

## Elements of Dystopian Science Fiction in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*: Generic and Ontological Implications

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### Abstract

The present research aims to study [Mitchell \(2004\)](#) *Cloud Atlas* from a narratological point of view for its generic hybridity which makes it a significant work of postmodern literature. David Stephen Mitchell (1969) is one of Britain's foremost contemporary writers who won prominent literary prizes including 2004 and 2002 Man Booker Prize for Fiction. This research analyzes the novel's narrative style and particular conventions which lead to a certain genre to investigate the implications and their relation to reality. It tries to unsettle the following questions: Are there any significant elements of dystopian science fiction in the novel? If yes, what are the political, philosophical, and moral implications of such categorization? To answer the questions narratological approach particularly genre criticism is applied to the novel. After the "Introduction", in the "Discussion" section, key words are introduced and defined; the elements of dystopian science fiction are searched for in the novel; and the implications of those elements will be discussed. In the "Conclusions" the genre and its ontological significance will be touched upon. This article shows that *Cloud Atlas* is a science fiction as it depicts a future advanced in technology, economy, health, transportation, and communication. Also the dystopian attitude is dominant because the pictured world has failed to consider societal and ethical issues and for its capitalism, genetic manipulation, and ignorance of and towards human and humanity. The ontology of the story has its own kind of reality whose characteristics can be generalized to the real world out of the novel. The issues fictionalized in the novel have roots in the present time problems of the world. It is concluded that the novel tries to warn people and the ontological solutions given to these problems are considered to be useful in the reality. Mitchell's dystopian world in "An Orison of Sonmi-451" is not the hopeless end of everything. He thinks that there is a chance to save the world by reading about other societies and creating a balance between nature and science.

**Keywords:** Dystopia; Genre criticism; Narratology; Ontology; And science fiction.



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### 1. Introduction

This article aims to study [Mitchell \(2004\)](#) *Cloud Atlas* as a contemporary dystopian science fiction. It tries to find the elements of science fiction and dystopia to investigate the implications and their relation to reality. The article tries to answer such questions as: what are the significant elements of dystopian science fiction in the novel? How are they developed within it? What are the implications and contribution of categorizing *Cloud Atlas* under this special genre of dystopian science fiction? How does the novel approach the societal, political, philosophical, and ethical issues in terms of its genre? In order to find answers, the article intends to identify generic signs to categorize and discuss them. It first traces science fictional elements and then continues to examine the utopian or dystopian nature and function of those elements. This examination provides an ontological explanation for problems of society, politics, philosophy, ethics, and psychology.

These issues are discussed both in terms of the novel's ontology and the present world. In other words, this research investigates the type of future pictured within the novel, the relationship between that certain future and the present time, and the ontological meaning of problems and solutions that the author tries to convey. Different theorists' ideas, philosophical theories, political commentaries, and articles on [Mitchell \(2004\)](#) works are used to justify the points.

In the "Discussion" section, first the definition of key terms and then a summary of two stories in the novel which are this study's concern will be given. The section entitled "An Ontology: An Orison" traces the signs of science fiction in the story "An Orison of Sonmi-451" in the first part. In the second part, it will be decided whether the utopian attitude is dominant or the dystopian one. When enough evidence is found to prove that the novel is written in dystopian science fiction genre, the forth section investigates the implications of such genre selection under the title "Implications: Ontological Awakening" in three subsections: "Politics: Totalitarianism", "Philosophy: Playing God", and "Morality: De-humanization", each of which tries to elaborate on the political, philosophical, and moral aspects of categorizing the story respectively. The section "Outcome and Ontological Solution" reviews the authors' ontological attitudes behind the novel. Then the conclusion will be made and further researches' ideas will be suggested.

## 2. Discussion

This section defines the keywords science fiction, dystopia, narratology, genre criticism, and ontology, in order to provide a context to study the novel as a dystopian science fiction. Despite of disagreements on boundaries and characteristics of science fictions due to its changing nature, Some scholars has defined it, [Suvin \(1979\)](#) defined it as "a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment" ([Suvin, 1979](#)). With his two key terms estrangement and cognition, [Suvin \(1979\)](#) separates Science Fiction first from the realistic literature and then from myth, folktale and fantasy respectively. Alienation, discovery, robots, space travel and genetics and any technological and scientific advancement expected to happen in a close future characterize Science fiction.

