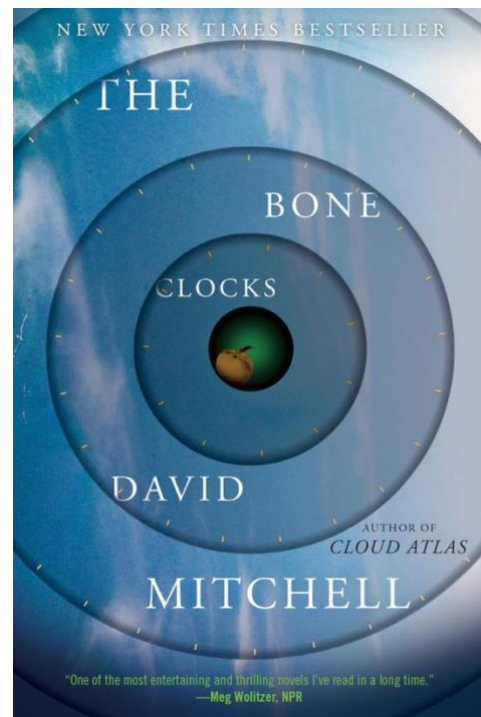
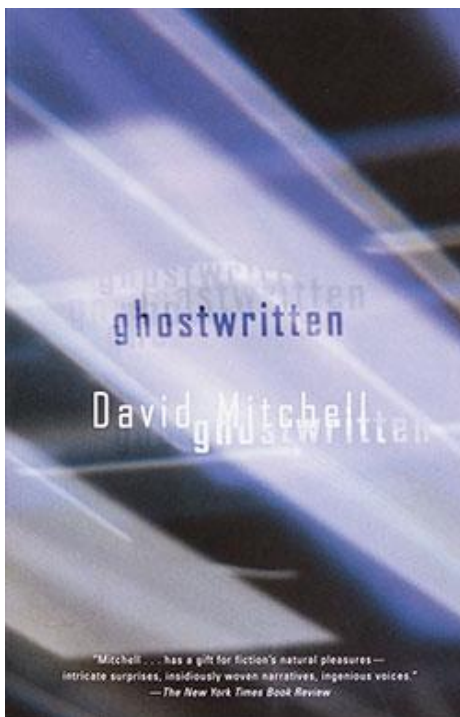


METAFICTION IN DAVID MITCHELL'S GHOSTWRITTEN AND THE BONE CLOCKS



Gaby Janssen
Radboud University Nijmegen
BA Werkstuk Engelse Letterkunde
Supervisor: Sophie van Os
15 juni 2022

ENGELSE TAAL EN CULTUUR

Teacher who will receive this document: Sophie van Os

Title of document: The Function of Metafiction in *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*

Name of course: BA Werkstuk Engelse Letterkunde

Date of submission: 15-06-2022

The work submitted here is the sole responsibility of the undersigned, who has neither committed plagiarism nor colluded in its production.

Signed

Name of student: Gaby Janssen

Student number: S1080684

Abstract

In this thesis I examine the literary merit of metafictional elements in David Mitchell's novels *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*. This thesis will answer the central question of what metafictional elements can be found in these two novels and what their function is. Moreover, the works are set a couple of years apart which allows this thesis to look at what metafictional strategies David Mitchell re-employs. Metafictional texts always redirect the attention of the reader to question the reality or fictionality of a story. I will argue that Mitchell uses metafiction to draw attention to a second layer in his text which makes the reader aware of the fact that they are reading a text and therefore question the reality of the story.

Keywords: David Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, *The Bone Clocks*, Narrative structure, Metafiction.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Introduction	4
Chapter 1. Theoretical framework.....	9
Chapter 2. Reliability of Ghostwritten	14
Chapter 3. Creation of the novel <i>The Bone Clocks</i>	24
Conclusion	31
Works Cited.....	33

Introduction

David Mitchell (1969) is a contemporary British writer. His first novel, *Ghostwritten*, was published in 1999 and won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. His latest book, *Utopia Avenue*, was published in 2020. In the meantime, he managed to get shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2001 for *Number9dream*, and in 2004 for *Cloud Atlas*. He secured a place on the longlist with *Black Swan Green* (2006), *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (2010) and *The Bone Clocks* (2014).¹ In 2007, he was even named one of the 100 most influential people in the world, by *TIME* magazine.²

Over the years Mitchell has become well known for his writing style. In an interview with Kim Skotte, at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Mitchell talks about his fascinations with words: “For me its words and their textures and nuances and the way they do fit together or do not fit together concordantly or discordantly ... I love all this stuff.”³ Mitchell also mentions that he does not define himself purely as a postmodern writer, as he finds that postmodern books are often more ingenious than loved, and he wants the stories he writes to be finished and fulfilling.⁴ Mitchell has a way with words and is courageous in his writing because he experiments with concepts that have not been tried by other authors, which results in books with distinct character.’

In his books, which with the exception of semi-autobiography *Black Swan Green*, are all fictional, Mitchell plays with different genres, including historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and magical realism, creating unique concepts. The intradimensional garden of *Slade House* is an example of magical realism, as the protagonist is offered magical food.

¹ “David Mitchell,” The Booker Prizes, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/david-mitchell>.

² “About David Mitchell,” David Mitchell, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www.davidmitchellbooks.com/about-david-mitchell/>.

³ Kim, Skotte. “David Mitchell Interview: Stories Have a Number of Beginnings.” *Louisiana Channel*, August 2014. <https://youtu.be/SbLNRxw3tZ8>

⁴ Skotte, “David Mitchell Interviews: Stories Have a Number of Beginnings.”

Moreover, his stories are set across space and time: *Cloud Atlas* has both narratives in the past and narratives in a dystopian future.

