and personality derive from the constant and unique interaction of conflicting psychological forces that operate at the three levels of consciousness, or awareness. Those levels are known as the conscious (Cs), preconscious (Pcs), and unconscious (Ucs) levels of the mind.

The conscious mind (Cs) is simply what includes everything that one is aware of. It is the aspect of the mind that one can think and talk about rationally. According to Freud, our unconscious mind is divided into two levels, the latent and the repressed. The latent kind (Pcs) is capable of becoming conscious at any time. This part of the mind generally represents ordinary memory that one can normally access at will. The repressed kind of unconscious is referred to as the unconscious mind (Ucs). This part of the psyche deals with unconscious repressed data. It is a reservoir of urges, thoughts, feelings and memories that are inaccessible to our conscious awareness by conventional means. Freud believed that most of the content is repressed because it was unpleasant to the conscious mind as it was associated with feelings of pain, anxiety, or conflict.

The second narrative, *Letters from Zedelghem*, could be interpreted as coded manifestations or messages that symbolize repressed memories coming from the deep realm of the unconscious mind. According to Freud, such memories cannot emerge to the surface level of the mind with conventional methods. However, more than often, such memories could surface in the form of disguised dreams. Thus, for him, "the interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of

the unconscious activities of the mind.” (Freud, 1900, p.608).

The fact that Frobisher began his story recounting a dream that he had opens this narrative to the possibility of being interpreted as such. Frobisher’s dream is indeed of a high symbolistic value as it represents his conflicts that would be revealed later on in the narrative:

Dreamt I stood in a china shop so crowded from floor to far-off ceiling with shelves of porcelain antiquities etc. that moving a muscle would cause several to fall and smash to bits. Exactly what happened, but instead of a crashing noise, an august chord rang out, half-cello, half-celeste, D major (?), held for four beats. My wrist knocked a Ming vase affair off its pedestal—E-flat, whole string section, glorious, transcendent, angels wept. Deliberately now, smashed a figurine of an ox for the next note, then a milkmaid, then Saturdays Child—orgy of shrapnel filled the air, divine harmonies my head. Ah, such music! Glimpsed my father totting up the smashed items’ value, nib flashing, but had to keep the music coming. Knew I’d become the greatest composer of the century if I could only make this music mine. (Mitchell, 2004, p.28)

Dreaming of being in a confined shop full of porcelain antiquities symbolizes Frobisher’s feelings of extreme restriction and the severe consequences of any attempted movement by him. These porcelain antiquities represent all the restrict rules and old cherished values that were imposed on him by his father who is manifested as the ‘totting up’ shop keeper. To be the son of a priest is no easy task especially if you lived in your older brother’s shadow who is idealized as a legend and a perfect son (Ibid, p.245). The fact that the destruction of porcelain antiquities resulted in creating beautiful music shadows the sublimation⁶⁹ defensive mechanism Frobisher unconsciously used to productively unleash the urges and feelings repressed from his childhood. (Ibid, p.254)

⁶⁹ In Freud's psychoanalytical theory, erotic energy is allowed a limited amount of expression, owing to the constraints of human society and civilization itself. It therefore requires other outlets, especially if an individual is to remain psychologically balanced. Sublimation (German: Sublimierung) is the process of transforming libido into "socially useful" achievements, including artistic, cultural and intellectual pursuits. Freud considered this psychical operation to be fairly salutary compared to the others that he identified, such as repression, displacement, denial, reaction formation, intellectualisation and projection. In the *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (1936), his daughter, Anna, classes sublimation as one of the major 'defence mechanisms' of the psyche. (retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimation_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimation_(psychology)))

The dream was only the first stop in the realm of the unconscious mind of our protagonist. The significance of places like chateaux Zedelghem and Zonnebeke cemetery symbolize the dark corners of the repressed memory. Zonnebeke is described as a gloomy landscape full of tombstones ascribed only as 'KNOWN UNTO GOD' (Ibid, p.245). Frobisher's visit to the cemetery was aimed to find his brother's grave who died there in the Great War:

[...] always felt I would divine which KNOWN UNTO GOD was Adrian's. A glowing inscription, a nodding magpie, or just a musical certainty would lead me to the right plot. Utter tripe, of course. The headstones were uncountable, uniform, and arrayed as if on parade. Coils of brambles invaded the perimeter. The air was stuffy as if the sky were sealing us in. Along the aisles and rows I searched the F's. Long odds, but one never knows. The War Office makes mistakes—if war's first victim is truth, its second is clerical efficiency. In the event, no Frobisher was resting in that plot of Flanders. (Ibid, p.245)

These graves of dead unknown soldiers symbolize a graveyard of repressed memories, thoughts, urges, and conflicts that Frobisher cannot access or recognize. Those 'soldiers' are the victims of a waging war between the three psychic apparatuses that form the personality. Frobisher's feeling of his ability to pinpoint Adrien's grave denotes the feeling of someone who is trying to access a memory that he is certain of its existence, but cannot draw it to the conscious mind due to its repression.

The decaying old Chateaux Zedelghem is where most of the narrative takes place. This chateaux indorses one of the most crucial, if not the most important, of all inner conflicts. According to Freud, during the phallic stage, the child's genitalia are his or her primary erogenous zone. The pleasures of playing with the genitals and the fantasy life of the child set the stage for the appearance of Oedipus and Electra complexes in boys and girls, respectively.

The relationship between Frobisher and Ayrs is Oedipal through and through. Since his arrival to the chateaux, Frobisher seems to be aiming to take Ayrs' place. He felt more and more as the true

great composer of the two claiming all to himself the music they had made together. He helped himself to the books in the library, entertaining Ayrs' visitors, and above all sleeping with Ayrs' wife.

Ayrs' wife Jocasta herself is the key to this oedipal relationship. Jocasta is the name of Oedipus' mother who became his wedded queen after the death of her husband. Oedipus himself is the murderer of his father and the new husband of his mother Jocasta. Thus, Frobisher's whole narrative is a coded manifestation of the repressed Oedipus complex in which he is striving to depose the father figure Ayrs.