Considered as a new direction of utopian literature, dystopia "has emerged in the revival in the 1980s of the inverted complement of eutopia" ([Moylan, 2000](#)). Death, misery, oppression, inequality, poverty and crimes are prevalent in a dystopian world. In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century "several writers took the utopian imagination into a "dystopian turn" that explored and negotiated closed and terrifying worlds that[...] were no more than "twenty minutes" into our own dangerous future" (ibid.: 106). Despite the name, dystopia is not exactly the opposite of utopia, it is not completely unplanned or planned to be awful; "dystopia, typically invoked, is neither of these things; rather it is a utopia that has gone wrong, or a utopia that functions only for a particular segment of society" ([Gordin et al., 2010](#)).

As [Rimmon-Kenan \(1983\)](#) tries to define this formalist-structuralist discipline, "narratology is a branch of poetics, and poetics is 'the systematic study of literature as literature' and the object of study in narratology is (or should be) the *differentia specifica* of narrative fiction" that is distinguishing it from non-narrative, non-verbal, and non-fictional discourses; narratology is "an attempt to formulate a system of logically interrelated laws, underlying the regularity of phenomena or of a group of phenomena" (2005: 141).

According to [Chandler \(1997\)](#), the word genre comes from the French (and originally Latin) word for "kind" or "class". The term is widely used in rhetoric, literary theory, media theory, and more recently linguistics, to refer to a distinctive type of text. However, this classification process is not an easy one, because there is no consensus on the limitation and definition of the genres; "one theorist's *genre* may be another's *subgenre* or even *supergenre* (and indeed what is *technique*, *style*, *mode*, *formula* or *thematic grouping* to one may be treated as a *genre* by another)". Naming genres is not only based on textual features but also involves different purposes, pleasures, audiences, modes of involvement, styles of interpretation and text reader relationships (1997: 1-15). [Guerin \(2005\)](#). believe that genre criticism includes the recognition of genre as a way of studying a piece of literature and the methodology of studying a work or group of works and then inducing theory from practice because it is assumed that if readers knew into what genre a piece of literature fell, they knew much about the work itself. The interpretation will be easier if we can recognize a genre, if we can be provided with a set of expectations and conventions. Different literary genres are judged according to different standards (2005: 29-34).

Ontology as a narratological concept is an inseparable part of science fiction which by definition tends to offer a new and different ontology. As [Thomas \(2013\)](#) puts it, "SF, like fantasy, often builds and developes entire and seemingly new worlds (sometimes as in disguises for our own world and often genuinely speculative or uniquely alternative existences) with characters that exist in extended narratives" (2013: 6). Ontological novels especially science fiction have a particular place in postmodern literature for their various references to philosophical, political, ethical, social, and psychological issues. [McHale \(1987\)](#) appropriately defines the term: An ontology is a description of a universe, not of *the* universe" (1987: 27). He continues to explain that the opposition between fictional and real "does not mean that *no* relationship exists between the fictional heterocosm and the real world," but quite the contrary "the heterocosm theme and the mimetic theme are mutually dependent and mutually implicating" (1987: 28). Ontology can be, and indeed is, an independent universe separate from any other universes, yet at the same time related and inspired by other ones. The generic signs are searched for in the novel to conclude accordingly.

### 2.1. Cloud Atlas: Plot Summary

Through a Russian-doll style narrative, [Mitchell \(2004\)](#) tells six interlocking stories – five halved and one whole - using six different genres and six different narrators spanning centuries from mid-19<sup>th</sup> to a post-apocalyptic future. Only two of them are this study's concern, so the other stories will not be summarized.

The fifth story, "An Orison of Sonmi-451" happens in the corporation of Nea So Copros (future name of Korea) in 2144. Genetically engineered clones called fabricant working for purebloods who are wealthy original humans. They serve the pureblood consumers for nineteen hours, imbibe one soapsac which deaden their curiosity and do not rest. As one of the fabricants named Sonmi-451 acquires knowledge – more than what she has been programmed to acquire – Unionists (members of an Abolitionist group) rescue her from servitude in Papa Song's fast food restaurant to take her to Taemosan University where she gains even more knowledge than any human can gain. Union believes in the equality and they educate and prepare Sonmi-451 to be the leader of the revolution. The state's kind of police, Unanimity, follows her. Abolitionist men help her scape. She becomes aware of the genocide of her type, rebels against the state which is a corporation and is executed for it. Zachry and his tribe believe in God Sonmi.

