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TIME/SPACE POLYPHONY IN DAVID MITCHELL'S "CLOUD ATLAS" AND ITS EPONYMOUS FILM ADAPTATION

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Abstract. The study examines the spatiotemporal narrative polyphony of David Mitchell's metanovel "Cloud Atlas" and its cinematic interpretation in the eponymous film adaptation. It focuses on the specificity of the novel's multi-layered narrative, constructed according to a palindromic principle in which six stories form a complex web of cross-references and causal relationships. In this way, the text becomes an experiment in genre and narrative design with "echo effect," whereby each story reflects the preceding one and anticipates the next. The analysis traces how spatial and temporal modalities – from the historical past to a post-apocalyptic future – are interwoven into a unified philosophical network in which every choice shapes what is yet to come. Emphasis is placed on the role of reincarnation as a pervasive symbolic mechanism: the motif of the "comet-shaped birthmark" signifies the continuity of a single soul across its various incarnations, while the central ethical imperative of the narrative emerges as the responsibility inherent in individual choice. The novel's musical metasymbol – the Cloud Atlas Sextet – functions as an artistic matrix mirroring the novel's fragmentary yet structurally harmonious architectonics. Intermediality

is treated as a foundational structural principle of the novel, with each of the narratives rendered through a distinct mode of textual representation – journal, epistolary correspondence, manuscript, screenplay, holographic recording, or legend – thus generating a multi-layered effect of “post-memory” and facilitating fluid transitions between historical epochs. The study also examines the linguistic stylisation that captures the ambiance of each period. In a comparative framework, the study traces the unfolding of the same ideas within the cinematic dimension. Filmmakers Tykwer and the Wachowskis employ the principle of parallel montage, which enables the simultaneous dynamism of the six narrative strands. The system of visual rhymes reinforces the notion of reincarnational affinities among the characters. The phenomenon of actor transfigurations, whereby a single performer embodies multiple roles across different eras, renders visible the metaphor of the soul’s continuity and the recurrence of ethical impulses. The discussion highlights that the film not merely adapts but re-envisiones the novel’s architectonic design, constructing its cinematic counterpart as a kind of “pointillist mosaic,” in which the composition is generated through alternating segments unified by a musical leitmotif and sustained by visual parallels. It is also stressed that music assumes the status of a fully autonomous character within the adaptation, performing a crucial suggestive function by shaping the viewer’s “emotional amplitude” in the reception of events and characters.

Keywords: David Mitchell; “Cloud Atlas”; metanovel; film adaptation; palindrome; spatiotemporal polyphony; multi-layered narrative; post-memory.

The idea that causal relationships give rise to a complex moral dilemma is borne out by the vast range of consequences that flow from our actions. Fully grasping the ethical implications of our choices is difficult, for the potential impact of even private decisions can be far-reaching, shaping the lives of people for generations to come. Over time, this deepens the complexity of our moral framework and ultimately raises searching questions about responsibility.

In works of fiction, “time” is treated as an existential category; it directs the unfolding of events in a novel, essentially shaping a holistic conception of the multiple temporal continua associated with a certain space. Within the poetics of the novel, the function of time/space, as a subjective factor, assumes increasing significance in terms of genre, a

tendency driven by the inclination of contemporary literature to integrate multidimensional models.