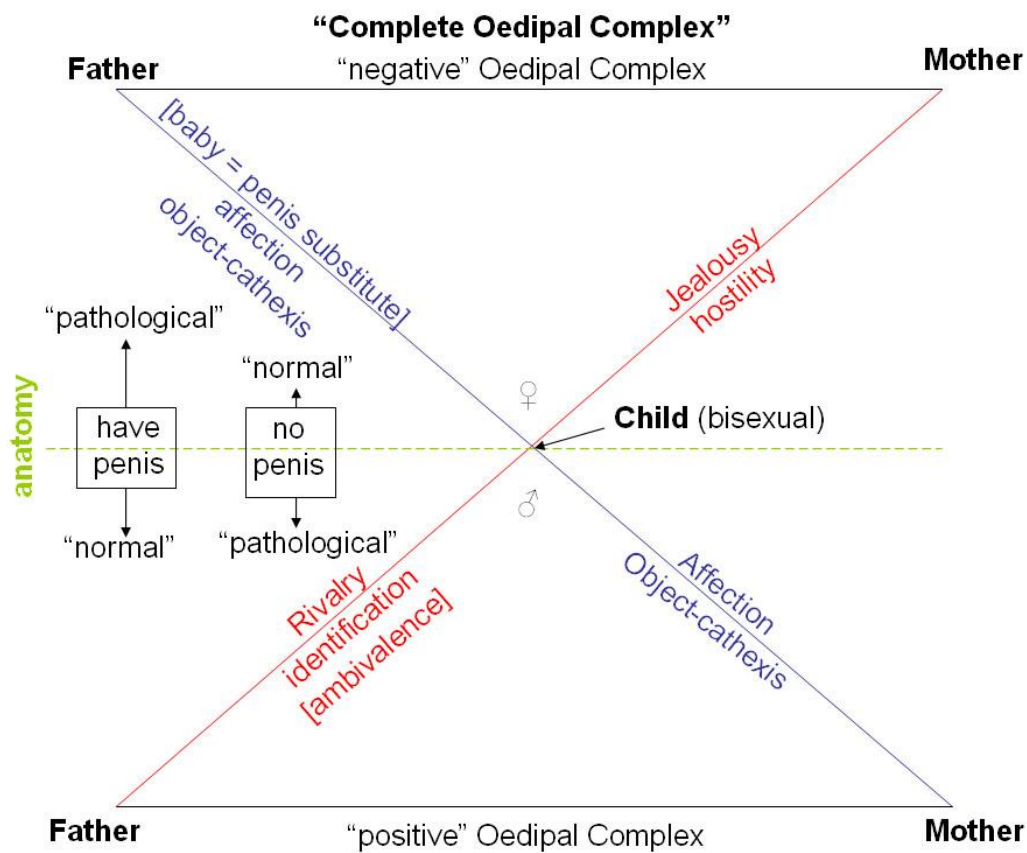
In addition to the symbolism of her name, Jocasta's character stands for their number one passion, 'music'. A mistress of many affairs who could only be with musicians like Frobisher and Ayrs. The fact that Jocasta is still with Ayrs in spite of his promiscuous past, sterility, and syphilis that he contracted over a decade ago through his sexual affairs proves her admiration towards his talent as a composer. Hence, musicality is the source of her attachment to him.

Unlike the first narrative in which Ewing stood for the psychic apparatus of the ego, Frobisher, the protagonist, stands for the id apparatus. Frobisher is a deeply individualistic, irrational, selfish, and self-involved narrator. The whole narrative is evolving around him, and all the actions are told only from his own perspective. At no point does he show any flicker of guilt or moral confusion over sleeping with Ayrs' wife or stealing his books. He has no issues with prostituting himself for actual cash, information or protection.

Frobisher's passive correspondent, Sixsmith, represents the ego apparatus. Deriving from Frobisher's comments about him, one can conclude that he is a rational person who abides the social norms. Yet, he is inert and distant from the heart of the narrative just like the ego would be from the unconscious level of the mind. This relationship in which the id almost controls every

aspect of the ego is typical for the Polymorphous perversity⁷⁰ stage of psychosexual development.

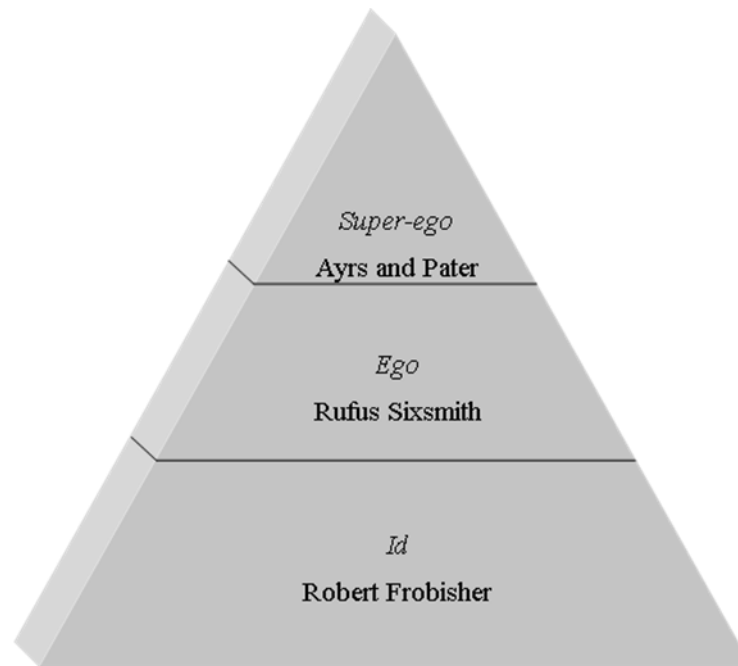
Frobisher's promiscuous nature that led him to get involved in many sexual relationships with both genders confirms his bisexuality. According to Freud, humans are psychologically as well as physically bisexual (Sigmund Freud, 1949, p.42) until the phallic stage in which the child forms his sexual identity through resolving the Oedipus complex. Such complex can be resolved in both negative and positive way:



(R. Gray, n.d.).

