

Fragmentation Progress: Dystopian Narrative Interpretations

Fragmentation Progress: Dystopian Narrative Interpretations of David Mitchells' *Cloud Atlas*

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Abstract

Science fiction is a literary genre that combines fantastical works with imagined reality, but its distinctiveness is debated due to its vastness and cultural idiom. This study uses science fiction theory to understand its unique qualities, themes, and societal implications. It explores how science fiction reflects real-world issues, philosophies, and power dynamics, and how it influences science, technology, and culture. The term "dystopia" refers to the antithesis of utopia, and the study aims to reveal specific aspects of narrative technique in fiction, which enhances the artistic and emotional impact of a story. *Cloud Atlas* (2004) is a novel by Mitchell that explores recurring revolution characters and their contrasting inclinations. The novel presents fictional retellings of historical events, with two parts set in the far future. It presents a dystopian world with disregard for humanity, capitalism, genetic engineering, and ethical issues. The novel emphasizes fragmentation and integrity in the Postmodern Novel, contrasting it with real-world situations.

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Mitchell uses fantastic and science-fiction tropes to challenge conventions like realism, neocolonialism, and science fiction, and explores the catastrophic consequences of uneven socio-economic connections.

Keyword: Science fiction, narrative techniques, Cloud Atlas, and imagined reality.

المستخلص

الخيال العلمي هو نوع أدبي يجمع بين الأعمال الخيالية مع الواقع المتخيل، لكن تميزه محل جدل بسبب اتساعه ومصطلحه الثقافي. تستخدم هذه الدراسة نظرية الخيال العلمي لفهم خصائصها الفريدة ومواضيعها وأثارها المجتمعية. ويستكشف هذا النوع الأدبي كيف يعكس الخيال العلمي قضايا العالم الحقيقي، والفلسفات، وديناميات القوة، وكيف يؤثر على العلم والتكنولوجيا والثقافة. يشير مصطلح "المدينة الفاسدة" إلى نقيض "المدينة الفاضلة" حيث تهدف الدراسة إلى الكشف عن جوانب محددة من تقنية السرد الخيالي مما يعزز التأثير الفني والعاطفي للقصة. تستكشف *سحاب الاطلس* (٢٠٠٤) هي رواية لكاتبها ديفيد ميتشل شخصيات الثورة المتكررة وميولها المتناقضة. وتقدم الرواية أحداثاً خيالية لأحداثاً تاريخية في جزأين في المستقبل البعيد. وهي تمثل عالماً متداخلاً مع تجاهل للإنسانية، والرأسمالية، والهندسة الوراثية، والقضايا الأخلاقية. وتؤكد الرواية على التفكك والنزاهة في ما بعد الحداثة، وتقارنها مع أحداث من العالم الواقعي. يستخدم (ميتشل) مجازات خيالية علمية رائعة لتحدي الاعراف مثل الواقعية، الاستعمار الجديد، والخيال العلمي، ويستكشف العواقب الكارثية للصلات الاجتماعية - الاقتصادية المتفاوتة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الخيال العلمي، وتقنيات السرد، سحاب الاطلس، والواقع المتخيل.

Section One: Introduction

1.1 Science fiction, Dystopian, and Narrative techniques

The majority of people understand what science fiction is, so this is a peculiar phenomenon. In other words, science fiction, as a literary genre, sets itself apart from our real world in one way or another through the creation of fiction, a fantastical work of writing that is based more on imagined reality than on observable reality. When it comes to define the specific ways that

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Science fiction is distinctive and how it differs from other works of imaginative and wonderful literature, there is a dispute. There are numerous definitions provided by critics, but other critics have refuted or altered them all. Science fiction has many definitions. Not because historians and critics of the genre disagree or cannot concur on important matters; Science fiction is a cultural idiom that is vast, multifaceted, and constantly cross-fertile; this is the reason for it. This study endeavors to tackle the subject from multiple angles (Roberts, 2002, pp.1-2).

