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**Dialogism as a means to Challenge Power and Achieve
Emancipation in David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas (2004)**

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Degree in Civilization and Literature.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my parents, my family, and all my friends.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deep and sincere gratitude to my supervisor **Prof. AFKIR Mohamed** for his guidance and constant support. His immense, knowledge, patience, and love of teaching inspired me and motivated me while compiling this thesis. I cannot imagine having a better supervisor than him.

ABSTRACT

The 21st century orbits around the notions of freedom, emancipation, and power. The question of self-realization became the concern of several individuals across the world. Power was no longer seen as the undefeatable beast that explicitly oppresses people in the name of the sovereign, but as a traceless phantom that runs through the entire social body. This dissertation brings forward the idea of combating this phantom and reaching emancipation using dialogism and interaction in *David Mitchell* novel *entitled Cloud Atlas*. In order to conduct this research, this dissertation makes use of the theoretical ideas of Michael Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, and Mikhail Bakhtin, and attempts to establish a common ground between them. Through a combination of analytical and descriptive methods, this study first explores the structure of power in the novel, and deciphers its types. Then, it approaches the novel from a dialogic perspective, and describes its impact on, not only the characters, but on power and emancipation as well. This inquiry culminates in determining that dialogism undermines power and leads to emancipation by promoting the construction of subjectivity, and the development of consciousness.

ملخص

يتمحور القرن الحادي والعشرين حول مفاهيم الحرية والتحرر والتغلب على القوة. كما أصبحت مسألة تحقيق الذات مصدر قلق للعديد من الأفراد في جميع أنحاء العالم. تطرح هذه الرسالة فكرة مكافحة القوة والوصول إلى التحرر باستخدام الحوار والتفاعل في رواية ديفيد ميتشل المعنونة *Cloud Atlas*. تستخدم هذه الرسالة الأفكار النظرية ميشال فوكو ويورغن هابرماس وميخائيل باختين، وتحاول إيجاد عامل مشترك بينهم. من خلال مجموعة من الأساليب التحليلية والوصفية، تستكشف هذه الدراسة أولاً بنية القوة في الرواية، وتحدد أنواعها المختلفة. ثم، تدرس الرواية من منظور حوارى، وتصف تأثيره، ليس فقط على الشخصيات الرئيسية في الرواية، ولكن على القوة والتحرر أيضًا. يتوج هذا التحقيق باستنتاج أن الحوار يساعد في القضاء على القوة ويؤدي إلى التحرر من خلال تعزيز بناء الذاتية وتنمية الوعي.

Résumé

Le 21ème siècle s'articule autour des notions de liberté, d'émancipation et le pouvoir. Plusieurs individus à travers le monde sont devenus préoccupés par le problème de la réalisation de soi. Le pouvoir n'était plus perçu comme une bête invincible qui opprime explicitement les gens au nom du souverain, mais comme un fantôme invisible qui traverse tout le corps social. Cette thèse avance l'idée de combattre ce fantôme et d'atteindre l'émancipation par le dialogue et l'interaction dans le roman de *David Mitchell* intitulé *Cloud Atlas*. Pour mener cette recherche, cette thèse s'appuie sur les idées théoriques de Michael Foucault, Jürgen Habermas et Michael Bakhtin et tente d'établir un terrain d'entente entre eux. À travers une combinaison de méthodes analytiques et descriptives, cette étude explore d'abord la constitution du pouvoir dans le roman et décrypte ses types. Ensuite, elle aborde le roman dans une perspective dialogique et décrit son impact non seulement sur les personnages, mais également sur le pouvoir et l'émancipation. Cette enquête aboutit à la conclusion que le dialogisme élimine le pouvoir et conduit à l'émancipation en favorisant la construction de la subjectivité et le développement de la conscience.

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General

Introduction

The pursuit of freedom, the resistance in face of physical and mental abuse constituted a major concern for, not only philosophers and intellectuals, but ordinary people as well. A number of individuals scattered across different times and locations were engaged in a quest to liberate or emancipate themselves from power and control.

In recent years, power has become an intriguing concept, and it gained tremendous attention in the field of social sciences. It is considered as a crucial element to study and understand social structures and relations. Power is a complex and puzzling concept as it has several definitions. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, power is “[T]he capacity or ability to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events”. In other words, it enables people or institutions to exhibit control over the others, or change the course of any given event. This means that it causes submission and subordination, it leads to alienation, and it curbs freedom or free will. Besides, Power constitutes a hindering factor for marginalized subjects, subservient classes and minority groups, who are attempting to achieve emancipation and freedom. As a result, individuals became obsessed with not only acquiring it, but also challenging it and subverting its influence.

Emancipation is an endeavour to obtain economic, social or political justice and equality. For instance, the abolition of slavery, the woman suffrage and the LGBTQ+¹ liberation movement are all good examples of emancipation. Human emancipation, on the other hand, is an act of liberation and resistance

¹ LGBTQ+ is an abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and other sexual categories.

against social exclusion, oppression and abuse. The individuals who seek emancipation usually belong to inferior economic classes; they have distinct religious and cultural background; or they have different ethnic or racial origins. The lack of representation in the political arena and media created a challenge for them, and they were faced with a major dilemma, which was finding alternative techniques and strategies to get their voices heard to the world.

Emancipation means dismantling the monologic, universal and authoritative discourse, and replacing it with multiple discourses that account for different perspectives and voices. The presence of multiple points of view and the absence of authoritative voice is called "dialogism". It encourages individuals to collaborate with each other to achieve mutual empowerment, which is a key element in any quest for freedom and emancipation. Dialogism is a feature shared among many postmodernist and contemporary writings, such *Cloud Atlas* by *David Mitchell*.

Cloud Atlas is a contemporary novel published in 2004. It is famous for its complex narrative structure, as well as its thematic boldness. It merges different narrative techniques, such as polyphony and dialogism, in order to explore human nature, and accompany the protagonists in their quest of self-discovery and emancipation. The novel is composed of six different stories scattered across different chronological periods and geographical locations, woven together using different symbols and motifs. Despite their difference, all of these characters have one thing in common: they are all engaged in a quest to overcome social alienation and exploitation.

Cloud Atlas critiques power, and its characters attempt to undermine it using different techniques. It has a clear political message to transmit through its discourse, which suggests that *David Mitchell* did not employ dialogism haphazardly. In this vein, the main problem that this dissertation tries to solve is the way dialogism can be the key to reach emancipation, and undermine the various forms of power and control in *Cloud Atlas*. The novel is known for its treatment of the notion of power, control, and resistance. Therefore, what are the different types of power found in the novel? Towards the end of the novel, the protagonists become more conscious about their status as marginal subjects, and they start to exhibit a change in attitude. What led to this change in behavior, and to what extent is human consciousness responsible for this positive metamorphoses?

Therefore, the objective of this dissertation is to identify the nature of the relationship between the use of dialogism, power and achieving emancipation in *Cloud Atlas*. In particular, this study attempts to develop comprehensive idea about the notion of power in the novel, its influences on the behavior of the protagonists, the possibility of using dialogism in order to challenge power structures, as well as how this challenge may lead to a total emancipation of the marginalized characters in the novel. Lastly, this study evaluates the role of dialogism in developing human consciousness, as a crucial aspect in any emancipatory process in *Cloud Atlas*.

Several researches are conducted on *Cloud Atlas*. For instance, *David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas: "Revolutionary or Gimmicky?"* by Sarah Jane Johnston-Ellis explores the novel in relation to power from a Nietzschean perspective. She

explains that, throughout the novel, the characters are driven by The Will to Power. The latter presents a real threat to humanity as it enables certain individuals to oppress others in order to obtain it. However, she insists that *David Mitchell* presented characters who were able to overcome their obstacles and social barriers in order to show that there is hope for humanity to be rescued from this fatal drive.

Similarly, *Power, Culture and Resistance: Is 'Cloud Atlas' an Anti-Capitalist Novel?* By Ailsa Martin gives us a comprehensive idea about power, by describing how it works, how it affects human beings, and how it is resisted by individuals. Furthermore, *Cloud Atlas* stresses the importance of society, as Martin draws attention to the fact all the acts of resistance and revolutions cannot be individual. They need several people with different thoughts, beliefs and ideological differences coming together, empowering each other, and interacting with each other. This act of interaction and dialogue allows them to overcome abusive power and subjugation. The collaboration between the characters and the interconnectedness is manifested in its intricate yet mesmerizing narrative structure, which constituted the center of the research conducted by *Ivan Radoš*.

In 2015, *Radoš* compiled a dissertation entitled *postmodern narrative strategies in David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas*, in which he delves into the depth and complexity of the narrative structure of the novel. The use of Postmodernist narrative techniques, such as Polyphony and Dialogism, depicts the complexity of the world we live in. *Radoš* thinks that what makes *Cloud Atlas* a dialogic novel, par excellence, is the different levels of dialogue, such as between the characters, between the narratives, and the between languages of the novel as well. He adds

that language has two functions in the novel: an agonistic one represented in the conflict between the characters, and a communicative one that allows the characters to empower each other.

Although such previous studies succeeded to clarify the notions of power and resistance, as well as describing the complex narrative techniques used in the novel, yet they neglected establishing a relationship between them. In these studies, the concept of emancipation was left out, and not highlighted as much, which means that there was no association between dialogism, power, and emancipation in *Cloud Atlas*. Therefore, the main argument of this dissertation is that dialogism leads to the development of rationality and human consciousness, which in turn enables the marginalized characters to take a resting position against power figures. Once power is curbed, the alienated character and marginalized individuals can easily achieve emancipation.

This paper is approached from a postmodernist perspective, in order to emphasize the plurality and interconnectedness of the world. Through a descriptive and an analytical approach, this dissertation attempts to determine the role of dialogism in challenging power, and achieving emancipation in *Cloud Atlas*. Its First chapter outlines some theoretical debates and theories related to this study. First, it describes power from a Foucauldian perspective, and presents a number of notions related to it such as knowledge, discourse, and resistance, in order to facilitate the task of analyzing the different types of power in the novel. Then, it includes the theory of emancipation advocated by Jürgen Habermas, and puts forward the conditions of its realization. This chapter also describes Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, and the concept of subjectivity, for the sake of testing the validity of the main argument.

