



University of  
Stavanger

FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

## MASTER'S THESIS

Programme of study: MLIMAS

Autumn and spring semester, 2016/17

Open

Author: Silje Haarr

(Author's signature)

Supervisor: Dr Eric Dean Rasmussen

Thesis title: Subjectivity in Three Postmodern Novels by Don DeLillo and Paul Auster:  
*Mao II, Cosmopolis and Leviathan*

Keywords: American literature, Paul Auster, Don DeLillo, subjectivity, subject positions, interpellation, postmodernity, postmodern novel, ideology, capitalism, radicalism, the author, parody, pastiche

No. of pages: 102  
+ appendices/other: 9

Stavanger, 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2017  
date/year

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>List of abbreviations</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1.0. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1. A Short Presentation of Don DeLillo and Paul Auster's Texts     Chosen for this Thesis</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0. Chapter One: Subjectivity in Theory</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2.1. Ideology</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2. Louis Althusser: Interpellation and State Apparatuses</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>2.3. Michel Foucault: The Author and the Author Subject</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>2.4. Fredric Jameson: Postmodernism, Parody and Pastiche</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2.5. David Harvey: Neoliberalism</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3.0. Chapter Two: Capitalistic Subjectivity in <i>Cosmopolis</i></b>	<b>25</b>
<b>3.1. Subjectivity and language in <i>Cosmopolis</i></b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.2. Violent Subjectivity</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>3.3. Past and Future Subjectivity</b>	<b>34</b>
3.3.1. Spiritual and Digital Subjectivity	35
<b>3.4. The Limousine and the World</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.5. Masculinity and Fear in <i>Cosmopolis</i></b>	<b>40</b>
3.5.1. Capitalism and Fear	42
3.5.2. Female Subjectivity in <i>Cosmopolis</i>	44
<b>3.6. Eric Packer's Asymmetrical Subject Position</b>	<b>46</b>
3.6.1. Self-Destruction	48
<b>4.0. Chapter Three: Politicised, Radicalised Subjectivity in <i>Leviathan</i></b>	<b>53</b>
<b>4.1. The Protagonist or the Narrator</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>4.2. Doubles and Duality in <i>Leviathan</i></b>	<b>61</b>
<b>4.3. The Whole and the Fractured Subject in <i>Leviathan</i></b>	<b>63</b>
4.3.1. Subject positions in <i>Leviathan</i>	65
<b>4.4. Political Beginnings in <i>Leviathan</i></b>	<b>67</b>
<b>4.5. <i>Leviathan</i> in a Historic, Biblical and Ideological Perspective</b>	<b>70</b>
4.5.1. The Subjectivity Journey in <i>Leviathan</i>	72

<b>5.0. Chapter Four: Parody, Pastiche and Author Subjectivity in <i>Mao II</i>, <i>Leviathan</i> and <i>Cosmopolis</i></b>	<b>76</b>
<b>5.1. <i>Mao II</i> and the Pastiche Family</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>5.2. Parody and Pastiche</b>	<b>82</b>
5.2.1. The Pastiche Family Subjectivity in the Novels	83
<b>5.3. The Novels, Parody and Pastiche</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>5.4. Bill Gray and the Author Subject</b>	<b>89</b>
<b>5.5. The Author and The Truth</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>6.0. Conclusion</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Works Cited</b>	<b>103</b>

## **Abstract**

This thesis explores how fictional characters come to occupy subject positions through ideological processes such as *interpellation*. It studies how the subject positions the characters occupy define their whole lives; even hinder the development in their lives. By analysing what I refer to as the capitalistic subject position in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis* (2003), the radicalised and politicised subject position in Paul Auster's *Leviathan* (1992), and the familial and authorial subject positions in Don DeLillo's *Mao II* (1991). This thesis argues that these novels imagine a reconceptualisation of our understanding of what it means to have a self, and what it means to be completely or partially in agreement with the determining ideological processes. The selected characters are *interpellated* into their subject positions, however all of them are struggling to be fully *interpellated* by the 'hail', the calling, of ideology. This thesis claims that all subjects are *always-already interpellated* as subjects to ideology, as there is nothing on the outside of ideology.

## Acknowledgments

This has been a long and educational process. After a year in a maze of thoughts and theories, I exit, hopefully, enlightened and stronger. I feel absolutely privileged and honoured to have been working with Dr Eric Dean Rasmussen during this process. His knowledge and expertise have sometimes awed me, and sometimes (most of the times) challenged me. He has set the bar high, and it has definitely given me something to reach for, making sure I'm a far better student than I was at the start of this process. He has equipped me to take on future academic endeavours. I am incredibly grateful. Thank you very much.

I would also like to thank the teachers I have been privileged enough to encounter during my years at UiS.

I want to thank Kjersti Dybvig for proofreading my thesis, and for being an inspiration through many years. Thank you very much.

I want to thank two of my fellow students who have been there for me when I have lost my courage, told me to get over myself and carry on. Merethe Sæbø and Beth Pedersen, thank you very much for your support and for just being there. I consider you both good friends, and you are brilliant.

My parents, Torunn and Tor Anton Haarr, and my brother, Jon Haarr, have been encouraging supporters, read all the hundreds of drafts this thesis has produced, and stood on the sideline with small waving flags, cheering me on. My mother, in particular, has lent me an ear when I have read out chapters during the editing process. It meant more than I can express. Thank you.

My son, Gabriel Haarr Fjordheim, has understood the importance of letting mum work. And it is an extra encouragement to know that he has observed that hard work will get you places, along with his amazing imagination. He has derailed me with homemade Lego fidget spinners, making sure I remember what is truly important. You are my heart, my beautiful boy.

Lastly I want to thank my wonderful partner, Trevor William Tyers. Being a native speaker he has helped me read through passages and made sure the language flows. Long nights over Skype reading out strange chapters about absurd subjectivity have been quite amusing at times, and we ask ourselves what other couples do for fun. He is also the one who has been behind me no matter what I decided. To know that someone is behind you, even if you seriously (for a brief, desperate moment) consider giving up, actually encourages you to fight on. You are amazing Trevor, and I love you more than human languages can convey in words. Thank you.

**List of Abbreviations**

*CoG – City of Glass*

*C – Cosmopolis*

*L – Leviathan*

*M – Mao II*

*NATC – Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*

*P – Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*

ISA – Ideological State Apparatuses

RSA – Repressive State Apparatus

## **Subjectivity in Three Postmodern Novels by Don DeLillo and Paul Auster: *Mao II, Cosmopolis and Leviathan***

“They don’t exist outside the market. There is nowhere they can go to be on the outside.

There is no outside” *Cosmopolis*, 90

### **1.0. Introduction**

This thesis examines subject positions in postmodern fiction novels by Don DeLillo and Paul Auster. The term subjectivity is conceptualising the everyday understanding of what it means to have a self, and depending on the circumstances, the self takes on many forms. This thesis investigates some of these forms, and also how the subjectivity process occurs within the selected novels. This thesis also interrogates what role ideology has in this process, and what aspects have to be present for the specific subject position to change, or remain unchanged. The three selected novels present character subjects in deep conflict with themselves as well as with their surroundings. This thesis looks at subject positions, and explores both internal and external processes that are present when a subject acknowledges, or breaks free from his or her position.

My understanding of subjectivity translates to the sum of a human being’s thoughts, beliefs, utterances and actions. This thesis first and foremost investigates what forces drive fictional human subjects towards the various subject positions the characters are in. And also whether or not they are presented with actual choices, or if the subjects’ positions are anchored in pre-decided factors, such as environment, upbringing and education.

In the field of literary studies, the term *subjectivity* is crucial to how characters relate to other characters and to the society and environment in which they function. In this thesis the understanding of subjectivity is that part of a human mind and a human identity that subjects, and is subjected, to ideological and discursive modes in society. In a smaller scale (like within the family) and in a bigger scale (like within society and nationality), subjectivity is staged. Subjectivity is that part of a human mind that is under the control and influence of forces that outwardly may appear not to be controlled. But in reality they are controlled at every level in society and by the choices the subjects make. The specific fields of inquiry this thesis will investigate are:

1. What subject positions does the fictional subject of ideology choose to occupy?
2. What kind of shapes does violence and fear take on, in the modern capitalist subject?

3. How a subject position that conveys clarity to one subject, but confusion to the surrounding subjects.
4. How subject positions within a family can lose sight of what constitutes a family.
5. How the author and the truth become their own contradictions.

This thesis argues that the processes defined by Althusserian concepts determine the selected characters' subjectivity. Three of these concepts are *interpellation*, *Ideological State Apparatuses* and the *Repressive State Apparatus* (these will be explained in chapter one). It will also argue that the characters' current identities, also known as subject positions, are connected to, and challenged by, postmodernism and capitalism (and eventually neoliberalism).

Both authors are known to write narratives that concern the author and the author subject, and this thesis focuses on the role of the author both within the novel as well as the actual authors of the selected novels. With a starting point in Foucault's thoughts concerning the role of the author, this thesis scrutinises the author's subject position. They both have created an almost mysterious air surrounding them, and this thesis investigates what processes lie behind such choices, and how it is transferred to the fiction they both produce.

Analysing the novels separately, and as a collection, will be some of the focuses for this thesis' findings. The significance will be presented in new ideas about subject positioning in fictions by DeLillo and Auster. Further, the significance of the narratives as representations by Frederic Jameson's understanding of Parody and Pastiche, and the family within a postmodern discourse will reveal, I believe, new discoveries in how to read the selected novels.

### **1.1. A Short Presentation of Don DeLillo and Paul Auster's Texts Chosen for this Thesis**

This thesis explores how Don DeLillo and Paul Auster depict subjectivity in the selected novels, *Mao II* (1991), *Leviathan* (1993) and *Cosmopolis* (2003), the novels will be analysed in reverse chronological order.

*Cosmopolis* (by Don DeLillo) is a novel about multi billionaire, Eric Michael Packer. He gets up after yet another sleepless night and wonders what he wants to do that day. He is the CEO (Chief Executive Officer) of his own financial company. Being one of the privileged few, he belongs to the 1 % who keeps increasing the inequality gap in the world, and a member of the neoliberal super-elite. Then, after watching the sun rise over the river, he realises what he wants to do that day in April, in the year 2000; to get a haircut.



Packer surrounds himself with an entourage of advisors and security personnel, and he is the owner of an armoured limousine with state of the art electronic gadgets and surveillance systems. The limousine is an important presence in Packer's life, and will prove to mean more than just transportation. There is the implication of status that comes with owning a car like that, but to Packer it is even more. It is in many instances his whole world. Also, somehow, his employees always know how to find him, and they seek him out in his limousine rather than him seeking them out. He has daily check-ups of his asymmetrical prostate, all of this in the car suggests that the protagonist is either very careful, very scared, or there is a third element; his asymmetrical prostate. He needs to assure himself that it is constantly asymmetrical. All of these elements place the haircut he is about to have in a special position, as this is a haircut that requires him to journey from one side of the city to the other. With this move, the reader realises that the haircut is about something other than just a haircut.

Packer is a married man, a newly married man, but he acts as if he is the leader of a pack of silverback gorillas, the one with the mating privileges. The presence of a honeymoon period in the marriage does not seem to exist. During this one day in April he manages to have sexual encounters with four different women. The last one of them is his wife. However, it will also become clear that these encounters are about something other than only sex and control. Eric Packer grew up without his father, one of the very rare personal details the reader gets access to, and this has shaped him further. And even though his past is a mystery to the reader, it keeps shaping him in his relationships with his subject employees. His journey to the barbershop on the other side of town is Packer's wish to rekindle a long forgotten past. The barbershop is the place where the only clear memory of his father resides.

Eric Packer is a man who on one hand reads philosophy and listens to spiritual music, and on the other hand detects patterns in the financial markets that are hidden to other people. This pattern draws Packer like a magnet, and he believes that on the inside of this pattern lies the secret for his eternal existence. The ability to recognise a pattern gives him the upper hand in high-risk currency trading, or so DeLillo makes the reader believe. During the narrative Packer recklessly bets against the yen, and he bets to lose. All of his advisors tell him to not go through with his financial plans, but he does, and he ends up losing all of his money. This is an important twist in the novel as it strengthens the polarities in his life. At the dawn of the day, he is one of the wealthiest men on the planet, but at dusk he has lost his place in the sun, lost his money and ultimately faces a man who will become his murderer on equal terms. As long as they are in different classes of society (and thought this is not a debate concerning

class or not, this thesis recognises that class division still exists even though society prefers to say it does not), they will never meet. When Packer is as poor as Levin, they can interact.

Throughout the novel Packer's chief of security reports that there are rumours of attacks, even reports of financial kings being killed live on TV. The risk levels are raised to be able to anticipate a possible attack. But the terrorist Packer's chief of security feared turned out to be Benno Levin, a previous employee in Packer's company. Having lost his job, and in his mind his reasons to live, he now plots revenge as a final way of claiming the right to his own life. He can only live if Packer dies, or so he has come to believe. Packer, on his side, believes that if he dies, the world will stop. At the edge of the novel, these two are caught in an unresolved death dance. His limousine is destroyed, his fortune is gone, he has watched his wife leave, and all that is left is his mind, which will continue, because somehow it has to.

*Leviathan* (by Paul Auster) starts with a bomb and a man being killed from the blast. Benjamin Sachs has blown himself up on a road in Wisconsin. The narrator, Peter Aaron, realises he has lost his friend. Aaron has not only lost his friend, he also feels inclined, or even obliged, to tell the story about Benjamin Sachs, so that whoever reads it will know that he was more than a builder of bombs, more than a political activist, more than a man who could not fully function within the ideological discourses he was placed under; he was a man who had friends and family, a man who was charismatic, a man who left a mark on the people he touched. Sachs was "the first white man to draw breath in the nuclear age" (*L*, 23), as he was born the moment the Americans bombed Hiroshima. His relationship with the bomb is going to leave a mark on his whole existence. It also creates a curious doubleness with an inanimate object.

Sachs goes through a gradual change from being a husband and an author, living a seemingly normal life, to being a political activist and terrorist. Aaron attempts to account for what made this gradual, yet drastic, transformation possible. Through a series of defining events in Sachs' life, he progressively turns into a version of himself he would not have recognised, or thought himself capable of.

As a young man Sachs was sent to prison because he refused the draft to the military and the Vietnam War. While he was in prison he felt freer than ever before. In prison he wrote his only finished novel called *The New Colossus*, which is a tale about an America that has lost its way. The message he tries to convey in this novel, according to Aaron – who will always remain the only one who has read the novel – is the message that ends up fuelling Sachs' quest that later will claim his life.

One of the defining events in Sachs' life is when he deliberately falls off a balcony, almost killing himself. As significant as this moment is to him, this thesis recognises what follows in its wake as even more significant. Those events will end up changing his politically left-winged enthusiast self into a radicalised man on a serious mission. His mission is to blow up replicas of The Statue of Liberty under the nom de plume, The Phantom of Liberty.

Liberty, or freedom, is a tricky concept for Benjamin Sachs, and has been since he at the age of six watched his mother suffer a horrible panic attack at the top of The Statue of Liberty. This moment was the first defining moment in his life. Since then the term freedom is a kind of an open wound in his mind, constantly reminding him that it is not really a concept that holds any kind of truth, at least not in his personal world of concepts.

After having recovered from the fall, he goes to Vermont to work on his new novel. At one point he decides to go for a walk in the woods. This inevitably leads to him getting lost. When he finally reaches a road and manages to get a lift, he realises he has walked quite far from his cabin. This is when the moment he never wanted occurs, and he and his driver meet with a violent individual, Reed Dimaggio. Dimaggio kills the driver, and then Sachs ends up killing him, violating his own code. What happens then is that Sachs, despite having felt free in prison, flees the authorities with Dimaggio's possessions, a bag full of cash among other things.

After this, Sachs tries to atone for his sins by seeking out Dimaggio's widow and child, and paying off his debt by sharing some of the money he found in Dimaggio's car. He takes on Dimaggio's role as father and husband for a while, but eventually it is Dimaggio's thoughts about civil disobedience that draws Sachs in, setting him on the road towards Wisconsin.

As Sachs travels further and further away from himself, Peter Aaron gets his life together. Aaron cannot possibly tell Sachs's story without also telling his own story. And at the beginning of his and Sachs' narrative, when they meet for the first time, they are in opposite places in life. Here Sachs is the one with a sorted and stable life while Aaron's life is in turmoil and uproar from his divorce. They move in different directions. Aaron acquires a new wife, a new child and a stable family and job situation. Meanwhile Sachs literally ends up pieces.

*Mao II* (by Don DeLillo) is a novel about reclusive author, Bill Gray. He has hid away from the public eye for years, living off his own myth. Now he has decided to come out of hiding by having his picture taken as a proof of life. He invites a photographer to his home, and this photographer disrupts the carefully planned family life in Gray's house. Gray lives

with two other people, Scott Martineau, his assistant, and Karen Janney, his lover, though she doubles as Scott's lover as well. Between them they have fashioned a family flow that works for them, but any disturbance, in the shape of a photographer for example, makes the fragile dynamics crack and break.

When Brita, the photographer, comes to take the photos of Gray, she is first subjected to a long drive on winding and secret roads, making her feel like she is on her way to see a terrorist chief (the terrorist is an overlying theme of the novel). Connected to Gray's person is a lot of secrecy, and his thoughts on the author and the function of the author in society are salient concepts to this novel. He has not published a novel in years, but he is currently writing, rewriting and revising his next novel to the point of pastiche, another salient element in the novel. Karen Janney starts off as a member of a cult and is, in a mass wedding ceremony in Yankee Stadium, married to a man she does not know. She is willing to marry nonetheless because the cult leader apparently dreamt of their union. This union is for no other purpose than making money for the cult. The old concepts such as love and honour are long forgotten. She ends up running away from the cult, but once in the safety of her constructed family, she seeks out masses and crowds again, trying to understand their function.

None of the members in Gray's little family have really been in a family that one would constitute as normal. Karen joined a cult, Scott is an ex-drug addict, and Grey, has so far been too self-involved to take notice of any previous family he might have had. His daughter knows he is out travelling, because he has to go to her to get his passport, but he does not let her know where he is going. In the short time he is with his daughter, it becomes clear that he has fathered more children, but never really been their actual father.

*Mao II* is a layered narrative that conveys various masses and large groups, and the individuality (or lack of such) within the groups. The novel might seek to convey that the narratives of the world no longer belong to the authors but the armed radical groups. Gray, however, is convinced his presence in a Middle Eastern hostage situation will resolve it, and on that basis he breaks free from his adopted family, and goes off on this wild hunch. In doing so, he fails to let anyone know where he is going.

Bill Gray is a middle-aged man who has been living his life in hiding, indulging in too much alcohol, and now emerges as a self-appointed saviour. While he is on his way to Beirut, he has a freak accident; he gets hit by a car and gets internal damages because of his previous alcohol abuse. This is the moment Gray decides to distance himself from his own possible future, and rather invent a narrative where the car accident and the serious repercussions

happens to a character he is 'writing'. As he realises that he is seriously hurt, he sits down with a group of veterinarians rather than seeking out a doctor. What he asks them instead is if they could, with their knowledge of anatomy, help him determine if a character he is writing about is in medical trouble. The veterinarians' conclusion is that he should call an ambulance. Since Gray is no longer Gray, but his character, he does not need to take this into consideration. However, his novels outlive him, and that is all that matters to him. Bill Gray dies on the boat to Beirut; to add insult to injury, the man who finds him dead steals his passport.

## 2.0. Chapter One: Subjectivity in Theory

In this chapter the agenda is to show how the theoretical concepts by four selected theorists will help support and frame the depiction and discussion of subjectivity in the selected primary texts. To give this thesis its proper vocabulary to enable the discussions about subjectivity in the primary literature, it is productive to look at the following theorists, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Fredric Jameson and David Harvey. Their concepts and thoughts, and how this thesis understand and interpret their concepts and thoughts will form the foundation for the further analyses and discussions of the primary texts. The selected theorists represent various versions of the debate concerning what constitutes a subject, how a human subject recognises and relates to concepts such as ideology and discourse, and how conflicting elements within the subject, and in society, can confuse or clarify.

Before turning to the theorists, there are a few terminologies and concepts I find necessary to discuss briefly first. As the sum of a human being's thoughts, beliefs, utterances and actions, subjectivity and subject positions in fiction can function as tools to understand societal and social processes and why some subjects end up not fully managing to follow these.

One of these social processes is called *interpellation*. This term was coined by Louis Althusser (117). It is through these processes one can investigate how a subject position emerges; what enabling or hindering factors prop the stage for the subject to seize its centre. Most of these processes are happening without the subject (or society as such) being aware of it; making the individual a subject to state; subject to culture and education; to authority, to gender, to sexual preferences, subject to urges and instinct, and to discourse. This happens without the conscious thought or notion that one is subjected to these mentioned forces. However, it is not only humans, as individuals, that are subjected to these invisible forces in society; the forces themselves are subjected to the changes that the human influence has, making the core process of subjectivity a symbiosis between the concrete human and the abstract concepts.

The selected novels centres on human subjects' development through the course of the narratives. They either go through, or have gone through, changes that have defining influence on their current subject position. Some of the characters start at one end of themselves and end up at the other end. Or to clarify further, they start with one set of beliefs, and end up with another set of beliefs, some of which might have surprised the earlier versions of the characters in question, and others that were latent from the very beginning. Other characters are quite rigid in their determination to either keep their ideological position,

or to go through life with massive ideological change. And lastly there are characters that hide behind ‘truths’ they believe in so much that the individual is almost erased. The thesis will get to know both the characters and (to a minor degree) the authors behind the characters and narratives. Why the authors are significant in this thesis is because of the position of the author. The author function and the author position have been alluring since humanity learned to read and write. To a degree there is still a veil of mystery connected to the author. Even though it has been established that the author does not hold the only correct meaning of his narratives, his or her presence or absence from a public arena (to mention one example) intrigues the reader. The selected authors play with these conventions, entering their novels into a meta-interpretation of meta-narratives, which contributes to the understanding of why they were selected to front this thesis’ subjectivity discussion.

### **2.1. Ideology**

In conversations about, for example, normality, one can come across the term ideology as a negatively charged concept that will force, or will attempt to force, subjects to behave in a certain way; a force connected to political and religious regimes and dictatorships; not something that is connected to every single decision made during a lifetime. Ideology becomes an important, if not *the* essential, part of the process of being in various subject positions. As the analyses of the primary texts will show, the characters in question are constantly influenced and lured into believing, or misbelieving, reality. From being subjected to one’s own political convictions and conclusions, to being subjected to a worldwide financial discourse driving the internal decision-making, seeking to understand ideology is essential to understand the processes behind the characters’ progress or lack thereof.

Terry Eagleton’s book about ideology attempts to give explanations of what ideology actually is. His list of possible meanings and interpretations is long, and each single point on said list, could be interpreted to fit what humans believe ideology to be (1-2). He has a quite pragmatic approach to the concept, and he claims that it is possible to both see ideology as a wide concept covering every single discourse, and as a narrow concept where only the bigger ideologies in society can claim to be an ideology. Ideology is “fundamentally a matter of denouncing, reverencing and reviling, all of which then sometimes gets coded into a bigger discourse which looks as though it is describing the way things actually are” (19). Here Eagleton is in dialogue with Althusser, as will this thesis be.

Eagleton affirms, “ideology has a wide range of historical meanings...from the unworkably broad sense of the social determination of thought to the suspiciously narrow idea of the development of false ideas in the direct interests of the ruling class” (221). Eagleton

talks about the lies handed down from those in charge in order to keep the power. Such lies are not just seen in a historical context, they are still present in society today. He continues to claim that ideology is “neither a set of discourses nor a seamless whole...” (222). He goes against the Marxist principle of ideology being “...the founding principle of social unity...” (222), which places him in opposition to Althusser, rather than in agreement with him. However, Eagleton notes, “...the most powerful ideological effects are generated by institutions such as parliamentary democracy...” (223). In conclusion, Eagleton seems to not have reached any.

Ideology makes humans assume the natural order of things. Ideology is what is always present in every decision a human being makes, every thought process, every discourse, and it happens without the human race, or the human individual noticing, at least not until made aware of it. Understanding ideology and the ideological state apparatuses are pivotal to be able to account for what makes a subject take on various subject positions, and also what forces are at work when this process takes place. According to Terry Eagleton ideology is a concept that allows and constricts human behaviour, and it is as mild as it is wild. “The very forces that are intended to subdue chaos are secretly in love with it” (pp. xii). This could be interpreted to mean that there is self-destruct mechanisms in every thought humans have. When one breaks it down, what is at the core are human consciousness and human understandings of concepts and language. Ideology itself has not got a consciousness on the outside of the human grasp of what it is or is not, as it is an abstract manmade concept. But the understanding of ideology in the human society becomes a double-edged sword, consisting of what one should and should not do in all the situations a human being can be put it. Further, defining ideology as one homogenous thought is complicated because of its abstract nature and its many interpretations.

Truths and lies are fixed before a person develops a consciousness to enable them to grasp the concept of ideology and further to be able to question it. An individual born into poverty is less likely to find his or her way out of this situation, but rather repeat what was taught, what he or she grew up with. One could claim that ideology keeps humans in their place, confining individuals to a specific setting or destiny. However, ideology can also be the element that enables an individual to break free from a confined situation because it is interpellated by another way of thinking, a different ideological apparatus that shapes subject positions that turns a poor subject into a wealthy subject. Further, because there is no universal agreement on what ideology is or is not, the concept’s interpretation and what needs to be present to understand and work it, is in constant flux (Eagleton, 18).



Is it an ideological act to be politically left oriented, as Benjamin Sachs starts off in *Leviathan*? He simply follows his inner guidance; pointing him in the way of opposing to, for example, partake in a war (*L*, 21). Or is it an ideological act to attempt to reason with terrorist cells within a country with a non-western oriented political and religious system, such as Bill Gray means to do in *Mao II* (*M*, 170)? He, as Sachs, follows his inner guidance, does not listen to the advice to return home (*M*, 170), but sticks with playing the hero. Is it an ideological act to believe in the financial system to the point where the human aspect seizes and becomes irrelevant, such as it is for Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis* (*C*, 206)? His character seemingly has no ideology at all, but his surface reflects his surroundings, and he keeps the deeper parts hidden. This suggests he is postmodernity personified. And in a postmodern context, even ideology becomes fractured and deconstructed.

Ideology as a concept is constantly used and misused in various situations making it into an almost hollow thought. This is because it cannot possibly contain the many meanings it does and still be a fundamental force in society. Eagleton says, “for a term to have meaning, it must be possible to specify what, in particular circumstances, would count as the other of it” (7). So how can ideology be present in every decision and every aspect of a human life? If it means everything, then it ends up meaning nothing. There has to be something ideology is not, in order to define it properly. Also, as Eagleton claims, “in order to be truly effective, ideologies must make at least some minimal sense of people’s experience, must conform to some degree with what they know of social reality from their practical interaction with it” (14).

Conclusively, ideology is so much more than just one single element with one single meaning in society. It is present on every step of the way in the shaping and staging of human subject positions, present as a constant power in the world of language and concepts. In short, ideology equals the beliefs people hold. As will be shown below in the sub section about Louis Althusser, the combination of all influences a human being encounters through life, from family to culture, to religion and the legal and penal system – with their restrictions and boundaries – are ideologically charged through the Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 96). For the purpose of the following analyses ideology will be interpreted in accordance to the views of Althusser and Jameson.

## **2.2. Louis Althusser: Interpellation and State Apparatuses**

Has Althusser become a Marxist classic? (pp. vii), Fredric Jameson asks in his introduction to Althusser’s *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. From a 2017 perspective, Althusser’s ideas represent an almost golden age understanding of the difficult concepts that are exposed

to perpetual scrutiny from literary (and other) critics. After Althusser was almost discredited, literary critics are now in a position where it is possible to return to his texts (pp. vii).

“...ideological positions...never exist only in the mind or in the individual experience and consciousness; they are always supported and reinforced...by social institutions and apparatuses” (pp. xii). This totality approach towards ideology, where it is not only an internal process, or something others have, is a process that is infused and included in all parts of society and all parts of the mind.

When looking at subjectivity in the selected novels, Louis Althusser’s conclusions on how ideology functions in society, and how ideology shapes a subject into taking up various subject positions in society, are pivotal to the upcoming analysis and discussion. He links the subject positions to ideology, and suggests that they exist in an eternal symbiotic relationship.

As ideology is eternal, I must now suppress the temporal form in which I have presented the functioning of ideology, and say: ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects, which necessarily leads us to one last proposition: *individuals are always-already subjects*. Hence individuals are ‘abstract’ with respect to subjects, which they always-already are. This proposition might seem paradoxical. (119)

In Althusser’s world ideology is something that is a constant force, and it has always been a part of human existence. In this passage he contradicts his own statements. However, this paradoxical feel to ideology is what constitutes ideology to Althusser. Ideology, then, has already, and eternally, *interpellated* individuals as subjects. Ideology, like language, cannot exist without humans, and the moment humans learn about language and ideology they are subjected to both. The Individual becomes impossible in this understanding of ideology. It becomes abstract, contrary to the subject that has a form and a position within ideology and language.

What Althusser claims to be a paradox, is not a paradox after all. Ideology is accessible to everyone, he says, and every individual on the planet are subjects before they are born (119). However, what subject positions a subject to ideology chooses to occupy during his or her life is one of the questions this thesis raises. In order for a subject to occupy a subject position, he or she must be *interpellated* (agree to), this specific subject position. This is the process of *interpellation*.