Science fiction is defined by Sam Moskowitz (1963):

Science fiction is a branch of fantasy identifiable by the fact it eases the willing suspension of disbelief of its reader by utilizing atmosphere of scientific credibility for its imaginative speculations in physical science, space. Wile, social science, and philosophy (Aquino, 1976, p.10).

Science fiction theory, which this study adopts, is an academic field that focuses on the study, interpretation, and investigation of science fiction literature, cinema, and other media. It is often referred to as Sci-Fi theory or science fiction studies. Understanding the distinctive qualities, themes, and societal ramifications of science fiction as a genre entails applying a variety of theoretical frameworks and analytical techniques. A vast array of subjects and fields of study are covered by science fiction theory, including:(Önen, 2022, p.2)

Science fiction theory looks at the distinctive elements and storytelling practices of the genre. This covers things like cutting-edge technology, future settings, speculative science, and creative extrapolation. Science fiction is frequently used as a vehicle for examining and analyzing social, political, and cultural themes. Science fiction theory examines how real-world issues, philosophies, and power dynamics are reflected in and discussed in science fiction stories. Science fiction often makes predictions about potential

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futures and the consequences that may arise. The study of science fiction theory looks at how these futuristic visions of society and technology reflect societal fears, hopes, and forecasts. Scientific discourse and technoculture, Science fiction frequently incorporates scientific ideas and theories while addressing scientific and technological developments. Science fiction theory studies how science fiction stories influence and are influenced by scientific discourse, as well as the interaction between science, technology, and culture (p.5).

The word dystopia and the concept of dystopian literature are frequently used interchangeably. According to Ruth Levitas (1990).

Dystopias are not necessarily fictional in form, neither are predictions of a nuclear winter nor fears of the consequences of the destruction of the rain forests, the holes in the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, and the potential melting of the polar ice caps are primarily the material of fiction (p.195).

The term dystopia was originally used in literature in the late 19th century, at the same time as industrialization and automatization. It is outdated to freely use the term dystopia in the Bible and use it to explain why it became popular in the late 19th and early 21st centuries. We have to acknowledge that when it comes to dystopia in the strictest sense, readers from the post-1900s will likely be the ones who can even identify the genre's common themes. In the late 19th century, the word dystopia was first used to refer to the antithesis of utopia, which is a location or civilization where things are essentially worse rather than better. Other categories associated with utopia, including "critical utopia" or "flawed utopia," also contain dystopian characteristics (Uhlenbruch, 2015, pp. 126–127).

Narrative technique is a literary method that describes the structural framework of a narrative. It provides a greater meaning for the reader and supports the reader to envision situations or to employ their imagination.

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Narrative technique is a method that writers use to give certain artistic and emotional effects to a story. It is significant to analyse the components of the story, such as character, discourse, point of view, manipulation of time and place, tone, mood or atmosphere, symbolism, style, stream of consciousness technique, theme, etc. To understand the novel and its underlying message or theme, the salient features of narrative technique can help readers in general. Thus, this study tries to reveal specific aspects of the narrative technique and their effects on the two most important elements, i.e., plot construction and characterization (Al Mamun & Siddika, 2020, pp.1-2).

Narrative technique gives certain artistic and emotional effects to a story. In fiction, it is also a mechanical skill to carry on the tale that the novelist has to describe. According to Kumar (2003), "his dexterity determines his success, and narrative technique is actually the means by which he discovers, objectifies, explores, and evaluates his subject." According to him, the method by which the novelists choose to tell their story in fact, a piece of art's vision and layers of meaning are revealed through its techniques. It also covers foreshadowing, flashback, flash-forward, metaphor, simile, irony, imagery, hyperbole, etc. Narrative technique describes the way an author narrates the plot of the story and both psychological and physical aspects of the characters (Kumar & McKean, p.251).