Apart from purely philosophical inquiries into spacetime that trace their lineage back to Antiquity, systematic examinations of literary time/space commenced with Mikhail Bakhtin's foundational study "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel" (1937–1938; published 1975), that introduced the concept of the chronotope – the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships in narrative. Afterwards the scholars delving into the issue applied varied approaches to space/time in a literary aspect from formalist (V. Shklovsky, "Theory of Prose" (1925), structuralist and narratological approaches (Gérard Genette, "Narrative Discourse", (1972) that gave systematic analysis of narrative time; Tzvetan Todorov, "Poetics" (1973), "Introduction à la littérature fantastique" (1970) suggested structuralist models of narrative structure involving temporal logic; Roland Barthes, "S/Z" (1970) analysing narrative codes that influence the unfolding of time) to phenomenological approaches suggested by Gaston Bachelard in "The Poetics of Space" (1958), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty in "Phenomenology of Perception" (1945) that influenced on literary theory and were foundational for later theorists of embodied, experiential space in narrative. Furthermore, the studies had poststructuralist, cultural, and geographic turns with Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopias (real and imagined spaces) and heterochronias (time distortions) ("Of Other Spaces" (1967/1984)), Henri Lefebvre's understanding of space as socially produced ("The Production of Space" (1974)), Bertrand Westphal ("Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces" (2007) – systematic theory of spatial analysis across multiple texts and geographies. Philosophical and hermeneutic exploration of narrative temporality and historical time was carried out by Paul Ricoeur in "Time and Narrative" (1983–1985). Fredric Jameson explores spatial logic of postmodern narrative ("Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1991), "The Antinomies of Realism" (2015)); Marie-Laure Ryan examines narrative space in relation to virtual worlds and immersive environments ("Narrative as Virtual Reality" (2001)), while David Herman delves into cognitive narratology dealing with how readers construct spatial and temporal worlds ("Story Logic" (2002)).

As extensive scholarly research demonstrates, the problem of time/space in contemporary literary studies emerges as one of the central theoretical concerns. It provides a means of analysing all the principal structural elements of a literary work as a coherent artistic system through the prism of global, social, historical, psychological, and cultural factors. In artistic reality, the temporal dimensions of the external world are transformed into a sophisticated aesthetic system in which artistic time and space function as integral elements enabling the author to construct the work's own microcosm. This framework provides the necessary foundation for the artistic shaping of meanings. Under its influence, the so-called model of the world takes form – a distinctive continuum generated through the spatial and temporal interrelations of its components, which anchor the spatial-temporal movement of figurative thought in the novel and serve as key agents of narrative structure.

In this respect, David Mitchell's metanovel emerges as a remarkable literary phenomenon. Each of his six novels constitutes an experiment in genre and narrative structure. Earlier analyses of Mitchell's fiction have noted the "global and historical sweep" and the "Hydra-headed nature of his novelistic output" (Mason 2010). His debut novel "Ghostwritten" (1999) weaves together nine stories unfolding simultaneously in different parts of the world, involving characters who are strangers to one another and fundamentally dissimilar, thereby forming a polyphonic narrative structure. The author regards "causality" as the connective tissue linking these seemingly disparate episodes. According to Mitchell, he owes the philosophical idea of causality to Thornton Wilder's "The Bridge of San Luis Rey", a quotation from which he chose as the epigraph to his novel (Begley 2010: p. 169). A distinctive feature of "Ghostwritten" is its series of allusions, such as a nod to Ray Bradbury's "butterfly effect", among others. It is no coincidence that the subtle interpenetration of each successive story into the preceding one gradually becomes more apparent, until the first and final stories ultimately converge in their logical resolution, shaping a unified narrative of the novel.

Furthermore, reflecting the ideas of linearity and cyclicity of time in his work, and merging the properties of ontological (physical) and perceptual (psychological) time, Mitchell invents his own distinctive temporal continuum. This literary device reveals his conviction that

everything in the world is interconnected (Mason 2010) and that one thing grows out of another. By juxtaposing fictional events with real historical ones, such as the sarin gas attack carried out by the Aum Shinrikyo sect in the Tokyo subway on 20 March 1995, or the atrocities of the Second World War and the many forms of twentieth-century discrimination, and by imagining the coexistence of ghostly characters alongside ordinary humans, David Mitchell creates a philosophical fantasy epic in which genres such as fantasy, drama, and thriller intertwine to produce the effect of a philosophical utopia.