So how does this process work? Althusser says, “It is indeed a peculiarity of ideology that it imposes (without appearing to do so...) obviousnesses as obviousnesses, which we

cannot *fail to recognize...*" (116). A subject is *always-already* a subject, but sometimes it takes a while to get to the truths of one's self and one's consciousness. When an obviousness finally becomes obvious "we have the inevitable and natural reaction of crying out (aloud or in the 'still, small voice of conscience'): "That's obvious! That's right! That's true!" (116). This can be recognised in how, at the knock of the door, one would go to the door and ask "Who's there?" and since it is an obviousness in this example, the subject on the other side of the door would answer "It's me. As we recognize that 'it's' him', or 'her'. We open the door, and it's true..." (117). To Althusser this is the first part of the process of *interpellation*. *Interpellation* is that hail, that "Hey, you there" (118) that is aimed at an individual who becomes a subject the moment he or she recognises and accept the 'hail' as aimed at him or her, and acknowledges the call. The example of calling out for someone on the streets includes sound (and the understanding of even *sound* in a society is also a part of this intricate interpellation process, as it is one of the most important parts that enable humans to learn language and eventually understand concepts). However, when heavy discourse changing politics and ideology calls for their subjects, the process is more complex, and often of an internal kind. This process happens after the subject's world of concepts has equipped them to accept a call. Having said that, not all subjects know what they accept when accepting a 'hail' from ideology. This is not always a conscious process; in fact mostly it is not. And some even 'believe' out of old habit without really having bothered to make their own mind up.

In the reading of *Cosmopolis* the challenge will be to determine how protagonist Eric Packer turned into a capitalist subject, and why he is not fully *interpellated* by his own capitalistic subject position. In *Leviathan* the challenge is to follow protagonist, Benjamin Sachs and narrator, Peter Aaron on their oppositely directioned life journeys, and what determining agents fully *interpellates* Sachs into a politicised, radicalised subject position. In *Mao II*, the challenge will be two main foci, one concerning the pastiche family – a point that will be discussed in relation to the other two novels as well – and the author subject. Protagonist Bill Gray is half and half interpellated by his shifting subject position. In the end he is constantly creating fictive subject positions for himself to avoid relating to a difficult reality. In all the instances above it is important to look at the process behind the choices the characters make. To help understand this process, Althusser's concepts are invaluable.

*Interpellation* is, then, one of the concepts this thesis will refer to, but there are a few other concepts that are important to the following analyses. They are the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). These apparatuses "are a certain number of realities which present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of

distinct and specialized institutions” (96). An ISA can be the family, or education, or cultural expressions. The RSA is the collective term for institutions like the police, prisons, the army and the courts. This thesis investigates the power of the ISAs in the protagonists’ lives, as well as the power of the RSA. Benjamin Sachs, from *Leviathan*, for example, is in prison, and whilst in prison he felt free, which is somewhat of a dichotomy. It needs to be analysed further in accordance to the subject position Benjamin Sachs occupies, or wishes to occupy. This will be addressed in chapter three. Eric Packer, from *Cosmopolis*, is *interpellated* to a capitalist subject position, and being at the top, he does not even flinch at the mention of the RSA. His subject position is connected to the educational ISA and to the communication ISA, as he is a very intelligent man in possession of cutting edge electronic devices. Packer’s subject position will be addressed in chapter two. Bill Gray from *Mao II* occupies the subject position of the author, as well as the subject position of a fractured family man. His fractured, pastiche family will be interpellated by hollow concepts, something that will be further addressed in chapter four.

### **2.3. Michel Foucault: The Author and the Author Subject**

In the selected novels the question of the author and his or her function in a text, both within the novels, and on the outside of the novels, is an omnipresent ingredient. All the selected novels approach this question to various degrees. *Cosmopolis* is first and foremost about ideology and capitalism, but this novel also deals with authors. Packer’s murderer, Benno Levin, is the author of a manifesto, his confessions (C, 55), though they will remain unpublished. But the other two novels, *Leviathan* and *Mao II* are both about authors and the author figure in society, the expectations towards the author, and what an author is. This question is an important part of the subjectivity investigation, which is why Michel Foucault’s thoughts on the matter are included.

“What difference does it make who is speaking” (222)? Michel Foucault is an important theorist on how society understands power, and punishment and knowledge. It would be possible to look at all three novels through the power and punishment relations, but for the purpose of this thesis it is Foucault’s thoughts on the author and the author function that will be applied. His essay “What Is an Author” is relevant to the discussion about subject positions, with a specific emphasis on who “is speaking” (222). The author function can be tied back to the notion about subjectivity. It enables a subject to hold several subject positions. Novelists often get to be critical cultural commentators, becoming a certain kind of authority, free to comment on matters and topics other subject positions cannot. Both Don DeLillo and Paul Auster grew up in a time when the author was treated like royalty (such as

for example Hemmingway). Both DeLillo and Auster witnessed how “The Death of the Author” (Roland Barthes in Leitch, 1322) came true, where the time and era screamed for a new way of looking at the classical author. Foucault’s thoughts on the author came as a response to Barthes’ essay, and it introduces the author function and the author subject. This thesis investigates the author function in the literary characters in the selected novels. Including Foucault’s thoughts on the author in this discussion is relevant because both selected authors are playing with normally perceived conventions. They write about authors that physically perish on the pages, even adding themselves as a fictional character in their novels. By doing this, the selected authors play with identity and whether or not it is possible to know who the person behind the text really is, based solely on the text.

In “What Is an Author?” Foucault discusses the problematic relationship between the author and the text, the author and the subject, the author and discourse and the author and ideology. His concept ‘the author function’ (211) classifies the different functions an author subject can take on. The author function “did not develop spontaneously as the attribution of a discourse to an individual. It is...the result of a complex operation that constructs a certain being of reason that we call “author””(113). This is the result of a process that is visible through history. In this process, though the art of reading and writing became more accessible to the masses, the author as the author-god did not diminish, or become less of an enigma. Foucault says, “the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather a question of creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears” (206). That the writing subject writes, producing a text is what matters, not *who* does the producing. The writing subject, thus, becomes subjected to the act of writing. This, again, means that the author is a subject to his or her own writing.

A miscomprehension concerning Foucault’s essay is that he attacks the actual author. But what he does is listing a way of organising the texts. The author is, instead of being an actual person, a concept that allows reader subjects to organise and group texts together. There will be an expectation connected to reading works by one author, and the reader will be able to recognise when and if the style and syntax changes drastically. This is one of the elements Bill Gray in *Mao II* relies on for his continued career. As the originator of a text, the author cannot stop being a part of the society and the discourse within which he or she writes. This in turn makes the text itself a part of such, caught in a perpetual intertextual maze. In this wilderness of historical influences and present understandings, the author subject transforms to so much more than the body writing the text. Foucault has some clarifying questions. He asks how “a subject can appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each

type of discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules?" (221). The subject in this context is the author. The author is a subject of, and subjected to, the discourse and ideology he or she functions within. And the author subject within a narrative by, for example, Paul Auster, would function within the discourse and ideology Auster constructs, and Auster himself functions within. Within said discourse and ideology, there are limitations and history. "...it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse" (221). The author cannot exist out of his or her time and his or her context. Because of history and development that brought the author to the present moment, he or she cannot claim to be in possession of an original narrative. The author subject is rather a function through which ideology and discourse can reach a perpetual state of renewal.

The author, to Foucault, is not the historical, mysterious, transcendental, magic being, capable of extracting stories that elevate, capable of producing texts that just proliferate meaning indefinitely (221). The author is the function that provides the reader subject with texts (221-222). Translating to the author not proliferating infinite meaning, but extracting certain originalities from the eternal intertextual presence. No matter how one views it, the moment one is a reader and a writer, one exist in the world of discourse, concepts, history and ideology. This even applies to DeLillo and Auster.

In his essay, Foucault refers to the process of conceptualising the author's work rather than to actual authors and their texts (207). Documents such as contracts or commercials do not have an author, nor do official letters (the latter might ha a sender, but one can assume that the text itself is a standard formulation, aimed to be understood and comprehended by many). The author remained, to Foucault, as a mark of prestige (*NATC*, 1470). However, he suggests that the author function might disappear altogether in the future (222). When he said this, he was not referring to the profession of being an author. To be a creator of texts, a creator of narratives, will always be something that cannot be stopped by discourse or ideology. But the days when the author function where the author is the master of polysemous proliferation of both discourse and ideology might be over. This is because society today constructs their authors differently than society did a hundred years ago. A philosophical author would not be read as if he or she were a poet, and a non-fiction author would not be read as a fiction author. However, categories have changed and will continue to change (213-214).

The person that is the author does not signify the text, but instead signifies a promise of a certain sort of text that one can expect from the specific author. According to Foucault,

no author precedes his or her work (221). The presence of the future promise of a future text, as Bill Gray in *Mao II* promises with his constant rewriting of the novel to come, might keep that particular author alive, even after his death. But the text does not write itself simply because an author has a name that creates certain expectations. The author becomes a "...a certain functional principle by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition and recomposition of fiction" (221). The author would in most interpretations seem like the one principle, the one interpretation, opening up a multitude of possible texts, but the fact, according to Foucault, is the opposite. The author that functions within a certain understanding of the actual author becomes his or her own limitations for the production of the text. Auster and DeLillo being postmodern authors would be expected to produce texts within that discourse.

#### **2.4. Fredric Jameson: Postmodernism, Parody and Pastiche**

In his book, *Postmodernism: Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* Fredric Jameson sets out to give an account of capitalism in a postmodern context. He lists a series of moments of critiques towards postmodernity, and thus creates a more accurate perspective of it as a historical presence in society. The term 'late capitalism' has, in a modern society, been cannibalised and means everything that is sellable and can make someone a profit. Lately, the term 'late capitalism' has turned into its own parody, and soon, when consumers forget where it started, and why, it becomes its own pastiche element. In his studies, one of his major concerns is the present world's increasing loss of a sense of history. The historical perspective constantly deteriorates, leaving humanity in a present focused state, losing the cognitive ability to historicise. These are very real concerns, and Jameson's thoughts on concepts such as parody and pastiche further confirmed these concerns. "In a postmodern world we seem condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about the past, which itself remains forever out of reach" (NATC, 1820). The history of the world is replicated from stereotypical memories of what the world thinks history was, making the present time an ongoing pastiche that is constantly replicating moments that never really were.

History is, according to Jameson, not accessible to humans apart from in textual form (NATC, 1820), and in these textual representations of historical truth Jameson's metacommentary plays an important role. The metacommentary provides "a theoretically sophisticated answer to the perennial question of the relation of aesthetics to social history", according to Vincent B. Leitch (NATC, 1819). Metacommentary not only places "cultural texts in relation to their immediate context, but also approaches them from the vantage point

of hermeneutics, exploring the interpretive strategies that shape how we understand individual works” (NATC, 1819). So to access history, it is not enough simply to read a historical text. One has to interpret the text in relation to how and when the text was written, and then interpret it through whatever time the reader is in. Then, contextualise and realise that everything is connected and nothing exists in isolation, in order to properly historicise.

In a sense, Jameson provides an account of the society as it is today, and some of the defining characteristics with a postmodern society are marking “some key boundaries between high culture and so-called mass or popular culture.” (NATC, 1847). This is one of Jameson’s concerns, at least from an academic point of view where preserving of high culture against a growing philistine group has been a key element.

According to Jameson, there exists a “full-blown postmodern building” (*P*, 38), the Bonaventure hotel in Los Angeles. He has used this as an example to describe postmodernity, as it embodies every element associated with it, from the sheer visual aspect of reflection to the abstract concepts of, for example, inaccessibility. The entrances alone preaches impassibility, built with an almost backdoor feeling to them, and having entered, one has to walk down a flight of stairs to gain access to elevators and eventually the lobby (*P*, 39). What this tells the visitors is that accessibility is not always easy; what this really translates to is that access to knowledge is not always simple, and to accomplish understanding one has to work hard. Jameson believes that “the Bonaventure aspires to being a total space, a complete world, a kind of miniature city; to this new total space...corresponds a new collective practice...the practice of a new and historically original kind of hypercrowd” (*P*, 40). If this is the case, then entrances are totally obsolete, and should not exist in the first place. This building does not wish to be a part of the city, but rather replace it (*P*, 40) making it an eerie presence, turning the rest of the city into a Platonian cave, viewing the city’s shadows in the reflective surface of the hotel’s exterior. “It is not even an exterior, inasmuch as when you seek to look at the hotel’s outer walls you cannot see the hotel itself but only the distorted images of everything that surrounds it” (*P*, 42). One could claim, quite prosaically, that this is because the architect used glass surface as the exterior skin, and glass has this reflective effect. But the message cannot be overlooked. The Bonaventure hotel is out of this world.

In the analysis of DeLillo’s *Cosmopolis* this thesis argues that Eric Packer’s limousine is a miniature world in the same sense that the Bonaventure hotel is. However, hiding the entrance of a car, even a limousine, is difficult. But being a limousine, it will only be accessible for a small part of the population, and only by invitation. This restricts the access for others than those who know about which limousine to enter, and why they can enter.



Packer himself simply expects doctors, assistants and colleagues to show up to where he is, instead of him having to seek them out, and so they do. But this thesis also claims that the limousine has the function of a womb, here drawing and expanding Ruth Helyer's thoughts on masculinity (Helyer, 127), this will be further expanded on in chapter two. To Eric Packer, the limousine is his whole world.

Jameson said that to understand the world, humanity needs a sense of the whole picture. And in order to understand the world, one needs to understand history. If not, one will not understand the present, or the modern state. However, in order to be in a position to view the world in a more total perspective, to look at history, to look at the present, to look to the future, one needs education and the financial means to acquire it. Often, as in *Cosmopolis*, the people with the means to seek out knowledge and understanding have run the risk of becoming corrupted on their way to the goal of a more total worldview, compromising their wish to act on behalf of the many rather than the few. In *Cosmopolis* DeLillo portrayed this totality view from one man's perspective, one man who looks at the world with a bigger understanding than those who are below him. This causes the gap between rich and poor to grow. Humans tend to believe what is in the paper or what they see on television. To take a deeper look in the process behind that which makes truths true, or that which makes things sellable, is not easy for the individual, especially if the human subject has scarce education and limited financial means.

It is easiest to choose to stick to one's impression about the truth, that it is what is commonly agreed upon. The American Dream will rectify whatever false truths people have accepted. Most truths have, in a historical perspective at least, been found at the end of some sort of disagreement (wars and revolutions), and to Jameson this uproar now hides in a false sentimentality and nostalgia to a time no one can really remember, but most will be able to replicate somehow. The childhood memory of a song can bring out the feelings of 'the good old times', but the good old times are nothing but misty moments remembered in false sentimentality.

What happens when one tries to replicate or revisit a feeling, a state, a narrative or a time that is no longer present in this world, or is but a veiled memory? All one has is a vague idea of what it was like, or what it looked like The representation of what ever it is (a narrative, a painting, a television show etc.) becomes something that Jameson calls pastiche. "Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style...: but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without...that still latent feeling that there exists something *normal* compared to...what is being imitated..." (1849). Parody,

then, is a replication with no original, or the memory of the original has been lost. Jameson calls it “one of the most significant features or practices in postmodernism today...” (1848). And here it is safe to assume that Jameson views postmodernity as a time that tries to have an originality to it, but rather it replicates that which it has completely forgotten. To stress it again, nothing exists in isolation, even postmodernity. Postmodernity is particularly visible in for example art, where the artists replicate art that no longer exists. The artist replicate and twist art so many times that it is no longer clear of what the art comments upon. In *Mao II*, the title alone is a pastiche that is no longer referring to chairman Mao, but to a series of pictures made by Andy Warhol. One does not have to look at art to be caught in the parody and pastiche debate. In Auster’s *Leviathan*, Benjamin Sachs looks for, or runs from, freedom, constantly unable to fully grasp the term, other than it being potentially dangerous (*L*, 35). The term freedom is no longer recognisable. In discussions about a concept such as freedom, one has to first decide in relation to whom. Freedom to one group or individual can (and most likely will) mean restriction to another group or individual. The question then becomes if it is a mental state, or an understanding that can ever be something more than an abstract concept, that could never be produced and reproduced.

Parody and pastiche are defining terms for attempting to describe that which cannot really be described. In this discussion these two terms are essential to support the findings in chapter 4 where this thesis links the three selected novels to postmodernity, parody and pastiche via the deconstructed family. This thesis also looks at capitalist subjectivity and the capitalist society in which all the characters live. What can be detected in all the selected novels is an increasing neoliberal thought process, both in society as such, and in the novels. Jameson said about neoliberalism that it is “modernity at its most streamlined” (Stuart Sim, 148), and when mentioning neoliberalism one has to mention David Harvey. Stuart Sim’s *Fifty Key Postmodern Tinkers* (2013) is a quick introduction to some of the most important theorists who are classified as postmodern. Sim’s selection portrays an eclectic group of scholars who have helped shape and define postmodernity. Among the people he has chosen to focus upon are, Paul Auster, Fredric Jameson and David Harvey. Harvey critiques both postmodernity and, in particular, neoliberalism, calling the latter one of the most destructive forces in the current world order (Sim, 134).

### **2.5. David Harvey: Neoliberalism**

David Harvey is one of the first scholars to claim that postmodernity is a short-lived phenomenon on the wane (Sim, 134), but time has shown that he might have been mistaken in this claim. However, what he fears and critiques even more than postmodernity is how

neoliberalism will threaten democracy. He gives a rather grim outlook on a world where neoliberalism is not just allowed to continue, but is presented as the only way to achieve the elusive happiness. However, this process is now so embedded in every part of society, ‘money equals happiness’, that it will be hard to provide a counter narrative to the internal truths of people. Harvey calls neoliberalism “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms...within an industrial framework characterized by...free markets and free trade” (Harvey, 2). A modified variation of the neoliberalistic frame of thoughts is that it involves less interference from a governmental point of view, making sure private investors and ‘money-makers’ can take on important roles in society, and also be a part of the decisions that are important for society as a whole. As most philosophies, the thoughts behind Neoliberalism were born as a way to fix a problem, in this instance, the problematic Socialism. But the privatisation of important and essential social elements such as health care has caused greater divisions in society where the rich gets richer and the poor avoids seeking medical help, because they cannot afford the financial ramifications. In Neoliberalism, after a market has been created, the state will then stay out of further political, economical or other debated concerns with the running of said market or company. The state funds the creations process, and then step back from further interference. Yet, political and societal opinions of the neoliberalistic elite are highly valued.

“Freedom’s just another word” (14), says Harvey. He has little optimism on behalf of the world, and he claims that concepts such as ‘freedom’ and “freedom of thought and expression” (29) are hollow and must be subjected to the deepest scrutiny (198). These thoughts are crucial for the analysis of *Leviathan*, as *freedom* is one of the protagonist’s major concerns from the age of six (*L*, 35). Just as the fictional character constantly questions these apparently universal concepts of freedom and equality, so is Harvey. He identifies the reasons for neoliberalism’s creation, and suggests that it came as a reaction to the thoughts spawned by post WWII society. Neoliberal thoughts were founded on ideas of ‘freedom’, as one of the core values of humanity, being an endangered concept under state control (14). The appeal of *freedom* as that elusive element that enables financial emancipation is a well-played move for convincing even those at the bottom that it is a good thing that most of the world’s wealth is controlled by private players. As long as one has a chance to reach the top, one endures the bottom. David Harvey says that in a society that claims to have no class division, this is exactly what society has created through choice being available only to those with financial

capacity. The individual's 'right' to be a free individual, eventually creates societal problems such as poverty and class division.

Keeping the 'wrong' political side out of interfering with the business is not difficult, because according to Harvey "...advocates of the neoliberal way now occupy positions of considerable influence in education...in media, in corporate boardrooms and financial institutions, and also in international institutions" (3). Governments have long since surrendered to the power of the financial market and the power of neoliberalism. Fighting it, at least in a US context, would be the equivalent of political suicide. Lobbying for positions within all parts of society, making sure people's 'freedom' are taken care of might just be one of the biggest smoke screens in history. The ever-present possibility of 'making it' is one of the secrets of neoliberalism's hold on the western world. Even the lowest of the low can become a millionaire, restore some kind of historically lost honour – as it is obviously the individual poor person's fault that he or she is in such a mess – and then live happily ever after. The presence of such a promise, even though it is a false promise, makes people accept that the few have access to the most wealth and opportunities in the world.

Even though Harvey was deeply troubled by the ripple effects of Neoliberalism, this is one of those elements in society that will be hard to turn around. Socialist ideas about sharing both workload and income are considered and perceived as communist thoughts; the very threat that neoliberalism is steering away from. Such thoughts take the focus away from the individual. Big multinational corporations run the world, and loyalty to flags and nations, has according to Harvey, been greatly overstated. In a historical context, why would one worry about nationality now? (35). However, "concepts of dignity and individual freedom are powerful and appealing in their own right" (5), and when a message of wealth is wrapped in the ideology of freedom, then it is hard for people to resist. It must be difficult for people like David Harvey to watch as the world gets sucked deeper and deeper into the lies of money, wealth and neoliberalism, being seduced by empty messages about individual freedom and the prospect of power. "The idea of freedom, long embedded in the US tradition, has played a conscious role in the US in the recent years. '9/11' was immediately interpreted by many as an attack on it" (5). To find that this freedom is being sold off to the normal men and women of the world is based on corporations fighting to keep their right to privatise society as a whole, would not convince many people to buy into the idea. So rather it is everyone's freedom on the line when finances and financial symbols are attacked. Neoliberalism has, according to Harvey, successfully created an economic elite (28).

Harvey suggests that Neoliberalism can be interpreted as “a utopian project to realize a theoretical design for the reorganisation of international capitalism” (19). But this is obviously Harvey trying very hard to come up with positives about a system he clearly detests. It is, rather, he says, “A political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites” (19). This means that, as much as it would be difficult to admit it in a modern society, class division is here to stay. There has always been poor and unfunded individuals in society, and there has always been those who are so rich that their wealth is not even comprehensible to those in the middle, even less so to the ones at the bottom. With forces so strong to keep society as it is, or even to increase social and financial differences further, it is hard to imagine any possible scenarios where the economic elite have society’s best interests in heart rather than making yet another dollar.

Harvey believes that “The somewhat chaotic evolution...of state institutions, powers, and functions over the last thirty years suggests...that the neoliberal state may be an unstable and contradictory political form” (64). Maybe the corruptive side of power will eventually make such financial and corporative empires implode. So how can the individualism and the freedom that the neoliberal idea supports be defended? “According to theory, the neoliberal state should favour strong individual functioning markets” (64). This line of thought transforms individualism into an essential feature. The success one individual can have is almost endless, but if a person fails, the responsibility lies with the victim and not society as such (76), making it a ruthless space where people can rise to unfathomable heights, but also plummet to the ground, and no one would even care. This is a growing element of the whole neoliberal way of thinking. A person who cannot make his or her future ‘take off’ have themselves to blame, not ideology, not predetermined, historic, misconceptions, but themselves; their lack of effort, their lack of will to succeed; their laziness.

Will democracy be able to survive, long term, in a society that so strongly advocates individuality and freedom to explore financial opportunities outside of borders and on the outside of national loyalty? Harvey suggests, “...neoliberal theorists are...profoundly suspicious of democracy. Governance by majority rule is seen as a potential threat to individual right and constitutional liberty” (66). So in a grim future scenario democracy is no longer the driving force of the free world; neoliberalism is. Current events in the US have proved this to the world where one of neoliberalism’s true success-stories has been elected president. Donald Trump already challenges democratic procedures. “Democracy is viewed as a luxury, only possible under conditions of relative affluence coupled with a strong middle-class presence to guarantee political stability” (66). But in America Donald Trump played the

*American Dream* card to the very group of people he no doubt will end up alienating. As long as the *freedom* in question is a shimmering mirage of the reality all can have if they make the right choices, then people like Trump will remain in power. The actual choices subjects in a neoliberal society have, have to be closely governed by those in charge. Freedom could in essence be translated to restriction, restriction to most. Subjects are "...not supposed to choose to construct strong institutions, such as trade unions...[and] they most certainly should not...create political parties with the aim of forcing the state to intervene in or eliminate the market" (69). Harvey claims that the US leaders of late have made a narrative where the "American neoliberal values of freedom are universal and supreme" (206). But are they really? Through the massive financial players on the market, the Apples, the Microsofts, the Coca Colas of the world, neoliberal values of power, freedom and wealth are spread. But David Harvey say there is "...a far, far nobler prospect of freedom to be won than that which neoliberalism preaches" (206), and it is probably fair to suggest he talks about Marxism, though he ends his book with an open suggestion to let the reader decide.

According to Stuart Sim, Harvey acknowledges that there are many "positive aspects to postmodernism, such as its commitment to difference" (135). He places postmodernism on the sideline claiming it has no "own distinct identity" (135). However, this is an argument one can apply to many of the -isms in today's society. Postmodernism is an evolvement of modernism, where decentralisation and deconstruction of important elements in society are the driving forces. Further, Harvey claims that postmodernism is "...dangerous for it avoids confronting the realities of political economy and the circumstances of global power" (135). But the truth is actually quite the contrary. Postmodernism, at least the way it will be interpreted in this thesis, gives a clear image of the circumstances of both power and power relations. The disturbingly fractured society that constantly focuses on individuality and success is highly visible in the selected novels, novels that are recognised as postmodern. Maybe this is where one can recognise a period or an era with the most clarity, to look to what happens and is reported and reflected in the cultural ISA. Even though one might find the mainstream culture to be shallow, and at best a way to waste time and numb feelings, culture as a concept still has room for expressions that will upset the leaders of countries and leaders of corporations. Don DeLillo and Paul Auster are two examples of this. They do not simply write a narrative that can be placed within a discourse; they comment upon the discourse as well.

### 3.0. Chapter Two: Capitalistic Subjectivity in *Cosmopolis*

In this chapter I will analyse the capitalistic subjectivity conveyed by the protagonist. The polarity of the very rich and the very poor is a thematic backdrop for the novel, and also polarities that describes the protagonist.

*Cosmopolis* is a narrative that conveys a world, or a city, caught in the numbness and the quiet before the storm, unable to deal with its present story, unable to look to its past, because of fear; fear of change, fear of what is new, fear of what might come. It becomes clear that *Cosmopolis* is a tale about a person whose humanity and opinion of self is confused, at times compromised, and most importantly, lost in the jungle of technology and wealth with which he surrounds himself. The protagonist is in deep conflict with both his masculinity and his tie to capitalism. These conflicts are the foundation for the narrative along with the violence he witnesses and performs.

*Cosmopolis* enters protagonist Eric Packer's life as he gives up trying to get some sleep and gets up to watch the new dawn (C, 6), "a day in April in the year 2000" (C, 3). Packer is a multi billionaire hedge fund executive, and the leader of his own massive financial company. Initially he is not sure what to do with himself on this day, but after a while he knows he needs a haircut (C, 7). This day in April could very well be DeLillo's referral to April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2000, when U.S. stocks plummeted and the dollar weakened against the euro and the yen, but this is never specified in the novel (*CNNMoney*, April 14. 2000). As the novel progresses it will be made clear that the haircut is a strong metaphor for Eric Packer's search for a subject position he left behind as a young boy, the subject position of someone who is dependent on others, the subject position of a child. Now he is the one who gives people jobs, and takes the jobs away. In his multi billionaire state he surrounds himself with a big group of advisors and security personnel, and he depends heavily on them. The moment he decides to get a haircut (C, 7) is also the moment he decides to bet against the yen (C, 29), going against advice from his employees. Instead of getting someone to come to him and do his hair, as he is wealthy enough to make that happen, he chooses to embark upon a journey through a fairy-tale-like gridlocked, demonstrator and terrorist infested (or at least it is so in the mind of Eric Packer) New York. The journey takes him from East to West, from 1<sup>st</sup> avenue to 12<sup>th</sup> avenue, from gentle to violent, from rich to poor, through life to death; to get his hair cut in the same barbershop he used to spend time as a boy, where memories from a forgotten past still might linger.

In what follows, this thesis examines Eric Packer's history, or lack of history, to seek to find what determined the path towards the capitalistic subject position, and why this

specific subject position has not fully *interpellated* him. Packer's emotions are just as veiled as his history. The reader does not really get to know anything substantial about his past. Some few flashbacks to how he met his wife, and how they ended up married without really knowing each other are present. Their history is a twenty-two day narrative of a seemingly unconsummated marriage (C, 15). They meet for lunch, as he is on his way to the barbershop, and she asks him to tell her one thing from his past. The only thing he can think of is how he calculated his weight on all the planets in the solar system when he was four (C, 70). The only important clue to his past is that he must have been a very intelligent little boy to figure something like that out at that age. There is never any doubt about Packer's intelligence, and this intelligence could be the reason why capitalism fails to fully *interpellate* him. However, the married couple seem a bit awkward with each other, almost as if this was an arranged marriage uniting two royal families. Their not having had sex in a while, or at all, is the ever-present elephant in any room they are in. The promise of having sex with his wife is a driving force in Packer's life, and also a foreshadowing of his downfall. It is what keeps him alive, keeps him going. Throughout the day he faces various threats and pleasures. One of the threats is a terrorist that targets people in Eric's position. He is aware of this threat, and knows someone is after. The person that follows him is his murderer, but he is not the terrorist. Packer chooses to be frivolous and enjoy as much sex as he can, but what he longs for is his wife. His life this day prepares him for the meeting with his murderer. The moment he has sex with his wife, there seems to be nothing left for the protagonist than to meet his end, he is finally his future murderer's equal (C, 178). After he has had several affairs with other women during this day, he finally makes love – not having sex – to his wife. The lovemaking happens outside and away from seats or beds or hotel rooms, to properly prove the deviant act they embark upon. The act of love between a husband and a wife should be a beautiful occasion, but here it becomes something sordid, something that is dirtier than his affairs with other women throughout the narrative. But in the moment of back-alley sex, he realises that he actually loves her. By then he has lost everything, the only thing left is death. In his life's first years, his subject position was that of a poor boy, but then he was *interpellated* into a capitalistic subject position he has in this novel. It seems that he actually needs more than just the opportunity to be rich. By keeping the reader in the dark about Packer's history, the novel both anticipates and challenges readings that would reflect any kind of gradual development from poor to rich. The novel, however, shows the reverse, from rich to poor.