The second chapter provides a brief overview of the novel. It discusses the notion of power in *Cloud Atlas*, and identifies its major types. It describes the techniques used by groups and individuals to insure control and domination. It also illustrates its impact on the protagonists, and its devastating impact on the world. In addition, the third and final chapter attempts to analyze the main argument presented in this dissertation. Therefore, this part explores *Cloud Atlas* as a dialogic novel, and analyzes its different levels. It describes how dialogism assisted the characters in their journey of resistance. Through the description of Sonmi's experience, this chapter also determines the role of dialogism in reaching emancipation, and shows the impact of consciousness and subjectivity on the protagonist. Finally, this chapter concludes with illustrating the lasting impact of dialogism even after the emancipation of the concerned subject.

I. Chapter One

A Theoretical Background

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The 20th century witnessed a great interest in the question of freedom and self-realization, thanks to rise of different liberation movements, and the spirit of emancipation. During that time, the world saw the independence of several countries from colonial control, as well as the birth of the human rights declaration. As a result, several disciplines and fields of study started to show interest in the notions of liberty and emancipation.

This period witnessed the rise of poststructuralism and the postmodernist theory. Several philosophers and thinkers, such as Jacques Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard, started crusading against the metanarratives of the past. The latter claimed to hold “absolute truth”, when in fact they only lead to segregation, as they were used as rationales for oppression and colonization. This, coupled with the flourishing of the postcolonial theory and the growth of globalization, resulted in the rejection of Eurocentric discourse and ideologies, as they legitimized the practice of subjugation and obedience. As a result, literary criticism developed from the traditional modals to include new paradigms, such as Mikael Bakhtin, who was committed to promoting his dialogic theory of language in order to dismantle the hegemonic practices brought by monologic texts.

In addition, one of the most remarkable emblems of this era is the French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault due to his work on power. He exposed the different means to achieve control and subjugation, showed how power works without being detected. Eventually, many individuals became extremely enthusiastic about emancipation and freedom from subjugation, and attempted to subvert the influence of power using different instruments and techniques.

This chapter serves as the theoretical background of the dissertation. It attempts to provide enough information about the variables of the research. It explores the notions of power, emancipation, and dialogism, and it seeks to establish a relationship between them. Such contextualization is required in order to facilitate the task of analysis in the upcoming chapters.

I.1. the Foucauldian Conception of Power:

In *The History of Sexuality Volume one*, Foucault defines power as “The multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organisation” (92). He argues that power is a process, a system of relations that is in a state of constant modification and mutual influence. It is universal, and it operates at all levels of society even at the microscopic level of social relations; i.e. power is found everywhere. It is at the heart of every social interaction, which means that nobody can escape its influence.

Foucault comments on traditional modals of power, arguing that during the mediaeval era, it was exercised publically by the sovereign, who gained control over the subjects via measures of repression and violence. For instance, the punishment resulting from crimes or the violation of regulations was performed in public squares, in order to intimidate the others. Foucault labels it as “judicial power”, and states, “Whether one attributes to it the form of the prince who formulates rights, of the father who forbids, of the censor who enforces silence, or of the master who states the law, in any case one schematizes power in a juridical form, and one defines its effects as obedience” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume one* 85). This type, inherited from monarchies and older models of power conception related to states, such as Hobbes’ social contract, is arbitrary

and coercive. The main idea behind it is that power is centralised as it flows from a sovereign authority that insures control as well as obedience. However, Foucault rejects this idea because it fails to capture how power operates within contemporary societies, due to the difference of circumstances and settings.

An alternative representation of power, and he explains how its exercise is different in contemporary societies. In his 1967 lecture, Foucault states:

Let us not ask why certain people want to dominate, what they seek, what is their overall strategy. Let us ask, instead, how things work at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours etc. In other words, rather than ask ourselves how the sovereign appears to us in his lofty isolation, we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc. (qtd. In Carrier and Gewertz 79)

Foucault shifts from the traditional sovereign-based conception to a more “disciplinary” type. As the name suggests disciplinary power conditions individuals, and normalises them to be controlled. It is characterized by its soft and intricate character; its footprint is far less visible because it is diffused and not localized in one single authority figure, unlike its traditional counterpart. This means that individuals are indirectly subjected to a power that modifies their actions and attitudes by means of implicit instruments and techniques, as it makes use of modern institutions such as schools, prisons, asylums and others.

Subsequently, Foucault attempts to expose the new mechanism utilized by this type of power, while investigating how it manages to subjugate and manipulate individuals without any visible traces. (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* Volume one 142)

Foucault argues that power goes beyond mere repression and domination; instead, it makes use of some intricate techniques in order to achieve conformity and obedience. He insists that “[I]t needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* Volume one 61). In fact, power is more than a mere repressive tool. It flows undetectably through society, and realizes its goal by creating an intricate system of production. What makes it undetectable is the fact that it “doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* Volume one 61). Here, Foucault suggests that power produces the knowledge that determines the practices that are accepted, decides what is considered “true” or false, sets norms and categorizes people. The latter allows the former to condition individuals to act in accordance to its wishes, with a minimum risk of rebellion. Foucault argues that power and knowledge have a reciprocal relationship, and they heavily depend on each other. as a result he states,

Power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another: that there is no

power relation without the correlation constituting of field of knowledge nor knowledge that does not presuppose and constituted as the same time power. (Foucault, *The Archeology of knowledge* 27)

Thus, the real danger of power is not domination or oppression, but it is the fact that it creates truth and reality through a set of discursive practices and language.

An equally important element in the Foucauldian conception of power is discourse. Unlike the traditional view, which regards discourse simply as the concrete use of language in texts or conversations, Foucault sees that discourse is a set of practices that construct reality and establish norms. In his book *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault states, “Discourse...is not a consciousness that embodies its project in the external form of language; it is not a language plus a subject to speak it. It is a practice that has its own forms of sequence and succession” (169). Discourse, from a Foucauldian perspective, can be seen as “ways of constituting knowledge” (Weedon 108). It represents the present voice of authority, the myths and metanarratives of the past, and it regulates people for submission and obedience in the future. It intrudes into peoples’ lives, shapes their life styles and beliefs, and creates new realities for them. Discursive practices produce knowledge that subjectively serves the party of interest. It is worth noting that Foucault puts a great emphasis on the idea of “constructing” objects and reality rather than objectively “representing” them. He argues that “discourses are not about objects, they don’t identify objects, they constitute them and in doing so, they conceal their own invention” (Foucault, *The Archeology of knowledge* 49). Foucault’s understanding of discourse is that it functions as an instrument of power because it allows it impose control and legitimize hegemonic practises in

all discreetness; i.e. discourses determine what is regarded as right and moral in order to serve the interest of power by normalizing people them. Any violation of their prescriptions is regarded as none-ethical, wrong, and the person who commits it should be punished, either by society or by institutions of power.

As previously mentioned, Foucault insists that power is not localized on a central, but rather “as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain” (Foucault, *POWER/KNOWLEDGE* 98), and that its influence arises from multiple locations. He then adds, “Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application” (Foucault, *POWER/KNOWLEDGE* 98), which means that within power relations individuals can easily shift their position from recipients to active participators in its creation and resistance. Foucault stresses this point even further by stating, “where there is power there is resistance” (The History of Sexuality Volume one 95). Here, Foucault insists that resistance is a vital component within any power relation. In this case, if power makes use of knowledge and discourse to subjugate individuals, then discourse itself can also be used as means to challenge and undermine it. Accordingly, Foucault states:

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile

and makes it possible to thwart it. (The History of Sexuality
Volume one 101)

Hence, it becomes evident that Foucault is suggesting that discourse can be regarded as a weapon to oppose power, as it reinstalls the norms that it created; it reintegrates the people that it categorized; and it gives a chance to alternative truths and realities to emerge, recognizing their emancipatory potential.

I.2. Jürgen Habermas and Emancipation:

Emancipation is a relatively ambiguous term and harder to define. It originates from the Latin word “emancipatus”, which means setting something free, or releasing someone from control. Similarly, in modern social studies, Emancipation is a “process through which individuals and groups become freed from repressive social and ideological conditions, in particular those that place socially unnecessary restrictions upon the development and articulation of human consciousness” (Alvesson and Willmott 432). In other word, it is to challenge the different forces that prevent human beings from achieving their full potential. Previously, the question of emancipation concerned a specific category of society such as women, slaves or colonial subjects who were striving to free themselves from domination and oppression. However, this issue has gained more interest among individuals due to the new disguised means of indirect subjugation. Emancipation became at the heart of several acts of rebellions and social struggles.

Emancipation became a central them in the writing of several philosophers and sociologists, notably Jürgen Habermas. The latter worked on formulating a new social theory whose aim is the emancipation of human beings, drawing on the

Marxist theory and making it more appropriate for the modern society. He attempts to build his critical theory upon an epistemological foundation, and reassert the authority of knowledge as the supreme vehicle behind human interest. He maintains that human beings are driven by three basic cognitive interests while constructing knowledge. First, an instrumental or technical interest that manifests itself in empirical and analytical sciences. It is driven by rules of deduction and the principle of the scientific method. This is used by human beings in order to survive and reproduce life through labour. The second interest is a practical/communicative interest, which underlines historical-hermeneutic sciences like humanities and social sciences. This fundamental interest serves human beings in interacting with one another, understanding each other and developing themselves. Lastly, Habermas claims that the most important interest is a critical interest in emancipation. In other words, liberating themselves from distortion, in order to achieve self-realization. (Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* 308-310)

Furthermore, Habermas's critical theory takes the emancipation of human beings "from the constraints of unnecessary domination in all its forms" (Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* xviii) as its primary concern. It centres on self-reflection and communicative rationality. As one of the last defenders of rationalism, he attempts to revive a sense of reason, which was rejected by his Frankfurt School predecessors *Adorno and Horkheimer*, to untangle the Enlightenment project from the barbaric practices brought by modernity. He argued that what causes human suffering and exploitation is irrationality and the lack of reason. This decline can be reversed only if human beings resort to rationality. However, rationality should not be seen from a traditional Cartesian

perspective, but rather as communication. In this sense, he shifts from the traditional Marxist paradigm, which considers emancipation as the achievement of economic equality and the control of the means of production, into a critical modal that demonstrates “how human beings use language to create orderly societies and how they have developed the principle that good societies should express the will of their members” (*qtd. In. Nakamura 31*). In other words, Emancipation is the end of distorted communication.