The development of this philosophical idea, combined with the belief in the soul's journey through time, from body to body, in conjunction with the novel's cyclical structure and radically different narrative forms, is characteristic of his third novel "Cloud Atlas" (2004) – "novel of interlinked narratives" (Byatt 2004), "some kind of grand narrative" (Jameson 2015: p. 305), a "transhistorical narrative" (Дроздовський 2019: p. 163). The book was adapted for the screen in 2012 by directors Tom Tykwer and Andy and Lana Wachowski (who also wrote the screenplay) (Cloud Atlas 2012). Yet it should be stressed that Mitchell's novel itself has a strongly intermedial nature. The writer admitted that the title was inspired by Toshi Ichianagi's music. According to Mitchell, the title combines melodiousness with ambiguity: "Souls cross ages like clouds cross skies" (Mitchell 2012a: p. 307). But it is not only the title that carries a musical code.

In "Letters from Zedelghem," one of the novel's stories, the young composer Robert Frobisher, working as an amanuensis for the celebrated maestro Vyvyan Ayrs, writes down Ayrs' musical "ideas" and simultaneously creates his own *Cloud Atlas Sextet*:

sextet for overlapping soloists: piano, clarinet, cello, flute, oboe, and violin, each in its own language of key, scale and colour. In the first set, each solo is interrupted by its successor: in the second, each interruption is recontinued, in order (Mitchell 2012a: p. 445).

It is not a coincidence that this part of the novel also raises the question of authorship, for Ayrs attempts to appropriate Frobisher's masterpiece as his own. The embedded composition, the *Cloud Atlas Sextet*, functions as an artistic metasymbol, a structural matrix

representing the internal narrative principles of the novel. Its title already signals its architectonic design: the six parts of the sextet correspond to the six stories and the six possible “incarnations” of the central soul, forming a musical equivalent of the novel’s reincarnation model. Here music serves not only as a motif but as a “structural metaphor” reflecting the text’s fragmentary yet harmonious order. Moreover,

music symbolizes the realm of the transcendental in the novel, a space of higher intellect; the apprehension of this symbol is possible only through the development of nature as a force striving to know itself through the principles of creative and productive evolution (Дроздовський 2019: p. 163).

The film adaptation preserves and expands this authorial design in cinematic form. The directors treat the sextet as the film’s “compositional spine”, transforming a literary symbol into a fully realized auditory leitmotif. Working with J. Klimek and R. Heil, Tom Tykwer co-composed the score (approximately two hours of original soundtrack), which, as Mitchell remarked, “can heighten or suppress emotion, can bind the text into a unified whole. A gifted composer can translate the essence of a book into music” (Mitchell 2012b). Mitchell also emphasizes the important role of music as a separate character in the adaptation, noting that “books don’t speak, though makers of e-readers are working on that”. In the film, music performs a crucial suggestive function: it shapes the emotional amplitude of the viewer’s perception of events and characters (Mitchell 2012b).

Thus, music becomes not merely a soundtrack but a translation of the novel’s structural idea into cinematic language. What exists in the book as a symbolic inner composition materializes on screen as an actual sextet functioning as the sonic analogue of the multi-layered narrative architectonics of “Cloud Atlas”.

Architectonically, the novel differs significantly from Mitchell’s other fiction. Its first distinctive feature is its palindromic design: six embedded narratives (five interrupted novellas and one complete central story) are arranged so that, beginning with the sixth story, each narrative mirrors the previous one and anticipates the next, creating an “echo effect”. The use of a palindrome in prose is rare being more typical of poetry or musical composition. Mitchell himself described this structure:

My 2004 novel "Cloud Atlas" opens in 1850, with a notary on an island-hopping voyage from the South Pacific to San Francisco. But that narrative gets interrupted by another story, set in the 1930s, about a young composer who finds a memoir written some decades earlier by the notary; which story in turn is interrupted by another, involving a journalist and a physicist, whose letters recount the 1930s narrative; and so on, for a total of six different time frames. In the novel's second half, the "interrupted" narratives are continued, and the novel ends with the conclusion of the 1850s memoir (Mitchell 2012b).