"Sloosha's crossin' an' ev'rythin' after", the main central story which is the only story told in one part; and after which the other halves of the previous five stories will be finished. The story is of a post-apocalyptic future type which pictures a high intelligent society parallel with a pre-civilized society. Prescient Meronym, a woman equipped with technology comes to stay with Zachry Bailey's uncivilized family in Nine Valleys (future name of Hawaii) in order to understand if the place is inhabitable. Zachry accompany her to Mauna Kea where Prescient Meronym

wants to gather information from its observatories. When they come back, Kona warriors kill the whole tribe and take Zachry into slavery. Meronym saves him and they escape.

## 2.2. An Ontology: An Orison

The following parts tend to find elements of dystopian science fiction in different ontologies of the *Cloud Atlas*. Every six story of the novel is such perfect and independent that can be considered as a quality complete novella in itself. Among them, "An Orison of Sonmi-451", is the concern of this study. The next story "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After", is significant where it is related to Sonmi's story and where it exhibits the continuation of it. In the next subsections, science fictional and dystopian elements will be searched for respectively.

### 2.2.1. The Fiction of Science

While it could be told which general issues are covered by science fiction, it has always been impossible to define it clearly. According to Roberts (2000), defining the genre has been a matter of controversy all along and it has not had a name until 1920s. Yet it is possible to refer to some major tropes, subjects, and themes among which "genetic engineering, biological robots", "computers, advanced technology, virtual reality", "alternative history", and "futuristic utopias and dystopias" (2000: 15), are searched for in the *Cloud Atlas*. One of the key features of science fiction is that the novel "requires material, physical rationalization rather than a supernatural or arbitrary one" (ibid.: 5). This is what separates science fiction from pure fantasy and what justifies studying its implications; the major issues in the novel have external equivalents in the real world.

The major tropes Roberts (2000) counts are the same things Suvin (1979) calls the *Novum*, the necessary condition of science fiction. Suvin states that he has borrowed and slightly adapted the term from the best possible source, Bloch (1989). He defines the "novum of cognitive innovation" as "a totalizing phenomenon or relationship deviating from the author's and implied reader's norm of reality" (1979: 63-64). The novum keeps readers detached from and at the same time critical of the depicted society which will turn out to be her/ his own society. In this novel, the novum includes the setting itself as well as the scientific advancements.

Through a simple plot yet sophisticated narrative, Mitchell (2004) depicts a futuristic world advanced beyond human's wildest dreams. The novel is set in 22<sup>nd</sup> century in the corporation of Nea So Copros (Korea). The whole world is turning into a deadland; "Nea So Copros is the world's only rising sun! Pre-skirmish East Asia was the same chaos of sickly democracies, democidal autocracies, and rampant deadlands that the rest of the world still is" (*Cloud Atlas*, 2004: 199). A state or as the citizens call it a corpocracy has survived to give ideal life to the people as well as to protect civilization; "if the Juche had not unified and cordonized the region, we would have backslid to barbarism with the rest of the globe" (CA, 199). Unlike the traditional utopias/ dystopias which were set in a remote land, the contemporary ones typically happen in the same land but after a kind of demolition caused by nuclear disaster. The alternative is a community of survivors who try to reorganize the society.

The whole remained world is almost a huge corporation ruled by the so called *Beloved Chairman* with smaller departments – similar to ministry – in charge of various duties related to the society. There are two kinds of human in the corpocracy: purebloods and fabricants. Fabricants are colonized humans made to being in the service of purebloods. People of corpocracy are referred to as consumers who are provided with enough dollars, all they have to do is to spend the money. They have the long-wished ideal life of staying young, healthy, entertained, and wealthy enough.

While in the past "people sagged and uglified as they aged in those days: no dewdrugs. Elderly purebloods waited to die in prisons for the senile: no fixed-term life spans, no euthanasium. Dollars circulated as little sheets of paper and the only fabricants were sickly livestock" (CA, 145), now everybody does face surgeries known as facescaping. Science has achieved the wildest dream of humanity, reaching moon, modifying everything from food to human body. The whole nature, animals and plants, is under control: "the trees were genomed to repel bugs and birds" (CA, 201). The struggle between nature and science, a common motif of science fiction, has come to an end with the dominance of science. Natural characteristics of both people and environment have changed in favor of science. The cures for all incurable diseases have been found: "pills for cancer, aids, Alzheimer, lead-tox; for corpulence, anorexia, baldness, hairiness, exuberance, glumness, dewdrugs, drugs for overindulgence in dewdrugs" (CA, 140).