David Mitchell is skilled in writing novellas and therefore he is most known for his ability of writing short stories that connect gradually over the course of a book, or even multiple books. As Alex Clark has underlined, “Mitchell’s novels, from his 1999 debut *Ghostwritten*, through *Cloud Atlas* and *Black Swan Green* in the mid 2000s, and 2014’s semi-supernatural epic *The Bone Clocks*, are strongly preoccupied with the idea of convergence; that moment when apparent random coincidence is revealed to be something more like a heady brew of cosmic echo, historical recurrence, personal destiny and narrative fillip.”⁵ Mitchell has created a world with returning characters across various books. He refers to this as his “uber-novel” or “personal middle earth.”⁶ Though each book he writes can be seen as a new chapter of this work, with returning characters that bring with them histories and autobiographies, Mitchell ensures that each novel is also a standalone; they are not prequels or sequels but accessible to people who have never read a word of his before.⁷

A lot of academic interest in Mitchell’s work has been shown, especially in *Cloud Atlas*, which has been his most popular work.⁸ *Cloud Atlas* has even been adapted into a movie in 2012, and especially its theme of globalism has received a lot of critical attention by scholars such as Mezey, who has highlighted Mitchell’s refiguration of community and

⁵ Alex Clark, *David Mitchell: 'I think most writers have a deep-seated envy of musicians.'* The Guardian.com, July 3, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/03/david-mitchell-i-think-most-writers-have-a-deep-seated-envy-of-musicians>.

⁶ Mashable. “Discuss ‘The Bone clocks’ with Author David Mitchell | Mashable” *Youtube, Mashable*, 37:50. October 2, 2014. <https://youtu.be/9Hw0oloUxnA>

⁷ Alex Clark, *David Mitchell*.

⁸ Examples of studies into *Cloud Atlas* include: ‘Maria Beville, “Getting Past the ‘Post-’: History and Time in the Fiction of David Mitchell,” *[Sic] – a Journal of Literature, Culture and Literary Translation*, no. 1.6 (January 2015), <https://doi.org/10.15291/sic/1.6.lc.1>.’ and ‘Alexander Beaumont, “Cosmopolitanism without a World? David Mitchell’s *Cloud Atlas*,” *Open Library of Humanities*4, no. 2 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.349>.’

storytelling.⁹ Themes such as cosmopolitanism and post/meta-modernism have also been vastly explored by researchers such as Beaumont, who examines the notion of cosmopolitanism in *Cloud Atlas*, and Bentley who explores postmodern and metamodern elements in *Cloud atlas*.¹⁰ The reason why Mitchell's novels have been studied in light of postmodernism and metamodernism is because he often experiments with his narrative, making his texts very self-aware.

Additionally, Mitchell's novels are often layered. This can be seen in his first novel *Ghostwritten*, where Mitchell uses disparate complex storylines that will be resolved in a later chapter. In his novel *The Bone Clocks*, major and minor characters from Mitchell's self-designed universe come together. Mitchell has created textual worlds with characters that cross various historical periods and geographical locations that offer a basis of postmodern playfulness and ties these forms together. In recent years researchers have looked at the map laid out by Mitchell, that spans over multiple novels.¹¹ Characters and events distant from each other are placed on a timeline and echo one another across generations.¹² Most of these characters do not play a central part in the plot, however, they are present for the joy of the reader and to slightly alter the scene. Not only does Mitchell create a labyrinth that connects his multiple works, but his independent books are also set up in a way that narratives combine in linear and cyclical structures.¹³

While the way in which Mitchell's novels are layered, as well as the use of language in his novels, can thus be seen as elements of postmodernism or metamodernism, they can

⁹ Jason Mezey, "A Multitude Of Drops': Recursion And Globalization In David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*," *Modern Language Studie* 40, no. 2 (2011): pp. 10-37, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/23339629>.

¹⁰ Alexander Beaumont, "Cosmopolitanism without a World? David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*", *Open Library of Humanities* (2018), p.21. doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.349>, and Nick Bentley, "Trailing Postmodernism: David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*, Zadie Smith's *NW*, and the Metamodern," *English Studies* 99, no. 7 (March 2018): pp. 723-743, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838x.2018.1510611>.

¹¹ Paul A. Harris, "Introduction: David Mitchell in the Labyrinth of Time," *SubStance* 44, no. 1 (2015): pp. 3-7, <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2015.0012>.

¹² Harris, Introduction: David Mitchell in the Labyrinth of Time, 4.

¹³ Harris, Introduction: David Mitchell in the Labyrinth of Time, 3.

also be classified as metafictional elements. In this study, I am therefore going to answer the question: “How do metafictional elements function in David Mitchell’s *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*?” I will argue that David Mitchell uses metafictional elements to make the reader question the truth of the story they are reading, because of unreliable narrators. Moreover, I argue that Mitchell invites the reader into the process of creating a novel through metafiction. And finally, the connections that Mitchell creates through re-appearing characters within his various novels can be viewed as metafictional elements themselves.

I will be employing a comparative method to gain a better understanding of David Mitchell’s use of metafiction in *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*. I will be analyzing the novels specifically on the use of structure, language and returning characters. By using close readings as examples, I will examine in what ways metafiction is achieved and then determine their effect on the novel and the reader. Metafictionality includes the use of metatextuality and historiographic metafiction, this study will also contribute to the better understanding these two concepts and their boundaries. If we look at Mitchell’s novels as examples of metafictional texts, we can learn more about what metafiction entails and its function. Furthermore, Mitchell’s books are often looked at separately. However, in the process of creating his uber-novel, Mitchell’s novels have become connected. By comparing the novels, it will become more apparent in what ways Mitchell’s writing style has changed and what elements he still uses to achieve metafictionality. This results in a juxtaposition between David Mitchell’s debut novel and one of his later novels.