1.2 David Mitchell's Biography

David Mitchell, an English novelist, had its birth in 1969 in Southport, Lancashire, England (now Merseyside). He was brought up in Worcestershire, which is located in England. From the University of Kent, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and American literature and a Master of Arts degree in comparative literature. Following graduation, before moving to Hiroshima, Japan, he lived in Sicily for a year. There, he

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worked as an English teacher for eight years until going to England. The influence of oriental cultures and cosmopolitanism is prominent in his literary works with regards to multi-voiced cultures and cosmopolitanism is prominent in his literary works with regards to multi-voiced characters, trans-cultural and trans-historic narratives, and Japanese animistic tradition evident in such novels as *Cloud Atlas* (2004) and *Ghostwritten* (1999) (Belevičius, 2016, p. 3).

David Mitchell is often regarded as one of the most influential voices ever to emerge, more than two decades following the publication of his first novel, *Ghostwritten*, in 1999. Among his literary accomplishments are the World Fantasy Award, the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize, the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, three longlists, and two shortlists for the Booker Prize (*Cloud Atlas* and *Number 9 Dream*). Apart from that, he has translated books from Japanese into English that discuss autism, and authored pieces for several newspapers, the most renowned of which being *The Guardian*. This is a writer whose works are now read aloud in book clubs and train carriages, and whose works are studied and taught at universities all over the world. To argue that Mitchell's writing has attracted both critical praise and broad readership, however, isn't completely accurate (Harris-Birtill, 2018, p. 1–2).

Section Two: Dystopian Narrative Interpretations in *Cloud Atlas*.

2-1 Introduction

Cloud Atlas (2004) is the novel centered on recurrent characters of revolution who are rebelling and battling against the inclinations that are being depicted in them. All throughout the interconnected world that Mitchell's works represent. The foundation of Mitchell's novels is comprised of a tapestry of many views that intersect with repeating themes and motifs. Mitchell regards himself as the creator of this tapestry. According to Childs and Green, these

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sentences also include a reference to the title of the work, in which they say that:

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

In *Cloud Atlas*, fictional retellings of historical events from throughout the world are presented. Given that two of its portions are set in the far future, some readers might believe it to be completely fictitious. A comparison is made between the actual history and its reversed appearance in the *Cloud Atlas*. In a very literal sense, Mitchell does this by having the first half of his story perfectly match the second, in which the plot reverses itself and makes amends and this rarely noticed in most of the novelist's works. This touch is a unique one attributed to Mitchell's innovative narrative techniques. The fact that each narrator begins in medias res for every portion of the two novels is perhaps more significant. For instance, the opening line of Mitchell's novel is as follows:

Beyond the Indian hamlet, upon a forlorn strand, I happened on a trail of recent footprints. Through rotting kelp, sea cocoa-nuts & bamboo, the tracks led me to their maker, a White man, his trow-zers & Pea-jacket rolled up, sporting a kempt beard & an outsized Beaver, shoveling & sifting the cindery sand with a teaspoon so intently that he noticed me only after I had hailed him from ten yards away (Mitchell,2004. p.2).

Each section of *Cloud Atlas* is likewise cut off and then resumes in the middle of the action. The ironic thing is that, despite the sudden changes between each narrative in the novel, this is done on purpose to make it easier to read the novel as a cohesive whole. With every new part, the reader is denied the accommodation of a fresh fictional world. There is no table of contents or other obvious indicator of the text's division in *Cloud Atlas*. A

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tribute page follows one saying. The reader is not led to assume that this is anything more than the title of a chapter in "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" (Moraru, 2014, pp.1-26).

Most people agree that Mitchell's 2004 work, *Cloud Atlas*, is his most challenging and highly acclaimed piece to date. Not only does Mitchell break up his six tales with another, in the same way that Italo Calvino did in *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979), but he also picks them back up and continues them in the opposite order, leading to the second half of the novel being read in reverse order from the first half. The next story's narrator will read out each of the previous ones in the first person, just like a text. Frobisher, an early 20th-century musician, finds the first half of this journal and then uses letters to a previous lover to narrate the second quarter. Ewing, a nineteenth-century notary who keeps a journal of his travels, is the narrator of the first section. Californian journalist Luisa Rey, who also narrates the first batch of letters, reads aloud the third section. A suspenseful letter that she wrote to Cavendish, a London editor, in which she outlines the events that occurred during the fourth airport incident is discovered to be her account. A Disney film is based on Cavendish's memoir in those days. "As the only Disneys I had ever seen were Boom-Sook's pornsplatters, I was obliged to believe him"(Mitchell,2004. p.125).