David Cowart explores how DeLillo's postmodernity is linked mainly to the way he applies language, and that language is the making of everything. He claims that DeLillo's prose



has always imported significant events (210). When depicting the digitally compromised protagonist, Eric Packer, DeLillo never, according to Cowart “doubts the ultimate ability of language to humanize (and survive) technology” (211). In *Cosmopolis* Packer’s subject position of an individual who desires to exist on the inside of the machines, on the inside of technology, technology itself then becomes a hybrid between human and machine.

Cowart’s book looks at intertextuality in DeLillo’s oeuvre. There are similarities and links to previous novels, and these are intentional. *Mao II* and *Cosmopolis* are linked by more elements than being written by the same author. They are also linked by art and how art is represented (213). The art Cowart talks about is, like any digital presence, left in a past that is already forgotten. In *Cosmopolis* the digital presence constantly reproduces and renews itself (215), and even though there is a human element to this process, these humans remain hidden, making the digital components take on a life of their own. Cowart’s concern with displacement in language is transferred to displacement “...by new advances” (215). In language itself the subject might become vestigial (215). Packer’s subject position demonstrates that he is en route to a reality where even language becomes vestigial, if only he can join the digital world and leave his mortal coil behind.

David Cowart says about Packer that he surrounds himself with “...eccentric advisors and employees in technology, currency, finance, and security on his way to a haircut in the grimy old neighbourhood where his father grew up” (213), confirming Packer’s status as the epitome of capitalist superiority. He has it all, a penthouse apartment, and art that his guests do not know how to look at (C, 8). Note that they are guests, not friends. He has consultants for every decision he makes, everything but the two that will define his end; the haircut, and him wanting “...all the yen there was” (C, 97). However, seeing the choices he makes, it becomes more and more clear that the protagonist of this novel is objecting to his current subject position. It is no longer about having more money than most, it is no longer about owning art and property, and it is no longer about the yen. It is about him being able to read the pattern and interpret and understand the ever-changing market. He surrounds himself with all the latest technology, making him a subject to technology. And, according to Cowart, Packer’s fastidious eye and mind makes him constantly disapprove of the technology and the situation he is in (214), confirms that he is, in fact, in opposition to his current reality. This objection is what enables him to choose a journey that he knows is going to end in disaster, and if it does not, then at least seeking out his past to see if he could see any future at all. When he can’t, he takes on a devil-may-care attitude. Cowart also claims that Packer views himself as the custodian of the future, denying entropy (218), creating the suspense related to

Packer's final demise. A person with no future cannot possibly be the custodian of the future and paradoxically him denying entropy means his current state of supremacy will carry on indefinitely. Packer becomes somewhat of a dichotomy in this journey. Packer's only possibility to be what Cowart suggests he is, is if he takes on an eternal presence in the digital world, free of his body, his mind hooked into the market; "When he died he would not end. The world would end" (C, 6).

### **3.1. Subjectivity and language in *Cosmopolis***

Many readings of DeLillo's novels have been with a focus on language as the main tool he applies to convey, for example, postmodernity. Cowart's main view on DeLillo's oeuvre is that language not only shows, and shapes subject positions, but it does so within a postmodern discourse and framework; that postmodernism is shown first and foremost through DeLillo's use of language, and not specifically in the choice of dramaturgic structure or particular scenes. By analysing Packer's downfall, this thesis reads *Cosmopolis* from a point of view where it can show that it is not only through language that subjectivity and postmodernity becomes salient, but also through elements such as those Fredric Jameson describes when he talks about the Bonaventure hotel (1854). At the foundation of every novel is language. Applying language to draw the attention to shiny exterior reflecting the city is a postmodern tool. Shiny exterior on buildings that forces the viewer to see other buildings rather than be allowed to look in leaves the buildings in a state of constant transformation. They will never look the same, and the inside remains hidden.

Cowart suggests that the journey Packer makes during that day in April "...parodies the westward movement that has defined the nation. But chiefly DeLillo toys here with the conceit of the life-Journey" (220). Reading this novel it becomes clear that Eric Packer's journey is a parody on the numerous interpretations of immigrants who fled poverty to seek out a more prosperous future. Packer's journey is an opposite version of the *American Dream*, a parody. Further, DeLillo is cramming an awful lot of life-journey into one single day, which is another indication of the parody element Cowart is referring to. However, in chapter 4 this thesis will show that Packer's journey is, in fact, pastiche.

Packer's journey is transformed in his mind to a fictional experience happening to someone else. He is witnessing violence, death, demonstrations, funerals, attacks – everything that happens from East to West – on some sort of screen, separating the protagonist from the emotional experience and presence. His screens are computer and television screens in the limousine (C, 94), the windows (C, 86), his watch (C, 123), reflections in buildings he passes by (C, 97), and most of the time he is unable to process it; to take it all in. Even when he

watches life pass him by on the streets of New York with his own eyes, through no filter other than his own expectations and presumptions, he interprets what he sees as something theatrical in the world he is asked to understand and process (C, 99), detaching himself from the whole scene. This is a weighty part of Packer's subjectivity; he is never truly present in the now. And whether he is, as Cowart suggests, a custodian of the future (218), or he is as a person who is stuck in the past, he hides his self from the eternal now.

On his way through New York, Packer witnesses so many various expressions of subjects that position themselves seemingly on the opposite side of what Packer is capable of representing, that he simply cannot process it all. Cowart claims that the demonstrators Packer meets represent everything Packer is not, as a group of antagonists, rather than one single character representing Packer's opposite (217). They have a cause and they have no choice but to voice their cause through violence directed towards the groups they disagree with. The violence they represent is directed inwards. This inwards violence is something that Packer actually can identify with and relate to. This thesis does not read the groups of demonstrators as Packer's antagonists. Instead of being his opposites, they become his equals. Had he not been in the financial position he is in, he would probably have joined them on the barricade. Their actions as protestors are solely based on truths they have visualised and internalised, leaving action the only way to sound their voices and possibly be heard. Eric Packer, even though he might not be aware of this himself, fights the same battle. He wants to be heard and he wants to understand. His battle is fought in the digital world, which is the reason for his stoic detachment from the real world, which again is the reason why he cannot manage to produce an emotional reaction when he witnesses the person burning himself to death (C, 98). He can relate to the thought process behind the man's choice, though. It is the same choice making Packer capable of buying "...all the yen there was" (C, 97), even though he has not got the financial backing to do so, even though his advisors advised against it, even though he knows deep down he is buying his own end, he still makes that choice, and backs himself in doing so. Cowart is puzzled by how Packer remains a "son of a bitch" (222) despite his interest in poetry and philosophy. However, there is a possibility that Cowart might have misinterpreted Eric Packer's subject position and his role and presence in the novel. Packer's lack of emotions is suggesting a struggle that he cannot bring to the surface. No one is *that* unaffected by deaths and horror unless they have gone through traumas of some kind. But since the reader only gets access to a few snippets of Packer's history, one can only make guesses. Bluntly claiming that he is a "son of a bitch" (222) becomes quite harsh, and probably a premature assessment of the protagonist (this is a point I will come back to).

The reader comes along for one incredibly action packed day with Eric Packer. He meets with a series of women, he encounters protesters in the streets (C, 89), he even has a meeting with the pastry assassin (C, 141-42) whose purpose is to go after people and leaders of Packer's like and slather them in their faces with a cream pie. Every time there is a threat, his chief of security, Torval, handles the situation, protecting his boss. It is almost comical how much DeLillo lets his protagonist go through during just one day, but according to Vija Kinski, "Money makes time" (C, 79), the more money, the more time. Based on Packer's wealth, he has all the time in the world. Having said that, Vija Kinski, Packer's chief of theory, says that a new theory of time is needed. She indicates that one used to know the past, not the future, and now it has changed completely (C, 86). Time itself turns into a pastiche presence as the world, oblivious to history, powers on, attempting to predict what is to come, forgetting to look behind them, forgetting that time is limited. This is a part of Packer's subjectivity, according to Cowart (218). His distrust in what was, and what is. Packer's fortune and social status places him in a situation where subjects come to him at his leisure rather than him seeking them out. The only two things, or people, Packer actively seeks out during this day are the haircut from Anthony, his old barber, and his murderer, Benno Levin. All the other characters he encounters during the day, either seek him out or he meets them by chance or accident, the doctor that checks his asymmetrical prostate, his various chiefs of this, that and the other, and even the pastry assassin (C, 141).

### **3.2. Violent Subjectivity**

The trauma left by the terrorist attacks on 9/11 hangs as a backdrop throughout the narrative as senseless violent moments waiting to happen. According to Joseph M. Conte, DeLillo's novels, from *Americana* (1971) to the present novel, are filled "...with moments of senseless violence and deliberate acts of terrorism" meant to disturb the American psyche (180). Conte discusses a latent crisis, and the crisis he has in mind is that of capitalism. But he also points towards the ever-increasing reliance on technology. Most of the wealth in this world has been digitalised. There are no longer gold reserves kept to match the economy at any given time. Wealth, money and capitalism have almost been reduced, or maybe even elevated to an idea rather than a concrete 'thing' in the world. And in this realm Eric Packer is one of the true wizards, recognising patterns and making predictions on currency. Also, he is seemingly unaffected by the violence and death he both observes and carries out. But when he is faced with his murderer in the end, Packer actually has to educate him telling him that he has very little in society he can hate, despite the fact that he lives in a grotty apartment and has no life outside the apartment. "Violence needs a cause, a truth" (C,194), Packer says.

Joseph M. Conte's essay "Writing Amid the Ruins: 9/11 and *Cosmopolis*" places the novel in the void between the calm before the storm and the shock after the storm. In any case one is left quite paralysed. Conte reads *Cosmopolis* as a statement and a comment on the state the financial market was in just before 9/11. Also he views it as a reaction to the senseless violence a moment like 9/11 produces in all the ISAs and RSA. He observes that DeLillo claims "Terror is now the world narrative" (DeLillo quoted in Conte, 179). But DeLillo proves Conte, and even himself, wrong with both *Cosmopolis* and *Falling Man*. *Falling Man*, seemingly about 9/11, turns out to be about people, about family and about how the narrative of the world in the end belongs to whomever wants to interpret it, not just terrorists. In *Cosmopolis* there is the threat of terrorism, and Packer finds himself constantly surrounded by his team of security. His murderer is, mistakenly as such, assumed to be a terrorist, but turns out to be a former employee of Packer's company. This does not make him less dangerous, though.

Conte claims that as the Cold War had its analysts, so must the Age of Terror (183). But what this statement proves more than anything is Packer's feeling of grandeur. He is of such an opinion of himself that he has to have analysts for every decision he makes. Conte then argues that though Vija Kinski states that there is nothing on the outside of the market (C, 90), Conte believes that terrorists can exist on the outside (184). But existing on the outside would mean that none of the participants in question are familiar with ideology or have been interpellated into any kind of subject positions, that they become the song written in isolation. Eventually, "There is no outside" (C, 90), not even for terrorists. They have to have grown up in a society where they learned what to hate and what to target. They are opposing to something they do not agree with, meaning they have observed enough of the world to form an opposing subject position.

In extending the notion of senseless violence as a reading of *Cosmopolis* one can note that the senseless violence is not present just for the sake of violence; it has a purpose, and that purpose is a cultural comment. In *Cosmopolis* the moments of senseless violence are not just the violence Eric Packer represent and commits, but the violence within his mind as well as the violence from a global perspective; violence difficult to comprehend and digest. Conte argues, "...DeLillo's novels are deeply seamed with moments of senseless violence and deliberate acts of terrorism – either emanating from the American psyche or calculated to disturb it with maximum effect" (180). These moments are represented by what he encounters on his journey through New York. The violence Packer is capable of goes as far as murder. He shoots his chief of security, because he has, in Packer's eyes, become the enemy (C, 146).

As long as he remained on one of Packer's employees, Torval was a possible threat. He was Packer's subject, but he was also his superior man in being Packer's subject, loyal to his paycheck and not to his boss. Packer does not know this, he speculates, and instead of finding out for sure, he kills his chief of security with his own gun. But a particularly thought provoking moment of violence for the protagonist is when he watches a man set himself on fire (C, 97). There is a sense of such an act being acceptable if the person is "...young and driven by conviction" (C, 98). An old man setting himself on fire would be seen as a deranged man, and such an act would be futile, and cause nothing but disgust. Here Conte suggests that the act of "self-immolation" shakes Packer's confidence that the protesters' voices will not be heard (185). Their causes are not emblematic enough, making them forgettable and ghost-like. Such an act of violence can become emblematic when an individual gives his or her life for the cause. The case of emblematic violence, when being either a victim of self-inflicted harm, or simply a victim of other's violence, is another foreshadowing of Packer's violent destination. This violence is directed mostly at himself. He gets Kendra Hays to stun him with her stun gun (C, 114), and towards the end of the novel he shoots a hole in his hand (C, 196). He is desperately trying to feel, and the fact is that not even he can explain why he cannot.

In what follows, this thesis examines how Packer's subject position as a money CEO with megalomaniac traits about his abilities, mixed with the electronic devises at his disposal, and the fear in the depth of his soul driving him *interpellates* him into occupying capitalistic subject positions. Packer's substantial wealth places him in a situation where he can do almost anything he wants. It places him in a position where he is ostensibly above any ideological voices calling him. But, of course, he is no exception. He has no family to turn to, so he surrounds himself with 'bought' family members. The dominant ISA in Eric Packer's life is capitalism itself. Capitalism is not on Althusser's list of ISAs (96), but he says that his list will need to be corrected at one time, and that time could be now. Capitalism is an Ideological State Apparatus that is constantly *interpellating* humanity into occupying capitalistic subject positions. This is the dominant force in Eric Packer's life. However, Packer refuses to see himself as a subject, even to capitalism, that role is kept aside for his actual subjects. He wants to be a leader, a king; fully equipped to choose other's sacrifice, and to be the lord over his own death, to reach his full potential.

He can buy the yen even when his financial advisors tell him it is probably not a good idea. "...he was borrowing the yen at extremely low interest rates and using his money to speculate heavily in stocks that would yield potentially high returns" (C, 84). The problem with his strategy is that the more yen he borrows, the stronger the yen becomes, and the more

yen he has to pay back, making this a losing project, something Packer is fully aware of even before his advisors advised him not to go through with it. He hides behind his constructed personification of the yen, where the yen itself apparently knows it cannot go higher (C, 84). And when the yen disobeys, and goes higher, it becomes an act of violence that is a violation of the trust between the yen and Eric Packer. Packer then retaliates by borrowing even more yen.

One more implication for this reading of *Cosmopolis*, will be suggested claims that ignorance is a senseless act of violence. Ignorance is the flammable agent that starts a fire between protagonist Eric Packer and antagonist Benno Levin. In this instance ignorance leads to violence. But both Eric Packer and Benno Levin have had to endure various degrees of ignorance; both aimed directly at them, and coming from them. The ignorance Levin has to endure is that of a poor subject in the world. He becomes almost invisible. He also ignores his own life for the purpose of his revenge.

The ignorance aimed at Packer is, as with the battle both Packer and the protestors are fighting, something he is not aware of. But the fact remains, there are only two individuals in the whole novel that are interested in Eric Michael Packer for the sake of him being Eric Michael Packer and not some financial high king with all the money in the world, and they are Elise Shifrin, his wife (C, 15) and Anthony Adubato, his childhood barber (C, 159). Being the only two people in the novel who are not (or have not been) on Packer's payroll, these two stand out from the ignorance he is normally in the presence of. They are the only two confirming his humanity. The conversations he has with his employees would never have happened had they not been his employees. This places Packer at the lonely top of his empire, exposed to the violence of ignorance. He mistakes the deep conversations he has with his employees for friendly exchange of opinion, never realising that he has no friends. And being on the receiving end of that sort of violence, it is understandable that he destroys his prospects of a future beyond the pages of the novel. Elise slips through his fingers (C, 178) and Anthony belongs to a past Packer can no longer recall (C, 170); Eric Packer has nothing in the end.

Packer is not just a murderer's victim in *Cosmopolis* he is also a murderer. He kills his head of security as the subjectivity paradox between the two becomes too overwhelming for Eric Packer. "Torval was his enemy, a threat to his self-regard. When you pay a man to keep you alive, he gains a psychic edge" (C, 147). Even though the employee is a subject to the person paying his or her wages, the loyalty towards the boss is normally no deeper than to the next paycheck; if a paycheck is missed the subject becomes the boss and has leverage over the

employer. And this is what has happened with Benno Levin, who was a dis-satisfied employee at one point in Eric Packer's career as a manager and boss. When Eric Packer then kills his head of security he leaves the final little flicker of humanity behind, along with his rationality and common sense. He becomes a subject to his own destructive delusions.

How Packer performs in front of some of his subjects, his lesser employees, those not welcome in his limousine, is a parody of what the reader would suppose and expect of someone like him to be. Packer recalls that he enjoys dropping a comment that makes a subject feel worthless (C, 192). Packer sticks to his method of leadership when he convinces Benno Levin to disclose his real name, Richard Sheets. At this point in the novel, Eric Packer is at the mercy of his murderer, but still he maintains his elevated status as a more important man than Benno Levin. Even when Levin says that he cannot go on living if he does not kill Packer (C, 201), Packer does not feel intimidated. Benno Levin's name "Means nothing to me" (C, 192), and it is not just the name that is worthless, the actual person means absolutely nothing to Eric Packer. He is just the vessel, helping Packer fulfil his dream of eternal life as part of his pattern. But what this is, is bullying. Bullying, even without the hands-on violence, is senseless (apart from maybe functioning as a Darwinistic display of power), and therefore a senseless act of violence.

### **3.3. Past and Future Subjectivity**

*Cosmopolis* is a narrative that happens during one day in April, and during this day the reader gets to know Eric Packer, but not much of his history is disclosed. The novel starts in a luxurious apartment (C, 7), situated somewhere around the Turtle Bay area on 1<sup>st</sup> avenue in Manhattan. It ends up in a grotty flat with a "portable orange toilet from a construction site" (C, 186) on 12<sup>th</sup> avenue by the river. Eric Packer has journeyed from East to West.

Historically and colloquially this is known as a prosperous journey to make, for example from Europe to America in the late 1800s. But in DeLillo's novel the journey is a comment on both historically known truths, and on capitalism and prosperity. Eric's demise ends the world (C, 6), as he himself predicted. Packer's wish is to live in a future where he gives up his physical body and becomes a part of his pattern (C, 206). This is stopping him from existing in the present, and he looks very little to his past, whereas Benno Levin is his opposite in this matter. He is not capable of looking ahead, as his past (a past that includes the violent ignorance from Packer) numbs him from seeing the now, and in his present state there are no visions of a future unless his demon is dead. Benno Levin's curse is to remain in the past that let him down. But however one looks at it, there is no real past, and no prospects of a future for the protagonist and the antagonist in *Cosmopolis*.



Benno Levin used to work for Eric Packer in the capacity of analysing currency. His specific target was the Thai baht. After having left his work in the Packer-syndicate, his whole life has circled around one truth, and one truth only, to kill Eric Packer. Benno Levin has left his own life in a paused state as long as Eric Packer is alive, ignoring his own needs and wants, apart from that one overpowering desire. He is a representative of the true marginalised other, having torn himself loose from the capitalist subjectivity to which he used to belong. Now extremism has *interpellated* him, called to him, agreed with him, eventually overtaken him completely. He is only the murdering subject; this is who he is (C, 203). It is possible to see this as a comment on society, visible in any crusade blanking out the individual subject's personal journey through life. However, this is a choice Benno Levin makes after losing his job. It is a choice he was not forced to make, but chose to make. In making his cases, Conte has recognised that one reason for Levin's reaction is that he has lost faith in Eric Packer and consequently in cyber-capital (187). If there is an outside of the market, it is Levin's lair; it is most certainly the opposite of the market. Levin is sat in his little room writing his manifesto with which he hopes to stop the world (C, 152). Once both of these are executed, the death of Packer and the manifesto of Levin, the world goes on, making them both wrong.

In the further reading of the novel, one notes that Eric Packer is Levin's opposite. Looking at him from a shallow perspective, he is the person, who has everything, can have everything, and who will not be ignored. But this is an illusion made by his massive wealth and power. Levin's honesty is connecting with Packer at a fundamental level. The attention he gets normally is attention he has had to pay for, some way or another. Levin's attention is something else entirely. Alone at the top, and alone at the bottom, causing both Eric Packer and Benno Levin to be left alone with their own minds and their own delusions; no one to correct them because no one can be their equals. It is an emotional connection they both have missed out on, and even though it is a connection solely based on negative emotions, they are emotions nonetheless, inspiring them to draw the moment of connections out for as long as they possibly can before the moment of inevitability takes over, and they both stop.

### 3.3.1. Spiritual and Digital Subjectivity

In the first parts of the novel, the reader is introduced to Eric Packer, this complex, layered character that tries to manoeuvre through a jungle of emotions he is not fit to handle. On the one hand he is one of the richest men in the world, with billions at his immediate disposal. On the other hand he is extremely intelligent, which is one of the reasons he has reached his wealth and status. But he longs to be spiritual, and attempts to get an outlet for this side

through music and poetry. However, the spiritual side of Packer seems forced as if he desperately tries to hold on to something he has already lost, his humanity. Phill Pass suggests, "...it is not simply wealth, pride, or megalomania which is at stake [in *Cosmopolis*], but instead the very possibility of Eric's subjectivity which is wagered on the Yen" (142). His subjectivity is in any case connected to the capitalist mind-set he has acquired, and during this one day he is a subject of the yen. In Phill Pass' view "...consumption seems to initially offer a stable vessel for a fulfilling enunciation of Self [...] Ultimately, however, commodities prove [...] susceptible to destabilization [...]" (143). In an age where artificial intelligence could translate to an insurance of a digital eternal existence, a possible way of saving (or even uploading) one's mind to the digital realm, it would be a massive goal to the right subject to do just that. In Packer's case, his dreams of an eternal digitalised existence *interpellate* him into not just a capitalist subject position, but also a computer age subject position.

Phill Pass also, as does David Cowart, refers to the language in the novels of Don DeLillo. But his approach concerns the language of the self. "As with any language it does not consist of a single possible enunciation but is instead inherently a flexible, multipositional continuum" (16). A unified self only exists in fiction, and when faced with a fictional character that is seemingly unified, the result is at best unbelievable, at worst one-dimensional. The language of the self that is presented in *Cosmopolis* reflects an individual in conflict with following the ideological framework connected to massive wealth on the one side, and trying desperately to nurture a deep humanity and humanitarian presence on the other side. When "The ultimate commodity has become money itself..." (135), it becomes more and more of a challenge to cling on to the self when the world is so utterly dependent on such a non-stable presence as money.

Phill Pass explores how subjectivity is portrayed in DeLillo's fictions. He reads subject manifestations as an eternal battle between belonging to a society and desiring solitude. Where Cowart's focus is on the language of modernity and postmodernity, Pass' focus is on the language of the Self (7). What Pass focuses on in parts of his analysis of *Cosmopolis* are the Greek concepts DeLillo introduces the reader to, "...the art of making money" (C, 77-78). Pass claims that this "...ability is embodied in Eric's contrasting relationships with hyperreal financial information..." (138), and how Packer reacts with the information he is presented with. It becomes a little unclear as to why Pass places so much focus on this element in the novel. Packer is a moneymaker, and he has made himself into one of the most successful moneymakers in his time. But *Cosmopolis* is a narrative about the opposite of making money. The making money-bit happened in the shadows of the past the

reader is not included in. Pass acknowledges that the novel's focus is not on how Packer acquired his wealth, but rather "...charts the catastrophic decline of Packer Capital..." (140). However, both Phill Pass and this thesis observes that Packer's proficiency in moneymaking must have been of a very high standard to elevate him to the position he is in at the beginning of the novel.

After Packer fails to detect his pattern, Pass identifies that Packer surrenders his belief in the system and in the hyperreal, that it contains something deeper than what he once thought. And that this is the moment Packer loses the "...stability of his enunciation" (141), which forces him to reconsider his self (141). In extending this analysis, this thesis claims that Packer's self is determined and set in the downward spiral the moment he decides that he needs a haircut (*C*, 7). He already knows by then where he has to go to get it, and he knows what his journey through New York – eventually – will imply.

Pass claims that DeLillo's "...refusal of easy forms of classification, closure and co-option..." (7), are some of his defining qualities. This is why DeLillo most often is interpreted from a postmodern perspective. Being difficult to classify, the novels end up in a category that are difficult to classify. His novels are not pure in their postmodern representation; they rather display postmodern elements such as the fractured self. Eric Packer is, as "...the majority of [DeLillo's] characters [showing a] struggle to balance isolation and connection, independence and dependency, exile and belonging" (1-2) in his life. Packer is, according to Pass, completely alienated from a real "...connection between object and commodification..." (137), which indicates that he has either no concept of the above, that he has been away from the ideology *normality* surrounds itself with, or simply that he has no interest in understanding such concepts at all. Packer's constant use of screens, opening up several doorways to the virtual and digital, supplying him with truths untold to anyone but him, is giving him a rather peculiar discovery of his self (139), a discovery that he can be both the spiritual and the digital subject.

### **3.4. The Limousine and the World**

Eric Packer's limousine takes on a far bigger role than that of merely being the means of transporting a person from one place to another. It is first and foremost a rolling fortress, enhanced and strengthened in all possible ways. But from Packer's perspective his limousine represents so much more than a safe way of getting from A to B. The limousine becomes like the Bonaventure hotel that Fredric Jameson describes (*NATC*, 1855). But it also is a feminine presence to Packer. It represents the safety of the womb; reminding him of the times he still had his mother. She would take him to the cinema (a point Ruth Helyer makes, 127, which

will be further addressed below) in which he would learn about the masculine role from the male characters in the films, and yet still feel protected by the enclosed cinema. He has brought this feeling of safety into his adult life with the enclosed space inside his limousine. Now, wherever he goes, he can bring along his long forgotten feeling of safety. This was not his intention, but it became the result of his limousine. It is a result he is happy to keep alive. Though, connected to the limousine as the womb is also the fear of leaving it. As long as he has his limousine, he can still go back to the safety of its cramped space. But the moment he loses his limousine, he has to realise that he has been born. And once on the outside, there is no going back. Which again is another metaphor for being on the outside of everything. But everything to Packer is, in turn, a metaphor for his capitalistic subject position, a position he loses when he loses his limousine.

The limousine is Packer's rolling world, and it is a significant part of the narrative. In the beginning of the day the limousine starts off with a clean and shiny surface. As far as the city is concerned, everything and nothing could be on the inside of the almost invisible symbol of wealth. "Long white limousines had become the most unnoticed vehicles in the city" (C, 11), ghost like spectres, reflecting everything, their inconspicuous presence carrying the ideological decision makers on the inside, interpellating the rest of the city and the rest of the world to subject positions of shadows. "People eat and sleep in the shadows of what we do" (C, 14).

In the shadows moves Eric Packer's wife, Elise Shifrin, as well. She shows some half enthusiastic interest in his whereabouts. She is always presented as very cool and distanced. It as if she is representing the world he cannot really be a part of, the reflection of himself he absolutely cannot recognise. But in the closing moments of his life he desperately wants to be with her (C, 205). She does not know him enough to know what exactly it is he does for a living. "Tell me this. Where will you go now... To a meeting somewhere? To your office? Where is your office? What do you do exactly?" (C, 19). Packer probably has an office, but he is never really there. "The word office was outdated now. It has zero saturation" (C, 15). Packer is afraid without really showing it. However, he outsources his fear to his employees, letting them deal with the fear he has no time for, while hiding in his rolling office. The limousine has become his real office.

The relationship with his wife is an element that is never fully defined. Are they close or are they strangers? They keep running into each other (or he keeps running into her, or running after her every time he sees her), but the distance remains, as if she is another image on another screen, representing a pattern he cannot fully interpret. When he then loses all of

his and his wife's money, she asks him "Where?" (C, 177), he responds, "in the market." "But where? she said 'Where does it go when you lose it?'" (C, 178). Packer is unable to give an answer, and she does not really want one. This is a good image of how virtual and fake his wealth is. Conte states that *Cosmopolis* shows how the world after 9/11 is getting used to change in the shape of "...paradigm shifts..." rather than gradual change through time (181). To look at it from the point of *Cosmopolis*, it is possible to wake up one day and be a multi-billionaire, and close the day owning nothing but the clothes on one's body. Eric Packer's mentality might be challenged, and to some people this kind of behaviour would imply a mental disorder. But Eric Packer's mental state is not an issue during the course of the novel. His actions speak of a troubled man who longs for his wife, but cannot remain faithful, a man who reads the always changing financial market as any other narrative, and who craves the danger of borrowing currency he dares risk losing.