In *Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas categorizes human actions into two categories: strategic/instrumental actions, consisting in labour, and communicative actions “that rest on or aim at normative consensus” (xxix). He states that human beings produce knowledge in the form of linguistic messages and utterances with a desire for consensus and mutual understanding, and that communication is always accompanied with rationality. He notes:

If we assume that the human species maintains itself through the socially coordinated activities of its members and that this coordination has to be established through communication – and in certain central spheres through communication aimed at reaching agreement – then the reproduction of the species also requires satisfying the condition of a rationality that is inherent in communicative action. (Habermas *The Theory of communicative Action Vol.1:397*)

Hence, the development of human beings depends on linguistic interaction, and rationality is a required condition in order to realize consent and unity in society.

His vision is to celebrate communicative freedom, and promote rationality by creating what he calls “ideal speech situations”, which are “immunized against repression and inequality in a special way” (Habermas, *The Theory of communicative Action* Vol.1:326).

Further, an ideal speech situation is “a situation in which everyone would have an equal chance to argue and question, without those who are more powerful, confident, or prestigious having and unequal say. True positions would prevail under these circumstances because they are more rational” (Wallace and Wolf, 178). In an ideal speech situation, the participants are alike despite difference in attitudes, positions, or socioeconomic status. Habermas lays out a series of conditions that characterize this situation, also known as “undistorted communication”. In his book entitled *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, he states:

- 1.** Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
- 2a.** Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatever.
- 2b.** Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.
- 2c.** Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires and needs.
- 3.** No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in (1) and (2). (*Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* 86)

These conditions allow every individual, who is linguistically competent, to participate in communicative actions, giving him the right to question the validity of any claim, as well as defend his own opinion. In addition, it gives him the privilege to express his values and principles without being obliged to modify them by other participants or any outside influence. In this manner, its emancipatory potential becomes more apparent because it allows independent individuals to resist oppression via communication and dialogue, without being forced to conform or compromise.

Habermas's emancipatory project is based on the freedom of communication, erasing all forms of discrimination such as class, gender, or ethnicity. However, His communicative theory can be easily be threatened by money and power because they distort our everyday life and communication. Accordingly, he sees that these mechanisms function as "steering media" that "replace language as the mechanism for coordinating action" (*Habermas, The Theory of communicative Action Vol:324*). Simply put, the interference of money and power in societal matters will disturb its tranquillity, and lead to enmity between individuals by hindering their communication. As a result, in order to insure the success of his model, individuals need to harmonize with these systems and communicate freely.

I.3. Bakhtin's Notion of Dialogism:

Mikael Bakhtin is a Russian philosopher, who is famous for his work on dialogism and the novel. He attempts to formulate a theory about the novel as a liberating literary genre that challenges power structures using dialogue and interaction. First, dialogism is an umbrella term that covers a number of

“theoretical and epistemological assumptions about human action, communication and cognition” (11). That is to say, dialogism is a theory of language, a set of concepts that attempt to decipher how human beings use language in their everyday life. A theory that celebrates plurality, and stands against the monologic view of language. Therefore, it is important to grasp the notion of “monologism” in order to get a better understanding of “dialogism”.

A monologue simply means one person’s speech, or a single voice. This means that, within a monologic text or discourse, there is only one perspective presented about certain events. A single authorial voice that claims to represent objective reality, and determines what is right and valid. For instance, in monologic literary works, the author works as puppet master. He pulls the strings, and decides what the characters say, do and think about. Although they seem different, they all reflect his consciousness and his beliefs. Furthermore, monologic discourses prevents the individuals from practicing their right of expressing themselves, and achieving their independence. As a result, Bakhtin proposes his dialogic theory as an alternative to permit language users to interact with each other, subverting the effects of monologic discourse, which is used to promote oppression and hegemony.

Throughout his work, Bakhtin introduces a number of concepts related to dialogism. First, in his widely acknowledged work, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Bakhtin introduces the notion of polyphony, and polyphonic discourse to describe the writing of *Fyodor Dostoevsky*. These writings are characterized by having various voices, independent from the author’s voice, each with his own

vision and understanding. They do not attempt to depict objective reality, but each voice has its own weight, as well as a valid perspective on events, despite his/ her socioeconomic status (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 6). Bakhtin argues that polyphony does not simply mean having many voices, but rather it is the “plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses” (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 6). This means that each voice has its unique consciousness, its own way of perceiving the world, and a distinctive manner for responding to events. In this way, polyphony evokes the dialogic principle through a process of ongoing dialogue between characters, individuals, and eventually discourses. However, it does not only characterize texts and discourses, but rather it is “. . . a universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life” (Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* 40). Simply put, all language use is pluralistic and depends on the diversity and awareness of the participants.

Dialogism, according to Bakhtin, “is the characteristic epistemological mode of a world dominated by heteroglossia. Everything means, is understood as a part of a greater whole - there is a constant interaction between meanings, all of which have the potential of conditioning others” (the *Dialogic Imagination* 426). Heteroglossia means different-tongues, which implies the juxtaposition of different languages, social codes, and voices. Every single utterance gets its meaning through the interaction with other utterances. It also implies bringing together opposing forces, or conflicting ideas, all equally valid, and able to communicate and use language freely. By introducing this concept, Bakhtin rejects the notion of a unitary national language, favouring instead a multiplicity

of languages. These languages result historically from the social interaction between language users, each with his/ her ideological standers. Accordingly, Bakhtin states in his essay entitled *Discourse in The Novel*, “Actual social life and historical becoming create within an abstractly unitary national language a multitude of concrete worlds, a multitude of bounded verbal-ideological and social belief systems” (the Dialogic Imagination 288). Under these circumstances, Bakhtin dismisses the idea of a monologic homogenous understanding of language, and insists that it should be seen as dialogic, due to the interplay and mutual influence that occurs at the level of utterances, participants, and even the appropriation of new tongues and languages.

Bakhtin projects his dialogic principle on the novel insisting that the novel, as a literary genre, is informal and liberating. In his book, *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, Bakhtin writes, “Dialogic relationships exist among all elements of novelistic structure” (40). Since the novel is dialogic, it inevitably embraces heteroglossia. As a result, its language bears a socio-ideological function. In this regard, Bakhtin utters, “The language of the novel is a system of languages that mutually and ideologically interanimate each other” (Bakhtin, the Dialogic Imagination 7). Similarly, since the novel is dialogic, it is also polyphonic, and its “heroes are . . . not only objects of authorial discourse but also subjects of their own directly signifying discourse” (the Dialogic Imagination 7). This leads to a fundamental aspect of the novel as a carnivalesque, which means that it a place where social and economic hierarchies collapse, and roles are inverted .This allows people to, not only produce an authoritative discourse, but also ridicule and undermine it. A text, then, is a battleground for individuals to express themselves, clash with oppressing systems, arrange social conflict, and subvert power relations

Dialogic novels and discourses have an emancipatory potential because they expose the inconsistencies and the fragility of hegemonic discourses. By giving voice to the underdogs, and allowing the plurality of perspectives, dialogism dismantles the metanarratives that justify discrimination and abuse. Likewise, *Gabriele Helms* writes, “If we make explicit the connection between dialogic relations and power dynamics, then dialogism in a novel (and the criticism that discusses it) can help to explore how hegemonies are organized historically and to expose such dominant discourses in narratives” (26). Moreover, she believes that it can be used as a type of social reform because it embraces diversity, and allows each voice to be expressed freely). Eventually, a dialogic novel “. . . indicates potential resistance to dominant structures. Because, by calling attention to oppressive hierarchies of power, dialogism can become a strategy for combatting monologism” (Helms 26). This means that dialogism can be regarded as a tool or a mediator for resistance because it allows the revision of power relations, and the subversion of social norms and regulations.

However, being able to confront hegemonic practices requires a high level of discipline and consciousness. Dialogism is regarded as a strategy for resistance because it leads to the development of consciousness, which emerges as a result of the encounter between the self and the other. Bakhtin sees that,

In dialogism, the very capacity to have consciousness is based on otherness. This otherness is not merely a dialectical alienation on its way to a sublation that will endow it with a unifying identity in higher consciousness. On the contrary: in dialogism consciousness is

otherness. More accurately, it is the differential relation between a center and all that is not that center. (Holquist,7)

This means that otherness is, not only a basic condition of dialogism, but also it is indispensable for the emergence of consciousness and awareness. Otherness, however, should not be seen as an opposite to the self, but rather as adjunct to it; i.e. one cannot exist without the other. Correspondingly, the self must be seen as a relation, in which dialogue acts as a rejoinder between the participants, as well as a means to understand other dualisms such as power/ resistance. (Holquist18).

At last, dialogism describes the “ceaselessly shifting power relations between words, their sensitivity to each other, and the relativising force of their historically motivated clashes and temporary resolutions” (Vice, 5). By putting forward his dialogic theory, that insures the freedom of speech and the development of consciousness, Bakhtin provides marginal subjects a platform to express themselves, and challenge the social status quo. Thus, the dialogic discourse can be used as a means to fight abuse and oppression, by recognizing the plurality of voices, perspectives, and discourses.

I.4. the Construction of Subjectivity through Dialogism:

The notion of subjectivity is immensely important in the context of resistance and emancipation. According to Michel Foucault, modern institutions turn individuals into objects of knowledge through the appropriation of discourses. He argues, “this form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches

him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him” (Foucault 212) . That is to say, power objectifies individuals by promoting individualism and segregation. It creates realities and regulation, to which people have to conform. Then, it insures its domination by preventing people from collaborating with each other.

Foucault sees that, “the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state, and from the state's institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state” (qtd. In Nuyen 30). Foucault perceives that freedom and emancipation can only be achieved when individuals turn themselves into subjects. Subsequently, he states, “we have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality which has been imposed on us for centuries” (*qtd. In Nuyen 30*). Subjectivity is discovering the reality and truth that were concealed by power. Here, Michel Foucault suggests that individuals must appropriate discourse, and make use of its liberating potential to foster their subjectivity, in order resist domination (Nuyen 30,31).