The cloned narrator of the fifth section, which takes place in the near future, Somni-451, watches many years later. The state archivist digitises Somni's testimony, which Zachry, a primitive Hawaiian tribesman, views on a "orison" (visual gadget). Zachry narrates the sixth and major portion, which is set in a far-off post-apocalyptic future. After then, each protagonist picks up where their predecessor left off, either finishing it or retrieving the second half. For instance, government agents trying to arrest Somni-451 interrupt her while she is watching the Cavendish memoir-based film. When she

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requests to see the second part of the Cavendish movie as her final wish before being put to death, the second portion of her narrative comes to a close. In the following section, Cavendish's story picks up where the last one left off. Every transition is linked in an equally skillful manner (Finney, 2017, p.29).

Mitchell refers to himself as an expert in structure. According to him, his thought process involves escape routes and straightjackets. He maintains, however, that novellas form the foundation of all of his novels. Mitchell views structure as a distinct form of story in addition to the narrative plot. In the instance of *Cloud Atlas*, how does it achieve this? The year following the book's release, Mitchell provided a clue in a piece he wrote for The Guardian. He remarks, after admitting his 2001 obsession with the want-to-power thesis put out by Nietzsche:

I decided to write the novel as a chain of plot-and-character studies about how individuals prey on individuals, corporations on employees, tribes on tribes, majorities on minorities, and how present generations "eat" the sustenance of future generations (Mitchell,2005, p.2).

3.2 Analysis

The current study attempts to examine *Cloud Atlas* (2004) by Mitchell as a modern dystopian science fiction novel. It looks for dystopian and science fiction aspects in order to explore the ramifications and how they relate to reality. As it presents a future with sophisticated technology, the economy, health, transportation, and communication, *Cloud Atlas* is a work of science fiction. In which, the dystopian attitude is prevalent due to the depicted world's ignorance of and disregard for humans and humanity, capitalism, genetic engineering, and ethical and societal difficulties. The difficulties that are dramatised in the novel are based on real-world situations that exist today. The novel's attempts to alert readers and provide answers to these

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issues are seen as helpful in the actual world, it is decided (Farahbakhsh& Kakaee,2018. p.43).

David Mitchell's novel *Cloud Atlas* (2004) examines the complexity of human interactions that transcend time by presenting six stories that appear to be unrelated to one another inside a multilayered, recursive narrative framework. All referring to various times and places while writing in distinct styles. Each of the six stories has a distinct genre and a unique style of narration that spans the nineteenth-century South Pacific, dystopian South Korea, and a post-apocalyptic future (Belevičius,2016, p.2).

These six stories each have unique stylistic, rhythmic, semantic, and grammatical patterns that are ideal for the subjects they deal with. To totally lose themselves in the atmosphere of the tale being told, the reader only has to keep pace with the beat. Stated differently, *Cloud Atlas* appears to demonstrate the principle that two languages may generate two separate realities. It is important to recognise, though, that David Mitchell is doing more than just utilising language in this way; he is reshaping normal English to match the vision he has for it. "We were the fruits of my mind, Archivist, fed by the experiences I have narrated to you this morning" (Mitchell,2004. p.132). The concept that different worlds might exist within the same language is effectively captured by this. With well-refined words, the subject is chiselled into life. It may be concluded, then, that this language, which has finally been figured out, does more than just reflect the tale it tells; rather, it gives it shape and enables it. From one narrative to the next, Mitchell does a masterful job of rendering language in a totally new way (Sorlin,2008, p.1).