Future science has made everything available for the comfort of the consumers: fabricant slaves, beauty, health, and modified nature; and also people in top layers of stratification have enough money to use them. They have something named ironically *soul* on them which is dollared and redollared by the state: "A Soul's value is the dollars therein" (CA, 199). The only thing they have to do to keep their kind Chairman satisfied is to spend proper amount of dollars: "under the Enrichment Statutes, consumers have to spend a fixed quota of dollars each month, depending on their strata. Hoarding is an anti-corpocratic crime" (CA, 140).

The story has featured the elements of science fiction in different aspects; now it is time to decide whether these scientific elements tend to exhibit the world altered towards being a better world or worse than the current world; whether science has helped human to find his/her appropriate place in nature or it has made them slaves; whether people have reached the equality they have been wanting for so long or technology has deepened the gap between the power holders and the rest.

### 2.2.2. The Dystopian Fiction of Science

The previous part focused on the positive aspects of scientific and technological advancement available to people; this part elaborates on the dark side of technology as shown in the novel. In the introduction to *Utopias and*

*Dystopias in the Fiction of H.G. Wells and William Morris*, Godfrey (2016) studies the great examples of dystopia and explains their dystopian elements briefly. She finds the dystopian tropes, concepts, and subjects as follows: man's experiments with nature, destruction of both the environment and history, ruined landscape, conspicuous consumption and consumerism, gluttonous capitalism, dictatorship, dangers of science and technology, machine-life, panopticon notion, utopian silencing dissent and punishing imperfection leading to totalitarianism, rout of civilization, massacre of mankind, nuclear bomb, poverty, controlled reproduction, disasters caused by man or nature, murder, violence, religious mania, worldwide ecological ruin, and brainwashing, exploiting, and discarding people (2016: 1-15). These elements are searched for in the novel to prove that it can be classified into dystopian science fiction genre.

The narrator of the story is a fabricant named Sonmi-451 who is narrating in the form of an interrogation. This form serves specific aims: from the first scene it gives the reader an impression of a committed crime as well as a picture of a police state. Gradually as they talk more and more, the reader finds an urge to take side which is not too simple. Because people are classified into different groups for each of them the world serves to be a relative utopia or dystopia. First of all there are two groups in the society: purebloods and fabricants. Considering purebloods the world free of economic dissatisfaction supposed to be a utopia which themselves think it is.

The genetically engineered clones known as fabricants on the other hand work in "a world without calendars or real windows, twelve floors underground" for nineteen hours (CA, 115). The only thing they can do and they do is to greet diners, input orders, tray food, vend drinks, upstock condiments, wipe tables, and bin garbage (CA, 114). They have been convinced that they are in debt to Papa Song; when their twelve years of *sacred service* is done, their debt is paid back; then they can change into purebloods and have a utopian life. Papa Song Corp, looking like a slavery camp, "seems humane if compared to [other] factories" (CA, 193). The Papa Song's fast food restaurant is just a small scale sample of the whole corporation. A revolutionist group helps Sonmi to run away from the slavery to a research site where she can develop and broaden her knowledge.

None of the pictures of upstrata residents or downstrata's is satisfying; not the one with eight lanes wide thruways neither the one too narrow for fords to enter. Although they were supposed to be highly different places of upstrata's paradise and underclass's hell, both of them are nightmarish landscapes of waste, filth, pollution, and darkness. To answer Sonmi's question, "why the Juche tolerates this in its second capital", her guide responds that every conurb "has a chemical toilet where the city's unwanted human waste disintegrates quietly, but not quite invisibly. It motivates the downstrata: "Work, spend, work," say slums like Huamdonggil, "or you, too, will end your life here." (CA, 193). Even below the downstrata there is a class of underclass people who are allowed to exist only for the purpose of scaring the class right above them. If they do not consume the proper amount of goods, then they do not deserve to have a class and will be drawn into the toilet of conurb and underclass.

