

# Queer theory in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*

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## Abstract

This paper studies the presence of Queer theory in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*. David Mitchell is a famous British novelist. He has won John Llewellyn Rhys prize in 1999 for his first novel *Ghostwritten* which has nine narrators. His works all have more than one narrator. *Cloud Atlas* is a multiplex novel which contains six different stories of six different characters, who lives in six different parts in orb. There are six protagonists in this novel. Six stories are interconnected with one another through an embedded element such as diary, letter, comet shaped birthmark, film, and hologram. Queer theory refers to the setting of ideas which debut the common misconceptions about sex, sexuality and gender. It rejects the conventional. Queer theory omits the binary oppositions like male, female, gay. The main intention of this paper is to show the way of queer theory enlightening the novel *Cloud Atlas* by David Mitchell.

## Queer theory in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*

Speculative fiction is an umbrella sort story fiction. It has powerful components and cutting edge component, for example, dream, ghastriness, super nature, fiction hero, idealistic and tragic fiction, Apocalyptic and post - prophetically catastrophic fiction.

Science fiction is a classification of theoretical fiction; it manages advance logical innovation, time travel, space battle and extraterrestrial life. It incorporates numerous topics and subgenres. Oppressed world Dys+ Topia. Dys= terrible, Topia= place. Tragic logical fiction is inverse to Utopia( an ideal nonexistent spot). This sort of story incorporates topian components. Essentially it manages political issues. Tragic epic discuss the upsetting society. It portrays a negative view on the world's voyage.

### Attributes of Dystopian fiction:

- ❖ Individual's considerations and opportunity are limited.
- ❖ Natives are seen to be under consistent surveillance
- ❖ Natives live in dread of the outside world
- ❖ The characteristic world is expelled and destructed
- ❖ People lives in dehuman state

David Stephen Mitchel, was born on January 12, 1969. He is a celebrated British Novelist. He has obtained degrees in American and English Literature, he did his M.A. in Comparative Literature.. His epic *Bone Clock* was for quite some time recorded for Man Booker Prize in 2014.

*Cloud Atlas* is a Complex novel, which includes six different stories of six different characters, who lives in six different parts in orb. "Each of the protagonists lives in a dystopian world where brutality,

enslavement and violence threaten their well-being” (Sultana 35). Six stories are interconnected with some embedded elements like a diary, letters a film, a sextet, and hologram. There are six protagonists in the novel.

the book’s structure is clear to the reader, the similarity with the sextet is obvious even without the two sharing a title. Moreover, Frobisher’s music comes much closer to modeling the book than the Russian Dolls do. Not only does it explicitly divide into six parts, but the different instruments, —each in its own language of key, scale and colour, are also suggestive of the various voices and genres in the novel. (Waldron 50)

The first story, “The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing” , the story is about a Journey of Adam Ewing, A legal advisor from San Francisco. It manages the Journey of Ewing to Sanfransisco from Australia in the wake of looking for the recipient of a will through the South pacific sea in 1850. In Chatham Island (acclaimed island in New zealand). He met a flighty English specialist named Henry Goose, who goes with Ewing amid his adventure.

Second story is “Letters from Zedelgham”, the story is set in Zedelghem, close Bruges, Belgium in 1931. Protagonist of the second story is Robert Frobisher, a promiscuous artist. His portrayal has done through letters written to his darling Rufus Sixsmith. Frobisher works for Vyvyan Ayrs, who is gradually biting the dust as a result of syphilis. Frobisher causes him to make his music.

Frobisher writes to his friend about how he came across half of Ewing’s journal in a library at Chateu Zedelghem. He requests him to track down a complete copy of it as “A half read book is a half-finished love affair” (Mitchell 64).

He creates his very own portion piece. In Ayre’s Castle, he found an antique book The Pasific Journal of Adam Ewing. Robert Frobisher has a sexual illicit relationship with Ayre’s significant Jocasta. In any case, later he flirts with Ayre’s daughter Eva. Ayre knows everything about Frobisher, so he began to blackmail about his affair with his significant other in melodic world. Finally he completes his own perfect work of art, *The Cloud Sextet*. He encases with his last letter and sent to his darling Ruffus Sixsmith. His last letter to Sixsmith, “we both know in our hearts who is the sole love of my short, bright life” (Mitchell 470).

The third story “Half-Lives – The Fist Luisa Rey Mystery:”, the story sets in the spot city of Buenas Yerbas, California, in 1975. The story is written in the style of a mash spine chiller. The hero of this story is Luisa Rey, a youthful columnist. He meets Rufus Sixsmith, a researcher. in the lift. He is utilized as a nuclear architect for the Seabord Corporation. He assembles record against the new atomic power plant which isn't alright for the general population. At last Sixsmith is slaughtered. Luisa Rey discovers sixsmith’s report alongside the Frobisher’s letters through that she finds the perfect work of art, melodic sextet named *The Cloud Atlas Sextet*. She has comet shape pigmentation in her shoulder.

Fourth story, “The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish”, happens in London. The hero of this piece of story is Timothy Cavendish, a sixty year old producer; he endured with absence of cash. So

he chooses to meet his sibling so he goes London through the train, he conveys an original copy for a novel *Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*. “The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish” manages the nursing home undertakings of Timothy Cavendish. He composed his brave life into film original copy. Cavendish has comet shape skin coloration in his leg.