⁷⁰ Polymorphous Perversity: The ability to find erotic pleasure out of any part of the body. According to Freud, a young child is, by nature, "polymorphously perverse", which is to say that, before education in the conventions of civilized society, a child will turn to various bodily parts for sexual gratification and will not obey the rules that in adults determine perverse behavior. Education however quickly suppresses the polymorphous possibilities for sexual gratification in the child, eventually leading, through repression, to an amnesia about such primitive desires. (Retrieved from Felluga, Dino. "Terms Used by Psychoanalysis." Introductory Guide to Critical Theory)

In the positive Oedipus complex, the boy fears his father wrath in the case of knowing his libidinal love for his mother and castrate him for desiring to possess her. This initiates the father-son rivalry over the mother as the young boy now regards his father as an obstacle or a rival whom he wishes to get rid of. Ultimately, this hostility will thwart to the superior power of his father as the boy will choose his pleasure tool (genitals) over motherly libidinal love. Thus, he would turn his attention to other women to replace his mother when he comes of age. As for residue of the father-son rivalry, Juliet Mitchell believes that “The *confirmation* of his first love-object for the boy *which is his Oedipus complex* is renounced till he grows up like his father whom he meanwhile internalizes as his superego by identification.” (1975, p.57). Hence, the division of the personality in this narrative is as follows:



The little boy, however, may alternatively go down the road of the "negative" Oedipus complex. Boys may choose to identify with their mothers and wish to be loved by the father. In this case, the boy will behave in a feminine manner and craves for men like his father as his

father now becomes his love-object instead of his mother. In Both cases, the castration anxiety⁷¹ is involved either by paternal threat (positive) or by taking the feminine identification (negative). So the boy will identify with a parent and wait until puberty (after his latency stage) to pursue his love-object. (Sigmund Freud, 1924, p.177).

Accordingly, it could be said that Frobisher resolved his Oedipus complex in a negative way. Due to the cold relationship with his father who casted him away (Mitchell, 2004, p.46), and Ayrs's (another father figure) coldness and condescending resentment towards him, Frobisher chose to Identify with his mother instead. His love towards Sixsmith, his huge infatuation with Ayrs and his daughter Eva because of her 'boyish looks' (Ibid, p.252) confirm his new sexual Identity.

Frobisher's suicide could not be more symbolic of how the Oedipus complex get resolved. In the last couple of letters, the conflict grew intensely as Ayrs began to threaten Frobisher by exposing his affair with Jocasta and destroying his reputation, hence his musical career, if he will not obey his orders. Like in the Oedipus complex, Frobisher craved the mother (music/Jocasta) and felt a growing resentment mixed with fear and love towards the father (Ayrs). Such situation could be linked to what Freud calls extreme 'ambivalence'⁷² that would usher the final phase of the Oedipus complex.

Frobisher imagined that his father (or Ayrs) would harm him. Threats from the resentful and punitive Ayrs confirmed his fear. His fears concerning what Ayrs may do to him is centred on his

⁷¹ (in Freudian theory) it is an unconscious anxiety arising during psychosexual development, represented in males as a fear that the penis will be removed by the father in response to sexual interest in the mother, and in females as a compulsion to demonstrate that they have an adequate symbolic equivalent to the penis, whose absence is blamed on the mother. (retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/castration_complex)

⁷² Ambivalence is a state of having simultaneous conflicting reactions, beliefs, or feelings towards the same object. In other words, ambivalence is the experience of having an attitude towards someone or something that contains both positively and negatively connoted components. The term also refers to situations where "mixed feelings" of a more general sort are experienced, or where a person experiences uncertainty or indecisiveness. (retrieved from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambivalence>)

genital organs (symbolized as his musicality) as it is the source of his attachment to the mother (Jocasta). Ayrs' threat to destroy his reputation and his future in music spheres could be correlated to the castration anxiety that is faced by the child in the phallic stage. This fear of castration helps the child to resolve his Oedipus complex, as he does not want to lose his genitals. Castration anxiety induces a repression of the sexual desire for the mother and hostility toward the father. In the same sense, Frobisher decided to leave the chateaux which indicates his willingness to solve his Oedipus complex in a way or another. The concept of suicide here is more of a metaphorical one. By committing suicide, Frobisher, the id apparatus, figuratively suppressed his sexual desires for the mother and, hence, resolved the Oedipal Complex.

Finally, Frobisher committed suicide after finishing his magnum opus 'Cloud Atlas Sextet'. Just around his death, one can witness Sixsmith's arrival, the ego apparatus, to Belgium which indicates the emergence of the ego as the new driver of the psyche. As one of the most important magnitudes of this climax of events, the super-ego is born at the moment the Oedipus complex is dissolved. It is formed by a process Freud calls introjection which is the internalization of parental figure, especially paternal authority, into the personality as the super-ego. This culmination of events deliver us to the next stage of the psychosexual development knowns as the latent stage.

V.3. Latency stage: Luisa Rey

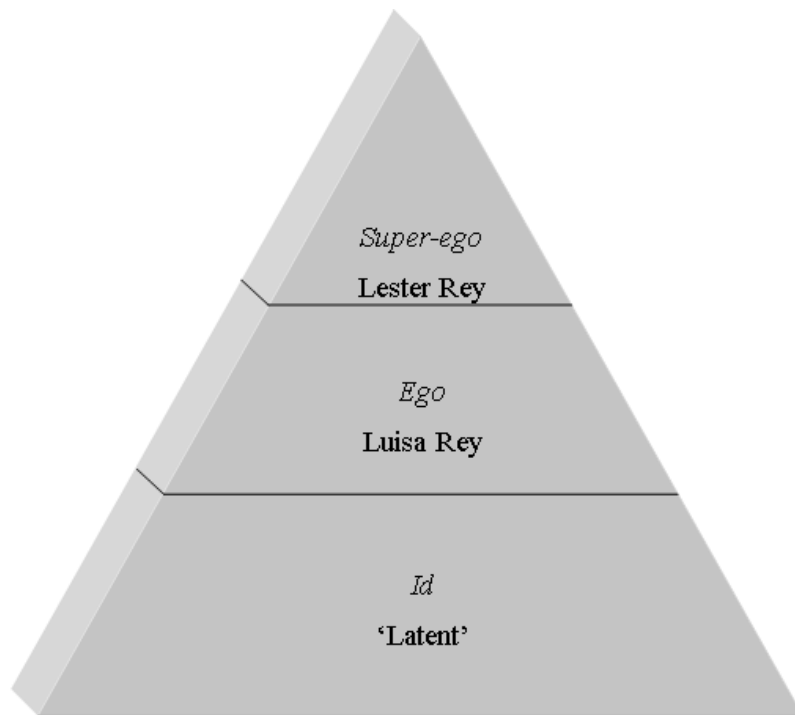
The psychoanalytic theory has very little to say about the psyche development between the phallic and genital stages. The resolution of the phallic stage leads to the latency period, which is not a psychosexual stage of development, but a period in which the sexual drive lies dormant. According to Freud, this stage represents a transitive period in which the ego and Super-ego develop freely from the influence of the third apparatus of the id. *Cloud Atlas's* third narrative

entitled *Halve Lives' the first luisa rey mystery* symbolizes such breaking point in the course of the psychosexual development.