In this way, the author presents a new kind of time-space – a "world without borders": an endless expanse of space and time with interwoven planes (Albert 2019).

Interestingly enough, Mitchell did not believe that such a narratively polyphonic text could be translated into the language of cinema:

This "there-and-back" structure always struck me as unfilmable, which is why I believed that "Cloud Atlas" would never be made into a movie. I was half right. It has now been adapted for the screen, but as a sort of pointillist mosaic: We stay in each of the six worlds just long enough for the hook to be sunk in, and from then on the film darts from world to world at the speed of a plate-spinner, revisiting each narrative for long enough to propel it forward (Mitchell 2012b).

Mitchell's metanovel forms a complex polygenre structure in which six autonomous narratives imitate different literary forms and epochs: "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing" – a nineteenth-century travel journal of a notary, travelogue and diary prose; "Letters from Zedelghem" – a modernist epistolary novella of impoverished young composer of 1920s; "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery" – a political detective thriller; "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish" – a social satire, a grotesque story about a publisher who involuntarily ends up in a nursing home; "An Orison of Sonmi~451" – a dystopian sci-fi tale about clones working in a fast food industry, dystopian science fiction; "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After" – a post-apocalyptic mythopoetic narrative.

A careful reading of the stories reveals the hidden unity of these heterogeneous plots: all six narratives form a coherent philosophical and thematic complex, and all are linked by a reincarnational through-line – the life of a single soul manifested in six embodiments. Nearly all central figures bear the same mark, a comet-shaped birthmark, symbolizing reincarnation or the metaphoric continuity of the soul. This creates the effect of “transfigured moral impulses”: not physical rebirth but a symbolic transmission of ethical choice from one consciousness to another. Furthermore, the protagonist of each preceding story becomes the reader or viewer of the previous narrative in the second half of the novel – a mechanism that not only completes the interrupted stories but deepens the novel’s compositional and plot cohesion.

In the screen version, the filmmakers further fragment the original text, significantly transforming its architectonics. In their opinion, linear sequence of entire story, would slow down the tempo of perception and overly stretch the screen time. They abandon the novel’s sequential presentation of each story in full, opting instead for parallel montage: the film opens with six “introductory” segments, which then continue in rotational sequence. As a result, the stories constantly shift yet form a unified whole. The climactic moment is particularly striking, unfolding simultaneously across all six temporal planes and creating a dramatically heightened emphasis. The filmmakers also introduce a framing device by selecting the post-apocalyptic tale as the film’s outer narrative (Zachry’s story about the decline of civilization with its the constant “hunger for more” as Meronym explains the fall of the Old’uns’ Smart to Zachry): Zachry opens and closes the film. This framing intensifies the sense of inner kinship among the plots and makes the complex narrative structure more accessible for viewers’ perception. David Mitchell has emphasized the distinction between the novelistic and the cinematic ending: in a literary work, an open ending is organic, as it leaves room for the reader’s imaginative elaboration (Mitchell 2012b). Cinema, by contrast, as a more concretized mode of interpretation, requires a relatively determinate conclusion. It is precisely this form of narrative finality that the filmmakers provide.

Scholars observe that the novel’s “defragmented narrative is connected to modern astronomical and physical theories of ‘superstring reality’, a nonlinear conception of time and space involving multiple

simultaneous projections" (Дроздовський 2017). Thus, reality becomes a potentially infinite realm of alternative timelines. Thus, reality emerges as a potentially infinite field of "alternative worlds," for in one reality an action № 1 generates a subsequent action № 2 and thereby produces reality №1, while in another reality № 1' the projection is a non-action № 1', which in turn gives rise to a non-action № 2'. According to scholars, in certain loci of the Universe these realities – these temporally divergent modalities – may intersect; consequently, upon entering such zones, a person could simultaneously perceive themselves from multiple vantage points and across different temporal projections (Дроздовський 2017).