The main character in the subsequent narrative reads or witnesses each one, and a complex embedding system connects them. The stories might appear as written or recorded documents or as examples of oral storytelling. The narratives of each chapter are influenced not just by the type of story that

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came before it but also by the ideas that are discussed in that chapter. Post-apocalyptic science fiction "Sloosha's Crossin' and Ev'rythin' After" is set in Hawaii, where Zachry, the main character, follows the mythical Sonmi as a guide (Radoš, 2015, p.12).

An elf owl screeched at me, *Well fought, Zachry the Brave!* I yelled at the bird to shut up, but it screeched back, *Or else? You'll bust me like you bust them Kona? Oh, for the sake o my chicky-chickchicks do have mercy!* (Mitchell,2004. p.127).

Cloud Atlas, reads as unquestionably postmodern and draws parallels between Mitchell's novel and Italo Calvino's *If On a Winter's Night a Traveler* (1979). Several critics have asserted, meanwhile, that Mitchell's novel goes beyond postmodernism. For example, James Green and Peter Childs (2011) contend that

His novels do not merely rehearse the stylistic inflections of a domesticated postmodernism [...] but rather articulate a complex response to the current material conditions of the world (p.35).

Another positive aspect of postmodernity is the way the virtual is gradually invading the physical world, highlighting how fake our perception of reality is. Because established narrative roles are never static and must always be reevaluated, the reader of this novel is forced to retroactively alter his understanding of the nature and status of every text he reads. Because the reader-writer contract of suspended disbelief is questioned with every new tale, fictional reality is never stable and is always under doubt. When we learn that Frobisher reads Adam Ewing's notebook in the story that follows, we will have entered Adam Ewing's fictional world and come to believe in it. Thus, Adam is not only reduced to the position of a fictional figure, but Frobisher also questions the veracity of the journal (Machinal,2011, p.130)

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Something shifty about the journal's authenticity – seems too structured for a genuine diary, and its language doesn't ring quite true – but who would bother forging such a journal, and why? (Mitchell,2004. p. 33).

According to *Cloud Atlas*, fragmentation and integrity in the Postmodern Novel, a text must undoubtedly seem fragmented and dystopian to the reader in order to qualify as such. By contrasting *Cloud Atlas* with the literature that Mitchell has frequently mentioned as its structural and narrative inspiration, McMorran furthers this interest in the postmodern. It is evident that *Cloud Atlas* has its roots in the classical aesthetic tradition, which values formal purity and continuity to this day. Between its several portions, *Cloud Atlas* creates an intertextual network of connected characters and topics. For postmodern literature, McMorran examines the parallels and divergences between Mitchell's structural and narrative methods in an effort to propose a more nuanced and dystopian link between narrative and metanarrative than Lyotard has permitted (cited in Dillon& Dillon,2011, p.27).

Similar to his previous *Ghostwritten* (1999) novel, Mitchell's third novel, *Cloud Atlas*, combines six distinct narratives that take place in a dystopian future. Following an unidentified tragedy, warring tribes fight for resources, alternating the time period between the colonial era of the eighteenth century and the dystopian future. *Cloud Atlas* consists of a combination of many voices and styles that compete with one another and transition through a number of different historical and geographical conditions. This is in contrast to *Number 9 Dream* (2001), which consists of a number of disjointed incidents held together by a single consciousness in order to preserve the narrative's coherence. The third novel by Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*, is very similar to the first in both style and content. It uses a similar technique of interconnected first-person tales that jump between disparate locales all over the world (Childs& Green,2013, p.148).

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Cloud Atlas (2004) is a sequence of nested novellas connected by various literary mediums that follows a number of people with comet-shaped birthmarks as they journey across time and space from the 1800s to the far future. The story takes place in several locations and eras; therefore, its structure appears to be an intentional development of *Ghostwritten* (1999) since it explores global echoes and similarities in a diachronic rather than synchronic manner. *Cloud Atlas* offers stories that illustrate changes in the contemporary global system throughout their historical scope (Selisker, 2014, p.20).