The limousine cannot reflect the city as the Bonaventure hotel does (Jameson, *NATC*, 1855) because it does not have an exterior of glass or mirrors; however, its anonymity makes it invisible to the rest of the city. "His chief of security liked the car for its anonymity" (C, 10). But even so, the exterior becomes a Platonian element. The car is the cave to the outside world, and whatever is reflected on the outside of the limousine does not affect, nor is it affected by, what is on the inside. The inside world *can* be affected by the outside world, if it chooses to, but the outside world cannot be affected by the inside world. That inside world only reflects and deflects the outside. The outside world does not need, in the Platonian way, to understand itself in the reflections or non-existence of the limousine's exterior, but the world outside is agreeing with its presence as a part of a world that they cannot touch or enter into, both literally and figuratively.

Towards the end of the day, Packer leaves his now battered vehicle that contains the part of his self that he knows and can function within (Pass, 143), and enters into the real world of utter uncertainty. There are no shiny exterior shells to hide behind anymore, no screens to open up the portals to his worlds of patterns (apart from his watch which is still on his wrist), no way of outsourcing his fear to his employees anymore, and no inner secret world hidden from the outside, only him and the rest of his time. His safe womb is destroyed and he is finally born into the world.

Packer's deviant behaviour, with countless sexual partners, is a mirror of his capitalist self, truthful and loyal to none, trying out everyone. He portrays the decadence and the superiority of an upper class one would assume did not exist, but does in this novel. His financial wealth is mostly digital, merely undefined or always changing numbers on one, or

several, of his many screens, making the wealth intangible, virtual, almost fake. He is troubled, and has difficulty keeping his relationships in accordance to relationship discourse (if such a thing exists). Nonetheless, his wealth is not just digital. He has earthly possessions, such as his forty-eight-room apartment (C, 7). Having witnessed the destruction of his limousine during this day, Packer has agreed to societal conventions saying that only the very rich subjects have cars like that. Now, when that no longer includes him, he can no longer justify the limousine.

His driver takes the limousine to the garage where it is parked every night, on the other side of town from where his apartment is (C, 171). Paradoxically enough, this emblem of wealth cannot be parked anywhere near where its owner lives. The drivers take them to their garages every night, parking symbols of massive wealth close to the neighbourhoods where poverty lingers. Packer realises the comedy as he lets his driver, Ibrahim, take the car down to the garage, and there is an air of *everything will be all right in the morning*. The garage is a magic place where all the battering from today's ordeals will be healed, and tomorrow it will be ready to resume its ghostly presence in New York, anonymously carrying who ever it is that resides at the top. If it is not Eric Michael Packer, it will be someone else.

### **3.5. Masculinity and Fear in *Cosmopolis***

The complexity of Eric Packer's character has been shaped in the history the reader is not included in. His present self is the only him the reader has access to, along with a few memories presented by his childhood barber, Anthony (C, 159). His present self is the leader of a company, surrounding himself with a group of advisors, like a king, portraying the epitome of masculinity. In her essay "DeLillo and Masculinity" Ruth Helyer claims that masculinity in DeLillo's fiction "...is an insecure construction based on dominant societal norms and presented via mediated images" (125). There is an expectation to how, for example, the Alpha male should behave and look, and most men cannot live up to such a stylised image. But Helyer notices that DeLillo's fiction depicts "...hyper masculine characters torn between upsetting and upholding the status quo...display[ing] the inadequacy of stereotypes...suggesting that...individuality is flawed and unsustainable" (125). The reader gets to know a protagonist who is both afraid of his own masculinity at the same time as he is afraid of losing it.

Both Eric Packer and Bill Gray (from *Mao II*) fit nicely with Helyer's description of DeLillo characters. Both Packer and Gray attempt to uphold the masculine role they believe they have to play; Packer playing the Alpha male that has the mating privilege, and Gray playing the hero. However, as the analysis of the characters shows, it is all an act. According

to Helyer, this is what DeLillo does in his writing. He depicts the flawed hero or the flawed Alpha male without offering an easy replacement (125). The cultural opinion about what masculinity should or should not be is significant in how these characters view themselves. The act according to what they believe to be expected of them and not necessarily according to how they would like to act. Gray knows he should seek help for his lacerated liver damage, but he cannot as he is on a heroic mission (*M*, 110). Admitting to needing help would compromise his masculinity. Packer, on the other hand, has to keep acting on every sexual tension between him and the women he encounters, as this is entertaining his idea of his own masculinity.

Masculinity conveyed through occupation (126) is an aspect most people can relate to (at least in the Western world); Fireman for boys and nurse for girls; heroic for boys and nurturing for girls. This is of course a generalisation, and nothing ever is that black and white. But, Helyer emphasises, there exists a hierarchy within the jobs DeLillo's protagonists are occupying. It does not seem to be enough to have a job that emphasises the masculinity. One has to be the best, for example the leader of an international, multi-billion hedge fund company, such as Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis*. Packer's masculinity is a complex presence in the novel, as is his connection with women. In order to stay hyper masculine he outsources his fear to his employees.

Eric Packer lives in a world where knowledge, education and financial superiority represent the elite few. But he was never fully *interpellated* by the capitalistic subject position; never fully a part of the world in which he made billions because of his fear, and his ties to a past where money was of less consequence. He is a stranger in every element he attempts to conquer. And when he can no longer place his fears with his advisors, his security team, his driver or his old barber, he is forced to face them himself. In the urge of being the best at everything he touches, he finds the courage. Unfortunately for Packer, being the best at everything he touches also means the best at failing. He has to conquer his own downfall. Having had representatives of his fear throughout the novel, he never has to show his fear. After being advised to accept additional security because of the public, televised, murder of another CEO, and being informed that the yen is indeed fading, rather than admitting or succumbing to fear, he feels refreshed. "He felt refreshed. The death of Arthur Rapp was refreshing. The prospective dip in the yen was invigorating" (C, 35). This is another contradiction in the novel as it is made clear that Eric Packer *is* afraid. He welcomes more security, he keeps his head down in his stretch limousine when he is told to do so, and he has analysts and security monitoring possible threats. And even so, he goes along with borrowing

the yen when he knows better. The reader gets a feeling he both anticipates and welcomes his end, and at the same time he does not want to go through with it. His murderer, his former employee, Benno Levin, makes mention of it, “Even when you self-destruct, you want to fail more...” (C, 193). This is an echo of the trends in society, trends that claim that only winning and winners are accepted as whole human beings in the current stage of capitalism in society.

### 3.5.1. Capitalism and Fear

It is impossible to get to know a person in just one single day. One might scratch the surface of who the person might turn out to be, but to really get to know someone, one needs to be invited below said surface, invited to see behind the mask of first meetings. Eric Packer’s mask is money, and money has two stylistic facades to show, one front and one back, which can be interpreted as one good and one bad side. No matter how much or how little money a person has, represented in *Cosmopolis* by Packer and Levin, the image and overlying meaning of money remains stable. What changes throughout the novel is what money represents in a person’s life. In Eric Packer’s life money is the commodity; he buys and sells money. Phill Pass notes that the role of money in *Cosmopolis* has lost its connection between sign and object (137), and it is as Packer’s chief of theory, Kinski theorises, “...talking to itself...” (C, 77). Pass also observes (137) that Packer is not able to conceive anything but money as money (C, 64). There is nothing that can really take the place of money and its value. Pass suggests that the normal conception and meaning of money – being able to exist in a capitalist society – “...for Eric, no longer have validity” (C, 65) as it clings to an interpretation of reality to which he no longer can relate. Eric Packer rather “delights in the hyperreality of the capital” (Pass, 137). And yet he is afraid, even having outsourced fear.

Eric Packer is a perfect figure for the current (late) stage of capitalism (Jameson, xviii). This world goes through a stage where capitalism has replaced imperialism. The goal is no longer single countries’ expansion and power but a corporate expansion and power. Nationality is not so important anymore. A bottle of coke has the same logo (and supposedly the same taste) in India as it does in Mexico. Drinking the coke means being part of a social group that has no borders. Can Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis* be a Marxist, a neoliberalist, and a postmodernist? In fact, I will suggest that he is a postmodern, neoliberal Marxist. He sees the deconstruction of his own wealth, as well as his supreme right to be in possession of such wealth as a postmodern act within a Marxist discourse.

Packer could be interpreted as cold and calculating, but he is simply living life according to how the very rich live. He is *interpellated* into both the subject position that are very wealthy, and into the subject position of those that are very poor. Being a man, in his



position, additional situations far fetched to a member of for example the middle class, emerge possibly marginalising Packer. Nonetheless, he is not marginalised like a poor subject without job and education would be. He is marginalised from comprehending how the other 99% live, and this is terrifying. He sees his own decadence being a corruption of both his masculinity and his capitalistic subject position, and it is horrifying. As long as he does not need to relate to the fear, his entourage and his surveillance systems can do that for him, he can worry about the yen.

He has a whole court of people whose job it is to look after just him. They manage his life, his days, and his fears. However, his employees are not just the place where he can keep his fear; they are also there to help keep his illusions and delusions alive. His actions this day might be misinterpreted as a possible terrorist act (Conte, 184). But Packer has no interests in being a terrorist presence. But this thesis recognises his chaotic presence in the novel. All the screens and all the talk about the digital market draw him in, and he loses his grip of reality completely. He is subjected to his own human unpredictability, and it is the element he probably fears the most. Packer keeps trying to predict the market. He attempts to eliminate the human factor by having both digital and human security protocols; countless doctor's appointments; casual sex, and what all of these elements eventually do is spiral him further into his personal abyss of non-human nothingness. In the end he fails to predict the market and human behaviour, including his own.

Eric Packer is possibly conveyed as a sociopath with constant sexual encounters during one single day (and if nothing else, one can at least admire his stamina). He could even be misunderstood as a misogynist, but this thesis does not understand him as such. His financial actions this day causes problems with the whole stock market, seemingly worldwide (C, 116) confirming the previously mentioned chaotic presence in both the market and in Packer's life. Packer needs distraction from the magnitude of what he exposes the world to. He finds this distraction in the arms of different kinds of women. Distraction and comfort do not change his actions, though. When all his financial powers and assets are being pushed in just one direction, the result is going to be either magnificent or disastrous. This side of him, the risk-taking side, has driven him too far, and his capitalist thoughts are poisoning his mind further to where *making money* has become *losing money*, and his goal is no longer for his capitalist subject's good. His world and his standards are gradually deteriorating during the day.

### 3.5.2. Female Subjectivity in *Cosmopolis*

With this sub-section this thesis claims that one of Packer's most important female relationship is with his mother, Nancy. As Helyer suggests, Packer remembers trips to a *matinée* cinema, and he describes it as a womb-like comfort (127). Not only is his limousine a rolling fortress of security, and his postmodern world within the world, it is also the safe womb which he keeps returning to time and again. Having said that, this relationship continues, even after his mother is not present in the narrative or in Packer's life. She becomes the standard to which he judges all other female subjects he meets. His mother was hardworking, so is Packer. This is also the reason, I believe, he is drawn to women who works hard to get their lives to go round, such as Kendra Hays (*C*, 114), Didi Fancher (*C*, 29) and Jane Melman (*C*, 51).

Helyer claims that all the sexual encounters Packer has during this day are "...neither original nor spontaneous, but instead planned, calculated interpretations of available influences." (130). They might come across as planned to a degree, even unoriginal, but the sex-element is more than the Alpha male's mating privilege, more than planned encounters, more than dirty sex in dark back alleys. And even though Helyer claims that the final sexual encounter on Packer's journey, which is with his wife, is staged and part of a film production that is going on in the background (131). This moment between the two is so tender and so fragile, and so real, that it is conveyed as the one true moment of human connection he has during the whole day. On his journey he meets up with women he has employed for different reasons, none of which are sex, but they all end up filling this position anyway. The dialogues he has with the women in his life are deep and existential in their form, and never interrupted by the presence of sex, which makes the sex element peripheral. His seemingly random relationships are not random at all, and they all serve as an attempt to fulfil the closeness he is searching for. Packer is far more conflicted and compassionate than previous interpretations have given him credit for. And he is certainly no "son of a bitch" (Cowart, 222). The downward spiral he is on is impossible to stop, even though he has redeeming traits of compassion and closeness hidden away in his wobbly subject position, especially when he is in the presence of Elise and Anthony.

His chief of finance, single mother, Jane Melman is in a special situation, because she is a witness to his doctor appointment where he gets his prostate checked. While witnessing his doctor checking his asymmetrical prostate, he seduces her without even touching her. The act involves a water bottle and sunglasses, and it is the equivalent of intercourse (*C*, 51). He has completely lost his shyness. He is standing naked, with the doctor's fingers up his bottom,

whilst seducing a woman. Either they both have a different way of viewing normality, or normality to someone in Packer's situation is a different normality than that of 'normal' humans. To find a man who could 'have sex' with a woman in the middle of a prostate examination in the stretch limousine is quite on the edge of what is expected of human behaviour. This is also an example of both his capitalist and masculine power.

His art expert, Didi Fancher, is a mature woman who hides behind her world of art, claiming she misses things (C, 29), but the truth is she is very up to date, and Eric knows, appreciates, and counts on this. She is also the first one to which Eric confides. "I am losing money by the ton today. Many millions. Betting against the yen" (C, 29). According to Cowart this is a foreshadowing of Packer's end (221). But Packer knows where he is heading; this is no surprise to him. Didi Fancher plays the ignorant role, pretending she has no idea what Packer is talking about, changing the subject to art, whispering that he needs a painting to feel alive (C, 30). What she really talks about, and affirms for Packer, is that he needs to speculate in currency to feel alive.

Kendra Hays is one of the people on Packer's security team. After he has had sex and conversations with her, he asks her to stun him with her stun gun (C, 114). First he pleads with her to do it because he has a notion that it will make him feel more. But it turns out that it is the opposite effect he was after all along. He loses contact with his "faculties of reason" for a while, and that makes the betting of the yen even more of a thrill (C, 115). He deliberately adds the element of numbness to his continued high-risk currency deals, making the betting itself a sexual factor.

His wife, Elise Shifrin, is from old money. She has a certain unreachable quality about her, and manages to keep him wanting more throughout the whole novel. But the most important female presence is his chief of theory, Vija Kinski. She is his voice of reason. He chooses not to listen to her, but he knows she is there. A large part of the novel is Kinski's monologue about the market and about capitalism. "He loved Vija Kinski" (C, 85), and this love Packer feels for his chief of theory is the only genuine love he feels. He can claim to love her without having sexual thoughts concerning her. Though, he imagines her "asquat his chest...not sexually or demonically driven but there to speak into his fitful sleep, to trouble his dreams with her theories" (C, 104). A sexual element present after all, however, he places her in the part of his nightmares, always theorising.

Vija Kinski remains an enigma to him, she reveals nothing about her life, she only theorises about his professional life, and this makes her a different female presence than the others. She reminds Eric of his mother. Only a few bits of information about Eric's mother are

revealed in the novel. Anthony, the barber, says that she had to carry the family after Eric's father died. Eric was only five years old. "Your mother was the brains of the outfit. That's where you get your mentality. Your mother had the wisdom" (C, 162). Vija Kinski is the representation of this element of wisdom. He likes to listen to her, and even though she does not always say what he wants to hear, he still wants to listen to her talk. He even lets Kinski sit in his seat, the seat of authority (C, 100). Why he lets her sit in his seat could have many reasons. One of them can be because she represents the mother figure in his life, and out of respect, she gets the best seat. It can also be out of curiosity; to see what she will theorise when completely in charge. Either way, he knows she likes that seat, so he gives it up for her. But as she is an enigma to him, he realises that "she was a voice with a body as afterthought, a wry smile that sailed through heavy traffic. Give her a history and she'd disappear" (C, 105). Eric Packer and Vija Kinski are two sides of the system. She is the theory behind his actions, and even though she claims that they cannot exist outside the market (C, 90), this is what they do in his stretch limousine. They exist, for a few moments, in their little bubble of theories and organic markets, outside of everything.

### **3.6. Packer's Asymmetrical Subject Position**

Eric Packer is constantly repeating in his mind, and out loud, "His prostate was asymmetrical" (C, 8). The problem is not that he might get a very serious illness if it is left unchecked, or that he might need medication and time off work, rather it is the fact that his prostate actually is asymmetrical. This information bothers him to the point where he becomes peculiar in his perception of reality. No human is perfectly symmetrical; a human has only one heart, leaving symmetry out of the equation already in physical human construction. It is true that when courting, humans are drawn to faces that represent the most symmetrical features. But even in the faces that are perceived to be symmetrical, there will be differences. So perfect symmetry and human physiology can never fully match. It is a fight Eric Packer will lose. The need symmetry in his life, and all his actions on this loaded April day are a result of him seeking this symmetry; is an irrational, and probably not fully conscious action. Paradoxically, when Eric Packer is murdered, he has an unfinished, asymmetrical haircut, he has blown a hole in one of his hands, his prostate is still asymmetrical, and his wealth and life have been squandered away on a currency deal gone completely wrong. The asymmetrical element he is trying to escape in his life is what eventually ends up following him to the bitter end, and he has no resolution and no absolution. Nevertheless, one might find that he is not running from his asymmetry, but towards it.

Eric Packer has his prostate checked out every single day, and to the normal perception this might be because of fear, and to some degree it is. When Benno Levin confesses that he too has an asymmetrical prostate, and that it means nothing, Packer's reaction is that of unbelievable relief (*C*, 199). But mostly the subliminal reason for checking his asymmetrical prostate every single day is to confirm that it is still asymmetrical. This element in Packer's life is what gives him the green light to cause financial turmoil based on his pattern recognition gone rogue, and him refusing to accept loss; only to be faced with the ultimate loss. Benno Levin agrees that Packer is trying to live symmetrically in an asymmetrical world. Or rather, he says that Eric Packer should have listened to his prostate and tracked the yen based on "The little quirk. The misshape" (*C*, 200). But the fact is that Packer did listen to his prostate. Packer might have needed balance in his life to be able to live, but to be able to die he is seeking out the imbalance in the asymmetrical. Not only is Packer's appearance asymmetrical, but also the life he leaves behind is off balance. He has only his fantasies of what his marriage would have become. It did not include him changing his ways, he wanted to be allowed to keep cheating on her, adding an asymmetrical element to their marriage as well. She is, seemingly, faithful, and he is not.

As a financial metaphor, the symmetry element becomes even stronger. Symmetry in the market sounds very grand, but is it at all achievable, and what exactly is symmetry? Conte claims "The asymmetry between the bastions of global capital and the protesters requires that their largely symbolic assaults must be spectacular" (188). This is what Packer's body is trying to show him. The inner battle that has totally submerged him, the search for perfect symmetry has made him lose his mind. Here symmetry can be seen as a trope for justice and fairness, two concepts Packer is not considering, but two concepts that follow him along on his way through New York.

Another understanding of symmetry is when it is something that is mapped out, streamlined, conformed and normal. And this is, of all the things Packer fears (or pays other people to fear for him), his absolute biggest; he fears normality. He does not even know what normality is anymore, and that is one of the reasons he seeks out his old barber, not for the purpose of a haircut at all, but for the purpose of reliving normality from a time when things were simpler. Normality and symmetry are concepts he can no longer relate to, which is why he leaves Anthony having received only half a haircut (*C*, 169). The only symmetry he can relate to at this point is that of the outside and the inside. If Anthony finishes the haircut, Packer's hair and prostate will become asymmetrical in relation to each other, and that cannot happen. In his closing hour, Packer has an empty account (probably several empty accounts),

but a forty-eight-room apartment on the 89<sup>th</sup> floor remains, again a huge imbalance. The element of symmetry is DeLillo's irony shining through, and it is suggesting, as Randy Laist confirms (159) that Eric Packer's life is more than just fear of death. His asymmetrical prostate, and in the end his asymmetrical hair, becomes emblems, symbols almost, of his connection with the market.

Randy Laist examines the connections between technology and subjectivity in Don DeLillo's novels. In *Cosmopolis* in particular, this is a salient factor. Packer is constantly surrounded by his state of the art technology, interacting with it maybe more naturally than with human beings human beings, another asymmetry in Packer's life. Laist suggests that "To think of DeLillo is to imagine a writer alone, stranded in a kind of world and possessed of a kind of awareness for which there is virtually no precedent" (1). However, this would mean that DeLillo is capable of existing on the outside of ideology and language, and that his novels were invented in solitude with no intertextual elements what so ever, adding an element of asymmetry to DeLillo as well. Both Laist and this thesis are fully aware of DeLillo's existence within discourse and ideology, and that it is his writing talent that has enabled him to create something so original.

In his reading of *Cosmopolis* Laist claims that it is "...arguably his [DeLillo's] most focused meditation of the theme of technology and subjectivity" (153). Showing the reader a familiar world presented in an eerie, unfamiliar way (153). The presence of Packer's micro world in his Limousine, driving by important matters of the world, creates asymmetry in his day. It is as if he was carelessly and mindlessly flipping through a newspaper, ending up scrutinising the obituaries. It is as if the world and what happens in it is of no consequence to Packer, but at the same time he needs to know about everything.

### 3.6.1. Self-destruction

Eric Packer is on a self-destructive path from the very beginning of the novel. The only problem is that he is not fully aware of his own desire for self-destruction. He just has an eerie feeling of incompleteness, a fact that becomes more and more visible throughout the novel. "Every act he performed was self-haunted and synthetic" (C, 6). He struggles with sleep, and in an attempt to anesthetise his mind he has tried sedatives, hypnosis, meditation, reading scientific journals and poetry. The only thing that helps him break free from his own mind for a few stolen moments is meditation. "This was the briefest of easings, a small pause in the stir of restless identities" (C, 6). Randy Laist claims, "...Eric exists at the very frontiers of what is technologically possible" (155). This places Eric Packer in the role of digital and technological pioneer, though this might be wishful thinking. He certainly wants to believe he

is more than the ordinary CEO; that he embodies abilities none of his estranged colleagues do. However, this explains his restlessness. To remain at the top, above everyone else, both mentally and literally, he has to make sacrifices. In the end his ability to be best becomes his ultimate sacrifice.

A human is never really just *one* unified self, but composed of a variety of roles and processes to manoeuvre through life and reality. A single human mind is almost like a committee of individual voices craving attention and spotlight. Money and power have replaced important elements in Packer's life, and what has come in their place are fear and a certain irrationality. Packer's elevated life in his forty-eight-room penthouse apartment has given him a view of life away from life, away from noise and disturbance. His collection of art, his dogs, his possessions are all functioning like a mask to hide the true him. According to Laist, "Eric's life takes place in the universe of electronic data" (158). One might argue that it is only his work life that takes place in "...the universe of electronic data". He is subjected to the universe of electronic data and it is subjected to him. He has been fully *interpellated* by the call of the digital age; he is occupying a technological subject position, which remains the only element that successfully and completely *interpellated* Eric Michael Packer.

Laist suggests that "DeLillo's subjects ultimately prevail over their entrapment" (2), and this is true if there is victory in death, as death is Packer's only way out of his predicaments. This day is filled with dichotomies between light and dark, and the end is not a happy end; maybe for Eric's wife, or his remaining employees (suggesting brutally here that they might be better off without him), but for him it is a grim and brutal end to a confusing life. The silver lining can be that he believes he will live on in "the pattern" (C, 86), and even though the developments in technology are based on hard facts and scientific evidence, to Packer they become almost a religion.

DeLillo's protagonist is reckless with both his investments and his life. Eric Packer has no wish at all to wait until the market stabilises so any kind of investment becomes safe. This is not how he acquired his substantial fortune in the first place. He is a risk-taker, and this urge to risk money to make money infects the rest of his reality. Eventually he becomes as indifferent with his life and future as he is with his money. He "pisses away" (C, 123) both his own and his wife's wealth with the click of a finger. He is not worried about it, as it is "all air anyway...It was lines of codes that interact in simulated space. Let them see each other clean, in killing light" (C, 124). To Eric Packer the numbers on the screen do not represent something real. He is, as far as he is concerned, watching a simulation of the world. He used to hack into security systems for money (C, 123), but now he hacks into whatever system he

likes, and he has no guilty conscious for doing so. He views himself as part of the system, as looking at himself as a slave to the system would shatter his capitalist subjectivity. Pass observes that Packer's subjectivity is linked to his strong belief that the pattern is organic, and that it is possible to foresee its movements even when others cannot (143). When Vija Kinski suggests to Packer that he can take a loss and come back later (C, 85), she has completely missed what the real battle within Packer is all about. She might be the one woman who understands him best, as a mother would understand her son. But the secrets children can hide from their mothers are many and dark. If Eric bows to the market and to loss, he will admit to being one of many, one of those who can simply do the math and make the predictions that way. To Packer, Pass believes, admitting to such failure the remaining choice is "...death over the inevitable collapse of his certainty of self" (143). Packer is not just a capitalist subject; he is a subject to the market. He has recognised a pattern in the system, an organic pattern, as he calls it, that has been brought into play (C, 24), and this pattern has become one of the few truths he can relate to. Rather than admitting that it does not exist, he descends from his throne of capitalist superiority. The pattern has interpellated him.

He views himself as exceptional among other stockbrokers. When it becomes apparent that the yen does not listen or follows his lead; that his truth was false, he finds himself in a situation where there is no way out. He was not exceptional after all. He is no healer and he is no saviour, as Benno Levin desperately wanted him to be (C, 204). But Eric Packer is not dehumanised in the manner of having no compassion or heart, or in the manner of having become distanced from his fellow humans. But the capitalist subject position he occupies has changed him. The scarce history the reader is presented with shows a man who grew up with a strong mother. His only memory of his father is left in a grotty barbershop on the other side of town. Even though he so far has outsourced his fear to his employees, and finds himself in a situation where he ought to be afraid, his final moments are in the end not spent in fear, but rather in pity for his murderer; pity for having failed him (C, 204). He leaves his capitalist subjectivity behind in the very last minutes of his life. And after that his only choice is to self-destruct beyond the point of no return. Because even though he has moments of feeling like he exists outside the market, that he knows more, feels more than most, and is capable of tapping into the pattern only he can decipher. He knows the truth, that after all, there is no symmetry, no equality, and certainly "...no outside" (C, 90).

Finally, the asymmetrical presence in the novel can be interpreted as the postmodern presence. Beauty is largely measured by symmetry, and to stretch the concept to fit with success, then success too must be measured by symmetry. Postmodernism has an



asymmetrical view on reality. The view Packer has on capitalism is through a postmodern looking glass. Peter Knight's essay "DeLillo, Postmodernism and Postmodernity" is featured in *The Cambridge Guide to Don DeLillo*, and it discusses the postmodern side of the author. Knight claims that DeLillo is "representing the turn to postmodernism in American literature" (27). But he is questioning whether or not DeLillo can be called a postmodern author. There certainly are postmodern features in his novels, such as the limousine in *Cosmopolis*. He does not come up with a conclusive answer to this question (and maybe it does not really matter – DeLillo can be analysed within a postmodern discourse even if he is a modernist author).

Knight is in dialogue with Fredric Jameson and claims, "The real significance of [his] analysis of postmodernism as the *Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* is the insight that postmodernity shapes art not just at the level of content but in its very form" (35). With this in mind, *Cosmopolis* becomes a postmodern battle cry. Everything is constructed to the point where parody is eclipsed by pastiche, the limousine, the family, the market. The only element that in the end becomes human, familiar and safe is Packer's revolution in his own life. Even his one-man revolution is a hollow mockery.

Knight claims that modernism's voice was silenced when its art expression became a part of normality, losing its rebellious sting, and that postmodernism is not, in this interpretation, a way to express art in a new way, but rather a further narrowing of the modernistic perspective (28). What it is a result of, or an evolving of, is modernism. Artistic expressions are a part of time, discourse and ideology. No matter how original one wants to be, one cannot escape history. Knight discusses DeLillo's focus on "...the problematic role of the artist in an age of boundless consumerism"(28) – which is also a point that can be related to Auster as well – every artistic expression is reproduced until one forgets where it started, and nothing authentic remains at all. Though, this is a rather pessimistic view on art in general. Sometimes there comes along new expressions that become the foundation for a new era, such as postmodernism. And though it is a reproduction in form, it becomes something completely new in its core, and that is where postmodernism exists. DeLillo's novels are not just a comment on the diagnosis of society; they are also "expressive symptoms of some of the profound social and economic changes that we can barely grasp at a conscious level" (35).

This is present in every part of the novel, even concerning Packer's exit. Conte suggests that Packer "assumes the role of the prophet" (185), a role he takes to the very extreme. If Conte's suggestion is correct, then the violence Eric exposes himself to in the end becomes as emblematic as that of the ablazed protester, giving his life as a saviour. One could see half of Packer as a prophet. He gives himself half a stigmata by just shooting one of his

hands (C, 196), thus he remains asymmetrical to the bitter end; the asymmetrical financial prophet. The problem with such a statement is that Eric Packer only dies in the imagination of the reader; there is never an actual gunshot aimed at his body. His narrative stops just before Levin allegedly pulls the trigger (C, 204). Packer fails to embrace the role of the scapegoat that assumes responsibility for his and the world's mistakes; when his money is spent, he simply stops.