At the same time, the text structure fragmentariness of both the novel and the film functions not merely as a compositional technique but as an "epistemological model": the world cannot be grasped as a single whole, only through intersecting trajectories of experience. Over the vast sweep of history, the same souls recur, reincarnating repeatedly to complete what was begun long before. The key concept is that everything in the universe is ordered and interconnected. Love, fear, faith – forces that shape human lives – bind individuals into an endless chain of reincarnations, offering repeated chances to correct past mistakes. The filmmakers emphasize that humans do not govern their lives; they are small links in an unending cycle stretching from a misted past to an unknown future. This aligns with the postmodern paradigm of the dissolution of grand narratives while offering an alternative: "networked coherence." The film directors realized the reincarnation model literally: each actor plays multiple roles, embodying various incarnations of the same soul.

Chronologically, the events in the novel move from past to future and then back again, following known temporal markers. Mitchell conceives the novel's temporal perspective as a bunch of characters' reflections on their psychological future, past, and present, as a dynamic basic property of human existence: "What wouldn't I give now for a never-changing map of the ever-constant ineffable? To possess, as it were, an atlas of clouds" (Mitchell 2012a: p. 372). It's no wonder that in her orison Sonmi reflects on self-awareness and identity emerging through interaction: "To be is to be perceived. And to know thyself is only possible through the eyes of the other" (Mitchell 2012a: p. 195).

She links her newfound awareness to broader ethical consequences, emphasizing that actions ripple through time: “The nature of our immortal lives is in the consequences of our words and deeds” (Mitchell 2012a: p. 201). Her reflections emphasize that actions reverberate through time. The future is determined by the present, the present is controlled by the past, the past, thus, creates a situation where the future connects the values of the past and the present:

Belief, like fear or love, is a force to be understood as we understand the theory of relativity and principals of uncertainty. Phenomena that determine the course of our lives. Yesterday, my life was headed in one direction. Today, it is headed in another. Yesterday, I believe I would never have done what I did today. These forces that often remake time and space, that can shape and alter who we imagine ourselves to be, begin long before we are born and continue after we perish. Our lives and our choices, like quantum trajectories, are understood moment to moment. That each point of intersection, each encounter, suggest a new potential direction (Mitchell 2012a: p. 135).

Hence the question – “Does a single act have significance on the scale of history?” – becomes central. Mitchell’s answer is optimistic: yes, an individual choice can alter the course of events, for it generates a cumulative effect upon the future reshaping it in the result.

Time in “Cloud Atlas” plays the leading role in shaping the space: “Time is what stops history at once; time is the speed at which the past disappears” (Mitchell 2012a: p. 244). Primarily, the apocalypse described in the novel is not the end of existence but a return to a reference point, allowing the reader to reconstruct the trajectory of civilization – with all its flaws – retrospectively. The novel therefore presents a cyclical model of historical development: motives, conflicts, and rhetoric of power are repeated in different epochs. But cyclical does not mean static: Mitchell offers the concept of “spiral time,” in which repetition entails transformation.

Reflecting different time periods in his novel, Mitchell preserves language peculiarities of each mentioned epoch, thanks to it the novel’s stylistic palette attests to a masterful command of multiple linguistic registers:

The central section of a novel I wrote called "Cloud Atlas" contains the narrative of a character called Zachry. This teenager witnesses the last spark of civilisation being snuffed out on a far-future Hawaii. Like the characters in the novel's other time zones, I wanted his narrative to use period speech (Mitchell 2005).