However, Mikael Bakhtin sees that constructing subjectivity is essentially a dialogic process. Bakhtin argues that, “[O]ur subjectivity is formed from the other. . . The subject creates it in response to the images that are given to him/her by others” (Oliveira 108). For him, it is the discovery of the self through the interaction with the other. That is to say, in order to achieve subjectivity, one must overcome the divorce between the self and the other though dialogue and interaction. By doing so, the self is put in the position of the other, and it

appropriates its habits, perceptions, and attitudes, which leads to the subject's self-reflection and correction of values. (Gardiner 30, 31).

Furthermore, the emergence of subjectivity from the dialogic interaction with the other results in a shift towards intersubjectivity. After his analysis of Bakhtin's work on subjectivity and the self, *Michael Gardiner* notes,

We must realize that every aspect of consciousness and every practice a subject engages in is constituted dialogically, through the ebb and flow of a multitude of continuous and inherently responsive communicative acts. Once the presence of the other in myself is recognized and respected, we gain an awareness of a self that is not solitary but profoundly social, intersubjective and 'intercarnal' [Sic]. (Gardiner 31)

The construction of subjectivity resembles the movement of water, which runs back and forth between the self and the other. This movement is carried out through language and communication. As soon as the self enters into the realm of the other, and becomes affected by it, subjectivity will officially be established. However, since the water is constituted by a multitude of drops, the metaphor of the ebb and the flow suggests that the formation of the self and subjectivity is an ongoing process that never stops. Thus, subjectivity becomes intersubjectivity due to the constant modification of the self and consciousness.

Bakhtin shares with Habermas the same vision regarding subjectivity. The former insists that any subject cannot exist without cooperating with others. However, Habermas stresses that the construction of self and subjectivity should

be seen as the acquisition of linguistic competence and the ability to use language.

In this regard, Nuyen writes,

Habermas has argued that what he calls the "ideal speech situation" is such a transcendent standpoint, and that we can reach it through Communicative rationality. The way to emancipation is not the construction of the self in the sense of constructing an aesthetics of existence, but the cultivation of communicative competence with which we can see through all kinds of distortions. (36)

Habermas sees that emancipation can be achieved only when the subject succeeds in creating an ideal speech situation. The latter requires its participants be communicatively rational, i.e. the participants must have command over language, and are able to interact with one other. Therefore, intersubjectivity allows the subjects to get access to language through the appropriation of the other's language. Once language become part of the subject's world, he develops a sense of awareness about his environment, and it helps him discover distortion and deviations.

The theoretical framework introduced in this chapter establishes a link between power, emancipation, and dialogism. Power should be understood as a relationship between people in society. It runs through the whole social body, emerges from different points, and makes use of explicit instruments, such as discourse, to insure control and obedience. However, it is always accompanied by resistance using different techniques. For instance, the formation of subjectivity allows the oppressed to appropriate discourse in order to undermine it. This

subjectivity is always seen as dialogic. That is to say, it can only be constructed through the dialogue with the other. This leads to the development of the human consciousness, which in turn leads to the rise of self-awareness and a desire for emancipation. The latter is seen as a cognitive interest shared among all individuals. It can be achieved through the acquisition of linguistic competence and communicative rationality. Eventually, the quest of emancipation becomes successful when communication becomes undistorted, due to the creation of an ideal speech situation. This framework will be projected on the contemporary novel *Cloud Atlas*. The second chapter of this dissertation will analyse the structure of power in the chosen novel, in order to test the validity of the established framework in the third chapter.

II. Chapter two:

The Structure of Power in Cloud Atlas

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This dissertation focuses on the use of dialogism as a means to challenge power. Hence, it is important to explore first the notion of power in the chosen novel. This chapter focuses on the structure of power in *Cloud Atlas*. It aims at developing an overall understanding of the effect of this concept on the characters of the novel. In order to do so, it is important to adopt the Foucauldian conception of power because it exposes the disguised mechanisms of abuse.

Published in 2014, *Cloud Atlas* is a contemporary masterpiece, and a widely acclaimed critique of human greed and exploitation. It is David Mitchell's most celebrated novel, as it received a number of awards, such as the British Book Awards. The novel was the centre of interest for several scholars, and it became famous thanks to its complex and innovative narrative structure, which encompasses six distinct story woven together to provide a better insight to human nature, and to the repetitive patterns of life. Furthermore, the novel's thematic boldness lies in its discussion of provocative themes such as power, sexuality, and human subjugation.

As previously mentioned, *Cloud Atlas* is composed of six distinct, yet interconnected, stories. Each of these stories varies in terms of settings and characters. They are scattered across different geographical locations ranging from The South Pacific to Belgium, the US, London, South Korea and Hawaii. Moreover, the novel is divided into two parts; the first part flows chronologically from a mid-19th century voyage in the Pacific to a post-apocalyptic tribal community threatened by cannibals. Then, each story is interrupted by the next one, sometimes in mid-sentence, leaving the readers with cliff-hangers, curiosity, and an eagerness to know the rest of the story. However, the sixth one is told in

one complete part without any interruptions. From here, the second half of the story continues from the last to the first. Finally, each story alludes to or frames the preceding one. For instance, *Half-lives of Luisa ray*, the third story, is read as a manuscript for a novel by the book editor Timothy Cavendish, whose biography is watched by Sonmi 451 as a film.

II.1. the Notion of Power in *Cloud Atlas*:

Power is a recurrent theme that flows across the six narratives of *Cloud Atlas*. During an interview Mitchel states, “the book's theme is predacity, the way individuals prey on individuals, groups on groups, nations on nations, tribes on tribes . . .” (qtd.in Martin 2). The notion of power in the novel is highly associated with knowledge and the socio-economic status of the characters (Sultana 9). However, what makes it intricate and harder to analyse is the fact that in each story the means of imposing it differs from the preceding one. Therefore, it is important to study each narrative separately, in order to decipher how it actually functions in the novel as a whole.

II.1.1. Slavery and Colonialism in the Pacific Journals of Adam Ewing:

The Novel opens up with *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing*, which follows young Adam Ewing in his trip through the pacific. Adam becomes friend with a certain doctor called Henry Gooses, and boards along with him on a Dutch ship called the *Prophetess*. Throughout his journey, Adam gets to visit offshores in different locations, and witnesses the ill-treatment of the natives on the hand of missionary men, white supremacists, and even stronger tribes. What makes things

worse for him is the fact that Henry Goose attempts to kill him and steal his money, by claiming that he has a worm in his brain. Eventually, Adam is saved by a runaway slave named Autua. Adam Ewing becomes committed to abolishing slavery and making the world a better place.

This story depicts the traditional conception of power, in which the few control the many, and the stronger preys on the weaker. It exposes the horrors of colonialism, the slave trade, and the hypocrisy of the missionaries during the nineteenth century. Adam Ewing exposes the greed of the western society, who abuses and plunders people in the name of God and progress. During a dinner conversation, Dr Goose contemplates on, “Why do White races hold dominion over the world?” (Mitchell 481). A preacher named Horrox answers, “How is it that the musket came to the White man & not, say, the Esquimeau or the Pygmy, if not by august will of the Almighty?” (Mitchell 481). Horrox claims that the white race is at the top of the “Civilization’s Ladder” (Mitchell 479), and that it was their duty to lead to the progress of other nation, even if it is by means of enslavement and abuse. Although men of God, the missionaries are cruel towards the natives because they have more power over them.

Furthermore, during his visit to Chatham Islands, Adam witnesses a whipping scene of a young Moriori man on the hands of his Maori master. The two tribes were once neighbours, before the Maori attacked the Moriori, plundered them, and took them up as slaves. After knowing this incident, Dr Goose comments, “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”(Mitchel 196). Henry Goose sees that preying of the weaker is completely normal, and that it is the order of nature. He

then adds, *'The weak are meat, the strong do eat'* (Mitchell 196). Moreover, Dr Goose is the personification of greed and manipulation, as he convinces Adam that he has a parasite in his brain. The latter believed due to his lack of knowledge in the medical field. Gooses power and manipulation allowed him to peruse his charade, without being suspected. Overall, as mentioned in Goose's quote, Adam Ewing's story explores how people use their power and superiority to prey on the less fortunate and the powerless.

II.1.2. Social Classes and Sexuality in Letters from Zedelghem:

The second story, entitled *Letters from Zedelghem*, is a series of letters exchanged between a young musical composer called Robert Frobisher and his friend Rufus Sixsmith in 1931. Frobisher belonged to an aristocratic family in England, but he refused to abide by their social codes and regulations. As a result, his father disinherits him. In his pursuit of fame and wealth, he travels to Belgium, and become the apprentice of the musical legend Vyvyan Ayrs, who is blind and slowly dying of syphilis. After his stay at the Ayres's guesthouse, Frobisher has an affair with the wise Jocasta, and falls in love with the daughter Eva. As the story progresses, Ayres starts tormenting Frobisher, and steals his work, threatening to ruin his reputation if he refuses to work with him. At last, Frobisher escapes and finishes composing his own musical masterpiece called the *Cloud Atlas Sextet*. Once finished, Robert Frobisher commits suicide, arguing that his mission in life was accomplished

Letters from Zedelghem represents the struggle of Robert Frobisher to overcome the regulations set by the upper class of society. His father disinherited him because he had different aspirations, and wanted to adopt a

different life style. As a result, he escaped to Belgium, and started working with the famous music composer Vyvyan Ayres. As soon as he starts working with him, Robert witnesses all kind of exploitation by the old man.

First, despite doing all the work required, Robert gets only a small salary. During his stay there, he collaborates with Ayres on different compositions, and he helps bring back his name to the scene. They work together on the *Todtenvogel*, which was described as “the most accomplished tone poem I know of written since the war” (Mitchell 71). Ayres takes full credit for their musical collaboration, and does not recognise his efforts. Yet Robert showed a great deal of understanding claiming that, “more than a few of its best ideas are mine. Suppose an amanuensis must reconcile himself to renouncing his share in authorship, but buttoning one’s lip is never easy” (Mitchell, 71). In this regard, *Ben van Eck* suggests that the relationship between the two men symbolises the exploitation that the working class witness at the hand of the bourgeoisie (67).