On the way to escape from Unanimity, Sonmi's guide answers to her questions and shows her the remaining of the world. The climax of the story happens in their last destination to Papa's Golden Ark which conveys Twelvestarred fabricants to Xultation. They go in covertly to see that fabricants wear helmets supposed to remove the collar "as promised by Papa Song in Matins over the years" instead it kills them (CA, 210). It turns out that the Ark is a slaughterhouse where clones are recycled: "a slaughterhouse production line lay below us, manned by figures wielding scissors, sword saws, and various tools of cutting, stripping, and grinding. The workers were bloodsoaked, from head to toe. I should properly call those workers butchers: they snipped off collars, stripped clothes, shaved follicles, peeled skin, offcut hands and legs, sliced off meat, spooned organs ... drains hoovered the blood" (CA, 210). Fabricants work all their life and at the end they are murdered deliberately. This is what this layer of society has been made for: serving the top layers. Not only they are the labor force, but also their bodies are recycled to provide food both for humans and clones.

Manipulation, social stratification, ruined nature, genocide, different kinds of oppression and suppression, new practical religion in power's favor, and identity crisis characterize the dystopian aspect of the story. The fact that these issues are also familiar to today's people, awakens them and requires to take actions.

### 2.3. Implications: Ontological Awakening

Unlike fantasy tale and mythological tale, "Science fiction does not posit another superordinated and more real reality but an alternative on the same ontological level as the author's empirical reality"; the necessary correlate of the novum is an alternate reality, one that possesses a different historical time corresponding to different human relationships and sociocultural norms actualized by the narration" (Suvin, 1979). The same ontological level of the novel makes it a great context to awaken a deeper understanding of the empirical world. The consequences of absorbing ideologies unquestioningly and playing god are: powerful totalitarian states brutally controlling any detail of human's life and dehumanized people devoid of identity. These consequences are explained in details as follows.

#### 2.3.1. Politics: Totalitarianism

The 20<sup>th</sup> century attacks on utopia – both as a practice and as a type of literature – were due to the "presumed connection between utopian thought and the totalitarian regimes of this century. Fascism is a utopia; so too is Communism in its Soviet form" (Kumar, 1993). What all dystopias have in common is that they were intended to be utopias. The novel represents a system of totalitarianism which has tried to make a utopia for people, at least a group of them. The reader faces a government which its only objective is to make sure of its absolute totalitarian power in every aspects of the society; this controlled society has turned to a dystopia.

Studying Orwell's political views, Philip lists the ways using which totalitarian governments actually work: ruling by force, securing the obedience of their subjects using violence, propaganda statements feed continuously

into the public mind, create the impression that the state is under imminent threat of being overthrown, limiting people's ability to question or challenge, reaching into the minds of ordinary people and win their unquestioning support by creating circumstances in which blatant lies are instantly regarded as pure truth (cf. *ibid.*: 145-149); these societal elements are characteristics of a totalitarian government as well as a dystopia. The state rewrites the past in any possible way through media and school subjects for instance, in order to distinguish itself as a perfect state. *Bounds (2009)* believes that by omitting any sign of fallibility, heads of state attribute semi-divine characteristics to themselves; they associate themselves with Christian God and authority figures in the family. The reason that "millions of people in totalitarian societies are willing to believe everything the government tells them, [...] is precisely because gods and relatives never lie" (*ibid.*: 146). In addition to ideological control, Another way is to keep people in "widespread poverty" to make them work long hours which stops them from being concerned with political freedom (*ibid.*: 150).

Considering abovementioned political features of dystopian science fiction, the following paragraphs study the ways with which the power controls the masses as shown in the story:

One) Lack of memory and history; fabricants have no memory or history: "fabricants have no earliest memories, Archivist. One twenty-four-hour cycle in Papa Song's is indistinguishable from any other" (*CA*, 113). History has been replaced by a present to make humans devoid of any experience to share. When there is no past, people cannot be aware that they have other choices; their only choice is the present completely programmed by the state. How can they be dissatisfied with their conditions when they have never seen any other to compare with?

Two) Language; using language is significant in different ways. One of them is using language ideologically in power's favor. The story is narrated by Sonmi-451 through an interrogation which the interrogator refers to as an interview. An interrogation whatever you call it is an interrogation. Slaves are slaves by any name, even if the word is forbidden and "the very word *slave* is abolished through Nea So Copros" (*CA*, 115). It implies the ideological use of language to deny any negative issue related to the state; if there is no word to call something then that thing does not exist.