Consequently, the novel captures linguistic specificity of each epoch: archaic nineteenth-century English; modernist syntax; the cinematic tempo of a 1970s thriller; satirical grotesque; the neologized technospeak of a dystopian future; and the dialect of post-apocalyptic survivors. This creates the effect of a "linguistic history of culture," linguistic polyphony, where the evolution of language is equivalent to the evolution of civilization. The film successfully mirrors this linguistic landscape. This approach is consistent with Chatman's concept:

in cinema as in literature, the implied author is the agent intrinsic to the story whose responsibility is the overall design – including the decision to communicate it through one or more narrators. Cinematic narrators are transmitting agents of narratives, not their creators (Chatman 1990: p. 132).

Another defining feature of Mitchell's narrative technique is the principle of diachrony. He moves with remarkable skill from one temporal period to another, from epoch to epoch, generating iterative reappearances of key events in the form of various textual and medial artefacts – diaries, letters, a novel manuscript, or, alternatively, a feature film, a holographic recording, or an orally transmitted tale. Scholars have observed that, in representing six distinct artistic realities, Mitchell employs a particular connective logic – "trans-metaphysical link", enabling past, present, and future to co-inhabit the narrative. By juxtaposing specific fragments of reality – Adam Ewing's shipboard journal, Rufus Sixsmith's memoirs, the Cloud Atlas Sextet, the film about Timothy Cavendish, and the Orison of Sonmi~451 – he orchestrates transitions from one temporal plane to another, thereby enabling discourse to unfold across past, present, and future (Алексенко 2023: p. 34). This principle is likewise adopted by the filmmakers.

Thus, the story of an American notary returning from the Chatham Islands in 1849 (the first novella) is transmitted, via his travel journal, to a young English composer in Belgium in 1936. The composer's letters to his friend (the second novella) are subsequently read in 1973 by Luisa Rey, a journalist in California. Her inquiry into a criminal conspiracy at a nuclear power plant (the third novella) appears in the manuscript of a novel that is, in the subsequent narrative, delivered by mail to a London vanity-press publisher profiting from sensationalist and lowbrow literature. This publisher – who thrives on tabloid-style scandal and is pursued by a criminal gang (the fourth novella) – later becomes the subject of a film viewed in a dystopian future Korea by Sonmi-451, a genetically engineered fabricant created for slave labour in a clandestine fast-food system. Although executed for resisting a corporate-totalitarian order, her testimony (the fifth novella) survives in a holographic archive and is eventually witnessed by Zachry, a Hawaiian goatherd in a post-apocalyptic world, narrator and protagonist of the central and final story. In old age, he recounts his memories of the former world (the sixth novella) to members of a newly emergent civilization. In this manner, the narrative deploys the concept of “post-memory”: each protagonist receives fragments of a preceding story through a textual medium – a diary, a letter, a film, a recording, or a legend. Text thus becomes the mechanism by which experience and information are transmitted across epochs, linking otherwise disconnected temporal realities.

A distinctive network of inter-narrative correlations in “Cloud Atlas” is likewise reproduced in the film adaptation; however, the cinematic version enriches this network through a series of “visual motifs” and “visual rhymes” that reinforce the idea of interconnectedness among the narrative threads. For instance, the Moriori tattoos from the 1849 storyline reappear as nearly identical ornamental patterns on the bodies of the Valleymen in the post-apocalyptic segment. This “recurrent visual code” functions as a cinematic marker of the “cyclical development of civilizations”, inviting viewers to interpret history as a sequence of rhythmic repetitions.

The film also highlights other micro-details that serve as visual leitmotifs or rhyming elements. The camera, for example, deliberately focuses on the blue button from Adam Ewing's coat; later, the same object appears in the hands of a character from an entirely different

epoch – Zachry. In this way, the filmmakers construct a “montage parallel” that materializes continuity across disparate temporal planes and characters.

A similar “web” of visual allusions – motivic correspondences in location, recurring dreams, and the musical theme of the Cloud Atlas Sextet – permeates the film’s entire structure. This network performs a dual function: it deepens the interferences among the individual narrative lines, thereby intensifying the sense of internal unity across the stories; and it encodes a cinematic metaphor of reincarnation, underscoring that the continuity of souls is expressed not only through plot-level correspondences but also through material objects and visual signs that accompany the characters across their various incarnations. The filmmakers thus construct a complex system of “visual anaphoras, rhymes, and echo-images” that serves as a cinematic analogue to Mitchell’s intertextual network, rendering the motif of reincarnational continuity more palpable, visible, and explicitly articulated at the level of filmic direction.