As a reflection on a confined social system, *Cloud Atlas* focuses on this dystopia by contrasting it with other locations and times when personal freedom appears, in varied degrees, to be more free. Because of the intricate historical framework of the novel, the corpocracy is just a temporary and hence imperfect depiction of *Cloud Atlas's* world, which it perceives as a combination of historical process and spatial order. Moreover, the novel takes its distance from the dystopia by treating it explicitly as a genre: in addition to taking over the plot structure from George Orwell *1984*, "Orison" also directly references Evgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1921) through the name of the character Dr. Mephi and adapts Ayn Rand's *Anthem* (1938) for its story of language discovery. In the last episode of *Cloud Atlas*, when the antiquated narrative of revolt against the totalitarian state is resurrected as a myth, the text of "Orison" turns into a precious relic for the future primitive civilization. By placing this story in such a way, Mitchell skillfully recreates in his work the ways in which George Orwell *1984* has come to represent the cultural myth, in which the forms of social closure and censored language stand in for the opposite of democratic openness, progress, and exchange (pp. 23–24).

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In *Cloud Atlas* (2004), David Mitchell creates a world without borders for his readers. This borderlessness affects both time and space. Thus, this disorienting voyage over space and time is also a voyage beyond the artistic and general bounds of storytelling.

Old Ma Yibber spread the news that the Zachry what came down off Mauna Kea weren't the same Zachry what'd gone up, an' true 'nuff I s'pose, there ain't no journey what don't change you some (Mitchell,2004. p.149).

In *Cloud Atlas* (2004) by David Mitchell, the ultimate sensation of borderlessness is conveyed in an apparently paradoxical fashion through a permanent condition of liminality, which is a condition of existing between two things or on the verge of something else is called liminality. This phrase is used to characterize a transitional moment in which the previous structures and identities have been abandoned, but the new ones have not yet been fully constructed. Feelings of confusion, ambiguity, and uncertainty may result from this.

Boundaries between noise and sound are conventions. All boundaries are conventions, national ones too. One may transcend any convention, if only one can first conceive of doing so (Mitchell,2004. p.244).

This strong assertion highlights how boundaries are inherently liminal. In the end, Mitchell contends, all boundaries whether those of space, time, or even genre are ultimately porous and ready to be pushed, which adds to the impression of an infinite cosmos. Its time and space leaps, as well as its disjointed chapter structure, give it a cohesive quality that transcends both space and time. It takes the readers to many locations throughout the globe and conjures up a make-believe universe that defies notions of a distinct beginning and conclusion. With its many characters, there isn't just one protagonist, its structure, and the many chronological and geographical

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settings it selects for its six disjointed (and interrupted) chapters, the entire novel resists the notion of a singular focus (Albert,2019, p.49).

There is not a clear beginning, middle, or end to the novel. This unconventional approach serves several purposes and contributes to the novel's overall themes, cyclical nature of existence, six stories that appear to be unrelated and are weaved together non-chronologically from various historical eras are presented in the novel. A cyclical understanding of time, in which the past, present, and future are intertwined and impact one another, is reflected in this form. A sensation of constant flow and repetition is created when one tale ends and a new one begins. “My word, you can say that again” (Mitchell,2004. p.92). This quote encapsulates the novel's depiction of time as cyclical, with tales resonating throughout generations and ends giving way to new beginnings. The fact that the story is not linear emphasizes how everything is related. There is a countermovement in time that resolves the catastrophic event at the core of the story. The structure of the novel delves deeply into the themes and builds a bridge, a continuous interaction between form and content. The multiple interpretations that revolve around the framework of six stories represent this dynamic. Gradually, one discovers that the text itself serves as the guide for every interpretation. The terminology used is taken directly from the novel, and in this way, the novel provides us with a paradoxical gesture that it uses to explain itself (p. 50).