This section of the novel explores the notion of sexuality and its relation to power. During that time, homosexuality was seen as a taboo and a disgrace. Robert was homosexual, and Ayres took advantage of that. He manipulated his sexuality by ordering his wife to make passes at the young man and sleep with him. This leads Frobisher to confusion, and he mistakes Eva’s kindness for love. To insure this power even further, Ayres attributes Robert’s “*Cloud Atlas Sextet*” to himself, arguing that it is his creation, and that he saw it in a dream. When the young man objects, he threatens to ruin his reputation and tells him, “well, no wealthy patron, no impoverished patron, no festival organizer, no board of

governors, no parent whose Little Lucy Lamb wants to learn the piano will have anything, anything to do with you”(Mitchell 450).

Finally, Robert tries to intimidate him by saying that he will tell everyone about his affair with his wife. However, the old man was untouched telling him that, ” any society’s upper-crust is riddled with immorality, how else d’you think they keep their power?” (Mitchell 541). Thus, Vyvyan Ayr’s wealth and his belonging to the “upper-crust” gave him the power to exploit, manipulate, and blackmail Robert Frobisher.

II.1.3. Political and Corporate Corruption in Half-Lives - the First Luisa Rey Mystery:

Set approximately 40 years after the preceding one, the third story is *Half Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*. Set in California during the 1970’s, it tells the story of a journalist who is attempting to expose the corruption of an energy corporation. By coincidence, the protagonist Luisa Ray meets Rufus Sixsmith, and lets her know that he wrote a report about the flawed nuclear reactor that Sea Board Corporation wants to build. Shortly after, Sixsmith was killed, and Luisa begun her journey to uncover the truth. After several attempts to kill her, she is finally able to get her hand on the report, with the help of a former Sea Board Employee called Napier and Sixsmith’s niece Megan. By the end, Luisa exposes the corporation as well as the corruption in the US government, as it was involved in this scandal.

Half Lives narrates the journey of Luisa Rey, a black female journalist working in *Spyglass Magazine*, and her fight against the corrupted *Sea Board*

Corporation. The story is a typical detective thriller, in which the protagonist risks her life to uncover the truth.

To start, *Alberto Grimaldi*, CEO of Seaboard and the power figure in this story, does not spare any effort to protect the HYDRA-ZERO nuclear reactor. He blackmails, murders, and even bribes to make sure that his project precedes as planned. First, he orders to kill *Rufus Sixsmith*, to prevent him from publishing the report that condemns the nuclear reactor. Then, he starts threatening his scientists to make them forget what they found out. For instance, he addresses one of them saying, “The choice is simple, Dr. Moses. If you want Soviet technology to burn ahead of ours, leak this report to your Union of Concerned Scientists, fly to Moscow to collect your medal, but the CIA has told me to tell you, you won’t be needing a round-trip ticket” (Mitchell106).

Besides, this story exposes the power of the media, and its role is shaping public opinion. During a meeting, *Dom Grelsch*, *Spyglass*’ editor-in-chief tells his employees, “Anything is true if enough people believe it is” (Mitchell 103). Being a private institution, *Spyglass*, serves only the interest of its owners. While a group of activists were protesting against Seaboard Corporation, Luisa meets *Hester Van Zandt*, who explains to her,

The corporations have money, power, and influence. . . 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 129)

Eventually, after failing at killing Luisa, Seaboard becomes the new owner of *spyglass*. Their first order of business was to terminate her contract and fire her from her job.

However, after succeeding at exposing the company by publishing her report, Luisa is surprised to know that the US government, particularly the secretary of defence, was involved in the Seaboard scandal. The HYDRA-ZERO reactor would benefit the government in their arm race and the cold war, because “A by-product of the HYDRA-Zero reactor is weapons grade uranium. Highest quality, lots of it” (Mitchell 426). Even the president at that time tries to covers up the scandal by statin in the press conference, “My administration makes no distinction between lawbreakers. We will root out the crooks who bring ignominy to corporate America and punish them with the utmost severity of the law” (Mitchell 340). He attributes the crime to “crooks”, clearing the name of his administration. Hence, it becomes clear that the power of Seaboard Corporation was due to the governmental support, and keeping the HYDRA-ZERO secret was its wish since the beginning. Luisa Ray was not just fighting against the corruption of corporation, but also the power of the media and the manipulation of the government.

II.1.4. Surveillance and Institutions of Power in the Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish:

The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish depicts modern modes of subjugation and control. The story takes a comedic route, and shows the ill-treatment of the elderly in modern society. Contrary to the previous parts, Timothy Cavendish, the protagonist of this narrative is not dealing with corporate or political power. Instead, he suffers from discrimination and abuse due to his age.

This part takes a comedic turn with *The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish*. It tells the story of a 65-year-old publisher in modern London. After being hunted by debts, Timothy asks his brother for help, but his brother refuses and tricks him into checking himself into a Nursery home. Once checked in, he suffers ill-treatment and abuse by the hand of the *Aurora House* employees. As a result, he starts planning an escape, but his efforts are soon frustrated by a stroke. After his recovery, Cavendish succeeds to escape Scotland in a stolen Rang Rover, with the help of other residents. After his escape, he publishes *Half Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*, in addition to his own memoir, which proved to be a very successful film script.

This story sheds the light on the abusive practices of modern disciplinary institutions such as nursing homes, prisons, and asylums. Once admitted to the Aurora nursing home, Timothy is robbed of all his personal belongings by the evil Nurse Noakes. He comments that the nursing house was reminiscent of “*one Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*” (Mitchell 184). Mitchell draws a parallel between the ill-treatment of the elderly in Aurora House and the abuse of the insane patients in the previously mentioned work. He alludes to Michel Foucault who believes that these modern institutions hold power because they are “. . . factors of segregation and social hierarchization” (the History of Sexuality volume one 141). In these

institutions, Power is maintained by means of surveillance and disciplinary measures .It is worth noting that Aurora House possess some “state-of-the-art surveillance arrangements”, such as “magnificent iron gates, opened and closed by a flash pneumatic stroke electronic gizmo . . . , they even had a surveillance camera and a two-way phone thingy!” (Mitchell 355). To impose control even further, Nurse Noakes ridicules the residents, so that the others would abide by the rules. Unlike Cavendish, the residents of that house have already been conformed and became normalized to its system and regulations, seeing it as a five-star hotel,

This is the best hotel you’ll ever stay in, boyo!” . . . “A five-star one, look you. Meals get provided, all your laundry is done. Activities laid on, from crochet to croquet. No confusing bills, no youngsters joyriding in your motor. Aurora House is a ball! Just obey the regulations and stop rubbing Nurse Noakes up the wrong way. She’s not a cruel woman. (Mitchell 184)

Finally, when Timothy starts to plan an escape, Nurse Noakes induces a stroke to frustrate his plans, and impose order.

As mentioned above, *Cloud Atlas* depicts the discrimination and abuse that the elderly suffer from. Their lack of power permits the more fortunate to exploit them. Mitchell summarizes this idea in the following passage,

Oh, 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 mori. The world can only get comfy in shinyeyed denial if we are out of sight. (Mitchell357)

II.1.5. Hegemony and Capitalism in An Orison of Sonmi~451:

Next, *The Orison of Sonmi-451* describes a highly advanced hyper-consumerist futuristic society, governed by corpocracy. The main character, Sonmi-451, is a female servant at *Papa Song's* diner. After the murder of her friend Yoona-939, Sonmi ascends from the restaurant and becomes a member of the Union, an underground group fighting against the corporatic state. She becomes highly educated, and finds out about the terrifying destiny of retired fabricants. As a result, she compiles a set of "declarations" about fabricants' rights. Unfortunately, she was captured and killed by UNANIMITY members. However, before executing her, she gets to tell her experience to an archivist, and lets him know that it was planned by UNANIMITY since the beginning.

Out of the six stories, *An Orison of Sonmi~451* is perhaps the most obvious manifestation of power. It is the first dystopia of the novel that describes a hyper-consumerist society called Nea So Copros, in which people are divided into pureblood consumers and fabricants. Sonmi~451, the protagonist of this story, describes her journey to fight corpocracy and the forms of abuse and discrimination.

In this section, power controls individuals through their bodies, a mechanism labelled by Michel Foucault as biopower. It is "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* 140). Sonmi explains that

fabricants are “genomed” to serve the needs to pureblood consumers. After completing their service, the fabricants are killed, and their bodies are reconstructed. Their remains are recycled because,

The genomics industry demands huge quantities of liquefied biomatter, for wombtanks, but most of all, for Soap. What cheaper way to supply this protein than by recycling fabricants who have reached the end of their working lives? Additionally, leftover “reclaimed proteins” are used to produce Papa Song food products, eaten by consumers in the corp’s dineries all over Nea So Copros. It is a perfect food cycle.
(Mitchell 342)

In addition, fabricants are treated like machine, as they do not possess a soul because it is regarded as a privilege, a currency that allows purebloods to pay for their goods. Biopower is also, “exercising control over the life of populations or classes without taking into account their individual dimension” (Machinal 140). As a result, after each shift, the fabricants are obliged to eat soap to erase their memory, eliminate curiosity, and make them forget what they learned from their encounter with the consumers. By doing so, the state insures conformity and obedience, and diminishes the possibility of rebellion by preventing them from communicating with each other, and developing their self-awareness.

Biopower goes hand in hand with capitalism and its hegemonic practices. Foucault states, “bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not, have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes” (The History of

Sexuality 141). In the novel, the pureblood are treated as tools to ensure the enrichment of the corporations. They are mere consumers who “have to spend a fixed quota of dollars each month, depending on their strata. Hoarding is an anticorporatic crime” (Mitchell 229). They are obliged to buy even the basic needs of life such as water, food, and even oxygen. Subsequently, the lower classes, also called the downstrata, live a miserable life because they cannot afford these luxuries. In addition, the state imposes censorship on certain books and films to prevent the citizens from getting more knowledge. By controlling their knowledge, the state curbs their power, and prevents their subversion.

By the end of the section, Sonmi reveals that her ascension was planned by UNANIMITY since the beginning. Her execution is meant to be public in order to intimidate everyone who is attempting to revolt. She explains, “Nea So Copros is poisoning itself to death. Its soil is polluted, its rivers lifeless, its air toxloaded, its food supplies riddled with rogue genes. The downstrata cannot buy drugs to counter these privations. Melanoma and malaria belts advance northward at forty kilometers per year” (Mitchell 323-234). This is a typical capitalist mentality known as market cannibalism, in which the benefiting party creates its own enemy, and eliminated him, in order to impose its power.