The first chapter will establish a theoretical framework for this thesis. I will define the notions metatextuality and narrative to use as a basis for my close readings. In each of the chapters that follow I zoom in on one of the novels. Chapter two will examine *Ghostwritten* and argues that Mitchell uses metafictional elements to make the reader question the truth of the story. In chapter three I discuss *The Bone Clocks*. In this chapter, I will examine what

strategies from Mitchell's debut novel are re-used and explore what new strategies have appeared since. In the conclusion I bring these works together, comparing and contrasting the different metafictional elements that are apparent in both these novels and stating their effect on the reader. In the conclusion the function of these metafictional elements will be highlighted.

Chapter 1. Theoretical framework

Because I will be analysing the two novels *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks* according to the notion of Metafiction, it is important to first understand the meaning of that concept.

Metafiction qualifies as a special kind of literary text that became characteristic of the postmodern era. Features such as self-referentiality, artistic expression, introspection, and self-consciousness became essential for postmodern aesthetics.¹⁴ Metafictional elements can often be found in postmodern literature. Postmodern authors, in their novels, stories, and poems, prefer to reject explicit meanings in favour of highlighting and celebrating the potential of numerous meanings, or a complete lack of meaning, inside a single creative work. They, essentially, write about writing in order to make the reader aware of its functionality and, occasionally, the author's presence. This technique is used by authors to allow for dramatic narrative shifts, implausible temporal jumps, or to distance themselves from the text.¹⁵

Moving on to metafiction itself, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* states that Metafiction is: “Fiction about fiction; or more especially a kind of fiction that openly comments on its own fictional status. The works need to have a significant degree of self-consciousness.”¹⁶ For example, authors can interrupt their narrative to comment on their own creation or offer insights. Patricia Waugh, in *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*, writes that “Metafiction is a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose

¹⁴ Elvira Vatazhko, “The Concepts of ‘Metatextuality’ and ‘Metafiction’ in Literary Criticism,” *Слово і Час*, no. 2 (2021): pp. 100-109, <https://doi.org/10.33608/0236-1477.2021.02.100-109>, 1.

¹⁵ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 105.

¹⁶ “Metafiction,” *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (4 ed.), accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www-oxfordreference-com.ru.idm.oclc.org/view/10.1093/acref/9780198715443.001.0001/acref-9780198715443-e-709?rskey=vwvtrQ&result=720>.

questions about the relationship between fiction and reality.”¹⁷ As has become apparent from Waugh’s work, metafictional works often have multiple layers of meaning. At the surface level, there is the text which appears as and conveys a story. However, under the surface there is the second layer which makes you aware of the fact that you are reading a text. There is a level of commentary in which the text knowingly comments on what it is doing, celebrating the power of creative imagination. The writing style and extremely self-conscious use of language is used to break free of old forms and pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. Building on Waugh’s influential study, Preeti Oza, additionally defines Metafiction as “an indirect way of live storytelling. It provides a direct commentary on the way a piece of art is created. It puts equal pressure of participation on the reader or the audience to be a conscious part of the entire process of creation of that art.”¹⁸ This suggests that intentionally making the audience aware of the way in which a work of fiction is created is essential for metafiction. The fictional work is highlighted when the reader gains insight in how it was created. In order to do so, metafictional texts include strategies such as unreliable or obtrusive narrators, intertextuality, genre mixing and multiple narrators, all of which can draw attention to narrative processes.¹⁹

Part of the bigger theoretical field of metafiction is metatextuality. Gerard Genette argues that metatextuality can be seen as a sub concept of transtextuality; the textual transcendence of the text.²⁰ Genette recognises five types of transtextual subconcepts in his book *Palimpsests*: intertext, paratext, metatext, hypertext and architext.²¹ As a Metafictional

¹⁷ Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 2.

¹⁸ Preeti Oza, “Explorations of Meta-Fictional Elements: Convergence of Narratives in Different Genre,” *Language, Literature and Beyond: The Postmodern Genre*, August 20AD, https://doi.org/https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343725062_Explorations_of_Meta-Fictional_Elements_Convergence_of_Narratives_in_Different_Genre, 1.

¹⁹ Amy Cross, “The (Im)Possibility of Objectivity: Narrating the Past in Young Adult Historiographic Metafiction,” *The ALAN Review* 42, no. 3 (2015): pp. 12-21, <https://doi.org/10.21061/alan.v42i3.a.2>, 3.

²⁰ Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), 1.

²¹ Genette, *Palimpsests*, 1.

work, a text that uses Metatextual elements makes the audience aware of the form they are looking at. Genette defined metatextuality as the critical relation that a text keeps by condemning, criticizing, or emulating itself or another one. Based on Genette's understanding of the concept I define metatextuality as follows: 'Metatextual texts are self-aware and go beyond straight forward entailing that the text has more than one layer, whether obvious or concealed, this allows the reader to find meaning outside of the text.'²² Prospectively, when referencing metatextuality or metatextual elements, this definition is what will be referred to.

Often metatextuality and metafictionality are used interchangeably. However, whereas all metatextual works are metafictional, not all metafictional works are metatextual.²³ For a work to be metafictional the author needs to go beyond commenting on the printed words and push readers to see that the book is constructed of established conventions.²⁴

Metafictional elements can be found in David Mitchell's novels. In his article about metafiction in *Cloud Atlas*, Kevin Brown argues that "Mitchell uses metafiction differently from those who have come before him, using such devices as a way of forcing the reader to consider the importance of narrative in one's life and the world in general."²⁵ As mentioned in the introduction, David Mitchell is often seen as a postmodernist writer, Brown argues that Mitchell's metafiction is similar to that of postmodernists in that "he wants to force the reader to question his or her reality, using the story-within-story technique to explore the next level outside the story, which is the reader's reality."²⁶ In *Cloud Atlas* Mitchell does this by knitting together the narratives of each of the succeeding narrators. By tying them together,

²² Genette, *Palimpsest*, 2.