Another significant use of language is to see it as a mean to oppose power. *Irregular speech* is the first sign as well as the result of thinking freely; The ability to speak equals to the ability to think, understand and act consciously. Consequently it threatens the power structure which needs unaware slaves happy with their conditions. Sisters are the masses obediently follow the state. In fact criticizing the state is linguistically impossible, they have no such language. They learn as many words as they need, not more. Acquiring language helps them to learn more about the reality and inform each other. Then they can change their status as being mere masses to humans with certain rights.

Three) Religion and rituals; fabricants as a group of masses have been convinced that what they are doing as slaves are religious services and will be awarded by Paradise. Sonmi-451 uses such religious terms as Plinth, Matins, Catechism, Sermon, Vesper, sisters, and Ark to describe the "blueprint of every unvarying day" (*CA*, 114). Fabricant's paradise is Hawaii where they will be "transformed into consumers with soulrings" (*CA*, 115). People swear to "the name of Holy Corpocracy" and "Sweet Corpocracy", they "thank Chairman" instead of *thank God*. Not every human is courageous enough to question and challenge the sacred beliefs.

Four) Distraction; in many cases purebloods are described *glued* to their sons or AdV. They are also busy buying stuffs, to be more accurate: consuming. They do not need anything more. If they are provided with enough credit they do not see anything wrong with the state to oppose to.

Five) Systematic drugging; it is again for the sake of distraction to avoid people being active in social and political situations. The soap they imbibe "contains amnesiacs to deaden curiosity" (*CA*, 114). Soap is not just an obligatory drug for fabricants. Seer Rhee overdosed on Soap and students in university where Sonmi was kept for experiments used to gamble and indulge in drugs often Soap. It is a benefit for the state as it entertains and involves them in another direction.

Six) Media's role; "Media reported the atrocity exactly as Unanimity directed" (*CA*, 119), "media alternated footage" (*CA*, 120). Media is the most powerful tool to produce lies and make people believe it.

Seven) An unreal, imaginary enemy; "we were sure a Union terrorist had facescaped herself to look like a server, for twisted propaganda purposes" (*CA*, 120). Papa Song told fabricants "a gas called evil exists in the world; purebloods called terrorists breathe in this evil, and this gas makes them hate all that is free, orderly, good, and corpocratic; a group of terrorists called Union had caused yesterday's atrocity by infecting one of our own sisters" (*CA*, 120). State protects people from this so-called enemy; that is why people are thankful to their caring state men.

Eight) Suppression; Yoona-939 the only fabricant aware of what was happening is neutralized and "turned into a pulp of bullet hole" (*CA*, 120). If none of these strategies works, then the state will use its last option: to murder and to pretend nothing happened. Each of these items also has societal, philosophical, and ethical implications.

### 2.3.2. Philosophy: Playing God

One possible angle for looking philosophically at the novel's worldview is a logical continuation of the political implication as *Althusser (1971)* puts it, "that philosophy is fundamentally *political*" (1971: 1) and by *that philosophy* he means Marxist-Leninist philosophy. He also believes that "philosophy is always linked to the science" (*ibid.*: 4); to conclude from this dual relationship of philosophy to politics and science he states: "Marxist-Leninist philosophy, or dialectical materialism, represents the proletarian class struggle *in theory*. In the union of Marxist theory and the Workers' Movement, philosophy ceases, as Marx said, 'to interpret the world'. It becomes a weapon with which 'to change it': *revolution*" (*ibid.*: 7). He thinks that this revolutionary character of Marxist philosophy is what should be used practically to analyze the class struggle today.

The other possible philosophical aspects of the story lies in the questions it poses; questions regarding human's ability to play God and make better creatures. In *Cloud Atlas*, the story of Sonmi-451 like any other dystopian story is concerned with presenting ideas rather than plot, structure, and characters. The first recognizable idea is a warning of the consequences of human's playing God, i.e. interfere with nature and the universe as it is. Does playing God and start creation from scratch bring happiness to the world or not?

On the debris of a God-created universe, Juche has made another one using technological and scientific entities. The beloved chairman has developed it and seers make sure that people are *enjoying* themselves. The new gods have made a human race satisfied with their servitude which never challenges the authority. There are also different ways preventing them from acquiring knowledge after they are manufactured. They are told stories which make them happy with their shallow lives. The authority brainwash them through rituals and their particular religion.