Across all storylines, both novelistic and cinematic, runs a pervasive conflict: the struggle between coercive power and individual will. This opposition manifests itself in various historical and futuristic configurations: colonial domination in Ewing’s journal, the exploitation of artistic talent in Frobisher’s story, political and corporate conspiracies in “Half-Lives”, Cavendish’s involuntary ‘confinement’, totalitarian control in Sonmi’s world, and tribal hostilities in the far future. Mitchell demonstrates that while forms of power shift across temporal dimensions, its essence – deriving benefit through the subjugation of others – remains constant. Closely tied to this conflict is the recurring motif of “predation,” which operates as a fundamental driving force of history. Humanity is portrayed as a system of total consumption: the strong devour the weak; civilization consumes natural resources; corporations abuse human labour; empires absorb their colonies; and the future consumes the legacy of the past. Scholars emphasize that

nature in the novel is an autonomous mode of being, one whose perception cannot be forcibly adapted to a human “optics” without catastrophic consequences. Examples of ecological disaster appear in three of the six “Cloud Atlas” narratives (Дроздовський 2019: p. 164).

Despite this overarching tragic register, Mitchell – and following him the filmmakers – proposes a “humanistic alternative”: individual ethical actions possess the capacity to accumulate into historical transformation. Each character experiences a personal “threshold moment” – a passage from passivity to active resistance.

At the same time, the narrative places particular emphasis on the motif of art as a locus of resistance and preservation. Art is endowed with a special ontological status: Frobisher’s music becomes a metaphor for harmony emerging through chaos; textual artefacts – diary, letters, memoirs, interview, legend – constitute a “chain of memory”; and media (the film about Sonmi) becomes a catalyst for revolutionary consciousness. Mitchell underscores that art safeguards humanity and carries the idea of freedom across time.

Thus, the poetics of time/space in Mitchell’s “Cloud Atlas” emerges as a multidimensional fusion of ramified temporal planes: from linear chronology, from chronologically defined time (present or past) to eternal cyclicity, which paradoxically intersects with historical, flowing time; from retrospective memory to prophetic vision, that is from the past time of associations, retrospections and memories to the prognostic plane and continuum of philosophical reflections with its properties to change the flow of time, to act as a means of connecting generations, nations, historical eras and civilizations.

The study concludes that “Cloud Atlas” emerges as a multidimensional text in which genre hybridity, intertextuality, philosophical inquiry, and postmodern play with form converge. The novel represents human history as a dynamic network of interdependencies, in which every gesture, every utterance, and every text becomes part of a vast mosaic of being. Through this provocative “puzzle-book,” distinguished by its unique stylistic, narrative, and genre gradation of hybridized and metamorphosed forms – travelogue, life drama, confession, detective fiction, technothriller, cyberpunk, philosophical dystopia, post-apocalyptic tale – Mitchell transcends any fixed genre paradigm, while simultaneously establishing the foundations of a multidimensional macronovel. At the same time, Mitchell actively deploys intertextual strategies, engaging with the research traditions and stylistic registers of the classical maritime novel (Melville, Conrad); the modernist ironic sensibility (Musil, Hesse, Woolf); the narrative models of the 1970s

political thriller (Capote, le Carré); dystopian discourses (Huxley, Orwell); and contemporary mythopoetics or the “ontology of objects” (Robbe-Grillet). The result is a “mosaic textuality” that simultaneously parodies, playfully subverts and reinterprets literary tradition. Therefore, the novel and its film adaptation are viewed as artistic models of a networked reality, wherein spacetime operates not as a linear continuum but as a dynamic constellation of interwoven narratives, unified by the themes of freedom, moral responsibility, and the cyclical recurrence of civilizations.