Fifth story “An Orison of Sonmi~451”, happens in Hawaii, which manages the account of a clone named Sonmi~451, who endeavors to protect other her own clone mates from Papa Song Corps, they regarded clones as a slave for their business. This story is described through the meeting. Her last wish is to complete the motion picture *The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish*. Indeed, even a Fabricant she additionally has a comet shape skin coloration in her neck. Her portrayal is done through the type of meeting. It has been recorded as 3D image.

The sixth story is “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After”, happens in Hawaii. “Sloosha’s Corssin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After,” presents an alternate point of view on managing imperialism and bigotry. In this story humankind is returned to tribalism. Mitchell clarifies about the Cannibalism. It is set in the dystopian world. Hero of sixth story is Zachry, an elderly person who recounts the story from his childhood. These clans venerated Sonmi. They treated Sonmi as goddess. Toward the End of the story entire clans were dead, he and Meronym depart to another island with Orison, a development sight and sound gadgets, which contains the first accounts of Sonmi. Here Meronym has Comet shape skin coloration.

These six stories were interconnected by inserted components, for example, Diary, Letter, Manuscript, film, chronicles, *Cloud Atlas Sextet* and Hologram. Specialist previously referenced that each of the six heroes have Comet shaped skin pigmentation. In the Matryoshka Narrative Structure, Which alludes story inside a story (with in a story).

they are embedded into each other, their nested representations are all similar, they copy each other, the actions of the protagonists are all similar, they all repeat the same actions, which are indeed a salient and continuous aspect of the primary world: they duplicate the primary representation as a whole. (Radoš 21)

The story of initial two stories is done as epistolary fiction. The portrayal terminated as reports, for example, journal and letters. In Diary Adam Ewing composes his self-portrayal in his journal. Later it is distributed by Adam’s child Jackson for the sake of *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing*. The third anecdote is about Luisa Rey, here the portrayal is done through the type of original copy for a novel *Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*. Next, the tale of Timothy Cavendish’s portrayal is made into movie “*The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish*”. The narration of the fifth story recorded in the form interview. The last story and the Central part of the story is “Sloosha’s Crossin’ an’ Ev’rythin’ After”. This story talks about the life of tribe Zachry. This whole novel is narrated by Zachry’s son to Zachry’s grandchildren. The whole novel consist of the complex narrative structure through interconnected stories.

Queer theory emerged in the early 1990s. It has come from Terasa de Laureti’s work in the feminist cultural studies journal named *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities*”. She explains that Queer

theory refers to heterosexuality. It contains both queer readings of texts and the theorization of 'queerness' itself. Queer theory came from multiple critical and cultural contexts including radical movement of people of color, feminism, post structuralist theory, the gay and lesbian moment, Aids activism many sexual subcultural practices such as Sadomasochism and post colonialism.

The theory explores the concepts such as marginalization of women and other population, sexuality and power inequality in the society as well as the culture. The objective of this theory is to change the monolithic thoughts, taxonomies and social norms about the sexuality. Queer theory is used as umbrella term for sexual minorities. Queer which refers something that does not match with the norms crosses the boundaries and fails to fall with the categories directed by the majority in the society.

In this novel *Cloud Atlas*, the concept of Queer theory reveals from the character Robert Frobisher. He fell in the love with the scientist named Rufus Sixsmith. They both lead their sexual life happily, and then he went to Ayre's house to compose a *Cloud Atlas sextet*. There he had an affair with Ayre's wife as well as his daughter. He was a bisexual musician, he wrote everything in the form of a letter to his lover Rufus Sixsmith. This story is narrated in the form of epistolary narrative fiction.

Dreamt I stood in a china shop so crowded from floor to far-off ceiling with shelves of porcelain antiquities etc. that moving a muscle would cause several to fall and smash to bits. Exactly what happened, but instead of a crashing noise, an august chord rang out, half-cello, half-celeste, D major (?), held for four beats. (Mitchell 43)

The queer theory includes a segment about a gay man, a bisexual musician Frobisher who is blackmailed by a famous composer into being the older man's muse. This story ends tragically, where Frobisher killed himself.

Time cannot permeate this sabbatical. We do not stay dead long. Once my Luger lets me go, my birth, next time around, will be upon me in a heartbeat. Thirteen years from now we'll meet again at Gresham, ten years later I'll be back in this same room, holding this same gun, composing this same letter, my resolution as perfect as my many-headed sextet. Such elegant certainties comfort me at this quiet hour. (Mitchell 490)

In the end of third story, Louisa Rey who is the protagonist of the third story, met Megan after sixsmith's death. Rufus Sixsmith was Megan's uncle. In the end Megan give a package to Rey. The package contains the final eight letter of Frobisher.

It contains the final eight letters Robert Frobisher wrote to his friend

Rufus Sixsmith. Luisa uses a plastic knife to slit the package open. She removes one of the yellowed envelopes, postmarked October 10, 1931, holds it against her nose, and inhales. Are molecules of Zedelghem Château, of Robert Frobisher's hand, dormant in this paper for forty-four years, now swirling in my lungs, in my blood? Who is to say? (Mitchell 453)

Here LGBTQ protagonist ends up with killing himself, but researcher thinks that it is also possible to go too far the other way and end up erasing the fact that too many in our community are driven by the oppression they should force to face the most extreme solutions possible.

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