Reincarnation serves as the novel's leitmotif, the concept of reincarnation, which appears several times throughout the story, serves to further stress the repetitive nature of existence. Characters recur in multiple stories, implying that their souls are traveling through a multitude of lives and experiences continuously. Furthermore, this leads to the notion that there is no clear beginning or conclusion to the narrative of an individual. The novel's chronological organization forces readers to reconsider how time is

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structured. There are a lot of different interpretations of how temporality functions in *Cloud Atlas* and what this implies for the overall message of the novel. Cyclical time, the nature of time is a significant issue in *Cloud Atlas*, and there have been a number of different interpretations available. Fragmented time, the fragmented narrative structure causes a disruption to our typical perception of the development of time in a linear fashion. The reader is continually hopping between different storylines and chronological periods, which creates a sense of discontinuity and disorientation in the reader. This might be seen as a reflection of the fragmented and non-linear character of human experience, where memories, emotions, and experiences frequently occur in sequence (Frame,2017, p.119).

The novel's title implies the concept of reincarnation, and Zachry uses the atlas of clouds to illustrate his tribe's viewpoint on soul transmigration in order to convey their belief in reincarnation. The concept of reincarnation as a unifying element of the story is rather alluring due to the fact that it offers a certain degree of fictive continuity between the characters and brings together the many plot threads into a single narrative, despite the fact that the storylines are separated by a significant amount of time (Radoš,2015, p.27).

Souls cross the skies of time, Abbess'd say, like clouds crossin' skies of the world. Sonmi's the east and west, Sonmi's the map and the edges of the map and Beyond that the edges (Mitchell,2004. p.160).

The idea of reincarnation as a means of connecting characters suggests a cycle of time. The prospect for the future in

Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After" implies that human society persistently engages with this struggle, and in the concluding pages of the novel Ewing asks the question "Is this the doom written within our nature? (Mitchell,2004. p.268).

Patrick O'Donnell (2015) introduced the idea of concertina time, which comes from a metaphor Timothy Cavendish proposed: "Time's Arrow

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became Time's Boomerang, and I lost count of all my majors" (Mitchell,2004. p.80). *Cloud Atlas's* repeated situations are not proof of an endless cycle of recurrence but rather a sign of these temporal compressions. Although they don't suggest causation between the events of each tale, the repeated situations create a temporal hybridity that links the chapters. This emphasizes how all humans are related to one another across the planetary stage of time and space (p.96).

The novels written by Mitchell are predicated on the idea that science fiction and fantasy literature might be classified not as genres but rather as modes or debates. It is important to keep in mind that everything is interconnected, every life, every dream, and every narrative. Prominent reviewers of both genres have embraced this stance, most notably Damien Broderick and Brian Aldiss in the case of science fiction and Rosemary Jackson in the fantasy genre. It is better to think of the terms science fiction and the fantastic as ideological orientations based on the analysis of prevailing cultural forms rather than as prescriptive formal blueprints. The fantastic and the science-fictional are separate genres that reject oversimplified attempts at amalgamation and produce the important semiotic hesitancy mentioned previously in different ways (Dillon& Dunlop,2011, pp.196-197).

In *Cloud Atlas*, Mitchell uses a variety of tropes from both the fantastic and science-fictional genres to great success in order to question and renegotiate a specific set of material and social interactions. These conventions include realism, neocolonialism, and science fiction. As an illustration, in the *Cloud Atlas*

The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing' engages with the installation and maintenance of European imperial authority in its expansive phase in the mid-nineteenth century. References to the dark arts of colonization (Mitchell,2004. p.8).

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The narrative's beginning and ending, as well as its numerous pseudo-scientific analyses of racial differences and cultural hierarchy, are all present. Adam Ewing, in particular, reveals in a telling way that when confronted with the claims to prominence of an exiled Englishman who tries to elevate his status within the colonial context by exaggerating his metropolitan achievements, "I am versed enough in Antipodes etiquette to let such unlikely truths lie" (Mitchell,2004. p.2). These asides, which appear to be extraneous to the novel's main plot (Dillon& Dunlop,2011, pp.199).