Unlike the first two narratives, this one is led by a female protagonist named Luisa Rey. This radical change in the gender of the protagonist could be associated to the negative resolve of Frobisher's Oedipus complex that led him eventually to alter his sexual identity. Thus, this pathological disorder will be taken into consideration in the psychoanalysis of Luisa Rey's character.

Around his fifth year, the child's sexuality is gradually repressed both because of the fear of the social consequences (super-ego), and the realization that the love-object is unachievable (reality principle of the ego). For the next 5 or 6 years, the child is not consciously concerned with sexual matters as his/her sexual urges are hidden or 'latent' during this stage. The child's repressed libidinal energy will be channelled into the external world.

Luisa Rey is the character that symbolizes the ego apparatus of the child at that age. During this period, the sexual urges are channelled into academic, recreational, and social inclination. Hence, the child learns to conduct his behaviour adequately in society and acquire its ideals. Eroticism is overtly manifested in the form of attachment to parents and friends. Luisa's obsession with journalism is a form of attachment to her father who represents the super-ego apparatus in this narrative. The interest in the opposite sex is at the lowest ebb as the child spends all his/her energy to excel, prove himself, and develop a sense of competence. Similar to the child, Luisa Rey had no personal life nor was she sexually active. She expresses no interest or attraction to the opposite gender despite the recurrent attempts of her mother to find her a suitable partner (Mitchell, 2004, p.222). All what she cares about is her intellectual pursuits and journalistic career. Accordingly, the division of the personality according to the characters in this narrative comes as follows:



Luisa Rey's work environment in the *Spyglass* magazine parallels the child's integration into society through his/her school life. The apparent sexism symbolizes the repulsion between the two genders in this period. Each child identifies him/herself with the same sex parent, and forms social bonds only with kids from the same sex (see Klaus Hurrelmann, 1995, p.141). Luisa's male co-workers constantly ask her if she needs help or advice, in a disparagingly paternalistic way, or making blatant sexual statements to her like Nussbaum did in this situation:

[...] He believes the new HYDRA nuclear reactor at Swannekke Island isn't as safe as the official line. Isn't safe at all, in fact. Its launch ceremony is this afternoon, so I want to drive out and see if I can turn anything up." "Hot shit, a technical launch ceremony," exclaims Nussbaum. "What's that rumbling sound, everyone? A Pulitzer Prize, rolling this way?" "Oh, kiss my ass, Nussbaum." Jerry Nussbaum sighs. "In my wettest dreams ..." Luisa is torn between retaliation—Yeah, and letting the worm know how much he riles you—and ignoring him—Yeah, and letting the worm get away with saying what the heck he wants. (Ibid, p.59) (see also p.231)

Such situations of juvenile teasing parallels the continuous poking and bantering between boys and

girls at that age.

As the title '*Halve Lives*' would indicate, this narrative not just divides the novel but also represents the period which separates childhood from adulthood in the Freudian psychosexual development theory. The latency stage or period signifies the calmness before the storm as it initiates the child to the emotional turbulence of puberty and the abrupt awakening of the id.

V.4. Genital stage

This stage begins with the onset of adolescence known as puberty and ends with our death. Freud described it as the time when “changes set in which are destined to give infantile sexual life its final normal shape.” (1905, p.73). His daughter, Anna Freud, showed an extent and particular interest in the period of adolescence. She believed that this phase was a universal phenomenon and included behavioural, social and emotional changes. Thus, physiological changes are related to emotional changes, especially an increase in negative emotions, such as moodiness, anxiety, loathing, tension and other forms of adolescent behaviour.

Unlike her father, Anna worked with children and adolescents instead of adults, and she was more interested in the role of the ego in the dynamics of the psyche. She was able to extend Freud's developmental theory to further expand upon what takes place during this time. Anna Freud described how the physical changes of adolescence were accompanied by an increase in impulses such as the libidinal (sexual) drive. As a result, a new conflict emerges between the id and ego. *Cloud Atlas's* fourth and fifth narratives could be associated with this specific critical stage. However, since females tend to reach puberty earlier, one will consider the fifth narrative to be the early adolescent period, whereas the fourth narrative will be the late adolescent period.

V.4.1. Sonmi-451: Early Adolescence

The psychological composition of the protagonist, Sonmi-451, is of a young child despite her fully matured body. She is a fabricant who was ‘genomed’ to have a fully functional mature body but with limited cognitive abilities. For years, she worked for papa’s Song restaurant with her all female fabricant ‘sisters’. This environment could be linked to the latency stage when the child starts to steadily attending school and forms emotional bonds with same gender kids.

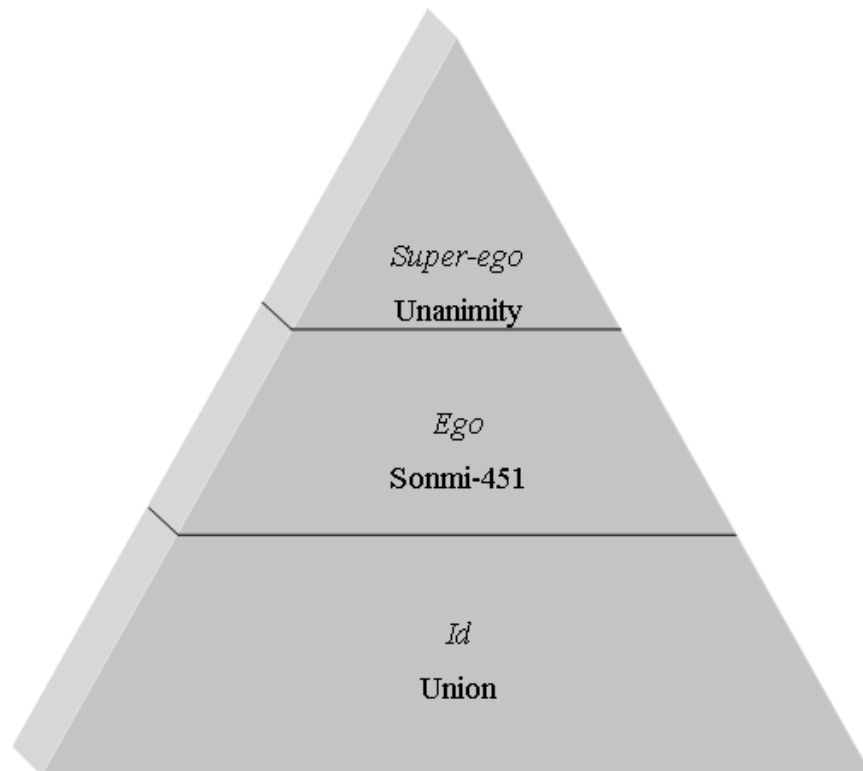
According to Anna Freud, adolescence is “by its nature an interruption to peaceful growth.” (1998, p.195). Like most of the kids in the latency period, Sonmi-451 conformed to society’s norms and the role it was given to her. It was not till her ‘ascension’ that her behaviour began to change. Her ‘ascension’ was characterized by sudden growth in her cognitive abilities and thinking process which can be interpreted as her hitting the puberty phase of the genital stage. Soon after the beginning of her ‘ascension’, she was paid a secret visit by mysterious men who ultimately turned out to be working for the Union.