DeLillo's characters are not heroes or villains; they are human subjects. But Packer is something else entirely; the more he spends of his money on the yen, the bigger the effect on the market. "When he died he would not end. The worlds would end" (C, 6). When he towards the end of the novel spends everything he has, the financial world does indeed come to an end. And though this was a temporary end, for a few seconds Packer reached his goal.

#### 4.0. Chapter Three: Politicised, Radicalised Subjectivity in *Leviathan*

In this chapter I will analyse protagonist, Benjamin Sachs and narrator Peter Aaron's journeys towards occupying the subject positions that resonates most honestly within them.

Paul Auster's novel, *Leviathan* from 1992, is a 2<sup>nd</sup> person narrative that centres on what happens in a human mind when driven to the extreme margins of society by radicalisation caused by inner battles. *Leviathan* is structured around the story about the life and death of Benjamin Sachs. He is, according to the narrator, Peter Aaron, a tall and charismatic man, husband, friend and author, and he is willing to go to prison for his own principles about peace and political convictions (*L*, 19). Other readings of this novel have focused on Sachs' fall from the balcony as the most important moment in his subjectivity development (*L*, 106). I recognise that this is an important moment in the protagonist's life and subject position development, but his thesis will claim that the moment Sachs becomes what he feared he would become if he went to war; becoming a murderer (*L*, 153), is the most significant turning point for Sachs. He refused to go to the war because of pacifistic reasons, and when he then finds himself capable of taking a life, it shakes him completely.

As a young man Sachs surrendered his freedom for his political beliefs, portraying mental capacities most subjects in any society would not embody. He went to prison when he refused the draft. One can discuss whether or not it is valiant and heroic, or even fruitful and necessary, to go to war for one's nation. The people who refuse to go to war are in reality only given one choice, to go to prison. In Auster's novel, the protagonist goes against his country's expectation of a young, strong and able man. He must face the consequences, and ends up in prison. Sachs tells his friend, Peter Aaron, that he never felt as free as he did while he did his time, which creates a dichotomy. "You don't have to worry about anything in there...your whole life is mapped out for you in advance. You'd be surprised how much freedom that gives you" (*L*, 20). How can one be free when freedom is what has been taken away? A quick explanation is that this is because Sachs no longer had to worry about food or laundry and other generic elements that go hand in hand with being left to one's own devices in the free world. He simply adjusted to the smaller world he was given and expanded his inner world instead. But a deeper explanation is that he was given the freedom to dive into the deep corners of himself, his own mind, and write. While in prison there were no expectations of him, and he did not need to be a part of society. He was also there with a clear conscience, as he knew he had done nothing wrong. He had simply refused to go to war to kill, and possibly be killed. Becoming a man who takes a human life is one of Sachs' biggest fears. This is a fear that will haunt him, and eventually destroy him.

The imprisonment element in the novel plays on various notions of ideology. Althusser's ISAs and RSA (96) are significant for both the ideological discussion and for the emotional aspects of Sachs' changing subject positions. Fredric Jameson talks about postmodernity, and writing within a postmodern discourse as "...the imprisonment of the past" (1850). Benjamin Sachs is forcefully placed behind bars, and whilst in this position he is imprisoning his own past, giving birth to the concept of his new and fractured self. When he is no longer in the hands of the RSA, he is a postmodern incarnation of his previous modern self. He started as a pacifist and went to prison for his convictions. But after he is placed in a situation where killing Reed Dimaggio (*L*, 153) is his only choice, he cannot find peace in the prospect of another prison sentence. One reason for this could be because this time he is not innocent. Prison would now become the restraining and repressive presence it is supposed to be in a society. Even though he probably would have been found not guilty, since the death was a result of self-defence, Sachs has no intentions of staying to wait for the authorities. In this moment he accepts the subject position of a fugitive. Since he knows he has ended another man's life, and this etches on his soul, it forces him to seek some sort of redemption. The only way to atone for his sins is to unravel the dead man's past and continue his work. However, the thoughts that ended Sachs up in prison when he was younger, are lingering on in his mind, forcing him to perform acts of terrorism. The fugitive subject position is one step away from a proper objection towards the apparatus hunting him, and gradually he comes to occupy the subject position of the terrorist. His terrorist acts remain only of symbolic construction (Aliko Varvogli, 141), as his targets are the replica statues of the Statue of Liberty located around the country. But terrorist acts nonetheless, and in the eyes of the authorities, this is his whole subject position.

Aliko Varvogli gives an in-depth analysis of Auster's novels. Her focus points are mainly on intertextuality in Auster's oeuvre, and how he writes within a postmodern discourse. She recognises clear elements that are always salient in the Austerian narrative technique, such as "...metafictive elements with a clearly articulated interest in, and engagement with, the contemporary world" (2). Auster leaves a recognisable fingerprint in his narratives, and one of the most striking aspects is how he depicts the author and the author's subject position in a contemporary setting. "Much like his fictional character Benjamin Sachs in *Leviathan*, Auster's interest in books is what prompts him to take a political stance, so that the public and private spheres are seen to exist in a new, unexpected relationship" (2). Sachs' interest in both books and politics ultimately confuses him.

The intertextual factor is one of the cornerstones of ideology. Humans are a sum of the things learned, lived, acted on, experienced and thought. Sachs becomes what he becomes in the end because he is *always-already* a subject to ideology (Althusser, 119). Varvogli claims, “Auster’s intertextual strategies...undermine traditional notions of authorship and authority” (18). Many readings of Auster’s novels have been with a focus on the author and whether or not Auster himself can be recognised in his texts. His author characters in his novels are indeed characters, not him. Varvogli has, in her book, “...tried to explore different aspects of the intertext, and to consider how they shape, and are shaped by, Auster’s fiction” (19). And though this thesis is not primarily about intertextuality, it becomes important when looking at parody and pastiche, as well as when looking at Auster’s texts. Having read classical texts and then moving on to Auster will provide the reader with a way to comprehend Auster. But, when having read Auster, one gets a new understanding of the classical texts (19). Varvogli’s claim is actually suggesting that Auster’s texts are of a canonical nature. What happens is that one text changes the realities and truths in other texts that came before.

Truth is a big concept running through this entire thesis as an overall element, and its various interpretations and representations cause all sorts of trouble for the characters, and for the readers. Because of its elusiveness, subjectivity and how difficult it is to claim that some things are true and other things are not; it will be an eternal question among the pensive. According to Varvogli *Leviathan* is Auster’s most realistic novel to date (141), and that it is “...populated by more realistic characters than any of Auster’s previous books...” (143). Varvogli’s book was written in 2001, but the elements of realistic narrative and characters still apply. Even though Auster’s last novel *4321* is a narrative that is seemingly realistic in style, it deals with alternative realities, so even today in 2017 *Leviathan* remains one of the most realistic novels Auster has written. However, there are clear elements of recognisability to the Austerian narrative technique, and this is no different in *Leviathan*. The Western reader will recognise both the scenery and the mentality of the novel’s characters. What the reader recognises, and comes to expect, is the representation of both the time period and of the development in the characters. It is a narrative set to a recognisable universe, but this recognisability is where one mistakes fiction for truth. Not only is the novel fiction, but it is also a narrative that tricks the reader into believing that the narrator’s story can be nothing else than the truth, the narrator even says so himself (*L*, 2).

In a fictional narrative that is mostly about the life and choices of a dead man, it is only natural that the narrator’s life story seeps through, especially when the two stories are so closely linked. This is not a biography about Benjamin Sachs. It is Peter Aaron’s

understanding of his friend. Varvogli claims that Aaron's narrative is first and foremost him accounting for his own journey rather than him telling Sachs' story (142). But the journey Aaron goes through is nothing like the journey Sachs goes through. When Aaron introduces his past self in the story about Sachs, he introduces a man that is broken, almost completely shattered by all the things life has handed him. While at the same time the protagonist of the novel is introduced as a man that (seemingly) has his life together. The journey Aaron describes is both his own, and Sachs', but their journeys are far from the same. Varvogli also suggests that *Leviathan* can be compared to another of Paul Auster's novels, *The Locked Room* (1985), and to some degree the two novels have similarities. Both novels are about a missing protagonist. Both novels are about how it is up to a narrator to investigate who the protagonists really were. Both narrators share a drive for self-destruction, and both narrators are saved by their significant others. However, the narrator of *The Locked Room* (who remains nameless throughout the novel) goes to further extremes in his journey of self-destruction than Aaron ever does. And only a very forgiving partner would take back a person after *The Locked Room*'s narrator did what he did. Aaron's self-destruct-path stops the moment he meets his partner, Iris (L, 101). "By the next morning, Iris had become my happy ending, the miracle that had fallen down on me when I was least expecting it" (L, 103). However, in Aaron's wedding it becomes, for the first time, clear that the tables have now turned on the dynamics between Sachs and Aaron. Sachs is now the one on the road to a shattered self, and Aaron is now on the road to a whole self. Sachs' speech as best man, indicates that there are cracks in what Aaron thought of as a held-together life and consciousness. "...he got there before I did..." (L, 103), *there* alluding here to the happy ending Aaron and Iris became for each other. So as Aaron can in some interpretations be seen as a flawed narrator of Benjamin Sachs' story, he is also the protagonist and narrator of his own story. They remain stories that are closely linked to, and inspired by, both the presence and the absence of Benjamin Sachs.

#### **4.1. The Protagonist or the Narrator**

The absence of Sachs puts Aaron in a position where he feels almost obliged to make sure Sachs' story is told. The impression the authorities have of Sachs is that he is a terrorist. Aaron is the only one who can give Sachs his humanity back. Eric Wirth, when talking about Paul Auster's *Ghosts* (1985) suggests, "...the narrator negates the story under narration..." (147), emphasising that whatever is presented as the truth is not necessarily so. In *Leviathan*'s case one could argue that this is applicable too. However, one must determine whose truth is in question. Aaron admits that he has to work fast to give the true story about Sachs (L, 2).

Speed could be relevant because of the possibility of memory loss. It could be because of the fear of being interrupted by the authorities (RSA). Or perhaps speed is there to make sure that Aaron's voice is the only, or at least the first, written representation of his friend's life. It could also be because of fear, or because of ego. The reader has no guarantee of Aaron's being the true story. There are no such guarantees. He only has access to parts of the story, and what he does know is exposed to the changes of memory through time. This means that the story the readers are presented with, and the subject position of Benjamin Sachs, could very well be fiction.

Wirth says, in his essay "A Look Back from the Horizon" that Auster's style of writing is one that is coherent with the postmodern discourse (if indeed the postmodern discourse is a coherent presence). Wirth claims that Auster has detected a missing piece in the human consciousness that simply had to be further investigated (171). That Auster writes about the human fractured mind is far easier to comprehend, but Wirth upholds that there is an element of paradox in Auster's novels, that they cancel themselves out, so to speak (171). Even when a character or narrative is seemingly in possession of a solution or a remedy to remove all possible misunderstandings connected to readings (of for example Auster's work), that solution itself emerges as a new source of misunderstandings (171). In such a reality the narrative and the possible readings of the narrative are caught in a perpetual circle of dwelling on what could be.

Wirth emphasises, "Every configuration of the world is anticipated in thought. There is nothing outside human acts, no recourse beyond considerations of our use" (172). This is where the notion of core humanity begins, but also where the same notion fails to deliver truth and validity. According to postmodernity, there exists no such core, and it is in this realm Auster writes his novels. With a focus on that is intangible because it is difficult and challenging to fully grasp, that is where Auster's characters and narratives emerge. They do not necessarily reflect the common perception of the world, but nonetheless, they are of this world.

An opposite does not construct the concept of a wholeness of self into a fixed subject position, nor does it provide a universal understanding of what a human mind really is. Wirth, however, claims that the human thought must "...live some sort of public life to be conceivable" (172), that there must be an opposition of some kind to fully grasp one's own thoughts, and to understand what they are not. Having said that, a subject is a "unity of meaning" (Husserl cited in Wirth, 173). It is this unity Sachs is looking for, that he fails to locate until the very end when he is fully interpellated into the terrorist subject position.

Benjamin Sachs is looking for his unified self and the unified nation. Varvogli says, “The narrator who sets out to find his missing friend has to confront his own imitations as a seeker of truth, as a writer, but what he achieves is not an insight into his friend’s true self” (142). This becomes one of this novel’s paradoxes. The reader is not certain whose story they are reading. To explain someone else’s road to politicised radicalisation, one will always wonder whose story, whose point of view, whose voice it really is. Varvogli continues, “Instead, he [Aaron] is confronted with the realisation of the unavailability of truth and objectivity” (142). Aaron claims to be on a mission to “...give the true story of how he [Sachs] happened to be on that road in Wisconsin” (*L*, 2). Objectivity does not exist in human interactions. It cannot, because objectivity means a complete emotional detachment from the situation, and that is impossible. The only objective element is that Sachs did die. Other than that, everything he did during his life was interpreted both by his surroundings and himself. The perspective the reader is presented with is mostly Aaron’s, and it cannot be a cold and analytic rendition of a life, as Aaron and Sachs were best friends. Lastly Varvogli suggests, “The only truth each narrator arrive at is the truth of the story he has created in the process of his investigation” (142). The essence of this comment is that the only truth the reader can truly trust is that the text in front of them is a text. Other than that, truth becomes a concept in flux, a concept that varies from discourse to discourse, from ideology to ideology.

In his novel, *The New Colossus*, Sachs writes about an America that has lost its way, and the only one who could interpret the compass for finding the way back, Thoreau, is dead (*L*, 38). “...we have no hope of finding ourselves again” (*L*, 39). This is the message from Sachs’ novel, but it becomes the message fuelling the drive to help America find its political and governmental way again. Sachs’ plan is to become the man with the compass in the real world (keeping in mind that the ‘real world’ is still a fictional world). In becoming a version of his own creation, he cancels himself out. Wirth claims, “That we have filled up the world eliminates the world...or itself becomes the world...The equation that leaves us solitary cancels us out” (171). Claiming that everything humanity does cancels out everything else is a destructive thought. But also, capitalist thinker and philosopher, Fredric Jameson supports this notion (he was the one that renewed these thoughts in the present time), that humanity slowly, or rather with increasing speed, is losing its history. Jameson’s battle cry is “Always historicize” (*NATC*, 1822). But having said that, the world is the world filled with all that was, all that is, and all that can be. History does not vanish because something new takes its place, but has to relate to the new element. History is interpreted by the present, and big moments in history can now be understood through contemporary novels, representations and films, rather



than by their historical accuracy. Jameson says that “...only another, stronger interpretation can overthrow and practically refute an interpretation already in place” (NATC, 1826), meaning that if the arguments are strong enough and convincing enough the *new* interpretation will take a previous interpretation’s place in world history.

The novel Sachs wrote in prison is an explanation of why he has not been fully interpellated to occupy a subject position of a husband and a middle class author living in accordance to norms in society. Benjamin Sachs wants change in the political system, but not at the cost of lives (L, 233). Here one can wonder what change he expects non-violent actions to accomplish. As mentioned above, it is a part of his atonement for having been the reason for another man’s death, and he picks up the dead man’s torch in an attempt to redeem himself. But, it is more than that. Sachs would not have been capable of going to the extremes he does, by making his own explosives and actually going through with his plans had it not been for his inner drive to oppose the system and the ideology. Targeting symbols and not people can scar the nation as the nation views the symbol as important. The first (and most powerful) reaction to this kind of terrorism would be unity among the people, unity in knowing that the RSA must be strengthened. Law enforcement must venture out to catch the madman, and incarcerate him, and then let us rebuild the symbol of freedom. This ultimately creates a paradox. Is the RSA Althusser (96) conveys, consisting of Police, courts, prisons and army, the price to pay for freedom? Freedom has to be restricted in order for people to feel free. A system without commonly agreed upon laws would feel unsafe and ungrounded. And this is the society the final subject position Sachs will occupy is seeking, the society that has been transformed into anarchy.

Humans are *always-already* (Althusser, 119) subjects to ideology, and ideology determines that a human society needs law and order to function. It is safe to assume that in a society primarily without any laws, laws and hierarchy would still develop, but on a smaller scales. Existing in structure-free harmony is a utopian idea, and would incline a hive-mentality among the citizens, but even in a hive there is a queen. Disagreements can be the cause of the outbreak of violence. The society Sachs looks for would not be the society he dreams of. This is something he knows deep down, something that explains why he is on a solitary quest. He goes out of his way to ensure no one is hurt when he blows up the symbols of the freedom he deems to be false. But he cannot see that total freedom, free from ideology and repression, would cause insecurity and frustration, eventually causing violence and damage. There is a fine line of how powerful the RSA can be before it becomes a dictatorship. Also, within the RSAs individuals can become more repressive than they are meant to be. This is

also the case within the ISA. All of these apparatuses, the ideological and the repressive, can become one and the same thing. The dynamics within a family can be a totalitarian dictatorship, and the school can be a place where pupils learn subordination and restriction rather than expanding the mind and encouraging freethinking. It all comes down to the individual person conveying and interpreting the ideology within its apparatus. If a person who was born into a family of violence and terror becomes a police officer or a prison guard, then that individual will potentially end up as a more repressive agent than is necessary. The same individual in a teacher role, or as a family member, will also potentially continue down the path of what was taught, or what *interpellated* him or her, as a child, which then introduces the repressive element to the ISAs. However, the ideology free society Sachs views as ideal is flawed, and is not a possibility, because there is nothing on the outside.

Even within Sachs' world of non-ideology (or his assumed world of non-ideology), there exists a discourse and an ideology. There is also uniformity to the way one is supposed to think as a part of this group. The people that came before will *interpellate* those coming after. What one individual says about anarchism would make sense to another individual who is *interpellated* by the same ideology. Wirth says that "...to understand objects as appearance is to make them dependent on something: on that before which they appear" (173), the same can be said about human presence in the world. Was that presence even a presence before someone made notice of it? There is nothing on the outside of language, concepts and ideology, and as Althusser says, "...ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects, which amounts to making it clear that individuals are always-already interpellated by ideology as subjects..." (119). As long as humans have language, it is completely impossible to exist in this world without being *interpellated* by some kind of ideology. No humans are born in solitude, no humans are grown, as some apocalyptic science fiction stories might convey. There will always be at least one other person present at the birth of a child, and already by then ideology takes a hold. Whether or not a tree makes a sound if it falls without someone present to hear it can be used to illustrate these thoughts. One could suggest that it takes a human consciousness to hear and interpret the crash. The concept of the crash is what is meant for the human, whereas the sound of the crash is meant for wildlife. Althusser continues, "...*individuals are always-already subjects*. Hence individuals are *abstract* with respect to the subjects, which they always-already are" (119). This corroborates Wirth's claim that "...consciousness, in graduating to absoluteness through the phenomenological reduction of the word, or whatever you want to call the perpetual discovery of the earth's limits, is itself identically reduced" (173). In *Leviathan* Sachs reduces his worldview every time he lets his

mind be *interpellated* by yet another radical thought. He is *always-already* ideologically restricted through his past, though he views this as the freedom everyone else is missing out on.

#### 4.2. Doubles and Duality in *Leviathan*

In other readings of *Leviathan* Benjamin Sachs and Peter Aaron have been called doubles. But since Sachs is not really present during the narrative, their doubleness becomes more of a duality within Aaron's head. But as Sachs was born August 6, 1945, the day of the Hiroshima bomb (*L*, 22-23) he became doubles with the bomb. His existence began with a big bang that shook the world, casting a massive shadow over Sachs' life. The doubleness of Sachs and the bomb is actually more of a credible symbiotic relationship, doubleness. It is the only one metaphor in his life that has been present throughout. It is something that follows him from birth to death, something that defines him, and something that he cannot escape, and in the end it is what finally catches up with him, confusing him completely, but bringing him clarity.

In the Sachs Aaron presents, one can detect duality, multiplicity even, an individual stretched in different directions of himself. But the same features are present in Aaron, maybe even more so, as he has to visualise the battle inside Sachs, analyse it, and then present it to the reader. Before he sat down to write about his friend, he was just a spectator on the outside. He was allowed to view flashes of a development, and had no way of knowing exactly what triggered the changes. When Aaron then writes about Sachs, the tables turn. It is impossible to know what someone else is thinking unless one is inventing the character. And this way Sachs becomes an actual person, as well as an invented character. Further, this way the duality presented in Sachs is also the duality within Aaron. Their invented selves and their actual selves also become doubles. Mark Brown (2007) suggests that Aaron and Sachs are both doubles and opposites in a linguistic sense, that the language with which they are conveyed makes them so (70).

Mark Brown's book, *Paul Auster*, analyses Auster's oeuvre with a special focus on how Auster applies space and its gradually expanding presence in the novels and in the world. Brown also has a focus on characters that apply abstract space when attempting to understand their subject positions (67). Benjamin Sachs is an example of the character that seeks out the abstract space to make sense of the actual space in which he lives.

In *Leviathan*, Brown believes that Sachs is a character that goes through a descent, a rescue and then a recovery (67). If this is true, then his rescue, to Sachs, happens the moment he comes to occupy the terrorist subject position. His recovery is when Aaron writes Sachs' narrative. Though, Brown suggests, Aaron is Sachs' replacement. "As the narrative

progresses it is apparent that Aaron comes to occupy a similar coherent social and linguistic space that previously was occupied by his friend” (69). But the contrary is closer to the interpretation for this thesis; reaffirming again the different journeys the protagonist and the narrator are on. Replacing someone means taking over completely. However, Brown’s thoughts might originate in the moment when Sachs’ world falls apart and Aaron’s world comes together. Nonetheless, Brown suggests that Aaron and Sachs are doubles *and* opposites in a linguistic manner. Sachs starts off with an innocence that Aaron later adopts, enabling Aaron to write Sachs’ story (70). But this thesis states that what indeed happens is that the two are on different paths, opposite roads and they happened to meet in the middle, enabling Aaron to compose Sachs’ story.

“No one can say where a book comes from, least of all the person who writes it. Books are born out of ignorance, and if they go on living after they are written, it’s only to the degree that they cannot be understood” (*L*, 36). In Paul Auster’s novels many of his protagonists are authors of some kind, and it is only natural that the life of an author is what fills narrative after narrative. Both the protagonist and the narrator of *Leviathan* are authors. Sachs is the kind of author who writes effortlessly but leaves his world of words behind in the end. While Aaron is the kind of author who writes meticulously, and has to work hard producing words and meaning, but can see no other life. Both of them have their view of what a storyteller should or should not be. It is not enough to claim ownership of the text. It becomes clear towards the end of the novel that Sachs has signed copies of Aaron’s books (*L*, 244). Aaron tries to tell the FBI-agent that it was Sachs’ way of keeping in touch, but neither the FBI-agent nor Aaron believes that story. Sachs challenges ownership with the texts.

Aaron describes three deeply defining moments in Sachs’ gradual development on his journey towards becoming the politicised subject. One of them is when Sachs flirts with photographer Maria Turner, and then deliberately falls from the fire escape (*L*, 116). This episode marks the beginning of Sachs’ downward spiral making the fall both actual and metaphorical. The episode does not just cause damage to his mind, realising he wanted to fall, but it makes him question his own ability to remain faithful to his wife. Another defining moment is the build-up to when he passes the point of no return in the way his mind changes. He is lost in the woods in Vermont, both actually and metaphorically (*L*, 147-48). Paradoxically enough, he loses his way because he forgets to look where he is going, being lost in his own mind thinking about the book he is writing. After having been lost in the woods a day and a half (*L*, 149), he gets a lift with “a local kid”, named Dwight (*L*, 149), and though Sachs at this point is a *new* man, he is on the way to the third life changing moment

(according to Aaron), the moment when he becomes a killer (*L*, 153). He now he has to become the radical activist he always was, when going to jail for refusing the draft (*L*, 19). “Sachs’s political ideas never fell into any of the conventional categories. He was wary of systems and ideologies, and thought he could talk about them with considerable understanding and sophistication, political action for him boiled down to a matter of conscience” (*L*, 25).

#### **4.3. The Whole and the Fractured Subject in *Leviathan***

Sachs is constantly looking for a unified self, a unified nation and unity in the concepts he deems important, for example “freedom” (*L*, 35). This search of his is subliminal. But when he faces death (*L*, 153), something he tried to avoid by refusing the draft (*L*, 19), he shatters mentally, and cannot live until the outside resembles his insides. Sachs’ inner subjectivity is shattered having gone through devastating episodes in his life. The fall from the balcony (*L*, 106) is the start of his decline. But he shatters even further when he watches a man get killed, and then kills in self-defence (*L*, 153).

The individual subject would have a conscious or unconscious opinion concerning what constitutes that specific individual. However, it would rarely (if at all) be only one thing defining one individual; it would be a multitude of elements completing a human being; childhood, school, family, friends, partners, work, opinions, and among other things, temperament. How the conscious mind perceives the world depends on what history is behind it, and what prospects lies ahead, all of which decides the present moment. According to Wirth, at one point a child goes from feeling tiny, yet powerful, in a vast multiverse of opportunities and possibilities to feeling the burden of limits and restrictions (173). To be able to function in a society, in a discourse, one has to follow rules and guidelines. Humans are *always-already interpellated* into subjects of capitalism, which will dictate all choices that initially were supposed to be free. Wirth continues to claim, “...by coming to constitute the world, consciousness loses for itself every world and persists as an abolished self-creation in either exaltation or misery, depending on the interpreter” (173).

Sachs and Aaron, have been best friends for fifteen years. They met a snowy night in a bar where they both had been hired to read from their written works; a blizzard made sure the meeting was cancelled. The people behind the event simply forgot to tell the two guest readers, but that fact did not seem to bother the two friends, as the night became memorable for the two of them. This is a development that might not have happened if they had been thrown in front of an audience

The first time Aaron and Sachs meet they drink until closing time. Aaron becomes so inebriated that he needs help, and at this point he gets double vision, seeing two of Sachs. “Whenever I looked at Sachs, there were two of him...It was probably a good thing that there were so many of him that afternoon. I was nearly a dead weight by then, and I doubt that one man could have carried me” (*L*, 22). This is a foreshadowing of how Sachs’ multi-layered mind will come to play an important role in the rest of the novel. Though it is an illusion brought on by the hazy glare of alcohol, it is an important moment in how Aaron will look and interpret his best friend, both as their friendship develops, and as Aaron realises Sachs is indeed the one that died on the road in Wisconsin.

Aaron sits in Vermont, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1990, in Sachs’ ex-wife’s cabin. He has just learned that Sachs is probably the man who blew himself up while making a homemade bomb in Wisconsin six days earlier (*L*, 1). After a visit from the FBI, Aaron feels a strong urge to write “the true story of how Sachs happened to be on that road in Northern Wisconsin” (*L*, 2) as he did not disclose anything to the FBI. He knew they knew he knew more than he told them, but wanted to give himself the chance to tell the truth. Arthur Saltzman says, “...every author is a detective at one point...” (162). This is a point that Varvogli corroborates. However, she claims that the detective work is not to find out what kind of person the missing character was, but what kind of person the one doing the digging is (142) Every author has to dig and investigate in order to figure out what happens with the characters and in the narrative, but in doing so there will be a certain element of self-realisation and self-discovery. Peter Aaron, who is an author in the novel, becomes the detective both Saltzman and Varvogli refer to when he investigates Sachs’ story. He realises he does not know everything, and he has to seek out sources other than his own memory to account for the truth; a truth that very well might end up not being disclosed at all. So, while investigating his friend’s story, Peter Aaron also investigates himself. Paul Auster’s character in the novel becomes a detective basing the truth about protagonist Benjamin Sachs on his educated guesses and investigation. But he also becomes an inventor, a creator of the character Benjamin Sachs. As Aaron says, “...the real is always ahead of what we can imagine” (*L*, 160). Aaron’s Sachs is the Sachs the reader gets to know, but the Sachs that Sachs himself might have presented and represented is hidden in the shadows of the narrative, and will probably always remain hidden.

Arthur Saltzman talks about Auster’s *Leviathan* as a detective novel (162). He argues that in a detective narrative a few things have to be present, such as “Good” and “Evil” (162). But when one pictures a classic detective story, where the good detective solves the puzzle of the evil antagonist, one realises that there is a contradiction to Saltzman’s statement. In

*Leviathan* one cannot claim that Sachs is evil and Aaron is good, or the other way around, they are both flawed, and they are both guilty of serious crimes. Sachs kills a man (*L*, 153), and Aaron sleeps with Sachs' wife while they are still married (*L*, 93). Both could claim that these incidents were accidental and that none of them committed either murder or adultery with intent. But it creates cracks in their goodness, adds to their evilness, and makes it increasingly difficult to establish a consistent subject position. Also, a through and through evil character would come across as one dimensional, and this is why occupying a subject position that is either pure evil or pure good in a world and reality where most characters embody both is a shallow fantasy.

Both Saltzman and Varvogli claim that *Leviathan* is Auster's most realistic novel yet (162), but Saltzman also suggests that "what constitutes reality" (162) is really the question to ask of *Leviathan*. Memory, traumatic experiences and time, are all elements that can change and distort reality; all of which are present at all times in the novel. Benjamin Sachs' life is only known through Peter Aaron's analysis (163). However, the link with Aaron and Auster himself (Aaron can be interpreted as a version of Paul Auster, at least Aaron's career is similar to Auster's), as viewed salient by Saltzman, is a question that will be further discussed in chapter four. Having said that, apart from the fact that there are certain similarities to Peter Aaron and Paul Auster, the reader should not be fooled into thinking that Peter Aaron *is* Paul Auster.