²³ Michael Kaufmann, *Textual Bodies: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Print* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University, 1994), 15.

²⁴ Kaufmann, *Textual Bodies*, 15.

²⁵ Kevin Brown, "Finding Stories to Tell: Metafiction and Narrative in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*," *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 63, no. 1 (February 2016): pp. 77-90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20512856.2016.1152078>, 78.

²⁶ Brown, *Finding Stories to Tell*, 77.

the tales of the predecessors get merged into the tales of the narrator at hand.²⁷ Moreover, Mitchell uses different types of narrative to structure his story: a journal, letter, spoken word, memoir, interview, and novel. This is what Genette refers to when he suggests that narrative implies a study of relationships: on the one hand the link between a discourse and the events it narrates, and on the other hand a relationship between the same discourse and the act that produces.²⁸

In more contemporary narrative theory, the question of how the stories are conveyed is taken into consideration, as well as the influence of different kinds of aesthetic order, arrangement, and inflection.²⁹ Mitchell, unlike authors from the past, uses narrative techniques for metafictional purposes. He makes the reader question the importance of narrative because it reveals a new layer.³⁰ This concept will be explained more thoroughly in chapter two. It is the consequence of an attempt to connect real or imagined events and objects in meaningful ways. In other words, how do we order the words in a tale to make them meaningful, and what are the required relations? Story discourse is not constrained by natural principles; it can expand and contract, leap backward and forward, and organise its tale in any sequence it chooses, establishing its own set of rules in the process.³¹ Narratives do not necessarily alter the story directly, but they do change the characters and stress the value of narrative, giving them the motivation to tell their own tales.³²

In conclusion, metafiction concerns itself with the display of the process of the novel's creation. What typifies metafictional novels is the principle of layering. There is simultaneously a fiction and creation of that fiction in the text.³³ The author will consciously

²⁷ Peter Childs, "Food Chain: Predatory Links in the Novels of David Mitchell," *Études Anglaises* Vol. 68, no. 2 (August 2015): pp. 183-195, <https://doi.org/10.3917/etan.682.0183>, 187.

²⁸ Genette, *Palimpsests*, 2.

²⁹ Kent Puckett, *Narrative Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2.

³⁰ Brown, *Finding Stories to Tell*, 81.

³¹ Puckett, *Narrative Theory*, 2.

³² Brown, *Finding Stories to Tell*, 80.

³³ Waugh, *Metafiction*, 6.

draw attention to the text, inviting the reader to the thoughts and intellectual processes that went into creating the text, and the uses and purposes of the creation of novels. It makes the reader question what to expect from texts and alters the way in which they perceive the novel, drawing attention to the status of the work as an artefact. Finally, metafictional elements make the reader question the relationship between fiction and reality. The author can include indications or references to the book's fictionality, such as using narrative techniques to create uncertainty in the fabric of reality inside the story or establishing fictionality within fictionality. In this thesis, the elements of narrative, self-reflectiveness, and consciously drawing attention to the text are most relevant as they reveal the second layer of meaning in Mitchell's texts.

Chapter 2. Reliability of Ghostwritten

In this chapter I will be analyzing metafictional elements in the novel *Ghostwritten*. First, I will discuss the structure of the novel. I will argue that the novel uses circularity to achieve metafiction. Then I will move on to the reliability of the narrative. As discussed in the theoretical framework, Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* has often been characterized as postmodern because he "forces the reader to question his or her reality by using a story-within-story technique."³⁴ We can uncover similar themes in *Ghostwritten*, which make the reader question the truth of the story. Additionally I will examine the use of motifs. I argue that motifs are used to create layers to the story that start a debate of meaning. Finally, I touch upon historiographic metafiction. I examine how genuine events are fictionalised by contrasting real- and fake events. I argue that by use of true historical events, fake events in this novel become real, because they are set in the same context.

Ghostwritten can be seen as a collection of short novellas, all with their own protagonist, which connect to each other through moments of apparent coincidence. The novel touches upon different eras, countries, and genres. All the chapters are named after the different places in which the narrative is set, from Japan to Russia to England. Often characters return in the other chapters, or their actions influence the events in the chapter at hand.

The narrator of the first and final chapter is Quasar, a doomsday cultist who has committed a terrorist attack on a subway in Tokyo. By opening and closing the novel with the same protagonist, Mitchell creates a circular structure. This circular structure can also be observed in the novel's opening and closing lines, which read: "Who was blowing on the nape of my neck?"³⁵ Whereas, at first glance, this may seem like an arbitrary opening line, a repetition

³⁴ Brown, *Finding Stories to Tell*, 77.

³⁵ David Mitchell, *Ghostwritten* (London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), 3.

can be observed when we look at the final lines of the book: “Who is blowing on the nape of my neck? I swing around – nothing but the back of the train, accelerating into the darkness.”³⁶ After reading the final line, the opening line suddenly falls into place. This repetition of phrases to create a loop is seen again in *London* where Alfred Kopf, a retired wartime spy, tells Marco, who is ghostwriting his memoir, about the time he encountered himself on the street.³⁷ An encounter he would have missed if a sudden gust of wind had not blown the man’s hat off. Alfred explains how he was able to chase the man until he loses him when his own hat blows off. This is telling because the moment the reader encounters the repeated phrase they are pushed back to the start of the paragraph. These events, namely Alfred’s spotting of this man and Alfred losing his own hat in the same manner that the man did, are only two pages apart and Alfred makes clear statements about how the actions of the man he sees are just like what he would have done himself “He bent down to pick [the hat] up, just as I would have done.”³⁸ It is unclear if what Alfred sees is his past- or future self or if he sees himself from a different timeline. The reader is invited into the process of creation and compelled to make up their own mind about the meaning. Therefore I argue that the loop that is created by the repetition of phrases, works as a metafictional element because every time a loop occurs the reader is made aware of the second layer to the text and the status of the book as a work of art.