At puberty, the physical development of the sexual system is completed which would ultimately lead to the re-emerging of the sexual feelings. In other words, the id apparatus is ceased to be dormant. The fact that the Union agents, who are rebels in conflict with Unanimity, appeared from their hiding around the time Sonmi-451 began her ‘ascension’ points out the symbolism of the Union as the manifestation of the id in this narrative.

Sonmi-451’s escape from the restaurant with the Union’s agents represents the beginning of the turbulent journey that she went through to complete her ‘ascension’. Similar to all the difficulties of sonmi-451’s journey, adolescents face difficult time to cope with the dramatic changes of this stage. Anna Freud considers the adolescent’s inconsistent and unpredictable manner of behaviour to be temporal and normal (1998, p.195). She further deliberates that these inconsistent fluctuations in

behaviour to be signs of normal development, of “no more than the adult structure of personality taking a long time to emerge.” (1998, p.196).

Adolescence is perceived as a period of great uncertainty about the identity of the self. Subconsciously, the issue of self-identity takes the utmost of the psychological energy as it comes to pervade everything that is done. All what Sonmi-451 did in this narrative was for the sake of finding a meaning to her ‘ascension’. To regain her psychological equilibrium, Sonmi-451 had to balance her instinctual drives of the id against the social demands of the ego (reality principle). She agreed to cooperate with the Union (id), and went through a journey with Hae-Joo that altered her beliefs and convictions about life. Consequently, the division of the personality according to the characters of this narrative is as follows:



The symbolism of her journey lays mainly in its ending. The last stop for Sonmi-451 and Hae-Joo is the Papa Song's Golden Ark that "[...] conveyed the Twelvestarred⁷³ east across the ocean to Xultation." (Mitchell, 2004, p.190). The ark is full of twelvestarred fabricants who supposed to be on their way to their retirement. The ark is more of a bloody slaughterhouse than a cruise ship (Ibid, p.p.189.191).

According to Freud's interpretation of dreams "[...] small boxes, chests, cupboards, and ovens correspond to the female organ; also cavities, ships, and all kinds of vessels." (Freud, 1900, p.115). The existence of blood could induce the interpretation of Sonmi-451's first visit to the ark as the female adolescent's *Menarche*⁷⁴. The fact that all female fabricants who would get into this ark must be a twelve years old further reinforces this symbolism. According to PMC archives⁷⁵, the average age of menarche is about 12 years old in western countries like the United States, France, UK, Netherland, Germany, and Hungary (Bellis, Downing, & Ashton, 2009).

Menarche, as the biological symbol of a shift from a child to a woman, symbolizes the epiphany Sonmi-451 had during this trip. Menarche may be anticipated and celebrated, or severely dreaded, nevertheless, it is regarded as a 'rite of passage' for adolescent females in many cultures (Brooks-Gunn & J., Peterson, 1983, p.73). Her final execution could be correlated with the loss of her childish innocence towards the external world and the beginning of her transformation from a pleasure seeking, self-loving infant into a reality oriented, socialized adult. Even though Sonmi-451 perceived such experience in a negative way, it was her own 'rite of

⁷³ Fabricants who reached their 12 years of service in Papa's Song diners. They went through the golden arks to reach their Xultation land.

⁷⁴ Menarche is the first menstrual cycle, or first menstrual bleeding, in female humans. From both social and medical perspectives, it is often considered the central event of female puberty, as it signals the possibility of fertility and the ushering of the young female to adulthood.

⁷⁵ PubMed Central® (PMC) is a free full-text archive of biomedical and life sciences journal literature at the U.S. National Institutes of Health's National Library of Medicine (NIH/NLM).

passage' that ushered her to the adolescent period of the genital stage.

V.4.2. Timothy Cavendish: Late Adolescence

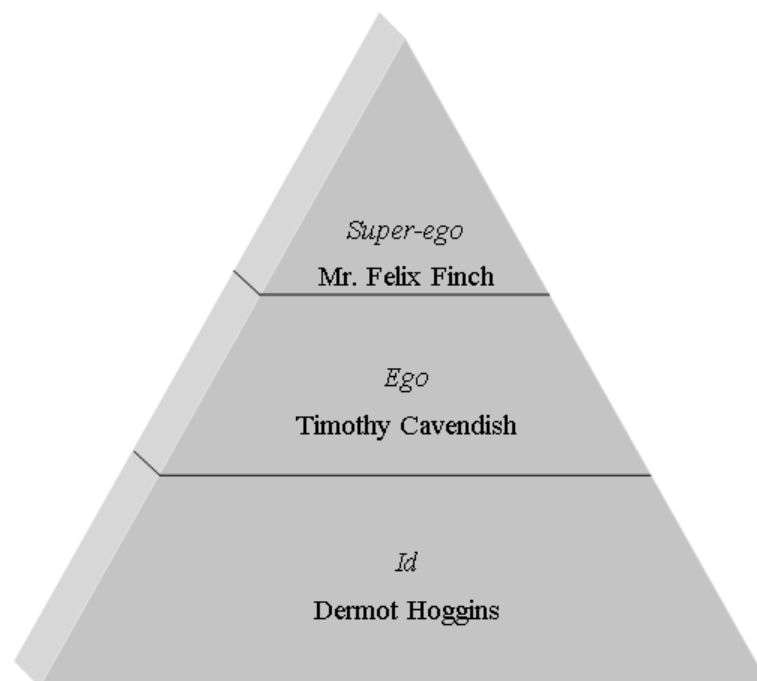
The protagonist of the fourth narrative, Timothy Cavendish, is one peculiar character. Despite being in his sixties, Timothy displayed a tendency to behave abnormally compared to both norms of society and to people in his age. It seems rather odd to link a senile character to this early stage of development. However, the age difference between the character and this adolescence period is merely a number when it is compared to his personality.