II.2. The Devastating Impact of Power in Sloosha’s Crossin’ An’ Ev’rythin’ After:

The last and final story is a post-apocalyptic dystopia that tells the story of Zachry Bailey, a man living in a tribal community threatened by cannibals. It is set in Ha Why years after the end of the world. The tribe worships Sonmi, and they resort to her to guide them and help them against the influence of the

devil called *Old Georgie*. Zachry narrates his life, and tells his experience with a Prescient woman named Meronym. At first, he suspects that she is going to bring destruction to the valley. However, as the story progresses, he learns to trust her. Meronym tells zachry that Sonmi is not a goddess, and recounts her story. After the destruction of the village by the Kona tribe, zachry kills their chief, and leaves with Meronym, bringing an end to the last story entitled *Sloosha's Crossin' An' Ev'rythin' After*.

Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After is set in a distant future, several years after Sonmi's Corpocratic state. It is drastically different from the previous ones as it shows the impact of power and its devastating effect on humanity, rather than depicting a process of subjugation.

After an event called "the Fall", the world goes back to its natural state, tribalism. Civilization has started from the beginning, as a form of competing tribes fighting for survival. In addition, life was simple with no access to technology or knowledge. The tribe get their supplies once a year from a trading ship with people who still have little access to technology called the Prescients. Zackry, the protagonist, mourns the fact that "the gone-lifes outnumber the now-lifes like leaves outnumber trees" (Mitchel, 246). Besides, the vallysman are threatened by cannibals known as the Kona tribe. They kill, rape, and enslave people to satisfy their savage instincts. In fact, Zachry recalls an episode where the Kona killed his father, kidnapped his brother Adam, and eventually captured the whole village. To make matters worse, a devil that goes by the name Old Georgie torments them due to his poisonous ideas.

This post-apocalyptic tragedy predicts the downfall of humanity, and that, “one fine day, a purely predatory world shall consume itself” (Mitchell 500). Meronym explains to Zachry how the humans have led to the destruction witnessed at that time by stating, “human hunger birthed the Civ’lize, but human hunger killed it too” (Mitchell 274). Besides, Machinal writes, “The construction of the novel gives the impression that since the end of the eighteenth century humanity has been paving the way to that posthuman dystopia” (136). The progress preacher Horrox called for and the genetic transformation that Sonmi warned against are the main causes behind this chaos. Meronym argues that humans’ obsession with control and power have led to the barbarism witnessed at that time. She notes,

Now the Hole World is big, but it weren’t big ’nuff for that hunger what made Old Uns rip out the skies an’ boil up the seas an’ poison soil with crazed atoms an’ donkey ’bout with rotted seeds so new plagues was borned an’ babbits was freak-birthered. Fin’ly, bit’ly, then quicksharp, states busted into bar’bric tribes an’ the Civ’lize Days ended, ’cept for a few folds’n’pockets here’n’t there, where its last embers glimmer. (Mitchell 273)

Regardless of the prevailing pessimism, this story also celebrates the liberating potential of knowledge. Zachry is chocked after knowing the truth surrounding Sonmi’s story. Unlike the common belief among the vallysman about her being an immortal goddess, “Sonmi was killed by Old –Un chiefs what feared her, but b’fore she died she spoke to an orison ‘bout her

acts'n'deedin's." (Mitchell 278). In addition, Meronym explains to him that, not only Sonmi is not a goddess, but Old Georgie does not exist as well. As a result, zachry starts questioning everything around him arguing that, "times are you say a person's b'liefs ain't true, they think you're sayin' their lifes ain't true an' their truth ain't true" (Mitchell 278). After being enlightened by Meronym, zachry prevented Old Georgie from intimidating him and defeated the Kona tribe as well. With that in mind, Johnston-Ellis notes the optimistic turn that the novel takes after this section because it enables the readers to imagine a better future for the other characters (10).

Cloud Atlas proved to be a perfect manifestation power, and it demonstrates how it works in society. The novel is composed of six stories that seem different at the beginning, but they are all joined by their common struggle with power. Each of the protagonist is dealing with his own demon, attempting to combat exploitation and abuse. Each of the six story exposes a different mechanism of control, and a different means of exercising power. Following a Foucauldian tradition, *Cloud Atlas* exposes the different mechanisms of subjugation, as well as the disguised techniques of achieving conformity and obedience. The novel shows that power is indeed found everywhere, and functions as a web of interconnected relations. Moreover, the novel highlights the devastating impact of hunger and greed, as they lead to cruelty, dehumanization, and even the destruction of the world. In the first half, an atmosphere of pessimism and darkness prevails over the novel, as it comments on sensitive subjects such as slavery, discrimination, corruption, and manipulation of the human body.

However, by the second half of the story characters start to show signs of resistance and self-emancipation.

III. Chapter three

Resistance and Emancipation through Dialogism in Cloud Atlas

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The second half of *Cloud Atlas* takes an optimistic route, as the characters begin to show signs of resistance, and a need for change. In this part, the protagonists start to conduct small-scale acts of rebellion against the power figures discussed earlier. This trajectory challenges the fixity and bleak deterministic view of human nature portrayed in the first half of the novel. Moreover, Peter Childs and James Green note that, “If, during the first half of the text, humanity appears to be shackled to its apocalyptic destiny . . . the reversal of this forward momentum opens up an alternative perspective. Rather than the future being impossible to resist. . . the novel argues the case for ethical choices made by individuals and societies reasserting the potential for enlightened political agency”. (43) That is to say, the characters experience certain events that lead to their ethical development, and ignite a desire for emancipation and freedom. Besides, the novel celebrates plurality and diversity by presenting a number of individuals, who are joined together by their common fight against exploitation and abuse. Since this abuse is practiced through various instruments and tactics such as discourse, resistance also requires adopting some techniques that assist the characters in their quest. As a result, this chapter explores the possibility of using dialogism as a means of resistance, as well as a strategy to achieve emancipation.

III.1. Cloud Atlas as a Dialogic Novel:

Cloud Atlas has one of the most intricate narrative structures. Its fragmentation emerges from the combination of several characters, motifs, languages, and even literary and mythical allusions. At first glance, the novel may seem confusing and chaotic, due to this puzzling structure. However, Martina Hrubes notes that the novel “corresponds to the postmodernist commitment to

multiplicity and dialogism” (41). In other words, the use of dialogism allows its fragmented pieces to be seen as a whole. Moreover, David Mitchell creates a web of interconnected stories using the dialogic principle not only at the level of characters, but also at the level of language and narratives as well (Rados, 17). However, what makes the novel truly fascinating is the dialogue between the novel and other literary and historical works, as the readers are bombarded by a number of references and allusions.

III.1.1 Dialogism and Polyphony in *Cloud Atlas*:

David Mitchell celebrates the idea of plurality by presenting a number of protagonists, and giving each the needed space to express his preoccupations. As seen in chapter one, polyphony is the “plurality of independent and unmerged voices” (Bakhtin, 1981, 6). Subsequently, each of the protagonists has his own personality, qualities, flaws, and more importantly voice. Among all of the voices present in the novel, “there is no one voice which prevails over the others, or has more authority than the others. The power lies in separate voices. . . And each voice, each narrative is distinctive because they are all characteristic of distinctive times and cultures” (Sultana 24). In other words, Mitchell introduces a multiplicity of characters each with his own independent consciousness, and allows them to interact with each other freely. In order to celebrate multiplicity even further, he distances himself from the narratives using metafiction, letting the reader decide who the author is. Thus, David Mitchell produces a polyphonic novel by making his own voice one among the many voices in the novel, and not allowing it to prevail over the others.

III.1.2 Dialogism and Heteroglossia in Cloud Atlas:

Johnston-Ellis states, “David Mitchell’s Cloud Atlas parallels the “*Cloud Atlas Sextet*” composed by the young composer of Mitchell’s creation, Robert Frobisher” (12). The latter describes his musical creation as, “. . . a “sextet for overlapping soloists”: piano, clarinet, ‘cello, flute, oboe, and violin, each in its own language of key, scale, and color” (*Mitchell 440.*) *Cloud Atlas* emerges as a combination of stories; each story has its own language that is extremely different from the others with a specific jargon and phonetic composition. For instance, in *Sloosha’s Crossin’ An’ Ev’rythin’ After*, the language is simpler, the words are shortened, and irregular verbs are made regular (Hurbes 112). If we assume that each language represents a world or a culture, then *Cloud Atlas* encompasses a plurality of distinctive worlds. The dialogue or interplay between these languages, precisely these worlds, leads to the moral development of the characters, and boosts their consciousness.

III.1.3. Dialogism as Intertextuality in Cloud Atlas:

Julia Kristeva writes, “any text is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another” (qtd. In *Draine 332*). *David Mitchell* adds yet another layer to his novel by including a number of allusions and references to other texts. He indirectly mentions some historical events such as the Watergate scandal, and alludes to many literary works including *Moby dick*, *heart of Darkness*, *1984* and *Brave New World*, in order to facilitate the task of the reader in understanding his fragmented narratives. In this regard, *Martina Hurbes* notes, “The numerous subtle allusions to literary texts we find throughout

Cloud Atlas evoke the sensation of familiarity. This sensation indicates the interdependence of all signs and discourses . . .” (118). Hence, employing intertextuality in the novel assert the interconnectedness of all works, and affirms the plurality advocated by dialogism.

III.2. Dialogism and Resistance in Cloud Atlas

Dialogism is highly associated with the notion of resistance. It has a subversive potential because, “. . . one of the greatest strengths of the concept of dialogism lies in its potential to articulate resistance through a contextualized investigation of power relations” (Helms, 6). As a dialogic novel, *Cloud Atlas* makes use of dialogic principles as mediators for resistance on many levels, as it varies from “microdialogism (the dialogism of a single word), to dialogism within a text and also across texts (Brown 276).