As for Sachs, who has been running his whole life, his wholeness might not be wishful thinking after all. The flight from the police and the authorities can be perceived as him acknowledging the refugee-role, but it is more complex. He has been running from the bomb his whole life. Now he is in a position to embrace the bomb, his double. His life started with a bang (*L*, 22-23), it has to end with a bang too. When he explodes the bomb, it is not an accident. Sachs embraces the wholeness of his consciousness the best way he can, the only way he can; he becomes the bomb.

#### 4.3.1 Subject positions in *Leviathan*

Aaron is, according to Saltzman, certain about his status to be in a position where he is able to tell the truth, but he is simultaneously concerned with the mysteriousness surrounding books. "A book is a mysterious object" (*L*, 4). The battle with truth is something Aaron feels first hand. And though he keeps assuring the reader that his account of Sachs's changing subject position is true, there is a definite element of doubt in both his own abilities and in the story Sachs has told him. Sachs tells Aaron "...once it comes to other people, we don't have a clue" (*L*, 97). He refers to what goes on in the minds of other people. One can imagine that one

knows another individual very well, but what one knows is what the other individual reveals, nothing more. “We never know anything about anyone” (*L*, 96), Sachs continues. But despite this, Aaron claims to hold some kind of truth, maybe even *the* truth, about his long-time friend. Saltzman argues that Aaron is in a position where he can do no wrong. “Mobbed by shadows, Aaron bears witness like a chalice, enduring his subject’s delicate stresses with all the fastidiousness and wariness devotion is pray to” (164). Essentially Aaron’s account of Sachs’ life and gradually changing subject position is all that remains of Benjamin Sachs. Eventually he has to morph into what Aaron remembers. “...the writer’s legacy carries the taint of his presumptions” (165), which is a factor one cannot escape. At one point in Aaron’s tale about Sachs, he would have had to draw conclusions that would make his assumptions fit the narrative he was telling; make Sachs’ subject position fit the development he assumed it went through. Such assumptions will always have a foundation in the body writing.

Saltzman concludes that both Sachs and Aaron live by fiction (170). In his arguments he continues to include Auster in this equation. “Our three novelists, Auster, Aaron and Sachs, seemingly bent upon triangulation so as to converge upon the truth, instead play out as concentric perspectives” (170). If one includes Auster in the equation, one has to delete the other two, because in the end only Paul Auster exists. Peter Aaron and Benjamin Sachs are characters in a novel written by Paul Auster. Including Auster in a triangularity of meanings along with two fictional characters that are unable to think and speak outside of Auster’s pen and paper is close to claiming that Auster suffers from some kind of split personality. There are some similarities in the author’s life and his invented character, Peter Aaron. But as mentioned above, the reader must not mistake them for the same person. It intrigues to go down the road of thinking the author lives his or her life in the pages of his or her novels. And Auster lets his narrator explain it in *Leviathan*. “Without even knowing it, I enter the lives of strangers, and for as long as they have my book in their hands, my words are the only reality that exists for them” (*L*, 4). However, person writing the novels conveys his or her author subject position, not who they really are

Aaron discovers even more ideological elements pulling Sachs in different directions when he looks into his history. “His father was an Eastern European Jew, and his mother was an Irish Catholic” (*L*, 24). Even though Aaron claims that most of Sachs’ history is difficult to discuss or have an opinion about, he dares to suggest that Sachs was neither Catholic nor Jewish, and yet *both* Catholic and Jewish (*L*, 25). The only possible religious aspect of Sachs’ physique is that he is circumcised, and that is noted down as a medical detail rather than a religious detail (*L*, 25). This means that Sachs’ subject positions are irreligious. His political



journey is the salient feature in his mind's development. This translates to a deeply confused soul who is playing the hard and strong man. In American society *real men* have a defined and clear role, and there seems to be a part of Sachs wanting to fulfil this role, the faithful husband, the trusted friend. Sachs views the world as a work of imagination (*L*, 24), a world where everything and even nothing is open to interpretation. A world where one has to trust everything and where nothing can be trusted.

#### **4.4. Political Beginnings in *Leviathan***

Aaron stresses that the book he writes about Sachs "...is not a biography or an exhaustive psychological portrait..." (*L*, 22) but this is exactly what the narrative about Sachs ends up becoming. It is a rendition of Benjamin Sachs' road from husband and author to radical activist Aaron judges, admires, and probably envies a little bit, maybe unintentionally so, the development Sachs goes through. One has to admire the person who manages to break free from what is expected of any citizen, and simply go with one's convictions of freedom and understanding of society; admiration is present in Aaron, even if it is deeply connected with fear and doubt. Also, the dynamics between the two friends is broken the moment Sachs dies. Varvogli claims that Aaron breaks the trust between them by first writing about him, and then by helping the FBI confirming Benjamin Sachs was Reed Dimaggio's killer and *The Phantom of Liberty* (146). To keep secrets for someone who is dead is going to devour the mind and soul of that individual. Aaron has no choice but to write the story about his friend. Even though he wants to keep his reputation as a good man, he cannot keep this secret for a long time. The secret is kept between Aaron and the pages he writes for as long as he is the only one reading them, but the moment he gives those pages to someone else (*L*, 245), he has broken the trust and betrayed his friend. However, that trust was broken between them when Sachs left friends and society behind. They both broke each other's trust, but only Aaron remains to tell the tale, and it is only fitting that he does.

Aaron further admits that the observations he has made when writing the story about Benjamin Sachs "...are subject to any number of errors and misreadings" (*L*, 30). Aaron has only Sachs' recollections of his past to rely on when he is talking about Sachs' childhood. There is only one story Aaron trusts to be true (*L*, 31), and that is the story about when Sachs went with his mother to visit the Statue of Liberty. He was six years old at the time (*L*, 32) and the episode changed his life completely, for two reasons. Firstly, they were visiting this symbol of freedom, and Sachs was not allowed to wear what he wanted. He felt like he was "in chains", and he managed to bargain with his mother that if he was the only one in little boys' clothes, he would be allowed to wear whatever he wanted from that moment, giving the

young Benjamin Sachs a taste of democracy (*L*, 33). Secondly, because his mother had a serious anxiety attack in the stairs while they were on their way up to the torch. She had to crawl back down. Sachs himself said that his mother's panic attack was his first real "...lesson in political theory...[he] learned that freedom can be dangerous. If you don't watch out, it can kill you." (*L*, 35). This lesson is a lesson Sachs keeps learning throughout the novel. He goes to jail for refusing to go to war (*L*, 19), and as mentioned above, Sachs writes the book *The New Colossus* while in prison, which, according to Aaron, is an angry book, angry at America and angry at political hypocrisy (*L*, 40). Varvogli believes that *Leviathan* is only political in the last thirty pages of the novel (146). But the novel is politically loaded from the very beginning. Sachs does not become a radical that blows up replicas of The Statue of Liberty until late in the story, which corresponds with what Varvogli claims. And, most of the narrative is about how Sachs tries to live with having taken someone's life (*L*, 153), where again he learns the dangers of freedom. But the political backdrop is always present. Varvogli thinks that Sachs has taking a life is the main theme of the book, and how he is forced to atone for his sins, somehow (146). But even though he is the reason another human is no longer alive, he was defending himself. He takes his victim's belongings, and even chooses to borrow his life as a family father (*L*, 172). He bonds with Dimaggio's daughter, and eventually with his wife, and they all play *happy family* for a couple of months, knowing it would last. However, it is when Sachs borrows and internalises Dimaggio's political agenda and convictions that he comes to occupy the subject position of a terrorist. He finally becomes the version who woke up (figuratively) while he was inside the Statue of Liberty at the age of six (*L*, 33). And contrary to what Varvogli suggests, that the political aspect is only visible towards the end of the novel (146), the political aspect is clear in every comment Sachs makes.

While living with Dimaggio's wife, Lillian, Sachs goes through the final stage of his political transformation. When he finally enters Dimaggio's study and starts reading his dissertation, he reaches his point of no return. It is clear that Dimaggio's dissertation is "...a study of Alexander Berkman...the anarchist who shot Henry Clay Frick...Frick survived the attack, and Berkman was thrown into the state penitentiary for fourteen years" (*L*, 223). Though he was sent to prison for refusing to go to war, he can relate to the feeling of being forced to go to prison for something he believes in. This is an inspiration to Benjamin Sachs. And towards the end of the novel the reader learns that Benjamin Sachs rented a cheap apartment "...on the South Side of Chicago, which he rented under the name of Alexander Berkman" (*L*, 234) Sachs is here borrowing the name of someone he feels he can identify

with, someone who, in Sachs' mind might have taken a similar route through ideology and discourse to get to where they can no longer sit idly by and do nothing. He forgets, however, to look at how Berkman was unsuccessful in the cause that took over his entire adult life. Sachs is, the moment he picks up Dimaggio's dissertation, on a slippery slope towards the same mistakes where Berkman, and later Dimaggio, slipped and fell before him. But he turns a blind eye to the prospect of failure, and powers through with his cause and his beliefs. Berkman or Dimaggio's failures do not frighten Sachs. He is not even considering his own failure or demise, and if he is, it is not strong enough to pull him back into occupying a subject position as an author or a husband. The easiest would be for Sachs to simply accept that the world is not perfect, be writer, voice his opinions through his texts, and live. He is in such a state towards the end that he cannot see reason to anything else than his cause. Sachs is completely numbed in parts of his subjectivity; the unexploded, metaphorical bomb hovering above his head is haunting him, forcing him to act. He becomes almost like a machine programmed to do one thing, and one thing only. Towards the end of the novel he has problems relating to the world in an honest way – it is honest for him, but for Aaron it is difficult to recognise his friend behind the cause that drives him.

Sachs is always in a massive conflict with himself. He tries hard to fit in to the society he is a part of, but he fails, and that is also why he cannot remain. This is his tragic flaw, a flaw that makes it easy for Aaron to deduce that it was Sachs who blew himself up and not anyone playing with fire. Having said that, Sachs has played with fire his whole life, and when he finally got burned, it very well might have been intentional. One could claim that every individual is at some point in a massive conflict with the self, and that is difficult to manoeuvre in a society that has different expectations to the individual at different points in a life. But this conflict is very strong within Benjamin Sachs. He is the one who dares to think and say the things the normal person would not, but he is also the one who lets other's misconceptions of him become false truths. Mentioning here when Fanny believes that every time he is away, he cheats on her. In his own words, he is not, but he cannot be bothered to have the fights with Fanny, so he lets her believe a false truth, as it is easier (*L*, 83 and 94). This kind of tactics can be linked to when a person knows something is wrong, but decides to do it anyway because it is the easier road. Making a choice based on an expectation of how one is supposed to act, rather than fighting for the truth is what Terry Eagleton refers to as "...the truth/falsehood issue" (20). Sachs' lived experience has taught him that he will only get in a world of trouble if he fights for his truth rather than accepting Fanny's false truth. It

is, then, actually easier to absorb the lie, someone's lie, than try to convey what one knows within is the truth.

Sachs' novel *The New Colossus*, is a literary work that Peter Aaron praises as extremely good literature (L, 36-37). Sachs was also working on a novel before he went missing. Aaron actually mourns the fact that Sachs' second novel will never see the light of day. And in honour of his friend, he gives his account of Sachs' life, the title Sachs would have used for his second novel, *Leviathan* (L, 142). This meta-element is very typical Auster, but however the readers of Auster's *Leviathan* look at it, Sachs' novels *The New Colossus* (L, 36) and *Leviathan* (L, 142), will always be phantom narratives. The novels are referred to, but can never be viewed or touched (and will not be, unless Auster decides to write a novel called *The New Colossus* under the nom de plume, Benjamin Sachs). They exist like a phantom inside the literal, fictional universe, in which the only true voice is Aaron's.

#### **4.5. *Leviathan* in a Historic, Biblical and Ideological Perspective**

Leviathan means sea monster, and is first mentioned in *The Bible* (745), in the Book of Job, chapter 41. Even in the Bible the leviathan is a metaphor for something incomprehensibly large and uncontrollable. Later (in 1651), Thomas Hobbes wrote a philosophical work called *Leviathan*, and this is a book about how human beings are mostly concerned with personal worries and passions, and in seeking out own desires it is easy, even necessary, to leave the power of society in the hands of few. "Art goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH or STATE..." (7). The state is important in Auster's *Leviathan*. It is represented as the freedom people have in a democracy – even more so in the United States of America, as the core belief of its people is the American Dream but Sachs attempts to challenge this freedom. Freedom, he says, is dangerous (L, 35), and subconsciously he devotes the rest of his life to teach others the same lesson he has learned. Benjamin Sachs felt freer when he was in prison, than he did as a *free* man. He becomes caught in the maze of his own political thoughts. His quest from the dramatic day in the forest, when he kills Dimaggio (strengthened by when he reads Dimaggio's dissertation L, 223) is to fight freedom, because freedom is dangerous (L, 35). "It fascinated me to think that I'd gone to prison because of that war – and that fighting in it had brought him around to more or less the same position as mine" (L, 225). Sachs is an author, Dimaggio is an author, Aaron is an author, all of them trying to understand key concepts in democracy and the free world, all of them feeling caught in the grip of ideology, and all of them subjects to thoughts and beliefs outside of their control.

For the purpose of this thesis, the leviathan is interpreted as a metaphor for the state, for the ideology within which humans exist, and for the driving force that is inside Benjamin Sachs. Because, the leviathan is, also an image and a metaphor for the storm on the inside of Sachs, he becomes the leviathan threat in the abyss, the monster slowly rising to the surface, and as the monster ascends, the readers are witnessing Sachs' descent within himself. This is a process that has a certain element of inevitability.

Ilana Shiloh's study (2002) is on the "narrative of the quest" (1) in Paul Auster's novels. She claims that as it is an examination of a living author's work it can never really be conclusive (1). Even a look into the oeuvre of authors who have passed on, might reveal new ways to be read as times change. However, Shiloh claims that Auster's novels "share the same formal and temporal structure – the protagonist sets out on a journey he hopes to complete" (1). In Sachs' case this is true. There is a clear journey present in the novel. But what is unclear, however, is whether or not this journey has, or ever had, a final purpose.

Shiloh acknowledges that the quest is a broad literary term and that a quest in literature is a combination of "...theme, narrative form or genre" (1). But the postmodern quest refuses linearity and predictability. Shiloh, however, defines "The quest as a linear narrative, in which the hero sets out to find the object of his desire" (2). This thesis is not about the quest, but to define and find one's subject position, some kind of mental journey is needed, some kind of personal development, both through incidents in the outer world and how to handle those in the inner world (the mind). Benjamin Sachs' journey into the belly of the Statue of Liberty leads to his disintegration rather than his liberation (3). It becomes the slow poison in his mind, driving him to the extremes of himself, and finally taking him as a hostage. Sachs is a hostage of his own search for freedom.

Shiloh claims that Aaron and Sachs' quests in the novel are mirroring each other. Once again it is important to remind the reader that *quest* is understood as a metaphor for detecting and becoming familiar with one's subject position. However, the two important characters in *Leviathan* are not mirroring each other, they are opposites. They travel in different directions to each other. It is an obvious conclusion to make, to name Aaron and Sachs doubles, and maybe this is where Auster has his fun, tricking his readers into drawing premature conclusions. But what the reader is presented with are two individuals with different starting points. If Aaron mirrored Sachs, they would both end up in pieces (metaphorically and actually), but that is where Sachs' journey ends, not Aaron's.

Shiloh says that "Sachs fails tragically in his quest for wholeness of the self" (114). Though this is not something he can be conscious of. His journey brings certain clarity, and

he feels he is on the right track, but his choices alienate him further from his friends and family. He becomes a lonely crusader with a cause. Shiloh continues, "...he [Sachs] seeks to acquire purpose and unity by exchanging the self of the writer for that of the terrorist" (114-115). He is still himself, himself with his perception of his core humanity, that which is called Benjamin Sachs. Though Sachs is also aware that no whole core human subjectivity exists. No matter how far Sachs runs, or no matter how many versions of himself he tries out, he is still himself despite these attempts. The frantic days when he confides in Peter Aaron (*L*, 220) are evidence of the battle Sachs is fighting. He can no longer stay in just one place, out of fear for himself catching up. If he did settle down for too long, he would be forced to re-evaluate his cause. Shiloh concludes this particular line of thoughts with "He forsakes the artist's passivity and seclusion for active involvement, for passionate dedication to the reform of the leviathan of the state" (114-115). He is either fighting the leviathan of the state or he has become the leviathan of the state. Sachs is only one man fighting his cause in the shadows of society. According to the authorities, he is a threat even before they know who he is. His actions are well planned, and consist of weeks of preparation and a lot of disguises, different names and deceit (*L*, 231-232). Aaron has massive troubles digesting what his friend has turned into, that "...he had killed a man, ...he had spent...two years roaming the country as a fugitive, and all I could think about was what to prepare for dinner. It was as if I needed to pretend that life still consisted of such mundane particulars. But that was only because I knew it didn't" (*L*, 230-231). When Aaron comes to the end of his narrative about Sachs in the novel, there is only one possible outcome. Benjamin Sachs had to perish, and Peter Aaron had to remain. Paul Auster provides his readers with deconstructed catharsis in this modern tragedy.

#### 4.5.1. The Subjectivity Journey in *Leviathan*

Can *Leviathan* be called a tragedy? It cannot, because it is not only a tragedy; it is also has some features of a quest narrative. Shiloh says that "The climactic action of the heroic quest is the killing of the dragon, whose Biblical variation's a sea monster, usually named leviathan" (3) One can argue whether or not Auster's *Leviathan* is a heroic quest narrative, because the monster Sachs encounters on his journey through numerous versions of himself, is himself. Shiloh suggests that "The leviathan is associated with Babylon, the fallen world of sin and death, and his belly, into which the hero descends, is often pictured as a dark and winding labyrinth" (3). As mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter, Sachs spends his time in prison diving into his own consciousness, his own mind – the mind functioning here as a metaphor for the leviathan he ends up fighting. But instead of becoming a beast the hero

would want to slay, Sachs' life post-prison is a life-long longing to go back to the freedom his mind had when he was restricted. And this encounter, head-on, with his leviathan makes him work hard to keep the monster alive, eventually at the cost of his own life. He fails to kill the monster, and it kills him instead. This seems quite poetic and a little far-fetched, but for Sachs to actually believe that one man's crusade, blowing up replicas of a symbol so many hold in high regard, is at best enthusiastic, but at the end of the day a futile effort. This might even be a hidden desire to fail. Had he, for example, targeted the real Statue of Liberty, his epitaph would have been a complete different story. His life would have been sacrificed for him to live on as a legend, or as the horrible monster that attacked Freedom in America. But his quest is to blow up replicas of the statue that made him, the very statue that served as a midwife to his political subject position. The RSA, with the law enforcement in the lead, would award him the attention to try and stop him. But whether Sachs lives or dies, the RSA, and the ISAs remain unchanged. In their eyes he is a disturber of peace and must be stopped. A revolution of one individual cannot be of the violent kind, the result would then be a strengthening of law and order in any society. This is where Sachs misunderstands his own cause. Had he remained an author, and alive, his political agenda, his possible discourse changing thoughts, might have stood a chance of reaching a far bigger audience.

Of course, Aaron picks up Sachs' torch when he writes the story about his friend. But he does so out of obligation to his friend – and out of guilt – not as a way of preserving Sachs' political views. Or at least, that is how it starts when he begins the work of writing about Sachs. Along the way, however, Aaron discovers himself and his own convictions, and that they differ drastically from his friend's. Writing a narrative that is so loaded will have to affect the author in some way. And in the beginning of the novel, Aaron is clear about the complexity of the story he has to tell before the law enforcement close in and connects the dots (*L*, 2). In the end he is actually relieved that FBI-agent Harris comes again to enquire about the “real” relationship between the man who blew himself up, and Aaron (*L*, 243-45). Shiloh says that “The most salient features of Auster's protagonists are absence, fragmentation, fluidity and invisibility” (10), which sums up Sachs. He is absent from the very beginning of the novel. The Sachs the reader gets to know through Aaron's narrative, is a man who is searching for his core humanity, only to realise that the core humanity does not exist. He is a fragmented version of the man he wants to be, and symbolically, and rather morbidly, he ends his life in actual fragments. He embodies fluidity to the extent that he constantly re-invents himself, adapts to his environments, and becomes the version of himself that fits with his new environment. But this comes at a high cost. Every time he leaves behind

a part of himself, it is impossible for him to go back. Lastly, towards the end of the novel, Sachs is invisible, even to himself. He takes on the new identity of The Phantom of Liberty. Even he expects to operate in the shadows of the world.

Shilo's description of the Austerian protagonist does not apply to Peter Aaron, even though he has been described by Arthur Saltzman as both Sachs' double, and his stand-in (167). Peter Aaron is not absent from the novel, as he is the one who is actually telling the story. Aaron starts off as a fragmented version of himself in the middle of a break-up (*L*, 55), after which Benjamin Sachs, and his wife (at the time), Fanny, helps rebuild him. Aaron is never later as fragmented as he is in the beginning of the novel. After he meets his second wife, Iris, he is gradually brought to a state of wholeness. In terms of fragmentation, Sachs and Aaron are on opposite roads where Aaron's is significantly positive and Sachs' significantly negative. The only thing the two might have slightly in common is a certain degree of fluidity. Though Aaron is more rigid and set in his way, caught in misconceptions of discourse and ideology, for example when he has an affair with Sachs' wife. To Sachs that is what happened, and he accepts it. To Aaron it is something he feels he has to atone for (*L*, 93), as that would be the *correct* way of reacting towards a friend that has been wronged. Also, Aaron is not invisible. He is the ever-present constant element in the novel. And as mentioned before, he has a development on the outside of just being the narrator.

Sachs reading of Dimaggio's thesis is pointing him in the right direction, but it is when Lillian Stern hits (or slaps) her daughter for being a "brat" (*L*, 214) he leaves the normal world behind. This is the moment when Sachs falls completely on the outside of all laws and discourses. Both the RSA and the ISAs serve as threats to the existence of man, and in the end Sachs feels he has to do something about this. As a phantom (*L*, 236), he blows up symbols (replicas of symbols of freedom). And mostly both phantoms and symbols exist on the outside of human subjectivity. Only rarely does a human become symbolic, in which cases the human part of the symbol is a subject that voices meanings or opinions that are discourse changing and then in turn become symbols for something grander, for example Martin Luther King. But Martin Luther King as a human, as a man, as an American, was subjected to the same ideologies and discourses his fellow countrymen and women were subjected to. The essence is that phantoms and symbols can influence, but not directly interfere in the subjectivity process. Sachs believes he frees himself from the laws and restraints of ideology and repression all together. The only element he still needs to fulfil his plan, is money (*L*, 227), making him a subject to money, more than anything else. The Phantom of Liberty is suggesting that liberty is not something that is present, that freedom is something that is



hovering like a ghost around human beings, like an idea meant to tempt humanity, or inspire humanity to believe freedom is the ultimate award. If only this or that requirement is met then the total freedom to follow dreams and be one's own person will lie before those who can meet the requirements. But Benjamin Sachs discovers that freedom is as hollow as The Statue of Liberty herself.

According to Saltzman Aaron has subjective criteria not for the truth but for the story he will settle for (168). Both the protagonist and the narrator are guilty of this. They shape their own truth. As for truth, Sachs is not really interested in the commonly perceived truth. He is focused on his own perception of the truth, and thus both Aaron and Sachs live by fiction (170). Both men pretend and long to be someone they are not. But this can also be contradicted. Aaron gladly, and with relief, accepts to occupy his subject position as a husband, father and author. If there exists wholeness of a mind, this is it for him. Sachs seems to be shattered, and literally he is. But when he blew himself up, he also entered into a state of wholeness as he finally could be one with the bomb that was present at his birth (*L*, 22-23), and as his choices are difficult to understand for his surroundings, it makes sense to him. He and his double, the bomb, become one.

## 5.0. Chapter Four: Parody, Pastiche and Author Subjectivity in *Mao II*, *Cosmopolis* and *Leviathan*

In chapter two, this thesis looks at capitalistic subjectivity, in Don DeLillo's *Cosmopolis*. The analysis focuses on Packer's subjectivity through the people he surrounds himself with. Further, through the state of the art technology with which he cannot do without, and lastly his trusted limousine that serves as an extension to his subject position. I suggest that he is not fully *interpellated* by capitalism because of his ties to his shaded past and his need to keep the asymmetry constant between all the polarities in his life. In chapter three, the main focus of this thesis is on the politicised, radicalised subjectivity in Paul Auster's *Leviathan*. This thesis observes that Sachs' subject position from husband and friend to terrorist was a gradual and traumatising experience, both for him to go through and for his surroundings (in particular Peter Aaron) to bear witness to (and later to narrate). I ask whether it is possible to recognise a wholeness of the subject or not. Concluding with such a wholeness being challenging, if not completely impossible to discover and hold on to. Having in previous chapters discussed the capitalist subject position in *Cosmopolis*, and the politicised subject position in *Leviathan*, chapter four will shift its focus. In chapter four this thesis looks at the family constructions and the author function in all the novels, but predominantly in *Mao II*. Next, with an anchor in Jameson's parody and pastiche, the following discussion concerning the family will develop. Then, this chapter will address the author subject position and subjects to authority in the selected novels. Foucault's arguments about the author and the author function will be the anchor for this part of the chapter. However, the part of this chapter that concerns the pastiche family will, I believe, yield new ways of reading *Mao II* (this applies in part to the other novels too).

The three novels are at first look a rather eclectic little collection. *Mao II* is about the author and about radical groups in secular and religious radical countries. *Leviathan* is about the inner violence that occurs when a character is driven to radicalisation from outside influence. And *Cosmopolis* is about the grasp the financial market has on the world, and what this iron-grip on humans' mentality actually implies. But when looking closer, the three novels are closely linked by theme. They are all about the three subject positions this thesis investigates, the capitalistic subject, the radicalised/politicised subject and the author subject. They are all about ideology and postmodernity. And they are all about the subject being lost in ideology. This is why it makes sense to talk about the collection as a collection and not just as separate analyses, or even comparative analyses.

*Mao II* (1991) is a novel about the shared mentality of the crowd and the individual *within* the crowd. It is a novel that recognises and alienates the subject self in the text, and it investigates what expectations the reader, and the masses, have towards fiction and absolute truth, and constructed *truth*. One of the focus points is on what role the classical author can have in a Western society that increasingly focuses on individuality within the masses, or a society that seemingly preaches individuality. Selfishness is allowed and even encouraged as long as one calls it individuality. In a society where most people are subjected to an increasing neoliberal movement, where democracy and social care are seen as threats to the *precious* individuality, the subject is hailed into selfishness. However, at the same time the novel conveys how individuality, extraordinariness and otherness are traits (or flaws) that will expose the individual to scrutiny and, in some cases, persecution and captivity. Lastly, it is a novel that confirms the massive importance of the author in a society where radical, religious, or commercial voices are gradually taking over the narratives of the world, claiming that they are preaching the truth. Radicalisation, dehumanisation and how certain groups in society (both the Western and the Eastern societies) will attempt (and often succeed) to capturing and enslaving individual opinions and choice, are also salient elements in this novel. And ultimately *Mao II* is a narrative about a society that has replicated itself so many times that the original has been lost along the way, leaving an empty pastiche-like representation of a “perpetual present” (Jameson, 1860).

Bill Gray is a reclusive author who comes out of his hiding to be a hero and help free a poet hostage from the grasps of radical theorists in Beirut. He never makes it to his heroic moment; he never fulfils his hyper masculine role as the hero (Helyer, 125). The choices he has made for his life so far are slowing him down and eventually killing him. He has an accident, and having exposed his body to alcohol abuse for many years, his body is not capable to survive the strain. He postpones, and eventually conveniently forgets to go to the doctor. What this thesis investigates further is if Bill Gray actually believes the author has power to influence the culture in a society, or if the reason for his reckless journey and choice is that he has lost faith in his own profession.

### **5.1. *Mao II* and the Pastiche Family**

There is a certain expectation to what constitutes a family, and within that expectation every family exist. In all the selected novels there are factors of parody and pastiche connected to the family. The only character from the novels that occupies a family subject position that society would deem normal is Peter Aaron from *Leviathan*. He is a divorced man who remarries the love of his life, has a second child and, clichéfully, lives happily ever after. This

would be a subject position many would recognise and not find abnormal at all. The protagonists of the selected novels, however, are in family constructions that come across as strange and out of the ordinary, like Eric Packer from *Cosmopolis*. He is a married man, but as far as the reader knows, this marriage functions almost like an arranged marriage. The couple is still spending awkward moments getting to know each other. There are even implications that the marriage might not have been consummated (C, 18). Packer's ideas of family consist of all the people he is surrounding himself with, all of his employees. Vija Kinski, for example, has a mother-like-role in his life. He loves her, but not necessarily in a sexual way, and she gives him important advice (C, 85). This constructed family of his, however, is on Packer's pay roll, and would leave the moment he stopped the salaries, turning them into a comic presence; a parody family, a bought family who will return to their own families when the working day is over. Benjamin Sachs, and his wife Fanny, lives in a cliché, like Aaron, but in the cliché that has bad connotations. They distrust each other; they cheat and lie (L, 93). When the marriage ends, it ends with the parody of the man coming home and finding the woman in bed with another man. The only thing missing is that the other man hides in the wardrobe. But the sad fact that Sachs must realise is that Fanny has moved on, thinking Sachs' absence meant they were truly done. When he returns to what he thought was a constant in his life, even if they were separated, he is shocked finding Fanny and her new man naked in bed together (L, 143). But then, the veil is lifted, and the charade is over. His final, desperate attempt on a family is when he plays house with Lillian Stern and her child Maria, Reed Dimaggio's widow and daughter (Dimaggio is the man Sachs kills in the woods, 153). He knows he has robbed Maria of her father, so he attempts to fill this gap in her life. But this attempt is just that, a short lived endeavour that is interrupted by Sachs' need to atone by being true to Dimaggio's political legacy rather than the family he left behind (L, 223).