Cavendish began his narrative by the infamous incident that led him to write his first own script *The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish*. He stumbled into a great success with his client's book, '*Knuckle Sandwich*', when the author pushed the unflattering critic, Felix Finch, over a twelfth story balcony. Similar to Sonmi-451's narrative, the number twelve could also be symbolising the age of puberty. The critic, Felix Finch, is the embodiment of the super-ego apparatus, whereas the author, the ex-criminal Dermot Hoggins, counterparts the id in this narrative. The super-ego mostly works in contradiction to the id as it strives to act in a manner that is socially appropriate. As a consequence, the ego which is represented by Timothy Cavendish is trapped between the conflicting morals and social standards of the super-ego against the libidinal demands of the id. According to Anna Freud:

The ego's only function is survival. It must defend itself from dangers to that survival, whether those dangers are from within or without. The conflict between the Id and super-ego represents a danger to survival. If a person spent all of his or her time in conflict about action, there would be no energy left to deal with the demands placed on the person from outside the self (e.g. from society). Accordingly, the ego develops defensive mechanisms, that is, ways to avoid dealing with at least one set of conflicting demands from within. Such avoidance would rid the person of the internal conflict, and "free up" energy for dealing with external adaptive demands. (Richard M. Lerner,

2002, p.406)

Anna argued that any typical person should be able to establish a balance among the three psychic apparatuses (Id, ego, and super-ego) as early as the end of the phallic stage. However, such balance would be ‘destroyed’ as soon as this person reaches the adolescence period (Ibid, p.407). Normally, for the sake of achieving the former balance, the ego creates defensive mechanisms to defend itself against the id’s drives, and not those of the super-ego, simply because the latter’s pressure represents the widely accepted demands and rules of the society (Ibid, p.406). In this narrative, Dermot (id) murdered Finch (Super-ego) which contradicts with the typical resolution of such conflict. Therefore, it denotes that the ego failed to establish balance. Similar to this case, Anna Freud stated that “if one got rid of these demands—internalized as one’s conscience—this would mean getting rid of one’s morality. We term people who apparently have no internalized morality, who do not obey rules of society, sociopaths.” (Ibid, p.406). Thus, the division of the personality according to the characters of this narrative is as follows:



Timothy's character matches, to a great extent, the psychological profile of a *sociopath*⁷⁶. As a vanity publisher, he always capitalizes off the success of his clients. He only hires employees "part-time, of course, I wasn't getting clobbered for National Insurance" (Mitchell, 2004, p.88), and tries to control and manipulate the people surrounding him through lying with no remorse. His reaction to Finch's death greatly reinforces this interpretation:

The crowd's senses flooded back. Gaggling noises, oh-my-Gods, and a stampede for the stairs. The most frightful hullabaloo! My thoughts? Honestly? Horror. Assuredly. Shock? You bet. Disbelief? Naturally Fear? Not really. I will not deny a nascent sense of a silver lining to this tragic turn. My Haymarket office suite housed ninety-five unsold shrink-wraps of Dermot Hoggins's Knuckle Sandwich, impassioned memoir of Britain's soon to be most famous murderer. Frank Sprat—my stalwart printer in Sevenoaks, to whom I owed so much money I had the poor man over a barrel—still had the plates and was ready to roll at a moment's notice. Hardcover, ladies and gentlemen. Fourteen pounds ninety-nine pence a shot. A taste of honey! (Ibid).

Timothy's personality is of a sociopathic nature. According to World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases & Related Health Problems⁷⁷, personality traits like bigotry, compulsiveness, callousness, and the lacking of empathy (see 88, 90, 99, 104, etc.) are all symptoms of the pathological antisocial Personality Disorder. However, the fact that both

⁷⁶ It is an antisocial Personality Disorder: "A condition characterized by repetitive behavioral patterns that are contrary to usual moral and ethical standards and cause a person to experience continuous conflict with society. Symptoms include aggressiveness, callousness, impulsiveness, irresponsibility, hostility, a low frustration level, a marked emotional maturity, and poor judgment. A person who has this disorder overlooks the rights of others, is incapable of loyalty to others or to social values, is unable to experience guilt or to learn from past behaviors, is imperious to punishment, and tends to rationalize his or her behavior or to blame it on others. Also called antisocial reaction." (MacKenzie, 2014, p.7)

⁷⁷ sociopathic personality shows a gross disparity between behaviour and the prevailing social norms and is characterized by at least three of the following:

1. Callous unconcern for the feelings of others.
2. Gross and persistent attitude of irresponsibility and disregard for social norms, rules, and obligations.
3. Incapacity to maintain enduring relationships, though no difficulty in establishing them.
4. Very low tolerance to frustration and a low threshold for discharge of aggression, including violence.
5. Incapacity to experience guilt and to profit from experience, particularly punishment.
6. Marked proneness to blame others, or to offer plausible rationalizations, for the behaviour that has brought the patient into conflict with society. (MacKenzie, 2014, p.9)

Cavendish and Dermot went into confinement (Aurora House and prison) could be associated with both the feeling of entrapment and restriction that is imposed by society and the feeling of guilt imposed by the super-ego. Such conflict, for Nietzsche, is a necessary evil for the process of overcoming: "I say unto you: one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star." (Nietzsche, 1977, p.143).

Consequently, this pressure led to a new resolve to this inner conflict. Unlike Dermot (id), Cavendish (ego) managed to escape from Aurora house. He was able to resolve all his conflicts with Dermot's brothers, the Hoggins, so he could start all over again. Cavendish's triumph in the end symbolises the triumph of the ego over the other two apparatuses. Accordingly, this phase represents the ego's reaching a new balance between the two other apparatuses which means that the ego is able to deal with pressures from within (the id and super-ego) and without (reality).

The association of the two narratives of Sonmi-541 and Cavendish to this period highlights the still persisting issue of the sexual identity of Meronym. The fact that Cavendish turned to the act of creative writing shows how the ego reached this new balance through implementing defensive mechanisms like sublimation⁷⁸ to channel the Id's repressed impulses. Such use of a mature type of defensive mechanism indicates the psychological growth of Cavendish who became an individual with, to some extent, a healthy personality.