Science has made humans –Fabricants – that can be better in many cases. Wing-027, another fabricant under experiment in the university, says: "if a randomly assembled pureblood can read, a well-designed fabricant should learn with ease" (CA, 126). Even the planned obsolescence of fabricants is due to the fear of them gaining emotions and become humans which are better than human. This implies that men can create things better than God whose existence is under question. In fact science is their God. Spirit is the only line between human and non-human. They try to kill humanity in the fabricants as they start to understand the situation. Another idea in the story as a dystopian context is what will happen to human soul in an advanced totalitarian government.

### 2.3.3. Morality: De-humanization

Moral crisis of capitalist civilization start from the very point that the society turns into a consumer society, people are referred to as masses, and having money equals to having power. Wallimann (1981) believes that "the agents of capital - the capitalists - do not possess this governing power on the basis of personal or human qualities, but merely because they *own* capital with its inherent power to purchase anything and everything" (1981: 26). Morality in such society is basically concerned with being truly human. Kerman (1991) poses questions "about the relationship of technology to politics and morality in the age of genetic engineering"; Questions such as are fabricants human, Machines or Slaves? What are the moral implications of creating people who have no free will (1997: 22)?

Both purebloods and fabricants are under surveillance, at least they both live on the same food: soap made out of dead bodies. The humanity issue is not just studied on the fabricants who are considered to be fake humans; the story is about totalitarian state's power to change the human's real nature and in some cases bring out the real nature hidden under the so called civilization. As Sonmi states, "you underestimate humanity's ability to bring such evil into being" (CA, 211). This is the story of future process of dehumanizing human kind.

The results of such a world are dehumanized people without any identity. Fabricants and purebloods are not discernible. Fabricants are described "as singular as snowflakes" as humans; while one of the seers "has lived with fabricants for so long he is very nearly one of us", Yoona said (CA, 117). While purebloods have become so mean that they "have short memories where their stomachs are concerned" (CA, 122), Hae-Joo tells Sonmi: "xistential qualms you suffer, they just mean you're truly human" (CA, 143). Hae-Joo "got a flickknife from his pouch and sliced off the tip of his left index, gouged, and xtracted a tiny metallic egg. He threw it out of the window and ordered me to discard my Soulring similarly. Xi-Li also xtracted his soul" (CA, 192). They got rid of the *Soul* that separated them from fabricants; because that was more like a slavery sign, a false identity that the Corpocracy has given them. While the only advantage of some purebloods is the *soul* ring, there are different types of fabricants: workers, porters, domestics, cleaners, militiaman, disasterman who are a lot more useful than purebloods. They have type and numbers as their names: sonmi-451, Yoona-939, Wing-027, Ma-Leu-Da-108, and Kyelim- 889. Sonmi believed that "Yoona-939 was worth twenty Boom-Sooks, and Wing-027 worth twenty Min-Sics, by any measure" (CA, 129). Fabricants and purebloods are not discernible biologically; in fact they are both human. But their humanity is not on the same level. On the one hand the boundaries between being a human and non-human has blurred in a way that they are distinguishable; on the other it can be said that the whole definition of being a human and consequently non-human has been changed.

In her "The Self and Representations of the Other in Science Fiction", Kerslake (2007) states that the notion of self and other, man and not-man, or the idea of alien holds true in all domains of science fiction; "in the demarcation of a place or center for one culture or individual, there is an automatic displacement and marginalization of all who stand outside or apart from that place" (2007: 8). The concept of other and how it is defined in the particular society is one of the key concepts of science fiction.

O'Donnell (2015) believes that "the more one comes to know the situated characters and identities of *Cloud Atlas*, the more one realizes that all of them, and thus the human as such, is for Mitchell a matter of the plural rather than a singular" (2015: 87). For Mitchell, not only there is no absolute self and other, but also the self itself is a mixture. He pictures his human as a culturally, historically, and even biologically hybrid creature who can also put on different social roles. The state manufactures human: full-grown fabricants with a built-in expiration date: this flaw is created on purpose to prevent fabricants from maturing emotionally into autonomous creatures. They are even able to become a god, as Sonmi indeed becomes. Fabricants are disposable personal servants while they have the potential to become more human than humans.