Moving back to the final chapter of the book, the circular structure is not only created by use of specific words; the events in *Underground*, the final chapter of the book, in fact, occur before the narrative of the first chapter. The chapter gives the reader some background information on realities of the present. For example, Quasar struggles with filling out forms

³⁶ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 436.

³⁷ In this thesis, the names of chapters that correspond to specific geographical locations (e.g. London, Okinawa, etc.) have been italicised to overcome confusion as to whether I’m referring to a chapter or a specific setting within the novel.

³⁸ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 285.

because his hand has been bandaged in *Okinawa*. When asked about the cause, Quasar explains that ‘a door closed on it’. In *Underground* the reader learns that not just any door closed on it. Quasar hurt his hand trying to escape the metro after he released a gas attack. Additionally, and even more importantly, in this final chapter Quasar starts to hallucinate. In his hallucinations, he sees glimpses of events and characters from the other chapters. The “saxophone from long ago circles in the air, so sad it could barely leave the ground”³⁹ is a reference to *Tokyo* and a “vinyl shopping bag falls down from a rack. It bulges with a crayon-coloured web that a computer might have doodled”⁴⁰ alludes to the London underground and therefore *London*. At first glance this merely connects him to all the rest of the narratives, as up to this point his chapters did not feel related to any of the others. However, when further analysing the passage, we see something more. Quasar’s actions are part of ‘His Serendipity’s Crusade’ - a brainwashing cult of which he is part.

My little brother, we both know that it was not luck which brought you here, love brought you to us.’ Then he kissed me, and I kissed the mouth of eternal life. ‘Who knows,’ said my Master, ‘if you continue your alpha self-amplification as rapidly as the minister of Education reports, you may be entrusted with a very special mission in the future...’ My heart leap still higher. I had been discussed! Only a novice, but I had been discussed.⁴¹

Quasar is unable to think for himself and simply follows orders he has received. When Quasar starts hallucinating the reader is set out to question what is real and what is not. If the narrator has been brainwashed, then we cannot trust his narrative. Quasar even says: “What is real and what is not?”⁴² Therefore I argue that the events from the novel, that Quasar

³⁹ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 434.

⁴⁰ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 435.

⁴¹ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 10.

⁴² Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 436.

hallucinates in the final chapter, make the reader question if what happened in the other chapters even happened at all. This shows that Mitchell uses the metafictional strategy of creating layers to make the reader question the believability of the story. Therefore, the reader is forced to question fiction and reality.

Comparing the effect of the hallucinations to the effect of the story that Alfred tells the reader, we observe a parallel. Marco does not take Alfred's story of the ghost sighting seriously, he refers to Alfred as nutty and a mad man, and does not wish to include it in a serious autobiography. Marco later discusses whether this story belongs in an autobiography with 66-year old publisher Tim Cavendish, who says: "we're all ghostwriters, my boy. And it's not just our memories. Our actions, too. We all think we're in control of our own lives, but really, they're pre-ghostwritten by forces around us."⁴³ This lets reader once again question the trustworthiness of the story at hand, and highlights the question of fiction versus reality. What Alfred perceived as the truth seems like a ghost story to Marco, however, if our stories are pre-ghostwritten for us then there is no reason to trust Marco's story either. The conversation slowly turns into a more philosophical debate, which the reader can metaphorically join in on. The reader is invited into the process of creating a novel. In *Holy Mountain* Mitchell even directly points this out to the reader when his narrator, the tea shack lady, thinks: "I added 'writers' to my list of people not to trust. They make everything up."⁴⁴ This immediately makes the reader question the narrative, if indeed writers make everything up, then can we trust the narrative? However, only a couple of lines further along the lady also notes that "it's not the truth that much matters," giving the reader once again substance for consideration.⁴⁵ They can decide for themselves, if they find it important that the narrator is reliable. Metafictional texts always redirect the attention of the reader to question the

⁴³ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 296.

⁴⁴ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 150.

⁴⁵ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 151.

reality or fictionality of our existence. By setting up a structure that pushes such ideas onto the reader, Mitchell moves away from the idea of questioning reality, to the power of stories themselves by inviting the reader into his mind as an author.⁴⁶

In *Ghostwritten*, what is known as the butterfly effect is what weaves together the story. The effect entails that: “Small, local inputs of information and coincidences at the front produce global consequences for the entire system at the end.”⁴⁷ The stories are arranged in such a way that a small event in the narrative story has a bigger impact on the larger narrative. In *Okinawa*, Quasar makes a call to a number he has been given and says nothing, as he was ordered to do by his cult. Then in *Tokyo* Satoru, the narrator of this chapter and an employee of a record store receives that call, right when he was about to close the store for the night. Although he does not think about the strange call for long, it causes him to stay in his store longer, resulting in his meeting with Tomoyo, with whom Satoru falls in love. They then influence Neal’s storyline in *Hong Kong* and so on. We can regard this butterfly effect as an early recognition of the work's intricacy, indicating a deeper chaotic structure. A chaotic element finds that the metafictional language is subverting his notions about the linear link between text and the known environment.⁴⁸ By using this cause-and-effect technique, Mitchell once again makes the reader question their own place in the universe.

As mentioned before, metafiction can be achieved when the author uses specific language to draw the reader’s attention to the text. The title of the novel, *Ghostwritten* is a passive voice. In English syntax we use a passive structure when the person or object that

⁴⁶ Brown, *Finding Stories to Tell*, 81.

⁴⁷ Nancy Katherine Hayles, *Chaos and Order: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 71.