⁷⁸ In psychology, sublimation is a mature type of defense mechanism where socially unacceptable impulses or idealizations are unconsciously transformed into socially acceptable actions or behavior, possibly resulting in a long-term conversion of the initial impulse. Sigmund Freud believed that sublimation was a sign of maturity (indeed, of civilization), allowing people to function normally in culturally acceptable ways. He defined sublimation as the process of deflecting sexual instincts into acts of higher social valuation, being "an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher psychical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilised life".[1] Wade and Tavis present a similar view, stating that sublimation is when displacement "serves a higher cultural or socially useful purpose, as in the creation of art or inventions". (retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimation_\(psychology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sublimation_(psychology)))

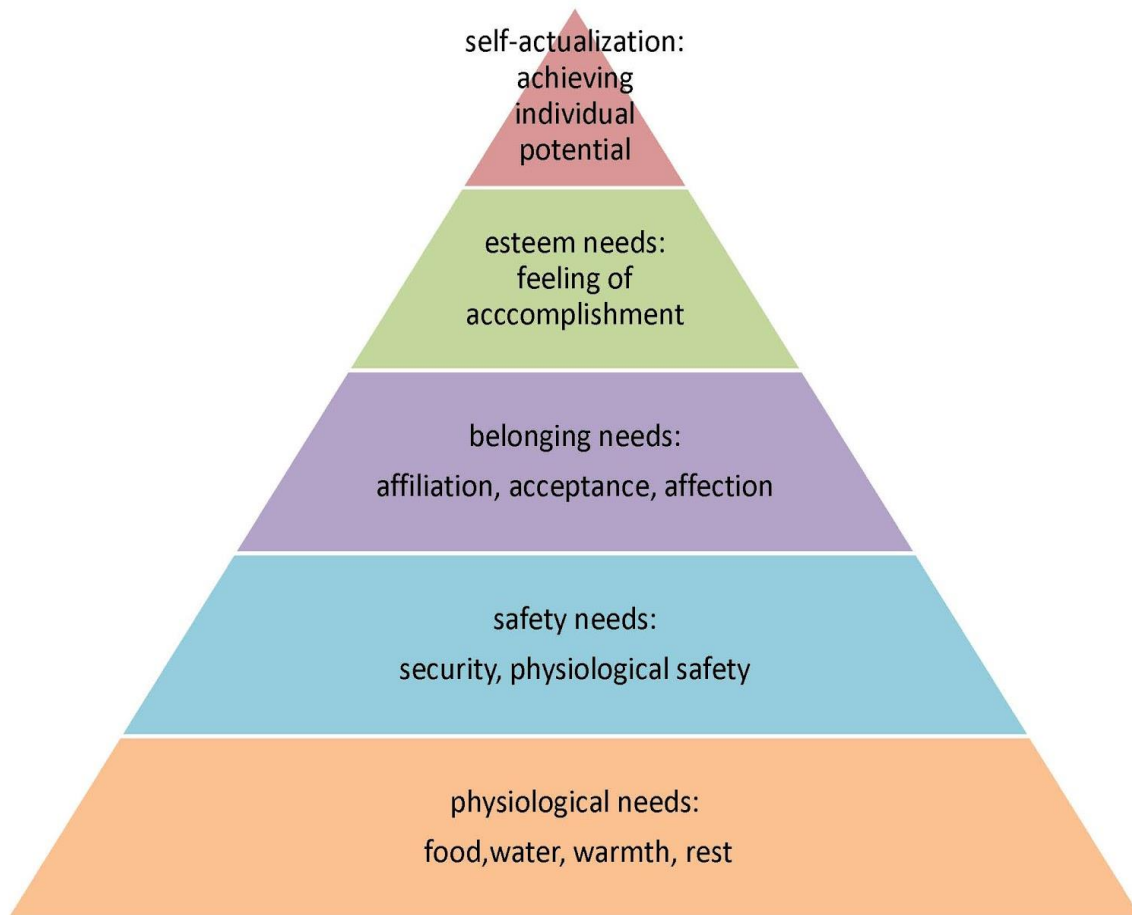
V.5. Meronym: as a self-actualizer

Researches concerning the healthy personality was ignored for a long time in psychology. Most of the experts in this field focused on the examination of mental illnesses and character disorder (Continuing Psychology Education, 2006, p.2). Recently, humanistic psychologists have begun to ask about the positive side of the human personality and to grope for the ways how such actualized-self functions.

Maslow, one of the founders of humanistic psychology, believes “[...] that human beings are capable of something grander than war and prejudice and hatred.” (Ibid, p.1). Unlike the Freudian psychoanalysts, Maslow studies what he seems to define as ‘exemplary people’ such as Albert Einstein, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Frederick Douglass rather than mentally ill or neurotic people. He stated that “the study of crippled, stunted, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy. The study of self-actualizing people must be the basis for a more universal science of psychology.” (Maslow 1954, p.231).

The Self-actualized individuals are “[...] those who have realized their full potentials and become fully human. Their personality is healthy, balanced, and integrated.” (Jay C. Thomas, Daniel L. Segal 2006, p.213). They are those individuals who transcended the D-needs⁷⁹ of Maslow's hierarchy of needs:

⁷⁹ The D stood for "deficiency." The D-needs were based on "D-values" (deficiency values). As a human being, you have a deficiency of something (food, water, security) and this generates a need. An individual works to eliminate the deficiency (reduce the drive) then he will be satisfied.



(Saul McLeod, 2007)

Meronym, the culmination of the previous protagonists, is a self-actualized individual. She has transcended the motivation to acquire lower-need gratifications represented in the four lower levels of the pyramid (physiological needs, safety and security needs, the need for love and belonging, esteem needs). Self-actualizers, such is meronym, are concerned with higher needs of knowing and understanding the world around them, enriching the experience of living and being all they can be.

Even though she was a way advanced compared to the valleymen, her eager desire for knowledge made of her a persevering person: “[...] what could one possibly teach her what she didn’t know? The learnin mind is the livin’ mind, Meronym said, an any sort o Smart is truesome Smart,

old Smart or new, high Smart or low.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.142).