In *Cloud Atlas*, dystopia is manifested through Mitchell's use of tropes of speculative fiction alongside realist generic pastiches to dwell on the catastrophic consequences of uneven socio-economic connections. Dystopia, on the other hand, is a different story entirely. Instead of addressing the ambiguity of Todorovian reluctance, the term Todorovian describes the beliefs and views of French-Bulgarian literary critic and philosopher Tzvetan Todorov. Todorov's contributions to narrative theory are well-known, and he is especially renowned for his definition of the fantastic a state of ambiguity between the natural and the supernatural. The narrative piece "An Orison of Sonmi~451" focuses exclusively on a technical innovation that has been moved throughout time. When utopias are reversed, they become dystopias. By pointing out the vulnerability of social systems and the possibility that utopian ideals may turn into repressive realities, as seen in Sonmi's future society, this directly confronts the idea of dystopia and its link to utopias. In the process of inscribing modern fears of race and colonialism into the equivocal character of Sonmi, the tale literalizes Jameson's definition of science fiction as a genre that includes a "structurally unique method for apprehending the present as history"(Jameson, 2005, p.288).

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The novel is a piece of historical fiction, and all authentic historical novels nowadays need to address the philosophical topic of future history that is, the future history of the planet itself. A connection is made between the reader and the world of *Cloud Atlas* in a manner that is comparable to the way in which the characters are connected to one another. Mitchell's fiction is infused with the themes, atmosphere, and philosophies of the materials to which he is alluding through the use of allusions, which are incorporated into his narratives. The references also serve as a reminder to the reader of the work's artificiality and the unpredictability of its actuality. As already noted, Herman Melville's writings have a significant impact on "The Pacific Journal," and *Cloud Atlas* self-reflexively draws attention to this relationship when Ewing describes his portrayal of the Moriori people's collapse as "holding company with the pen of a Defoe or Melville" (Mitchell,2004. p.10). An image of humanity in a state of close connectivity is created by the *Cloud Atlas* (Frame,2017, pp.130-133).

This is helpfully referred to as a critical dystopia by Constance Penley (1986), which is a projected dystopic future that actively addresses the possible causes of societal breakdown rather than only describing its symptoms. The story's inversion of the conventional binary of western dominance alludes to a few of these sites of dissent and fragmentation throughout the history of colonialism; for example, Nea So Copros, encoded as the vibrant center of human achievement, is located in what is contemporary Korea, and there are knowing references to the "Californian Boat-People Solution" (Mitchell,2004. p.13), suggesting a drastic shift in the balance of power between countries in the near future (p. 80).

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Conclusion

The type of science fiction known as dystopian science fiction frequently functions as a cautionary tale, examining the various outcomes that may result from unchecked social trends and human actions. The novel *Cloud Atlas*, written by David Mitchell, is an enthralling and ambitious piece of writing that weaves together various storylines that span different historical periods, genres, and styles. This results in the creation of a complex tapestry of dystopian futures as well as the eternal themes of power, oppression, and the human condition. One of the most remarkable storytelling strategies used in *Cloud Atlas* is the use of nested storylines, in which each story is interrupted and then resumed at a later point to provide a feeling of continuity and connectivity across the many time periods. This nonlinear storytelling technique encourages the reader to draw parallels and analogies between the numerous individuals' struggles against oppressive forces.

Mitchell is able to examine the complexity of dystopian societies from a variety of perspectives because of his skillful use of different perspectives and distinct narrative voices. Every story offers a different dystopian vision; they might be about a post-apocalyptic world where society has collapsed into a tribal state or a future governed by corporations. Mitchell draws attention to the cyclical nature of human behaviour as well as the recurrent patterns of oppression and resistance by contrasting these two very different stories. The use of a variety of genres and styles in each story further enhances the reading experience. Writing historical fiction, noir mysteries, epistolary novels, and future sci-fi, Mitchell moves between genres with ease, demonstrating his flexibility as a writer and his capacity to captivate readers on several levels. This variance in style emphasizes the universality of the subjects covered and reflects the range of experiences and viewpoints portrayed in the book.

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Mitchell's investigation of how human experiences are interrelated over space and time is a recurrent theme in *Cloud Atlas*. Reincarnation, or the belief that souls reincarnate in many bodies and settings, is a compelling metaphor for the ongoing nature of human problems and the possibility of individual and social change.

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