It is the family construction in *Mao II* that will serve as a potentially new way of reading this novel. The following discussion happens without the support of established scholars (apart from the main theorists), as this part of the thesis is innovative. Bill Gray is the epitome of a reclusive author. He hides his person from the public eye, focusing wholly on the texts he has published. He rewrites his next novel to the point of pastiche (M, 31). He lives upstate New York with his constructed family. This family is not just an element briefly visited in the beginning of the novel. It is an element that, in its fractured state, drives the novel forward. And where other readings of *Mao II* have focused on the masses, the

politicised and radicalised subjects, or the author question and function, this reading, in addition, attempts something new.

To read this classic novel as a novel about a domestic household, as DeLillo writes in detail about in other novels in his oeuvre (for example, *Falling Man*), is adding a cutting-edge, contemporary approach to this particular narrative. This thesis places the family in *Mao II* (and attempts include both *Cosmopolis* and *Leviathan*) in dialogue with Fredric Jameson's arguments about parody and how, in this case (and indeed most of postmodernism's cultural – and other – expressions), it is eclipsed by pastiche. What has been parodied is still capable of resetting itself in society to be parodied again. What is pastiched, however, is lost in a distant, or even very close, past (*P*, 16). Times change so quickly, that one can hardly be expected to remember every norm, every style, every discourse there ever was. In order to make a comment in the form of a parody, this particular discourse must be current, otherwise it becomes a distant vague memory that is lost in the void. Jameson says "...the explosion of modern literature...has been followed by linguistic fragmentation of social life itself to the point where the norm itself is eclipsed..." (*P*, 17). This is the place where pastiche takes over for parody. The laughter and irony are silenced, only the mimicry is left. Now no one can remember what is being mimicked. This is the arrangement with Gray's constructed family. None of the members of this family can remember what living in a functioning family structure was even like. "...the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: the imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now global culture" (*P*, 18). Society's shared memory believes itself to remember, for example, World War II. But what is, instead, a common memory, a common perspective, is today based on numerous reproductions and accounts of a war that the authors of such accounts may not even have experienced.

*Mao II's* fractured, little family consists of Bill Gray, the reclusive, middle aged, alcoholic author, his biggest fan, ex-drug addict (currently Bill Gray addict) and now manager, Scott Martineau, and religious-cult-runaway and lover, Karen Janney. They exist in an almost cult-like family where Karen is the concubine for both men, adding an eerie element to what goes on behind the four walls of the hidden house; the *father* and the *son* share the sexual access to the person that can be interpreted as either *mother*, *sister* or *daughter* (*M*, 142). It would be impossible, let alone disastrous, to add an innocent child to the dynamics of this *family*. When Scott is offered, on the streets of New York, a new born baby (*M*, 21), thoughts of social conscious, of saving the child from poverty and a fate in the margins of society, are not even entering his mind. He flees the woman offering him the child

as if she tries to hand him a bomb. However, Scott views himself as the grown-up in the house, the one who is in control. He functions as the manager of Bill Gray's career, and he sees himself as the one person who knows Gray best. He dresses himself in the father-mask, or even the omnipotent mask. DeLillo portrays Scott as a boy pretending to be an adult. His ideas about knowing it all are, of course, an illusion that Gray allows Scott to have. As long as Scott thinks he is in charge, Gray can plot and plan without having to consult anyone. Gray's agenda is his own, and neither Scott nor Karen can predict or stop the plans he has for his future, and finally their future.

The dynamics of the house present themselves rather slanted. As mentioned, Scott believes himself to be a sort of boss, making decisions for the weak man who hides from any kind of public life. The fact is that Scott is in the house at Bill Gray's mercy. Gray has collected his family to avoid solitude. His loneliness might not be something he is aware of. However, in the end Scott has no real authority in what Bill Gray can and cannot, or should and should not do. This is a fact that he will be made abundantly aware of as the novel progresses. Karen has a rather ambivalent role in the house. She is a housekeeper, cook (although she and Scott shares the house chores "fifty-fifty", 57), and a lover. But where one might assume a figure like hers would be repressed, one finds instead a strong woman with a highly developed social conscience. Her inner drive is to give the voiceless a voice. She remembers too well when she lost hers while in the grips of the big religious cult. In the novel she is the observer of the masses, the one who, along with the narrator, accounts for the inserted images presented in *Mao II*. These images flicker on Karen's TV, without sound (*M*,32), wordless, but screaming loud nonetheless, inspiring her to take action. This element of the crowd in the family, forces this particular family to take on a role of something more; they all have their roles to play. Karen is the voice of the masses, Scott is the voice of Gray's books, and Gray attempts to be the voice of the West in radical, religious hostage matters.

The reasons to why the pastiche family in *Mao II* has not been the focus of any readings is because it is difficult to see that Western citizens have lost the idea of what constitutes a family. Jameson talks about a concept he has named nostalgia, and this concept is the subjects' attempt to recapture some sort of lost reality (*P*, 19). He talks mostly about the nostalgia film, but as far as *Mao II* is concerned, the family structure presented by Bill Gray, Scott Martineau and Karen Janney is based on a mutual notion of nostalgia. It also represents a wish to how it should have been. *Mao II* is a contemporary novel depicting a contemporary time. The family has not been reduced to an alluring myth. Though Gray has fathered

children, he has no idea how to raise them. None of the three knows how to be in a traditional family.

Within this family exists a twisted role pattern. Scott does the washing up, and with his back turned to Gray, he orders him to go back into his study to keep writing the book he has been working on for the last twenty years (*M*, 62-63). Scott orders Gray around as a misogynistic husband from the fifties; only he is hand deep in the washing up, portraying the angel of the house. Gray wants to take Karen (and visiting photographer, Brita) for a walk up to the mill, but he is forced to return to his study, spending precious daylight in front of yet another edit of his finished novel. While Gray is in his office he then becomes the misogynistic husband from the fifties, spending his time in the study, doing male tasks in the house, such as reading and writing. Thus, both Scott and Gray try to be the strong, male character in the family, with the result that the family has no such presence at all. Gray admits to Brita that he has "...forgotten how to talk in ordinary ways except to mumble at meals for the salt" (*M*, 65). She on her part acknowledges the strangeness of the family, where Scott has the whole household in some kind of mental iron grip. "I think there's an intensity that makes certain subjects a little dangerous" (*M*, 65). She is, however mistaken about how dangerous Scott is. He is still caught in his addiction. He is not addicted to drugs anymore, but he has an addictive personality, and what controls him in the present state is his addiction to power. He runs the house like a little general. However, the power he believes himself to have is as treacherous as any other drug, and will eventually fail him.

One more implication for this particular reading of the novel is how the pastiche family is caught in the nostalgic notion of what their subject positions should be. They are making an "ultimate attempt" (*P*, 19), as Jameson would describe it, at composing a family subjectivity within a nostalgic mode. The three members in this family are hostages of their own present and immediate past (*P*, 19). Despite the fact that they all have had possibilities to observe (and even live in) a normal family discourse in their pasts, they have lost sight of this family design as quickly as the world forgets its past. Both the world in general, and this little micro cosmos upstate New York, are desperately attempting to recreate its "pastness" (*P*, 20) from fragmented memories and fractured pop-cultural images of the times gone by.

*Mao II* is, as other novels in its category, "...crowded with real historical figures" (*P*, 23), such as Chairman Mao and Ayatollah Khomeini. It is also laden with images from significant historical moments. All of these interact with the fictive family somehow (*P*, 23), but their presence does not produce deeper levels of knowledge and understanding about what constitutes the family ISA. Their lives are based on make-believe. They are adults (Bill Gray

is even middle-aged), but their take on life and adulthood, are from the point of view of children playing house. They have completely misunderstood certain elements, or misinterpreted other elements. In conversation with Brita, Karen disclose her concern with Brita being there to take Gray's photo, exposing his person, demystifying him to the world. "We have a life here that's carefully balanced. There's a lot of planning and thinking behind the way Bill lives and now there's a crack all of a sudden" (*M*, 57). In the end, though they try to keep the family together, fearing the likes of Brita, their family and their individual roles within the family only represent "...ideas and stereotypes about the past" (*P*, 25). They trace mental images of a past they do not quite know and understand, filling the present with pop-images and fractured notions of the family image (*P*, 25).

Towards the end of the novel, the reader is fully aware that Bill Gray is dead, but Karen and Scott are left in the dark about this. They are not quite sure what to do with themselves (*M*, 222). The only redeeming feature with the absence of Gray is that when they are not concerned with the matters of Gray, it brings them closer together. Societal family roles almost reset themselves to mirror normality (*M*, 220). They have to come to terms with the possibility that Gray might not return (*M*, 222). Scott has backup plan to postpone the eventuality of possible interventions from Gray's other family by gradually managing finished novels, long awaited proofs of life in the form of the photos Brita took. This way they can justify their continued stay in Gray's house as a "second chance" (*M*, 224).

## **5.2. Parody and Pastiche**

Parody and pastiche are two essential terms when discussing postmodernism and postmodern texts. According to Fredric Jameson pastiche is the most significant feature in postmodernism today (*NATC*, 1848). Both terms "...involve the imitation or, better still, the mimicry of other styles and particularly of the mannerisms and stylistic twitches of other styles" (*NATC*, 1848). A parody is often regarded as a humorous attempt to make fun of, or ridicule the original. According to Jameson "...parody capitalizes on the uniqueness of...styles and seizes on their idiosyncrasies and eccentricities to produce an imitation which mocks the original" (*NATC*, 1849). A parody would not work if there existed no recognisability with the original element. In this respect, to create a parody, the original needs to be something most people recognise and can relate to. Pastiche is what happens when the parody has become impossible. "Pastiche is blank parody..." (*NATC*, 1489). The pastiche can occur without the public being aware of the style that is conveyed, because there is neither memory nor resemblance to that which is being mimicked.



In a society that is constantly focused on always moving forward, always thinking ahead, there is a danger of forgetting what once was. This is one way of understanding postmodernity. Jameson believes forgetting the past is not just a danger society face, but also a fact that has already happened. Jameson believe it is one of the most salient features with postmodernity. “It is safest to grasp the concept of the postmodern as an attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place” (*P*, ix). The loss of history does not make it postmodern, but, Jameson continues, the “historical deafness” creates a series of almost desperate attempts to recover what once was, only it is impossible to remember (*P*, xi).

### 5.2.1. The Pastiche Family Subjectivity in the Novels

In what follows there will be examples of parody and pastiche in the families from the selected novels.

The mass wedding at Yankee Stadium in the beginning of *Mao II* (*M*, 3-16) is a parody of what culture (any culture) would perceive as a *proper* union between two people. It becomes ridiculous that a cult leader claims to know how to pair couples together based on his visions and dreams. To view the scene from the outside, it becomes comedy. But to stand on the inside, it is dead serious. This is why this mass wedding in the beginning is also a pastiche of how the western world in a not too distant past used to arrange marriages. To the parts of the world that still have a marriage arrangement made by other people than the actual bride and groom; the mass wedding would be a parody. The main purpose of the mass wedding is to produce a hollow union between two subjects that will be joined, on the basis of their leader’s dreams. Later they are to live in two different countries, working for the church, and not for the purpose of their marriage. The function of the couple is both a parody to what a union between man and woman should be, and a pastiche as it seems the cultural purpose of such a union is forgotten. Their goal is to earn money that will go directly to the leader. The union has nothing to do with love, or even family anymore. The sanctity, or even the practicality, of marriage has become a hybrid entity existing between a parody and a pastiche. The subject within such a group is expected to do as he or she has been told, and a mental violence is ever-present in the minds of the subjects. They are at the same time free to roam the country in search of the daily collections of financial funds.

Does a subject raised in a fractured family, such as the one Abu Rashid can provide for his *sons* know he is robbed of the normal family life, or does he accept the reality to which he is presented (*M*, 233)? Abu Rashid’s subjects have been rescued from a grim fate of drugs, alcohol and crime on the streets. They have been enrolled in a *family* with their identities are

hidden under hoods. They are taking on the features of their *father*, Abu Rashid, and they exist as copies, rather than children. “They don’t need their own features or voices. They are surrendering these things to something powerful and great” (*M*, 234). Hooded and carrying guns, serving as hollow replicas of Abu Rashid, they are subjects of the family, but they do not know what family is. They are the hollow men. The only thing they know is that “...women carry babies, men carry arms” (*M*, 234). When Brita Nilson rips the hood off one of the subjects, the subject reacts with anger, contempt and violence (*M*, 237). Had he been fully brainwashed, fully subjected to someone else’s mind and will, fully *interpellated* as the subject position of a copy, he would not be in a position to show his own emotions. He would look to his *father* before reacting in any way. He would simply put his hood back on and continue his life as someone else. The fact that he looks at *her* and decides to hate *her*, and then attack her, just because he sees her with his own eyes, makes him *always-already interpellated* into a subject within ideology. He is a subject with his own thoughts and ideas within the discourse he is growing up.

The marriage between Benjamin Sachs and Fanny from *Leviathan* resembles more and more a parody the longer they stay married. Whenever he is away she believes he is cheating on her, and he knows she will not believe him if he denies it, so he plays along. “I tell her what she wants to hear. I lie in order to keep her happy” (*L*, 95). Sachs already tries to fit in to the subject position of a husband, so to add another level to the role is easy for him, though it does not fit him. For Aaron it is difficult to imagine that a marriage where the trust is broken in this way can be a happy marriage. And for Fanny, it is not a happy marriage. In her mind, the fact that he cheats on her gives her the right to cheat on him, so she does, with his best friend (*L*, 85). Peter Aaron sees Fanny as the only woman he is capable of loving at this point in his life. But admitting to it, as she is married to Sachs, is not something he does until Fanny allows him. “Fanny had become someone else. Ben had become someone else. In the space of one brief conversation, all my certainties about the world had collapsed” (*L*, 84). Aaron believes that his friends’ marriage is the epitome of a happy marriage, but the evening Fanny invites him to dinner when Sachs is away, he realises that their marriage is a bit of a charade. This is a suspicion that is further confirmed when he decides to come clean to his friend.

The Phantom of Liberty believes himself to have a good cause to travel the country to place explosives inside fake symbols of freedom. His cause is hollow and without originality and origin. It has a quasi origin in his disturbed memories of trauma from his childhood, but no real origin. He is an intelligent man with family and friends, he is a respected author, and could make more of a difference in society remaining within that ideology. But instead he

listens to vague and distorted thoughts that only he and other missing men can relate to. He acts for the purpose of acting. He creates a narrative where he feels his actions are of great importance. Aaron, however, is never really certain on whose behalf Sachs acts. Sachs' actions are not making the world a better place. His demonstrations end up strengthening the Repressive State Apparatus rather than weakening it. His cause is not making conditions for those who have little any easier. His cause alienates him more and more from the society he seeks to change. His cause is a one-man crusade, a lone wolf, fracturing his subjectivity further, making him deaf from all ideological hails.

When Eric Packer gives up sleeping at all, and starts getting ready for the new day, he is surrounded by the parody of the filthy rich (C, 5). His life is so perfect that he hardly can believe it himself, which is why he goes out of his way to destroy it. "Every act he performed was self-haunted and synthetic" (C, 6), a sentiment that will be his demise. Packer even has a parodic shark tank (C, 7). At the start of the novel Packer feels unsettled, He has had no sleep, and starts the day empty. But walking through his forty-eight-room apartment makes him calm down, as an emperor inspecting his empire. Packer's empire is mostly digital, which can explain why the tangible presence of shark tanks, pools, gymnasiums, screening rooms and borzoi pens (C, 7) causes him feel calmer. His virtual wealth is just that, where as his apartment and his possessions represent a version of him that he can view as successful and accomplished, the physical things he can touch.

Packer's need for a haircut (C, 160), the element that drives him further through the novel, is a pastiche element in the story. To him this is a feeble attempt to awaken the safety of childhood when his father was still alive. He has completely forgotten what going to the barber was, and when he comes back though he can remember, the feeling he wanted to resurrect has passed. He enters Anthony's barbershop and can see that nothing has changed. It is like the place has lived in a bubble outside of time, Anthony speaks about the same things he was spoke about the last time Packer was there. And upon entering, Packer relaxes, though it is fake, he relaxes for the first time in a long time, as a kind of calm before the storm. In the past, sleep has failed him (C, 5), but when in the barbershop he finally manages to find rest. "What can be simpler than falling asleep" (C, 165)? The sleep-element also becomes pastiche, because Eric Packer does no longer know what sleep is. He is caught in the ever-awake market, and like his digits and patterns, he is awake, tracking them, predicting them, interpreting them.

Eric Packer finds himself caught in the hollowness of his childhood safe-place. But his safe-person, Anthony, is caught in the same tracks as he was from before Eric was born. "I cut

his father's hair when he was a kid. Then I cut his hair" (C, 166). The safety and calmness of a place outside the market cannot fulfil Packers needs for family and refuge. He thought he needed to come there to find balance. But half way through the haircut he has spent the entire day to get to – the haircut that has brought him from paradise to hell during a long day – he realises that it did not fulfil its purpose after all.

### 5.3. The Novels, Parody and Pastiche

When working with concepts such as parody and pastiche, and theorists such as Louis Althusser and Fredric Jameson, new ways of analysing the selected literature emerge. The literature has been critically scrutinised since published; DeLillo's novels with mostly with a focus on how he applies language, how he conveys mass media, and how he presents close to accurate literary snapshots of the society and reality he wants to convey; Auster's novels with a focus on how he conveys the fractured subject, how he deconstructs the self, and how he turns himself into a character in many of his narratives. But when collecting the selected novels for the purpose of this thesis, a new level presented itself.

Fredric Jameson talks about parody and pastiche and how these concepts are helpful to determine postmodernity (NATC, 1848). When understanding parody and pastiche, *Mao II*, *Leviathan* and *Cosmopolis* turn into a literary collection and not just separate novels that were written by long-time friends (who dedicated works to each other – *Leviathan* is dedicated to Don DeLillo and *Cosmopolis* is dedicated to Paul Auster). The novels exist within a postmodern discourse, and Jameson says that "...we seem condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about the past, which itself remains forever out of reach" (NATC, 1820). The selected novels are linked together by parody and pastiche as understood by Fredric Jameson (NATC, 1848-1849).

None of the novels are *the original*, to that the pastiche element, in particular, is too strong. Nonetheless it starts with *Mao II*. DeLillo's narrative about the tormented, alcoholised, secluded author who spices up his life (to prove that he is not as predictable as his self-appointed entourage imagined him to be) by leaving the safety of his cage to go into a war zone to negotiate the freedom of a poet hostage. Presented in this novel is also the power of the masses, and at the same time the powerlessness of the masses. The novel presents the author in different settings of different societies and cultures, such as the classical author conveyed through Bill Gray, the mass-author, conveyed through the masses, the politicised, radical author, conveyed through the radical leader; all of which write narratives that have no origin, but still keep referring to something that came before. This creates a paradox in this thesis' claim that the three novels are linked by parody and pastiche. They still are, but this

conflict of original-less art is striking throughout most of the postmodern era; where everything is original and nothing is original, because no art, no novel, no song was ever created in isolation. The world might have forgotten what inspired the texts in the first place.

To call *Mao II* an original would on some levels be completely inaccurate, other than the fact that it was published first. Viewing it as an original indicates that there were no novels before, and that this story was invented solely in Don DeLillo's mind. It is not what this thesis attempts to convey. There are many aspects to *Mao II* that places it within the pastiche discourse, its title, for example. It is far from original, it is number two. The selected novels *are* connected by theme, coherence in topic and character development. This starts with *Mao II* being the pastiche. Then, *Leviathan* takes on the role of the parody novel, the one that has a slightly exaggerated look on *Mao II*, but still is in a position to convey something new. Lastly, *Cosmopolis* becomes the second pastiche novel, where it is looking back at something that is already forgotten, even before it happens, reflecting everything around it, but never being in a position to look ahead.

Having said that, this might convey that *Leviathan* is mocking *Mao II*, but the novel was not written with the intention of being a parody. Aliko Varvogli claims that *Leviathan* is "Auster's most realistic novel to date" (141) – and when reading *Leviathan* among novels such as *City of Glass*, *Man in the Dark* and *Invisible* (to mention a few), the realism of *Leviathan* is one of the elements that makes the novel stand out –and for that exact reason one can view the novel as something more than a sheer comment on *Mao II*; it becomes a parody when seen in connection with all the other novels Paul Auster has written. The seriousness of the narrative can be interpreted with a sense of humour and even well intended mockery. If one looks at *Leviathan* in the light of parody, then one can see the exaggerated elements that are present to make the narrative go forward. Going from the moment he lets himself fall from the balcony (*L*, 106), to the moment he lets the bomb he is building explode, taking him with it (*L*, 244). These are clear details confirming the parodic mood of the novel. And even though the emotions of the character, Benjamin Sachs, are real, and difficult for him to handle, in this particular part of the discussion they become somewhat of a ridiculous twist staged by Paul Auster.

*Cosmopolis* is at first glance not about the radicalisation of the mind or the author question. Further, at first glance it is not conveyed as a pastiche. With *Mao II* and *Leviathan*, this novel is about something that is larger than life. It is about something that drives the protagonist to make choices that puts him in situations he would not have predicted to be in. In the novels there is this element of something outside of the subject, steering them, and that

presence is the ever-present ideology in all its incarnations. Essentially *Cosmopolis* is the pastiche version of both *Mao II*, and *Leviathan*. This pastiche element is as hidden as the pattern Eric Packer is looking for when he is inspecting the market on his computer screens, but it "...wants to be seen" (C, 86). The novel is not just pastiche in relation to the other two selected novels in this thesis; it is also pastiche in terms of historical epochs such as medieval times when feudalism reigned. Packer is at the top; he is the lord allowing the vassals the access to the market, expecting them to return as his subjects, to protect their lord. However, the danger with being in this position, as mentioned in the chapter about *Cosmopolis* (chapter two) is that his paid subjects are only loyal as long as they get their money. Because the market is, as the reader will see, not something that Packer himself owns, meaning he cannot really trust them to do his will. DeLillo has written his own pastiche novel that conveys the Hedge fund CEO who manoeuvres in a world that has completely forgotten how power and capital ought to be divided. At the same time it is a comment on the contemporary time with an increasing attraction towards a neoliberal society as David Harvey sees it.

Packer writes a narrative that his subjects, and their subjects again, believe in, and that narrative is money. This narrative is not only something Packer is behind, it is also something he shares with other financial tops, all of which end up as the most amazing authors in history. The financial part of the world has created a narrative that is a bigger lie than anything else. But since every single person on the planet believes that an essentially worthless piece of paper has a higher value than for example food, clothes and houses, the lie is working. There is this abstract concept of *The Market* that holds all the financial secrets, all the financial myths, and all the financial routes to another abstract concept, *success*. A misconception of happiness being hidden within this market has made its elusive attraction, force its believers to reach for concepts as hollow as origin of a text, freedom, and the American Dream. This means that even though the market is something that still exists, money and how money mess with the mind, becomes the pastiche in *Cosmopolis*.

In this context the market becomes a presence of totality. It runs through all facets of human existence, the one thing (more than any ISAs) that *interpellates* human subjects into occupying capitalistic subject positions; a subject position no one can escape. Thus the market alienates all other subject positions leaving only one subject, according to Althusser, namely "Logic" (82). What "Logic" conveys is that it negates its own beginning, because it cannot have existed in nothingness. This becomes a paradox in the discussion of origin of text, origin of the market, and origin of the subject, as all end up existing in a perpetual duality of being

and non-being. This is the dichotomy Packer struggles with throughout his whole narrative. He is and he is not, and this confuses him, because his goal is to *become* in the future.

Packer does not exist in the past or the present, he exists (or he wants to exist) in a future he cannot have, making both the historic element and the present element disappear in an alienated moment where subjects seize to be and it is all about what will be (Althusser, 81). Packer toys with the idea of becoming part of his pattern, as he feels strongly he can connect to it. To him it becomes almost religious. *Cosmopolis* takes on the subject position of a pastiche novel because of its lack of history, and because of its presence in both the now and the past; the past but without history. The protagonist is almost history free, as is the world from his point of view. There is history, but the world has forgotten what it refers to in the various moments of looking in the rear view mirror. A moment in history has no changing effect on the present anymore, and gradually every moment in time becomes a faded, dusty family photo one looks at, but rarely incorporates the importance of.

To claim that presenting the novels as a collection that depicts parody and pastiche are DeLillo's and Auster's intentions with these novels might be nothing but this student subject's speculations, but it is the effect the novels and the authors have created in the findings of this thesis. That *Mao II*, presents the pastiche element heavily already in the title, which is a reference to Andy Warhol's images of Chairman Mao, underlines this point even further. When having reproduced the original so many times that the original is lost it becomes a pastiche. But the narrative as such is not a hollow unoriginal copy of something that once was; it creates a presence to the time and the mindset of the author and how he or she should relate to the real world.

Intertextuality is an important factor in the parody/pastiche debate. The selected novels have aspects that enable and empower them to stand alone, and one does not have to have read *Mao II* to read *Leviathan* or *Cosmopolis*. There must be no doubt; the novels are separate and unique works. But when collecting these three novels in search of the capitalist subject, the radicalised, politicised subject and the author subject, these new details connecting them emerge. All the novels, and both the authors, are separately highly referential to both own and other texts.

#### **5.4. Bill Gray and the author subject**

Bill Gray is as grey as his name implies, and it is not even his real name (*M*, 223), making the greyness surrounding him into a cloak of invisibility adding to the mystery of whom he really is. His adult life has been spent in the shadows, and the reader is never really introduced to his history. He has a daughter, Lizzy (*M*, 112), who reports back to the estranged mother,

concerning Gray's alcohol habits and reclusiveness. The reader is also let in on how, Gray "fucked up" two more siblings, "Sheila and Jeff" (*M*, 114), but this is the only time they are mentioned. The reader gets only a few clues to why Gray's family is no longer a family functioning within the norms of family life. He used to hide behind the lie that his writing made him a recluse, but his daughter sees right through him, claiming he used the writing as an escape from the burdens of his family (*M*, 114). The reasons for why his first family did not work, are the same as why his current constructed family indeed works. However, the only reason he visits his daughter is to get his passport, something she is fully aware of (*M*, 115). Had he been in possession of his passport, he would have vanished without his family, both the constructed and the deconstructed, having any clues to where he went.

Gray constantly re-writes his own narrative, and it becomes clear that he hides within his constructed narratives to avoid the painful truth about his own present reality. His "tendency to drink" (*M*, 207), is about to poison his life completely. After having travelled from The U. S to London, and then to Cyprus, he suffers a freak accident, being hit by a car (*M*, 167). When he talks to a group of veterinarians, he creates an alternate reality, a narrative concerning a character in a book he is writing, asking their professional medical opinion about the injuries his character might have caused himself when being hit by the car. Here, in this moment, he makes himself into a character of a possible book he never intends to write. His whole being depends on the answer of the medical experts on animals rather than humans, taking the theme of the fractured self even further. "...a writer creates a character as a way to reveal consciousness, increase the flow of meaning" (*M*, 200). Bill Gray creates himself as a character to convey a different consciousness, but it is also present as a way of protecting himself from the truth he does not want to admit; that he is an alcoholic, and that he is dying from the damages of the accident.

Gray has been living in his fractured, unstable family situation for years, existing under the radar of normality and media, and now he marginalises himself further. One can suspect that this unwillingness to admit to the veterinarians that he indeed talks about himself is to be in a position where he later can make up his mind whether or not to seek medical help. The more likely answer is that he takes his anonymity and his seclusion even further that he did when he lived with Scott and Karen. He does not want to admit to the veterinarians who he is (*M*, 205), not even that he is a writer of consequence. They believe they are a part of an author seeking medical advice as a part of his research, and they presuppose, with the help of Gray's narration of the 'character's' symptoms, that the character should call "...a bloody ambulance" (*M*, 210). Instead of following their advice, Gray sits with them, eats with



them, and drinks even more with them, letting his body and his “lacerated liver” (*L*, 208) continue to suck the life out of him. The only reason he does not care about the serious message the veterinarians have given him is because he has entered into a new subject position. Bill Gray, the author, is the one in his narrative, and Bill Gray, the man, the hero, is the one who intends to fulfil his journey, free the poet, and make something real out of his life. He submerges himself in the character he created, and as long as *he* is the one with the problems, Gray himself does not need to worry.