Albeit her old age (fifties), Meronym kept visiting tribes from all over the globe in her quest for more knowledge or the ‘true true’. For her, “[...] true true is presher’n’rarer’n diamonds.” (Ibid, p.154). Maslow defined such drive as metamotivation. The self-actualizer individual is no longer concerned with deficit needs or reduce tension. In fact, the ideal is to increase tension through new and challenging experiences. (Continuing Psychology Education, 2006, p.8). According to Thomas and Segal, self-actualizers:

[...] are at peace with themselves and with others. They are loving, creative, realistic, ethical, compassionate, interested in helping others, and interested in fighting against injustice. They demonstrate the best of humanity as described by the B-values. They are not only fully functioning but also transcendental and spiritual. But only a few can become fully self-actualized. (2006, p.213)

Through the whole narrative, Meronym was peaceful and composed despite Zachry’s mistrust and accusations (See Mitchell, 2004, p.147). Apparently, she lost her son and husband to sickness years back (See Ibid, p.166). Yet, despite all these difficulties, she proved to be resilient, tough and level-headed individual. In fact, she proved she could even save Zachry’s life by taking him with her at the end.

Conclusion

Mitchell's explicit reference to the *Übermensch* (Overman) and *Untermensch* (Last man), underlines his concern with the travesty of those in power, the possession of power, and the way it is perceived in the western society. The formation of western states is and still a corrupted process. The state state is "[...] where the slow suicide of all is called 'life.'" (Nietzsche, 1978, p.50). Those individuals have no distinct will to power, no wish, and no desire: "no shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse." (Nietzsche, 1977, p.130). They were suppressed by the state for the betterment of their collective existence. Nietzsche says: "it is the purpose of all culture simply to breed a tame and civilized animal, a domestic pet." (2006, p.xvi).

It is perceived that all individuals seek mostly to manifest their will to power over others. However, the western states, thwarted such will which resulted in the emergence of the 'Last man' who merely seeks to earn a living, to be comfortable and content. For such reason, humanity has to find its way again to ascend above the normality of 'Man'. Nietzsche's *Übermensch* can be seen as a symbol of revolt; a counter movement against the mundanity of western culture.

Decisively, one can conclude that Nietzsche called for an inner revolution and nothing besides. Through the three metamorphoses, one can become an *Übermensch* who voluntarily chooses his or her goal and strives for it with great passion regardless of his background, class, status, gender or other factors which one conventionally considers determinant factors of a person's growth and improvement. By achieving his desired aim, one can prove himself as more than a human being and thus synchronize himself with the pure essence of life and universe.

Conclusion

Like the many headed Hydra in its prime, the conception of power has many definitions. *Cloud Atlas* successfully portrays how power flows and shifts in the modern western society. Each of the six narratives that comprise *Cloud Atlas* operates as an exploration and harsh critique of how human societies, regardless of time, race or location, attempt to control and condition their citizens to become the ‘foot- soldiers’ that uphold, sustain and protect the regime of those in power. Mitchell clearly alludes to Nietzsche’s will to power as the core element of such constant change in forms of power. Basically, the will to power, for him, is a bleak picture of a world in which the ‘power hungry’ individuals suppress, oppress and brutally destroy any individuals who attempt to stand in their way. It is a world ridden with corruption, murder, slavery, and destruction; *Cloud Atlas*, simply put, is our contemporary world under the spotlight.

Both Nietzsche and Foucault saw the modern western state as a hoax that would greatly able those in power to gain even more dominance in more subtle means. From controlling the language and the dissemination of knowledge through the disciplinary acts of punishment and enslavement to the hyper-capitalism that is fuelled by technological advancement, Mitchell cleverly succeeded to weave a collection of events and situations to examine just what power means, and how it shapes and destroys the human nature.

Cloud Atlas represents a civilization cycle in which we saw humanity evolve forth and devolve back to its primitive tribal condition. Reesor believes that today “we have so far been fairly successful at extending the scope and strength of our dominion, but it is neither beyond

dispute that we are the most powerful organism on the planet nor certain that our dominion will continue indefinitely.” (2008, p.69). Nietzsche also believed that “[...] mankind does not represent a development toward something better or stronger or higher, in the sense accepted today. ‘Progress’ is merely a modern idea, that is, a false idea.” (2014, p.4). Consumerism, indeed proved Nietzsche’s claim. The all-consuming drive of will to power manifests itself today in such phenomenon which is nothing less a subtle and indirect process to breed and control the ‘ideal citizen’ who is docile and productive.

Even though David Mitchell relied heavily on Nietzsche, he refuses to completely accept his nihilistic orientation towards life and existence which is depicted in the post-apocalyptic dystopia of Zachry’s world; a world that, even as it ‘begins again’, repeats the history of ‘predacity’ that led to the destruction of the old civilization. The survival of the Prescients and what they represent in Zachry’s narrative gives a glimpse of hope for humanity.

Nietzsche believed that power is an allusive concept. For him, “all things are subject to interpretation whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth.” (Chang, 2006, p.498). This specific idea was exemplified in Mitchell’s protagonists, mainly Meronym. The interpretation of civilization and power for Meronym became the ability to control the destructive impulses coming from within, after all, “the will to power is always at war with the individual and the battle between reason and impulse is only a small part of this war.” (Johnston-Ellis, 2010, p.85).

All protagonists went through an epiphany and succeeded to find a new interpretation to their own lives and existence. Frobisher broke all social boundaries as for him “Lifetime’s music, arriving all at once.” (Mitchell, 2004, p.256), and what separates noise from sound is but those

boundaries that would be transcended: “if only one can first conceive of doing so.” (Ibid). Sonmi-451’s revelations in the movie adaptation of *Cloud Atlas* (2012) offers an alternative karmic philosophy of existence in which she preached that “we are bound to others, past and present, and by each crime and every kindness we birth our future.” (*Cloud Atlas* the movie, 2012). Perhaps the main revelation of all is of the wiser, more mature Ewing:

If we believe that humanity may transcend tooth & claw, if we believe divers races and creeds can share this world [...] peaceably [...] 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 [...] A life spent shaping a world I want Jackson [his son] to inherit [...] strikes me as a life worth living. (Mitchell, 2004, p.281)

So belief in an alternative future, and the goodness of humanity is the key to overcome the destructive urges of the will to power. Though to do ‘battle with the many headed hydra of human nature’ (Ibid) is no deed for a normal foe of the Untermensch, yet the Ubermensch can. *Cloud Atlas* illustrates through its narratives how can humanity save itself from itself by simply overcoming our will to power.

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