⁴⁸ Cory A. Reed, “Chaotic Quijote: Complexity, Nonlinearity, and Perspectivism,” *Hispania* 77, no. 4 (1994): p. 738, <https://doi.org/10.2307/345699>.

performs the action is either unimportant or unknown. Emphasis is placed on a person or object that experiences the action, instead. Taking this grammatical structure into account, “the form of ‘ghostwritten draws attention away from the subject that does the writing. This underscores the semantics of the word and puts the emphasis on the result” this would then suggest that the narrators in these short stories have no significant value.⁴⁹ They are in control; however, we do not know who they are, nor does it matter. “There is no central, all-powerful intelligence masterminding the workings of these forces.”⁵⁰ By focussing on the result of the writing, the writer itself moves to the background creating a ghostly voice.

Dissecting the word ‘Ghostwritten’ further, another important theme in the novel can be found. Ghosts play a central role in the novel. Besides the ghostly voice of the narrator, multiple “actual” ghosts make appearances in various chapters. Alfred’s encounter with himself, even though he would not refer to what he saw as a ghost, can be seen as an example of this. Furthermore, in *Hong Kong* Neil Brose, an expatriate lawyer, and his girlfriend Katy are living in an apartment haunted by the ghost of a little girl:

Unless you’ve lived with a ghost, you can’t know the truth of it. You assume that morning, noon and night, you’re walking around obsessed, fearful and waiting for the exorcist to call. It’s not really like that. It’s more like living with a very particular cat. For the last few months I’ve been living with three women. One was a ghost, who is now a woman. One was a woman who is now a ghost. One is a ghost, and will always be. But this isn’t a ghost story: the ghost is in the background, where she has to be. If she was in the foreground she’d be a person.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Pieter Vermeulen, “David Mitchell’s Ghostwritten and the ‘Novel of Globalization’: Biopower and The Secret History of the Novel,” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 53, no. 4 (July 2012): pp. 381-392, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.2010.511318>, 382.

⁵⁰ Vermeulen, David Mitchell’s Ghostwritten and the ‘Novel of Globalization, 382.

⁵¹ Mitchell *Ghostwritten*, 285.

The night of the ghost's first appearance is the night Katy comes home and tells Neal she wants to try and have a baby. It is ironic that while they speculate that the girl "is the child of a *gwai lo* man and a maid. The man would have left, and the maid flung the girl off one of these buildings,"⁵² Neal is having an affair with his maid and Neal and Katy are unable to get pregnant. The ghosts draw a parallel between speculation and reality. Mitchell celebrates the power of imagination in creating these ghostly characters because they have the power to connect the story.

Another strategy that Mitchell uses is that of motifs. In *Ghostwritten* a word that became such a motif is 'a quasar'. A quasar is "an astronomical object of very high luminosity found in the centres of some galaxies and powered by gas spiralling at high velocity into an extremely large black hole. The brightest quasars can outshine all of the stars in the galaxies in which they reside, which makes them visible even at distances of billions of light-years. Quasars are among the most distant and luminous objects known."⁵³ When Satoru in *Tokyo* first meets Tomoyo, who he describes as completely different from all the other girls "she pulsed, invisibly, like a quasar"⁵⁴ it is then seemingly coincidental that he later receives a phone call from the terrorist we know as Quasar.⁵⁵ This small coincidence has big consequences because this is what sets the butterfly effect into motion. Moreover, as quasars are one of the most powerful energies in the universe, it is fitting that the terrorist who held in his hands the power to poison many people in the metro is given this nickname.

The repetition of words or phrases is quite common in *Ghostwritten*. A Camphor tree is mentioned in almost every chapter (except for *Tokyo* and *Underground*). Though the tree has a variable global reputation, it has long cultural and historical ties with Japan. The species

⁵² Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 151.

⁵³ "Quasar," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/science/quasar>.

⁵⁴ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 41.

⁵⁵ Patrick O'donnel. *A Temporary Future: The Fiction of David Mitchel*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015, 26.

is one of the country's oldest and biggest living trees, with many being protected by the government. The camphor was often used to treat disease as it contains therapeutic characteristics that have long connected the tree to notions of health and safety. Moreover, the trees are spiritually significant as they could be home to tree spirits that are associated with those same notions of healing and protection, making the tree sacred. However, grave misfortune is said to follow those who cut down these trees.⁵⁶ Mitchell's referencing to this spiritual tree is no coincidence. For example, in *Hong Kong* Neal mentions the tree on his way up the mountain "I saw Buddha's head above the camphor trees, almost close enough to touch."⁵⁷ It is on this mountain that he will eventually die while considering the meaning of love and life, which he had thought to be unimportant during the rest of his life.

If we were to view Quasar as the antagonist of the story, we could draw a parallel between his attack on the subway and the harming of the camphor tree. When he encounters the tree, this would then foreshadow grave misfortune on this path to come. Finally, the tree is mentioned in all but two chapters. I argue that by leaving the reference of the tree out of these narratives a new debate can be started. The reader is made to speculate as to why this was done. Mitchell carefully placed these references in the different narratives; therefore he must have also deliberately left them out of the other two. Mitchell uses this metafictional element to make the reader part of the debate.

The final element that I want to draw attention to is that of historiographic metafiction. Although the circular structure of *Ghostwritten* may suggest that the rest of the contents are chronological, this is in fact not the case. Several chapters are set in the past or include flashbacks, and some span over multiple decades. During these decades, references to

⁵⁶ Tokyonaturalist, "Cinnamomum Camphora: Camphor Tree," Tokyo Naturalist, June 2, 2021, <https://www.tokyonaturalist.com/post/cinnamomum-camphora-camphor-tree>.

⁵⁷ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 104.

actual historic events are made. An important event in *Ghostwritten* is the Tokyo subway attack.