In *Cloud Atlas*, the interaction between characters leads to their empowerment, and facilitates their task of resistance. First, *Adam Ewing* begun his journey as a naïve man. However, his encounter with the stowaway slave *Autua* has a great influence on him. Through their interaction, he experiences the goodness and kindness of the slave at the ship. *Autua* exposes the hypocrisy of the missionaries, who plunder and exploit people in the name of civilization and progress. Moreover, *Adam* learns about the oppression witnessed by the *Mororis*, both at the hand of and the *Maoris* as well. *Autua* saves his life, and exposes the truth of *Goose*’s lie. After this incident, *Adam* pledges his life to abolishing slavery, and he was determined to eradicate the idea of white supremacy and racial superiority. *Adam Ewing* understands that his quest can never be individual, as he establishes “the importance of networking his individuality within a

community or multitude that stretches across history” (Edwards, 185). In his concluding pages, Adam Ewing Comes to a realization. He sees that engaging in quest to eliminate abusive practices, which are rooted in humanity since its creation, maybe futile. He sees that, “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 501). However, he adds, “Yet what is any ocean but a multitude of drops?” (Mitchell 501). Eventually, he is convinced that abusive system must be defeated through small acts of resistance, bound together by dialogue and interaction.

Similarly, Timothy Cavendish’s story represents a modal of a successful resistance thanks to dialogism and interaction. Martin argues, “When he attempts to escape alone, he is captured and punished; it is only when he works in conjunction with his friends, forming a microtopia of individuals in the boiler room, that their revolution is successful” (24). At the beginning of his journey, Cavendish’s efforts were always frustrated because he was alienated from the rest of the residents at the nursing home, and from society as a whole. However, when he started collaborating and interacting with other individuals, he engineered an escape plan that was successful at the end. The interaction between the residents of the Aurora House allowed them to undermine and defeat the abusive power of Nurse Noakes and the staff. However, communication and dialogue goes beyond a simple conversation between characters of the same story, to include the interaction and the influence of one story over the other.

Cloud Atlas represents a modal of resistance and empowerment that transcends the traditional boundaries of dialogue between individuals in the same spatiotemporal location. For instance, Timothy Cavendish's memoir contributes immensely to the empowerment of Sonmi-451, and her resistance to the corpocratic state. After watching his movie, Sonmi comments,

The past is a world both indescribably different from and yet subtly similar to Nea So Copros. People sagged and uglified as they aged in those days: no dewdrugs. Elderly purebloods waited to die in prisons for the senile: no fixed-term life spans, no euthanasium. Dollars circulated as little sheets of paper and the only fabricants were sickly livestock. However, corpocracy was emerging and social strata was demarked, based on dollars and, curiously, the quantity of melanin in one's skin. (Mitchel 237)

Sonmi draws parallels between her world and the world of Timothy Cavendish. She identifies several elements in common, and sees that the seeds of her nightmarish dystopia in that movie. Subsequently, Rados notes, “ The viewing of this movie is what enabled Sonmi to see beyond the fixed ideological perspective imposed by her society” (38). Cavendish's subversive modal allows Sonmi to imagine a better future for her society. It makes see that her resistance can be crowned with success at the end.

Sonmi's dystopia adds another layer to the dialogic dimension of resistance. Usually, dystopian fiction illustrates the dehumanizing effect of power, and the cruelty of oppressive regimes. By adopting the dystopian conventions and

characteristics, David Mitchell is committed to exposing the horrific practices that are carried out in the name of progress. The inclusion on two dystopian section is extremely significant to highlight the role of dialogism in resistance because, “dystopian fiction . . . is a particularly political sub-genre because it realizes the dialogical principle on different levels” (Hurbes102). According to her, dystopian literature reevaluates the hegemonic practices by presenting a horrific version of reality, in order to expose their monologic tendencies. She also assert that dystopias are highly subversive, as they open “a dialogue between the official doctrine and subversive minority thought is established and the ideological shortcomings of authoritarian ideologies are made apparent by the system’s resorting to violence against deviant members” (*Hurbes 102*). Dystopian fiction has a subversive potential thanks to its adoption of dialogism. It exposes the devastating impact of power and greed, using multiple characters and perspectives. It illustrates the metanarratives that contribute to the subjugation of human being. However, as the work progresses, it dismantles hegemonic ideologies, and makes them fragile by exposing the cracks and hypocrisies found in their discourses.

Additionally, in the novel, Resistance becomes possible only when a dialogic relationship is established. By interacting and exchanging communication, the parties involved have a better chance at exposing corruption and fighting oppression. It is worth noting that a significant motif runs through the novel, and reappears in all the stories. That motif is the mythical creature the *hydra* that appears in the story of *Hercules*. This motif symbolizes the force that the characters are fighting, and the power that abuses and exploits them. For Robert Frobisher, the hydra is “the v.d.V. daughters” (Mitchell 442). They

represent the upper class with its rigid rules and regulation. The class to which Robert's father and Vyvyan Ayrs belong that is full of immorality and scandals. Moreover, Luisa Ray's monster is "the new HYDRA nuclear reactor at Swanekke Island" (Mitchell 103), while Cavendish's fight is against "The Hoggins Hydra" (Mitchell 383), and sonmi's was the "*HYDRA NURSERY CORP*" (Mitchell 322), in which the fabricants were genomed. However, the most significant use of the motif is Adam Ewing's description of the human nature as "the many-headed hydra" (Mitchell 501). On this subject, Hurbes comments, "the recurring metaphor of the hydra represents the enormity of this struggle, since the mythological creature with multiple heads is virtually invincible. Hercules, however, with great wit and effort, defeats the monster in the end" (55). Similar to *Hercules*, the protagonists of *Cloud Atlas* are not able to defeat their *Hydra* until they interact with other individuals, and collaborate with them.

Although the story of Robert Frobisher might seem as an example of the failure of resistance, the protagonist is able to defeat power. When Frobisher fails to combat Ayres's abuse, he decides to take matters into his own hands, and commits suicide. By committing suicide, he liberates himself from the regulations that are imposed on him. In fact, Foucault argues that, "death is power's limit, the moment that escapes it; death becomes the most secret aspect of existence, the most "private"" (The History of Sexuality 138). For this reason, suicide has become one of central issues in sociological studies. Foucault claims that suicide is a right that all individuals poses, and "it testified to the individual and private right to die" (The History of Sexuality 139). Similarly, Frobisher sees suicide as a sign of strength and stability. In his last letter he writes, "The lovelorn, the cry-for-helpers, all mawkish tragedians who give suicide a bad name are the idiots

who rush it, like amateur conductors. A true suicide is a paced, disciplined certainty” (*Mitchell 463-464*). Likewise, Sonmi states, “even Yoona 939 chose death over slavery” (*Mitchell 325*). Hence Robert Frobisher is, at last, able to resist power and escape its influence by committing suicide.

III.3. Emancipation through Dialogism:

Battling against power is the first step towards emancipation. As mentioned above, dialogism can be regarded as a mediator for resistance. It can also lead to emancipation because interaction leads to the development of characters. It enables them to acquire new skills and competencies that facilitate their integration into society. Most importantly, through dialogism, individuals develop their self-awareness and consciousness, as they start questioning their positions as abused subjects.

First, Dialogism leads to the development of linguistic competence and self-awareness, which pave the way for the success of the emancipatory process. First, Machinal argues that in the novel, the notion of emancipation is highly associated with language and the development of linguistic competence (146). As mentioned earlier, in Sonmi’s narrative, the fabricants have a limited diction, a specific set of words that allows them only to master their work at the restaurant. However, Sonmi notices the evolution of her fellow ascended fabricant Yoona through her language, and her “irregular speech” (*Mitchell 190*). She notes that, “Yoona’s speech grew more complex as the year aged” (*Mitchel, 190*). Moreover, Sonmi goes through the same process in her accession. When the archivist asks her do describe this process, she answers,

My language evolved: for xample, if I meant to say good, my mouth substituted a finer-tuned word such as favorable, pleasing,

or correct my curiosity about all things grew acute: the “hunger” Yoona 939 had spoken of . . . Lastly, my sense of alienation grew. Amongst my sisters I alone understood our existence’s futility and drudgery. (Mitchell 201)

Sonmi draws a parallel between her rebellion and the development of her linguistic competence. She sees that her acquisition of new linguistic utterances, allowed her to express herself in a more sophisticated manner, and enabled her to explore new realities.

However, Sonmi’s development is not possible until she starts communicating with other characters, such as Yoona and Hae-Joo. After her encounter with Yoona, she witnesses the awakening of her rebellious spirit. She tells the archivist, “a voice spoke in my head. It alarmed me greatly, until I learned that no one else could hear this voice, known to purebloods as “sentience”” (Mitchell 201). In fact, since fabricants are engineered, they lack human qualifiers, such as consciousness and sensations. However, Sonmi manifests a change in attitude due to her newly attained self-awareness. Besides, Machinal sees that “access to language leads to conscience and the potential emergence of an independent mind” (147) and that emancipation “is associated with getting access to language” (Machinal 146). In other words, Sonmi’s acquisition of a linguistic competence allows her to interact with other individuals, forge a new identity, and it awakens a desire for change and self-actualization.

Furthermore, access to language allows the characters to gain new perspectives on reality, and it enables them to take part in making their own signifying discourse. Many critics, such as Chris Weedon, see language as “the

medium through which subjective identity is acquired in social interaction” (93). It provides the characters with a platform to develop their consciousness and adopt their subjectivity, which constitutes a real threat to power structures and mechanisms. Besides, Bakhtin sees that this subjectivity is produced by language, and that this process is naturally dialogic. Subjectivity emerges because of the interaction between the self and the other. Accordingly, Holquist states,

The site to which language assigns us as subjects is unique, but never ours alone. The subject determined by language is never singular: like language itself, it is divided between dynamic and static aspects of its activity. . . . the individual subject is organized by both an abstract, normative category—the other—and a specific, more open category—the self. (166)

It is only through communication and dialogue that individuals adopt their subjectivity, which is a basic element in the emancipatory process. Eventually, once people become self-aware and communicatively competent subjects, they can participate in the creation of ideal speech situations, which allow all the participants to be active parts in the creation of subversive discourses. These discourses challenge the hegemonic beliefs embedded in the metanarratives that contribute to discrimination and social hierarchies.

Habermas’s ideal speech situation has a utopian vision, as it calls for the freedom of communication and the end of all distortions. David Mitchel, not only represents alienation and abuse, but he provides an alternative modal of successful communities, which promote a sense of solidarity and consensus as well.