One of the author’s tasks in a world where violence and radicalisation screams louder than most quiet narratives, is to convey the language of the people without a voice. The people in Beirut will only be able to express themselves in the language that represents their reality. David Cowart claims that it becomes a language of the self (112). Whatever reality DeLillo conveys in his novels, he creates a version of the discourse where themes of importance can be discussed (112). His narratives are presented within a realistic universe, often linked to actual historical moments, making the discussions take place within a *true* ideological discourse. Even though Gray dislocates himself from the truth of his own life, creating a heroic quest for his hero character, the real him is still caught in the real narrative.

When Bill Gray is on the boat to Junieh, where he plans to find a taxi that can take him to Beirut, he creates yet another person, yet another character, that can function as a stand-in for him. The author side of Bill Gray completely takes over. “It was writing that caused his life to disappear” (*M*, 215). The pain of his dying body is something he sweeps aside because he is on the inside of the boat. He creates a narrative of his plans when he comes to Junieh and later to Beirut. He will “walk into the headquarters of Abu Rashid and tell them who he was” (*M*, 215). This causes the reality and severity of his situation to fade. “...who he was” (*M*, 215) is not referring to the man, Bill Gray, but the author, Bill Gray. The one who has written literature that might have offended religious leaders and cults, the one with opinions that do not go down well with radical thinkers, the one who thinks he can solve a hostage situation by being *him*. Gray *is* afraid. He does not want to deal with the fear of dying, and ignores the signs his body gives him. The little voice of reason inside that wanted him to go to the doctor is silenced when the boat is back in traffic again (it was taken out of traffic due to damage). But of all these, the most likely reaction is that of fear. In the narrative Gray creates, his character replaces the one that is afraid. He makes sure his emotions are buried deep, and only a brief pang of longing for family when he sees mothers with babies entering the boat makes him think about what he once had (*M*, 214). In the end he forces himself to look ahead, even though he knows deep down that *ahead* is a matter of hours.

Back in his house upstate New York the abandoned Scott and Karen are perplexed and confused as to what their new reality will be like. They act like two orphans, presenting the orphaned child as a pastiche, because they are both adults, and fully capable of surviving in the world without paternal guidance (*M*, 218-24). Their father figure is missing and now they need to decide whether to preserve Bill Gray's reputation as secluded author, or to report him missing. Scott knows that the next novel is finished. He knows there are photos (the ones that Brita took of Gray – *M*, 37), and he knows he can release them to undo the "local symptom of God's famous reluctance to appear" (*M*, 36). He knows (or fears) that no one has any answers of where Gray has gone, or even if he comes back. The fractured family is left in an even more fractured state, in the hands of those who do not have the creative gift of the author. However, they both end up writing their own narrative within the fractured family, reinventing their positions and hoping for a second chance (*M*, 224).

### 5.5. The Author and The Truth

Historically, Mao Zedong would have his picture taken for various steps in his political career. If he had, for example, been away, travelling, he would have his picture taken showing his people he was healthy, strong and back (*M*, 141). Bill Gray applies the chairman's example as an inspiration to how he wants to be perceived – which tells the reader a lot about his rather elevated image of himself. Bill Gray has been hiding from the public eye for a long time, but his novels continue to sell. Now with the help of photographer, Brita Nilsson, he plans to resurrect his public identity. Towards the end of the novel, Brita does not look at the novelists anymore; she is then a *narrator* of war, taking photos of political and religious radical leaders. But, she is, in the beginning of the novel, on a mission to give the writer a face, claiming, "The writer's face is the surface of the work. It's a clue to the mystery inside" (*M*, 26). Here she has entered into the discussion about the author and his or her functions in society. She addresses questions like whether or not the author's meaning with the text is the *correct* meaning. Foucault said "What difference does it make who is speaking?" (222). The reader's interpretation of the text would probably change if the author had a different name. There is an expectation connected to an author's name. The reader would expect a certain type of novels from this thesis' selected authors. The reader would be confused if this part of the puzzle changed radically. According to Foucault the author has "...played the role of the regulator of the fictive" (222). One does not need to be an author to invent narratives and stories, or to be a conveyer of truth.

What is truth to an author? In his non-fiction book, *The Red Notebook* (1996), Paul Auster accounts for many of the serendipitous and dramatic moments he has had through his

life. Once how he witnessed death at the age of fourteen, when his friend, Ralph, was electrocuted and killed by lightning, and it missed Paul Auster by a few inches (170); how Paul Auster at the age of eight, forgetting to bring a pencil in his pocket missed him the chance of getting the autograph of his favourite baseball-player, and essentially put him on the path of becoming an author (and also giving him the habit of always having a pencil with him) (175); how he wrote a prayer for Salman Rushdie, how he prays for him every day, and eventually himself, because of the actual dangers related to being a creator of the written word (157). The prayer concerning Salman Rushdie is probably one of the reasons both Paul Auster and Don DeLillo are concerned with the dangers of radicalisation and the status of the author in their oeuvres. They observed how a fellow author had to flee for his life for doing his job; writing a book, and a fictional as such. Even though this book, *The Satanic Verses* (1988) might have conveyed credibility to the society it was describing, it *was* fiction that came from the author's imagination.

The first 38 pages of *The Red Notebook* are a little collection of small essays Paul Auster has called "The Red Notebook". He accounts, among other things, for how he got the idea for *City of Glass* (1987), and oddly enough it starts with a wrong number, as does the famous novel (*CoG*, 1). To round off his essay collection he says "This really happened. Like everything else I have set down in this red notebook, it is a true story" (38). The dilemma of the truth will confuse every human being more than once during a lifetime, and a person who says he or she has never lied, is lying. But does something become the truth just because a subject believes in it? Throughout this thesis one of the most salient theorists has been Louis Althusser. His thoughts on subject positions within ideology are key elements to comprehend what subjectivity and subject positions are. How a subject ends up occupying capitalistic or political positions has to do with the process of drawing that subject in. A subject is *interpellated* into the truth they feel is speaking to them, calling to them, hailing them. Essentially this means that every subject is subjected to the truth that has hailed him or her in, and that the truth in the end is its own contradiction.

In this process, mass media, as one of the ISAs, has a moral obligation of reporting the truth, but whose truth? It is media's truth, it is the reader's truth, and it is the government's truth, as long as one believes. Auster and DeLillo are concerned with mass media (maybe DeLillo even more so). They try to give accounts of the power, the reach and the results of mass media's process of reporting, creating and narrating the state of the world as it is seen. When something is reported in the news, humans interpret and perceive what is presented as the truth; but whose truth do they perceive and interpret, and why are these truths so easily

internalised and accepted? It is easier to trust the *truth* presented in the news than asking questions. If it is written in the papers, or mentioned on the news, it must be true. To ask questions means making an effort of staying on top of the ever-changing question of truth. In all fairness, most people just want to go to work, get paid, and live a life where necessities such as administration of society is left to the people in charge. As long as the group, defined as *most people* are satisfied, it does not always matter that they are tricked or someone has performed shady operations to hide truth and knowledge, and it happens in the Western world as well as everywhere else. Those with power will make decisions on what is good or not for the people to know.

Packer conveys that the protesters' truths are fake (C, 89-90). As his chief of theory, Vija Kinski says, the protesters are nothing but a "...fantasy generated by the market. They don't exist outside the market. There is nowhere they can go to be on the outside. There is no outside" (C, 90). Both Packer and Kinski are ignoring the protesters' violent treatment of the limousine, sitting unaffected on the inside, even though the limousine is shaking quite brutally from their anger. Simply because the market is on the inside (literally) of the vehicle, and "There is no outside" (C, 90), they do not have to acknowledge anything but their own truth. Kinski and Packer's truths are so strong in this moment that the protesters' voices have no sound and their cause no consequence. The rolling micro world is all that Packer and Kinski need.

Sachs pretends to be a man who considers moving to the villages with replicas of The Statue of Liberty, but his true intention is destruction of political truth. Sachs creates a narrative that can explain his presence in the villages in question, why he would need to know what the place looks like at nighttime, for example (L, 231-234). The villagers would at this point have no reason to distrust the eloquent and charismatic stranger, and his fake truth forms bonds of trust and even compassion. That he has no intention of ending lives is not important. The important element is his alternative truth. To the villagers this constructed narrative is received as truth, they are accepting the call of Sachs' false narrative. This can be brought even further when reading almost any Paul Auster novel. One will meet either Paul Auster as a character in the novel, or a version of Paul Auster as a character. In *Leviathan*, for example, he has his own presence in the novel as Peter Aaron (the same initials), and his wife in real life, Siri Hustvedt, has a mirror character in Iris who marries Peter Aaron in the novel. So Paul Auster is present, either as a fictional character with a twist as in *Leviathan*, or as Paul Auster the fictional character in *City of Glass* (CoG, 7). But he is not present as Paul Auster, the man, only Paul Auster the character. By applying this literary move, including his own

name, the reader is caught off guard and dragged out of the narrative for a moment, to then let the reader back into a false narrative about himself. The character Paul Auster could be perceived as the real Paul Auster, but the character will always be a character. He remains the mythological author on the outside of the story. In *Leviathan* it is not as visible as in *City of Glass*.

The lies, or fake truth of family and friends translates to the most treacherous if disclosed – of course depending on the lie, or how far from the truth the message is, and what mental state the receiver, or interpreter, is in. For Bill Gray to manoeuvre lies and truth is conveyed as a dance he is very skilled at. When George Haddad claims that “Your safety was foremost in mind” (*M*, 155), when trying to convince Gray to travel to Beirut and negotiate the freedom of a kidnapped poet, Gray is fully aware of the lie behind the fake truth Haddad is presenting. He accepts despite the danger he knows he will be exposed to. It is a risk he is willing to take. One can discuss whether his compass has been completely switched off, or if it is a secret death wish. One has to wonder how Gray can he thinks that him being in a place where authors and poets are taken prisoners will help the situation. What he eventually plans is to offer himself up as a second victim, and this could very well have been his intention all along. If this is the case, then his inner truth has not been conveyed so far in his life, or in the novel. The people he lives with are most certainly kept in the dark about this decision. They have been his surrogate family for while he exiled himself, but now when he follows his inner voice, his inner truth, he has no more use for them. He does not even consider letting them know where in the world he is.

The various ISAs relevant for the brief discussion above, here represented by the capitalistic system in *Cosmopolis*, the community in *Leviathan*, the pastiche family and the cultural ISA with the author in *Mao II*, functions as a framework for perceiving, interpreting and conveying truth. The capitalistic system, the community and the pastiche family are fragmented versions of ISAs, meaning that they do convey ideology, but maybe not the ideology these apparatuses were meant to convey, or are indeed expected to convey. The protagonists of the selected novels exist in the margins of these truths, but not in the margins of society as such. None of them are marginalised through social class, race, or gender, and none of them have been exposed to treatments or episodes that would marginalise them in terms of mental capacity. This means that they are marginalised within the ideological framework they exist. Further, it points to how they interpret said framework, how they read their own narratives and how they disclose the reasons to why they became marginalised. Why could not ideology *interpellate* them fully? They all have experiences in their past that

has given them the ability to ask questions that might not be fully answered by the ideology that shaped them, and the ideology they live in as adults.

For Eric Packer in *Cosmopolis* it is the massive difference between his poor self as a child and his extremely rich self as an adult. He sees the difference, and the part of him that lacked money as a child is fully reimbursed as an adult. There is a part of him that clearly longs for the simpler times when a haircut was just a haircut and the wealth was in the conversation and the feelings of belonging somewhere, not in possessions. His former employee, Benno Levin, eventually, causes his death, or so the reader has to assume (C, 206).

For Benjamin Sachs in *Leviathan* it is the political differences between his younger and adult self. He reflects on how a child is at the mercy of an almost repressive ideological state apparatus within the family, how a mother has the power to decide the dress code of a child, even though the child objects. Further, the traumatic experiences he had inside the Statue of Liberty haunts his adult self. The void and hollowness on the inside of what is translated as the idea of liberty, becomes a part of Sachs already from the age of six. This explains why he cannot be fully *interpellated* by the Ideological State Apparatuses in the society he lives. It also shows why he feels the need to try out all those different versions of himself, and why he ends up fractured in the end, rather than as a whole person (though this thesis has doubled him with the bomb, claiming that in his final moments he reaches the wholeness he has searched for his entire life). His death is self-afflicted, though categorised as an accident.

For Bill Gray in *Mao II* it is the text, the creator of the text and the masses reading the text – the text here is a metaphor for ideology. Gray lives a veiled life on the side-lines of what a normal society can provide of for example companionship, community, and human interactions. His author subject position is spent in seclusion and deep thought, constantly re-writing his latest novel, forcing him to either break out and do something, or wither away as a myth. Because he has sold books, and has created a name for himself, he can afford to withdraw from society and only answer to the ideology within his constructed family. When he finally does emerge from his self-made exile, he makes choices that would be considered strange. His death is a proper accident, though he could have chosen to seek help. He rather travels towards what he knows is a dangerous country where people in his position are considered threats to those who are in power.

Humans tend to believe authority, police, doctors, and the government. But when really scrutinising, truth, the police, doctors, and the government are merely human beings,

programmed to be pragmatic and serve the many (in the utopian world), rather than the few; programmed to make mistakes, making sure the truth stays true. Depending on who is the receiver of said truth, it will not always be perceived as such. To *Cosmopolis*' Eric Packer, the capitalist looking glass of ridiculous surveillance systems and expensive penthouse apartments are truths; to *Leviathan*'s Benjamin Sachs, who portrays various versions of himself to end up with the politicised subject prepared to risk his life for his cause, find truths in his convictions; to *Mao II*'s Bill Gray the narratives he creates about his character becomes the truth. But these fictional examples are just that, fictions. The reader knows that the protagonists are all lost in their own misconceptions and illusions, and also at the mercy of the author. So what, then, is true? Leaving this question open is tempting, because to define one true interpretation closes the door on all other interpretations. This is, it seems, one of those questions one actually can leave hanging. What is certain is that truth is subjected to the individual perceiving it, as are interpretations of literature and texts in general.

The author question, and the author, represented in *Mao II*, is a mythological author. He has first created a name for himself, created interest and a foundation for selling books, and then he has withdrawn from the public life. The author who would do something like that is an author who wants the focus to be on the text and not the person writing the text. How the person writing the text lives and loves is of no relevance to the reader, or should be of no relevance to the reader. However, removing the author completely, his or her name, his or her influence on the text, and his or her relevance for any interpretation of the text becomes impossible. In terms of whose interpretation is the correct one, the author's interpretation of his or her text should not be more important than the interpretation of any of his or her readers. If the reader wants to know the meaning behind a text, and what it means to the creator of said text, then that is also valid. One can keep on saying that the author is of no significance, but one would be wrong.

No matter how much someone wants to tell the true story about either themselves, or someone they know, several elements will stop that from happening. Some of these can be memory, individual interpretations, and what the narrator chooses to emphasise or not tell. A story will come out, but not *the true story*. The truth is a complicated and uncanny concept to discuss, because it will always be seen from a subjective point of view. A society agree upon some truths that all of its citizens will try to relate to in some way, or act according to. However, even such truths are subjected to individual interpretations. What stands out as the truth to one individual might become false lies to another individual, even within the same community. An author will have to face these problems when writing a novel, or any kind of

fiction. But even the non-fiction texts out there are open to interpretation, making the truth something that can never be completely fixed or completely true to every single individual. This is the truth about being an author and conveying the truth.



## 6.0. Conclusion

This thesis has examined fictional characters' subject positions in postmodern novels by authors Don DeLillo and Paul Auster. Through analyses of the selected novels this thesis sought to interrogate ideology's impact on subject positions in fictional characters within a given discourse. Further, it sought to examine what aspects and what processes had to be present for a subject position to change or to remain the same. The selected characters provided subjects with conflicting subject positions, and these mostly internal conflicts drove the characters to extremes.

Analyses of Althusserian concepts such as *interpellation*, ISA and RSA have aided the discussions of how the selected characters came to occupy certain subject positions, and how they also came to reject, or at least find themselves in conflict with, these subject positions. A number of outside influences played important parts in the way the characters made choices that either led to drastic changes, or kept the situation unchanged. Eric Packer was pulled in two directions by the two polarities in his life, his subject position as a CEO and his subject position as a poor kid on the poor side of town. He was at one point the epitome of the American Dream, the one who against the odds rose to the eighty-ninth story on the Upper East Side (C, 8), the one who had it all. His old life pulled him back down because he let it. He did not have to take all the risks he took, and in the beginning of that fateful he could still afford taking all those risks. The more risks he took, the more he affected the whole financial world, and the more influence he had, though it cost him everything.

What subject positions does the fictional subject of ideology choose to occupy? This question was one of the most salient throughout the thesis. The question suggests that there is a choice. If there is a choice, whether or not this choice is possible to fight is another important factor. The findings suggest that the constant presence of ideology and the process of *interpellation* have placed the characters in a position where the choice has been made already. All of the characters were presented with choices that they choose to make or ignore, but these choices are only seemingly a choice. At the foundation of the choices are all the influences from ideology that helped the characters occupy the subject positions they occupy in the novels. The choices they make can also seem reckless, but it is their gradually changing subject positions that pull them in the direction to make choices that eventually destroy their lives. Packer chooses to kill his chief of theory (C, 147), and then seeks out his own murderer (C, 181). There is nothing or no one physically forcing him to make these choices, nothing else than his inner determination to win at self-destructing. Deep down he knows that if he is caught by the RSA, even he will get some kind of punishment for having killed a man. After

having taken Torval's life Packer acts like the RSA. He is now in control over his own punishment, which is death.

Aaron must believe, to keep the image of his friend alive, that Sachs did not choose to build a poorly constructed bomb, that he did not choose to blow himself up. But, Sachs could at any moment have chosen to come back to society. Eventually he made a choice that confirmed his terrorist subject position. Though it is difficult for those left behind to grasp Sachs' decision, it still remains the fact. Aaron can wonder whether or not Sachs actually had a choice, or if his conflicting subject positions finally stopped conflicting him and fully *interpellated* him to occupy a subject position as a terrorist. In his search for an existence with no violence, Sachs did turn to violence. His voice as an author did not have a long enough reach, but nor did his reach as the Phantom of Liberty. He chose to remain and die in the shadows, and only Aaron's choice to tell Sachs' story grants him other subject positions rather than that of the terrorist.

Bill Gray has a choice to seek out medical help after his accident. He could have been saved and continued his career as an author. But he chooses to ignore his pain and his lacerated liver, and place his ill and non-functioning self in the world of fiction. He chooses to treat himself as a character within a fictitious narrative in which pain and damage happens to someone else. There is no narrative, only a scared man afraid of his own mortality, worried about his epitaph, hoping his novels gives him a perpetual presence in the world.

What kind of shapes does violence and fear take on in the modern capitalist subject? This question was primarily addressed in chapter two and yielded ideas of how the very wealthy capitalistic subjects are in a position to outsource, for example fear, to a security company, or to bodyguards, or to an electronic security system. Only with the presence of bodyguards and security systems can the subject feel safe, or so he or she believes. However, it turned out it is impossible to flee from the present state. Fear will eventually catch up with its subject. Packer existed in a world only the rest of his 1% club of the world's wealthiest people would recognise. The difference between the rest of them and Packer is that he is ready to give up his wealth and embrace his asymmetry. As far as fears go, this would have been the biggest, the fear of losing everything. When he finally let go of the fear of losing everything, it freed him to seek out other sides of himself that were forgotten. Packer remains a dichotomy refusing to be *interpellated* by both the capitalistic subject position and the poor subject position, and ultimately he occupies both positions. He has lost all of his money, but he still owns a forty-eight room apartment at the Upper East Side.

How a subject position can convey clarity to the one subject, but confusion to surrounding subjects is a question that runs through the whole thesis. But the clearest discussion and answer to this was conveyed in chapter three when discussing the radicalised subject. Sachs' subject position makes sense to him but not to his surroundings. By the RSA he is considered a terrorist. His friend attempts to paint a different picture of Sachs, seeking to show that there was more to him than a desire to destroy fake symbols of freedom. Sachs becomes the literal embodiment of a fragmented subject. To him his journey made complete sense, and all the choices he made until he either deliberately or accidentally blew himself up, were a natural progression in his life. The analysis showed that though it was a natural progression to Sachs, it was not so to his friends and family.

How subjects positions within a family can lose sight of what constitutes a family. This question was mainly addressed in chapter four and turned out to be one of the innovative parts of this thesis. The pastiche family in *Mao II* presented a new way of reading this classic novel, and the analysis showed that the family constitution influenced the members to occupy new subject positions. Within the family, where all of the members had lost sight of, forgotten, or never really experienced belonging to a family and its connotations, they created new roles to fit their fractured expectations. These roles were based on expectations towards both gender and hierarchy, but they got them all mixed up in the end. What ended up happening is that the family dynamics rectified itself when Bill Gray left Karen Janney and Scott Martinaeu behind. The two suddenly had to reconstruct their own little family, reinventing the classic roles of man and woman (with the possibility of additions). Though it is not said in so many words, it is implied that they will continue to function as a family, or as a union, as long as they can live in the house of Bill Gray.

How the author and the truth become their own contradictions. This question has omnipresence in the thesis, but was most clearly discussed in chapter four. The truth is a perpetually ambivalent question that depends on who speaks, and eventually "what difference does it make who is speaking" (Foucault, 222)? This turns this specific question into an *always-already* (Althusser, 119) contradiction. Packer's narrative is the capitalistic. He writes this narrative when he goes against his deep knowledge of failure, because he knows he is losing money (C, 29). He shifts the financial market with the weight of his massive wealth sent in one direction. Sachs stops writing novels and starts turning his inner world of concepts into action. What he deems to be wrong with society, he no longer simply observes but actions against. His author friend, Aaron, can only do what he knows, which is to write. By

writing, he saves Sachs' author subject position, a position that otherwise would have been buried in the subject position he ultimately chooses to occupy.

This project started off with a determination to analyse the novels separately and was not meant to be a comparative analysis – it still is not – but something appeared as the analyses went deeper. The analyses made it possible to draw lines between the novels based on topic and presentation. Postmodernism, parody and pastiche, and also the presence of the always changing subject positions that become parodies and pastiche were other factors that enabled this thesis to read the novels from a perspective that could potentially open up new understandings of the character subjects.

With the vocabulary of Louis Althusser and Fredric Jameson (these two in particular) it was possible to implement the most significant discoveries in this thesis, *interpellation*, *parody* and *pastiche* and how the pastiche family organise their subject positions in dialogue with these concepts. Bill Gray's pastiche family in *Mao II* opens up new readings of the novel. The pastiche family is present in all the novels, but in *Mao II* in particular. Another significant discovery is how Sachs and Aaron in *Leviathan* are opposites, not doubles. Aaron is not Sachs' replacement. Lastly, Packer's limousine in *Cosmopolis* takes on new significant positions in being the postmodern element, as well as a substitute womb for the protagonist.

Althusser and Jameson have changed how this student subject views an everyday concept such as ideology. In conclusion for this thesis, and as a thought for future academic projects, ideology will not be understood as an either negative or positive force in society. It will be understood as a force that can be compared to language. Along with language, ideology is one of the cornerstones in human subjectivity, and will *always-already* play defining parts in how subjects come to occupy subject positions. These subject positions have to be *within* ideology, because as Vija Kinski said in *Cosmopolis*, "There is no outside" (C, 90)

## Works Cited

- Adams, Robert. *Routledge Critical Thinkers: Fredric Jameson*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000. Print
- Althusser, Louis. From "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". In Leitch, Vincent B. Editor. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* [First published 2001]. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2010. Print
- , *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. [First published by Monthly Review Press, New York, 2001] Delhi: Aakar Books, 2006. Print
- Auster, Paul. *City of Glass*. [First published 1987] London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2015. Print
- , *4321*. New York: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2017. Print
- , *Invisible*. [First published 2009] London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2010. Print
- , *Leviathan*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1992. Print
- , *Man in the Dark*. [First published 2008] London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2009. Print
- , *The Book of Illusions*. [First published 2002] London: Faber and Fabre Ltd., 2011. Print
- , *The Locked Room*. [First published 1987] London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 2015. Print
- , *The Red Notebook*. [First published 1995]. London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1996. Print
- Barthes, Roland. "Death of the Author" in Finkelstein, David and McCleery, Alistair. Editors *The Book History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2006 [first published 2002] Print
- Barone, Dennis. Editor. *Beyond the Red Notebook: Essays on Paul Auster*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania press, 1995. Print
- Brown, Mark. *Contemporary American and Canadian Novelists: Paul Auster*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. Print
- Cowart, David. *Don DeLillo. The Physics of Language*. [First published 2002] Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003 Print
- DeLillo, Don. *Americana* [First published 1971]. London: Penguin Books, 2011. Print
- , *Cosmopolis*. [First published 2003] New York: Scribner, 2012. Print
- , *Falling Man*. [First published by Scribner in 2007] London: Picador, 2012. Print
- , *Mao II*. [First published by Viking Penguin 1991] London: Picador, 2016. Print
- Duvall, John N. Editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Print
- Eagleton, Terry. *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso, 2007. Print
- Foucault, Michel. *Aesthetics: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, volume 2*. London: Penguin Books, 1994. Print
- , "What is an Author?" in Leitch, Vincent B. Editor. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* [First published 2001]. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2010. Print
- Hall, David E. *Subjectivity*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print
- Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. [First published 2005] Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Print
- Hayford, Jack W. Editor. *Spirit-Filled Life Bible*. [First published, as Holy Bible, New King James Version, 1982] London: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1991. Print
- Herbert, Zbigniew. *Report from the Besieged City: and Other Poems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. Print [First published by The Ecco Press, 1985]
- Helyer, Ruth. "DeLillo and Masculinity" in Duvall, John N. Editor. *The Cambridge Companion to Don DeLillo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Print
- Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Print [First published 1996]
- Jameson, Fredric. "Postmodernism and Consumer Society". In Leitch, Vincent B. Editor. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* [First published 2001]. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 2010. Print

- , *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. [first published 1991] London: Verso, 2009. Print
- Laist, Randy. *Technology and Postmodern Subjectivity in Don DeLillo's Novels*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2010. Print
- Leitch, Vincent B. Editor. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. [First published 2001] New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010. Print
- Mansfiel, Nick. *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Print.
- Pass, Phill. *The Language of the Self: Strategies of Subjectivity in the Novels of Don DeLillo*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, 2014. Print
- Rushdie, Salman. *The Satanic Verses*. [First published 1988] Dover, Delaware: The Consortium Inc., 1992. Print.
- Saltzman, Arthur. 'Leviathan: Post Hoc Harmonies'. In Barone, Dennis. Editor *Beyond the Red Notebook: Essays on Paul Auster*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. Print
- Shiloh, Ilana. *Paul Auster and Postmodern Quest: On the Road to Nowhere*. New York: Peter Lang, 2002. Print
- Sim, Stuart. *Fifty Key Postmodern Thinkers*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print
- Varvogli, Aliko. *Contemporary French and Francophone Cultures: The World that is the Book: Paul Auster's Fiction*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001. Print
- Wirth, Eric. 'A Look Back From the Horizon'. In Barone, Dennis. Editor. *Beyond the Red Notebook: Essays on Paul Auster*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995. Print
- Internet articles consulted
- Auster, Paul. "Paul Auster: A life in..." *The Guardian*. January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <[https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jan/20/paul-auster-4321-interview?CMP=Share\\_AndroidApp\\_Facebook](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jan/20/paul-auster-4321-interview?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Facebook)>
- Begley, Adam. "Case of the Brooklyn Symbolist". *The New York Times on the web: Books*. August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1997. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <<https://www.nytimes.com/books/99/06/20/specials/auster-92mag.html>>
- Bonca, Cornel. "Rethinking *Cosmopolis*" *Salon*. September 15<sup>th</sup> 2012. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <[http://www.salon.com/2012/09/14/rethinking\\_cosmopolis/](http://www.salon.com/2012/09/14/rethinking_cosmopolis/)>  
This article first appeared in *LA Book Review*
- Monbiot, George. "Neoliberalism – the Ideology at the Root of All our Problems". *The Guardian*. April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-monbiot>>
- Morrison, Blake. "Future Tense". *The Guardian*. May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/may/17/fiction.dondelillo> <<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/books/review/Martin-t.html>>
- Shilling, Jane. "Invisible by Pauls Auster: Review". *The Telegraph*. November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/bookreviews/6508502/Invisible-by-Paul-Auster-review.html>>

Shone, Tom. "Book Review/Trying on Terrorist Chic for Size: *Leviathan* – Paul Auster" *Independent*. October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1992. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/book-review-trying-on-terrorist-chic-for-size-leviathan-paul-auster-faber-1499-pounds-1559269.html>>

Tymkin, Catherine. "Bleak Friday on Wall Street" *CNN Money*. April 14<sup>h</sup>, 2000. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <[http://money.cnn.com/2000/04/14/markets/markets\\_newyork/](http://money.cnn.com/2000/04/14/markets/markets_newyork/)>

Urquhart, James. "*Invisible* by Paul Auster". *Independent*. November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/invisible-by-paul-auster-1811036.html>>

Ward, John William. "Violence, Anarchy, and Alexander Berkman". *The New York Review of Books*. November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1970 (issue). Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017. <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1970/11/05/violence-anarchy-and-alexander-berkman/>>

Wood, Michael. "Paul Auster, The Art of Fiction" *The Paris Review*. Fall, 2003. Accessed May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017 <<http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/121/the-art-of-fiction-no-178-paul-auster>>