## 3. Conclusion: Outcome and Ontological Solution

The research studied the scientific entities and their dystopian function in David Mitchell's novel *Cloud Atlas* to consider the implication of categorizing it as a dystopian science fiction. *Cloud Atlas* is consisted of six

interconnected stories one of which portrays a nightmarish vision of the future. Although science has succeeded enough to resolve economy, health, transportation, and communication problems, it has failed to consider societal and ethical issues. The universe depicted is a dystopia for its capitalism, genetic manipulation, and ignorance of and towards human and humanity.

The story pictures the life of fabricants among other classes in a highly stratified society including purebloods' upstrata, downstrata, and also underclass. Fabricants are physical beings exactly like humans that progressively learn to acquire real feelings, emotions, knowledge, and thought even more advanced than humans. These nth class of manufactured people resemble people who are oppressed. The story is a matter of slavery as well as genocide. It is the political story of rebelling slaves challenging human oppressors' power. Mitchell tries to awaken masses and inform them of their potential power to reform and transform society in a liberal or revolutionary way. His novel as a kind of social reform literature arises ideological, political, and sociological issues; it shows the ability of power to define human and to destroy those who fall outside the definition. It scrutinizes the relationship between technology and morality in the age of genetic engineering. It triggers philosophical discussions on the creation. The outcome is this totalitarian state controlling dehumanized people waiting to die.

Dystopian science fiction is distinguished from other similar genres for its potential to picture social and individual life in late consumer capitalism. The restaurant is the whole corpocracy in smaller scale; the corpocracy is the whole universe; the story's universe can be regarded as the real universe at the present time with the same issues. Mitchell himself has given us hints through his choice of narrative mode; each story is read or watched or continued by a character in the following story except the central story. It seems that even the actual reader is living in a narrative reading that central story to complete the circle. The ontology of the story has its own kind of reality whose characteristics can be generalized to the real world out of the novel. The novel challenges readers to be observant towards their own time, yet it does not have a blueprint for an alternative.

The novel discredits the traditional ways of opposing the system while offering the least humans can do. For example, the idea of revolution, a long practiced opposition, is somehow ridiculed and proved impractical. Sonmi herself – the leader – believes that all of it is planned beforehand. A way it suggests to live beyond the classes boundaries is to gain knowledge; "what if the difference between social strata stem not from genomics or inherent excellence or even dollars, but merely differences in knowledge?" (CA, 136). Sonmi's question "how is knowledge found" is answered, "You must learn how to read" (CA, 127). Sonmi concludes that "we are only what we know" (CA, 128). She begins to read as many books as she can among which is Orwell, Huxley, and Plato (CA, 130). Reading others' experiences and gaining knowledge about other societies are regarded here to be powerful assets against the state.

Furthermore the world is not complete dystopia; a part of it has succeeded to preserve some utopian conditions: a tribe that uses both technology and natural resources, is threatened by both advantaged people and natural disasters. In this part of the world also "Problems arose, no doubt, even crises from time to time. But no crisis is insuperable if people cooperate" (CA, 202). The author does not think of utopia as an ideal world; his ideal world is a combination of happiness and disaster, utopia and dystopia, science and nature. This idea of a hybrid ideal world combining science and nature continues in the next story "Sloosha's crossin' an' ev'rythin' after". In this post-apocalyptic story of the novel, a pre-civilized tribe joins an intelligent high tech tribe to keep human race alive. It turned out they both need each other. The only possibility for the world to thrive is to use science and nature together.

The article gave a comprehensive view of the world as shown in the novel, to generalize the problems of that world to the real world we are living in. The fictional world made by the author serves to address the issues of the real world. Some issues are not even visible when you are living through them. Bloch (1989), the utopian Marxist philosopher explains that "all nearness makes matters difficult, and if it is too close, then one is blinded, at least made mute". He views art as a representation of social realities and human dreams (1989: 208). To see these social realities, one has to look at it from a new angle, through the eyes of art, particularly utopian literature. It is concluded that the novel tries to warn people and the ontological solutions given to these problems are considered to be useful in the reality. Mitchell's dystopian world in "An Orison of Sonmi-451" is not the hopeless end of everything. He thinks that there is a chance to save the world by reading about other societies. If it does not work, the apocalypse with which the novel ends gives the final solution of creating a balance between nature and science.

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