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ЧАСОПРОСТОРОВА ПОЛІФОНІЯ МЕТАРОМАНУ ДЕВІДА МІТЧЕЛЛА «АТЛАС ХМАР» ТА ОДНОЙМЕННОЇ ЕКРАНІЗАЦІЇ

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Анотація. Розглянуто часопросторову поліфонію метароману Девіда Мітчелла «Атлас хмар» та її кінематографічне втілення в однойменній екренізації. Дослідження зосереджено на специфіці багаторівневої наративної структури роману, побудованого за принципом паліндрому, де шість історій, стилізованих під різні жанри та епохи, формують складну систему взаємних відсылань і причинно-наслідкових зв'язків. У такий спосіб текст постає своєрідним експериментом із жанровими та наративними структурами: роман у шести вкладених оповідях (п'ять незакінчених новел та одна завершена), починаючи із середини (шостої оповіді), отримує своє дзеркальне відображення або так званий ефект «відлуння», де кожна історія віддзеркалює попередню й провіщає наступну. Простежується, як просторово-часові модальності – від історичного минулого до постапокаліптичного майбутнього – поєднуються в єдину філософську мережу, де кожен акт вибору формує майбуття. Підкреслено роль концепту реїнкарнації, що реалізується як наскрізний символічний механізм: мотив «родимої плями-комети» презентує тягливість однієї душі в різних іпостасях, а ключовим етичним

імперативом постає ідея відповідальності за індивідуальний вибір. Особлива увага приділена музичному метасимволу – сексету «Атлас хмар», який функціонує як художня матриця, що відтворює фрагментарну, але структурно гармонійну архітектоніку роману. Інтермедіальність розглядається як базовий структурний принцип твору: романні наратори реалізовані через різні форми текстової презентації – щоденник, листи, рукопис, кінотекст, голограма, легенду – що створює ефект багаторівневої «постпам'яті» та забезпечує постійний рух між епохами. Аналізується мовна стилізація, яка передає дух кожної історичної доби – від архаїзованої англійської XIX століття до неологізованої техномови антиутопічного майбутнього. У компаративному ключі простежується розгортання цих самих ідей у кінематографічному вимірі. Режисери Тіквер і Вачовські, трансформуючи текстову композицію, застосовують принцип паралельного монтажу, що забезпечує одночасну динаміку шести сюжетних ліній. Підкреслено, що система візуальних рим – повторюваних деталей, мотивів, символів – посилює ідею реінкарнаційної спорідненості персонажів. Особлива увага зосереджена на феномені акторських «перевтілень», коли один актор виконує низку ролей у різних епохах, тим самим унаочнюючи метафору тягlostі душі та повторюваності моральних імпульсів. Наголошено, що фільм не лише адаптує, а й переосмислює романну архітектоніку, створюючи її кінематографічний аналог у вигляді «точкової мозаїки», де композицію формують чергування сегментів, об'єднаних музичним лейтмотивом та візуальними паралелями. Акцентовано, що музика стає повноправним персонажем екранизації, вона виконує й важливу сугестивну роль, формуючи певну «емоційну амплітуду» у сприйнятті подій та персонажів. Узагальнено, що «Хмарний атлас» постає як багатовимірний текст, у якому поєднуються різноважановість, інтертекстуальність, філософська проблематика та постмодерна гра з формою. Роман і його екранизація осмислюються як художні моделі мережевої реальності, де часопростір функціонує не як лінійний континуум, а як динамічна система взаємодіючих історій, об'єднаних ідеями свободи, моральної відповідальності та повторюваності цивілізаційних циклів.

Ключові слова: Девід Мітчелл; «Атлас хмар»; метароман; екранизація; паліндром; просторово-часова поліфонія; багатошаровий наратор; пост-пам'ять.

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