The Tokyo subway attack of 1995 coordinated multiple-point terrorist attack in Tokyo on March 20, 1995, in which the odourless, colourless, and highly toxic nerve gas sarin was released in the city's subway system. The attack resulted in the deaths of 12 (later increased to 13) people, and some 5,500 others were injured to varying degrees. Members of the Japan-based new religious movement AUM Shinrikyo (since 2000 called Aleph) were soon identified as the perpetrators of the attack.⁵⁸

By referencing real events the reader is made aware that, similar to the way novels are crafted, the past is also constructed through narrative.⁵⁹ This strategy is used to reveal to the reader that reality is filtered through storytelling. Using historical events in literature has an influence on the reader. Linda Hutcheon defined term historiographic metafiction as: fiction that details history.⁶⁰ Both fiction and history can be identified as linguistic constructs. This reveals that storytellers may silence and exclude events, and, by connecting history to fiction, argues that historians have done the same.⁶¹ A novel with elements of historiographic metafiction forces the reader to question their interpretations of history and fiction.⁶² Mitchell uses historiographic metafiction by placing his narrative within what the reader perceives as 'real' history. By juxtaposing these two images, genuine events are fictionalised, and fictitious occurrences may look real in this setting. *Ghostwritten* gives the reader insight in what could have happened preceding this brutal attack, but we know that what is on the page

⁵⁸ "Tokyo Subway Attack of 1995," Encyclopædia Britannica (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc.), accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Tokyo-subway-attack-of-1995>.

⁵⁹ Cross, "The (Im)Possibility of Objectivity," 3.

⁶⁰ Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*, 105.

⁶¹ A poetics of postmodernism, 107

⁶² A poetics of postmodernism, 105.

is fiction. In this narrative, metafictional strategies allow readers to question the notion of a stable identity and construct positions from which they can critique a text while reading it.⁶³

To conclude this chapter, in *Ghostwritten* metafiction is achieved through the structuring of the novel. Mitchell has created a circularity that draws the attention of the reader and makes them aware of the fact that they are reading a text. Additionally Mitchell invites the reader to the process of creation of the novel. By employing these strategies, Mitchell creates layers in the story that force the reader to look beyond the surface and question the truth of the story, highlighting the contrast between fiction and reality. When reading a novel, even though a reader is aware of the fact that they are reading fiction, the narrative often feels real and meaningful. When the reader is made to question that reality they are forced to think about why stories matter. As mentioned, *Ghostwritten* was Mitchell's debut novel. The strategies that he uses in this novel can also be found in Mitchell's later novels, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

⁶³ Cross, "The (Im)Possibility of Objectivity," 3.

Chapter 3. Creation of the novel *The Bone Clocks*

In this chapter I will be analysing the metafictional elements in *The Bone Clocks*. I will examine what strategies from *Ghostwritten* Mitchell re-uses, and in what ways his approach has changed. In this chapter I argue that Mitchell uses metafictional elements to draw the readers attention to the creation of the novel and therefore the reality of the story. Moreover, he uses names to create layers in the story and make the reader question their own truth. In addition to these points I will discuss the use of reappearing characters to counter the untrustworthiness of the narrative.

The Bone Clocks is a story told in six parts, with an intricate plot which revolves around the life of Holly Sikes who unknowingly becomes an important asset in a war between two groups of immortal beings. Each chapter is a step in time of about a decade, starting with the first chapter in the year 1984 and ending with a final chapter in 2043. Additionally, each chapter is narrated by a different character as David Mitchell often does in his novels. With each narrative the story is unfolded more, geographically, temporally, and in person. Though most of the story is told in the present tense, for the reader the narrative moves from the past in which Holly is a teenage runaway, to the future in which she is an old lady. Holly starts of as a chess piece in a war that exceeds beyond the physical world into a more spiritual realm. She later becomes more essential to the plot as we learn more about her and her psychic abilities. The contrast between everyday settings and fantastical or out of our world narratives challenges the conventions of genre. The naturalness and truth of realism is contrasted to the imaginary space.

In similarity to *Ghostwritten*, *The Bone Clocks*'s first and final chapter are narrated by the same person and a connection is formed between the first and final lines. The book opens with Holly looking out the window "I fling open my bedroom curtains, and there's the

thirsty sky and the wide river full of ships and boats and stuff...⁶⁴ In the final lines Holly is waving her grandchildren goodbye as they embark on a journey “for one voyage to begin, another voyage must come to an end, sort of.”⁶⁵ Both lines have references to boats which are often used to symbolise a journey. Additionally, both chapters account for three days in the life of Holly creating the same circular structure used in *Ghostwritten*.

In *Crispin Hershey's Lonely Planet – 2015* we meet Crispin Hershey, an author with a habit of referring to himself in the third person, living off his early success of his novel ‘Desiccated Embryos.’ Although he is a very unlikable character, he makes some interesting remarks about authors and writing:

I assert that the author of Njal’s Saga deploys the very same narrative tricks used later by Dante an Chauser, Shakeseare and Molière, Victor Hugo and Dickens, Halldór Laxness and Virginia Woolf, Alice Munro and Ewan Rice. What tricks? Psychological complexity, character development, the killer line to end a scene, villains blotched with virtue, heroic characters speckled with villainy, foreshadow and flashback, artful misdirection.⁶⁶

The reader is made aware of narrative tricks that are often used by authors, allowing them to speculate if these tricks are present in this novel as well. ‘The villain blotched with virtue’ for example, could refer to Hugo Lamb. He is one of the antagonists of the novel who has a change of heart in the climax, he allows Holly to escape and, in doing so, gives up his immortality. This narrative trick, of making the reader aware that they are reading a novel by referring to it in the text, is something that we saw before in *Ghostwritten* when Alfred tells his ghost story so that Marco can write it down in his autobiography.

⁶⁴ David, Mitchell. *The Bone Clocks*. Londen, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014, 3.