Edwards sees that, “Mitchell’s description of the small community of political exiles Sonmi encounters in her revolutionary Union activities in *Cloud Atlas* offers us a utopian instance of political opposition to the consumerist dictatorship of Nea So Copros” (181). She believes that the colony presents an alternative to the nightmarish corpocratic world. After visiting the colony, Sonmi states,

Yes, winters are severe; rainy seasons are relentless; crops fall prey to disease; their medicine is sorely limited. Few colonists live as long as upstrata consumers. They bicker, blame, and grieve as people will, but at least they do it in a community, and companionship is a fine medicine in itself. Nea So Copros has no communities now, only mutually suspicious substrata. I slept soundly that nite against a backdrop of gossip, music, complaints, and laughter, feeling safe for the first time since my dormroom in Papa Song’s.
(Mitchell 329)

Despite the harshness and the difficulty of life in the colony, Sonmi found comfort and serenity. Although the colonists do not benefit from the same privileges as the pureblood consumers, they can at least rely on each other, and help each other survive in a world dominated by individualism and selfishness.

Overall, the utopian depiction of a community in the novel highlights the importance of interaction and dialogue. Martina argues that Sonmi’s use of the word community, “reflects the novel’s thesis on the nature of utopia: that it is created through individual or small-scale human actions and interactions of compassion and humanity, networked into a wider system of connected

individuals” (15). Simply put Cloud Atlas imagines a utopian community, whose members are heterogeneous and nonconformists. Each member has his distinct perspective and set of beliefs, and each member confronts abuse in his own way. Regardless of their status, origin, or cultural background, these members are joined together thanks to dialogue and interaction, which allows them to defeat power and achieve emancipation collectively.

III.4. Dialogism as Legacy in Cloud Atlas

As a postmodernist work, Cloud Atlas allows each protagonist to leave behind a form of discourse that symbolizes his struggle, and his process of self-actualization. All of the protagonists contribute in the political message that Mitchell wants to transmit through his novel. In fact, Rodos states, “we could say that in each story, the main character encounters some incarnation of the old cannibals maxim, both on individual and societal level, fights against it, inspired by older stories, and leaving behind him his/her own story, which inspire others” (38). In other words, all the protagonists suffer from abuse and exploitation in some way. They all succeed in liberating themselves thanks to their collaboration and interaction. At the end of each journey, the emancipated protagonists leave their immortal imprint in the world, and encourage other liberating movements through their inspiring stories.

Adam Ewing left behind his diary to serve as a manifesto against slavery and human greed. His diary warns its reader about the danger of greed, selfishness, and individualism. In the last pages of his diary, Adam states,

If we believe humanity is a ladder of tribes, a colosseum of confrontation, exploitation & bestiality, such a humanity is surely

brought into being You & I, the moneyed, the privileged, the fortunate, shall not fare so badly in this world, provided our luck holds. What of it if our consciences itch? Why undermine the dominance of our race, our gunships, our heritage & our legacy? Why fight the “natural” (oh, weaselly word!) order of things? Why? Because of this:—one fine day, a purely predatory world shall consume itself. Yes, the Devil shall take the hindmost until the foremost is the hindmost. In an individual, selfishness ugliest the soul; for the human species, selfishness is extinction. Is this the doom written within our nature? (Mitchell 500)

He draws a dark image about the future of humanity and how praying on the weak will lead to anarchy. However, he provides a solution to prevent this from happening. He argues that, “if we believe that humanity may transcend tooth & claw, if we believe divers races & creeds can share this world as peaceably as the orphans share their candlenut tree, if we believe leaders must be just, violence muzzled, power accountable & the riches of the Earth & its Oceans shared equitably, such a world will come to pass” (Mitchell 500). Through his diary, Adam Ewing calls for collaboration between people regardless of their status and origin, as well as the equality and acceptance of the others.

The idea of acceptance is also advocated by Robert Frobisher, whose story symbolises the tension between classes in society. As previously discussed, the relationship between Robert Frobisher and Vyvyan Ayrs presents the struggle of the proletariat. The protagonist hates the upper class, and prefers committing suicide than being part of it. His transgression of rules, his hedonistic life style, his pursuit of life and pleasure, and his freedom of sexuality liberated him. These

factors were behind the success of the *cloud atlas sextet* because his sense of freedom and experimentation allowed him to break traditional musical patterns, and create a polyphonic musical masterpiece. His composition allowed him to see that, “boundaries between noise and sound are conventions, I see now. All boundaries are conventions, national ones too. One may transcend any convention, if only one can first conceive of doing so” (Mitchell 455). After finishing it, Frobisher writes, “Cloud Atlas Sextet holds my life, is my life, now I’m a spent firework; but at least I’ve been a firework” (Mitchell 455). His musical masterpiece is his imprint in the world, as it allows him to transmit a clear political message. It provides the reader with a beacon of hope by asserting that power can in fact be curbed, and that it takes courage and willingness to subvert any abusive system. Finally, Robert Frobisher represents a tragic hero that was able to insure his immortality through his inspiring work.

In the same fashion, despite her death, Sonmi is able to leave behind an inspirational message that would last centuries ahead. Regardless of the fact that her accession is planned by the state since the beginning, she is able to take advantage of the situation. Sonmi confesses that the publication of her *Declarations* have a subversive impact that was not expected by UNANIMITY. She tells the archivist,

We 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 statewide “Vigilance Day” against fabricants who show signs of the Declarations. My ideas have been reproduced a billionfold. (Mitchell 348)

Sonmi has envisioned that her declarations would lead to the hatred of fabricants and their ill treatment by the purebloods. She regarded this as a strategic movement to urge the fabricants to revolt. She sacrificed her life in order to get her voice heard, and to enlighten other people. Her sacrifice payed off, as she became regarded as a goddess in sloosha's crossing. Meronym confirms that her message reached its desired effects only after he death, as she states, "A short'n'judased life Sonmi had, an' only after she'd died did she find say-so over purebloods 'n' freakbirths' thinkin's"(Mitchell 278). Her declarations, and the podcasting of her story, serve as a warning against the hegemonic practices witnessed at that time, which leads to the destruction in the post-apocalyptic dystopia.

Cloud Atlas is a subversive dialogic novel par excellence. It employs Bakhtin's dialogic principles on various levels. It leads to creating a web of interconnected stories, joined by their common fight against dehumanization and exploitation. The protagonists promote hope by showing the potential of resistance to power structures, and dismiss the deterministic view of the world. This resistance is always plural, as it emerges from the interaction and collaboration between the characters. Furthermore, this interaction and dialogue lead to the development of the protagonists' self-awareness and consciousness. It enriches their language and fuels their rebellious spirits. Eventually, dialogism equips the characters with enough tools to emancipate themselves, and leave their stories behind to serve as an inspirational message for other people.

General conclusion

The focus of this study is to investigate into the role of dialogism in challenging power, and reaching emancipation in *Cloud Atlas*. The chosen novel is characterised by its unique narrative structure, and its treatment of controversial concepts related to power, such as slavery, sexuality and corruption. The novel is composed of fix different stories, which all share the struggle against discrimination and exploitation. The first half of the novel depicts a dark view on humanity, and portrays its greed for money and power. It shows its impact on the world, through its post-apocalyptic trajectory. However, the second half is more optimistic, as it shows the reversal of the repeated cycles of oppression.

The main argument is that dialogism and interaction between the characters of the novel leads to the development of their consciousness, which allows them to recognize their position as marginalized subjects, and enables them to collaborate with each other in order to defeat power and abuse. As soon as this happens, they can reach emancipation and self-realization. This argument is reflected in Michel Foucault's conception of power, Jürgen Habermas's notion of emancipation, as well as the dialogic theory of Michael Bakhtin.

The second chapter explores the structure of power in *Cloud Atlas* drawing on the ideas of Michel Foucault. The novel encompasses several types of power, which make use of various instruments and techniques to subjugate and control individuals. Each type was juxtaposed against a character in the novel. Power runs through the entire social body, and leads to the dehumanization of individuals and the destruction of the world. However resistance could be possible, and the

repeated cycles of oppression and discrimination could be broken thanks to dialogism.

Dialogism in *Cloud Atlas* is thoroughly examined in the third chapter of this dissertation. The novel proved to be a dialogic work thanks to its adoption of polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality. Then, the task was determining the impact of dialogism on the characters, and their quest for emancipation. The characters are able to emancipate themselves only after they start collaborating with themselves. The collaboration resulted in the development of their consciousness and self-awareness, which allowed them to take an opposing attitude towards power.

Through the description of the experience of Sonmi-451, dialogism could be a key to reach emancipation and undermine power. Dialogic interaction allows Sonmi to get construct her subjectivity, and develop her consciousness. It gives her access to language, which enables her to cultivate herself and discover new realities and distortions about her nightmarish world. Once she realised the possibility of her freedom, she became determined to, not only free herself, but also contribute in the freedom of the others. Through her Declarations, Sonmi defeated power, as she was able to expose the corpocratic state, without being suspected

All the protagonists of *Cloud Atlas* are able to defeat power, each in his own way. Adam Ewing choses to join the abolitionists after his journey on the Pacific, which enlightened him about the greed and hypocrisy of the western civilising missions. His encounter with Autua allowed him to move from being a naïve young man, to an enlightened and wiser soul, whose ambition is to make the

world a better place. Similarly, Robert Frobisher had a realization about the social boundaries set by the upper classes. He is an inspirational figure because he was able to conceive those rigid boundaries as mere conventions, who are meant to be broken and altered. Luisa ray fights corporate corruption, and Timothy Cavendish exposes the ill-treatment of the elderly in society, and the segregation that results from the modern institutions of Power. Even in the two dystopias depicted in the novel, the element of hope is always present. Sonmi-451, a slave, who was able to emancipate herself, and become the goddess of Zakary's tale, who also succeeded to escape from the threat of cannibalism and ignorance thanks to the help of Meronym.

David Mitchell emphasises the interconnectedness of life, and the importance of collaboration between individuals. Through his novel, he draws a bleak vision of a world driven by greed for power and money, in which individuals prey on each other to achieve progress. However, by the end of his story, he provides an alternative vision to the post-apocalyptic destiny of humanity, only if people learn to fight power collectively.

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