⁶⁵ Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*, 595.

⁶⁶ Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*, 362.

I have never seen a ghost, Marco. ... Yet one extraordinary thing occurred one summer evening in 1947. I want you to include it in my autobiography ... just write it like I tell it, so the reader can make up his own mind. The ghost comes in the first paragraph.⁶⁷

The reader is pulled into the process of creation and the story gets another layer. Often readers speculate what the author meant by certain passages. The audience will debate the meaning of the lines and their effect. However, this paragraph shows that Alfred wants the reader to make up their own mind about the story at hand. He tells the story as he experienced it, yet he leaves the interpretation of the passage to the reader. This is a metafictional element because what appears to be a text on the surface level has a second layer under the surface that the audience needs to find themselves, and this quote reveals that strategy to the reader. In addition, the reader is made aware that what they are reading is fiction when Alfred alludes to how this story will be build up. This is something that we also see in *The Bone Clocks* when Hershey addresses the reader directly or makes cynical comments on writing styles of other authors, drawing attention to the story being a novel. "A book can't be a half fantasy any more than a woman can be half pregnant."⁶⁸ Not much time after making this comment Hershey encounters one of the anchorites looking for Holly. The torture Hershey endures, he describes as being pulled off his feet by a giant's fist. A giant, of course, is a well-known fantastical being. Turning back to his comment about half fantasies; if a novel can't be a half fantasy, then, because of the paranormal events this novel must be a full fantasy. Every comment comes back to what is real and what is not. *The Bone Clocks* forces the reader to question the truth of the narrative in the same manner that *Ghostwritten* does.

In contrast to the previous point, in *The Bone Clocks* something else is added to the narrative. What, at first, may come across as a fun incident turns out to be a deliberate

⁶⁷ Mitchell, *Ghostwritten*, 285

⁶⁸ Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*, 349.

strategy: the reappearance of characters throughout the different novels. This is something that Mitchell is famous for, and that many readers look for when diving further into the ‘ubernovel.’ In *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*, there are three such characters; ‘The Texan’ with two men in black, Dwight Silverwind, and Mo Muntervary and her family. In the entirety of *The Bone Clocks* there are 12 returning characters from Mitchell’s books. They appear at different times in both novels, not being essential to the plotline, however they often slightly alter the scene. These characters also bring with them another layer. David Mitchell often uses metafictional elements to make the reader question the truth or reality of the story they are reading. By using metafictional elements, as mentioned in this thesis, Mitchell invites the reader to question the relationship between fiction and reality. Most of the time this results in the reader becoming part of the bigger debate and as I have argued in this thesis to question the narrative. By having returning characters, I argue that Mitchell uses metafiction to the opposite result. When the reader encounters a character that they know from another book, that character brings with them a history. The reader has previously formed a connection with this character which makes them real in the mind of the reader. Incorporating a character that is real or believable, in the novel at hand, has an effect. It gives the reader a handhold for the truth of the story. Because the character was real in the first book, when they appear in the second book, this narrative becomes instantly believable. Therefore, there is no question that what we are reading is the truth. In *The Bone Clocks* there are many fantastical elements which would make the reader view the story as fiction. However, now that real characters have appeared, the reader will have to re-evaluate their judgement.

Coming back to Hershey’s narrative, Mitchell “parodies the cult of authorial celebrity”, a position which he and Hershey share.⁶⁹ Both Mitchell and Hershey are

⁶⁹ O’donnel, *A Temporary Future*, 171.

successful writers bring out new novels. Hershey's latest novel, *Echo Must Die*, is criticised by one of his close friends who is also a critic.

One: Hershey is so bent on avoiding cliché that each sentence is as tortured as an American whistleblower. Two: the fantasy sub-plot clashes so violently with the book's State of the World pretensions, I cannot bear to look. Three: what surer sign is there that the creative aquifers are dry than a writer creating a writer-character?⁷⁰

With these words David Mitchell, not even subtly, criticises his own novel and writing style, almost making Hershey a caricature of him, David Mitchell, self. The reader is forced to evaluate their view of this novel because the third point of critique on Hershey's novel, the presence of a writer character, is equally true for *'The Bone Clocks'* itself. Therefore, the reader is made to speculate if the novel is filled with tortured sentences in an effort to avoid cliché's and/or a clash with the fantasy sub-plot.

A couple of lines later, Hershey counters the comments on his novel with "in publishing it's easier to change your body than it is to switch genre."⁷¹ What is interesting about this counterreaction is that ironically, in this novel it is quite easy to change bodies for the horologists. All they have to do is die and they are reborn in another host. Therefore I argue that Mitchell is using these lines to allude to his own status as a writer. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, David Mitchell's novels have often been put in the postmodern genre even when he does not necessarily identify himself that way, he cannot get rid of the label. To break free of this Mitchell employs strategies such as the challenging of expectations. For example, a lot of what we might refer to as major events in the life of the main protagonist happen off page. Events such as the aftermath of Jacko's disappearance,

⁷⁰ Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*, 282.

⁷¹ Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*, 282.

Holly's marriage with Ed Bruebeck, the death of Ed, her battle with cancer, and finally the death of Holly's daughter Aiofe as a result of climate change, are subjects that we would expect to find in a novel. Mitchell breaks those expectations by only referring to them when necessary and making the reader aware of the process of creation of the novel instead.

In *Ghostwritten*, certain vocabulary is used to create motifs that serve as metafictional elements. I argue that in *The Bone Clocks* this is achieved through the deliberate naming of people or importance of names to the story. Names are important in *The Bone Clocks*. For example, Marinus' saying of Esther Little's true name brings her back to life after having lived in Holly's body for many years. When the reader becomes aware of the importance of names, they start seeing interesting connections. The character Hugo Lamb is an example of this. The last name Lamb carries a Christlike innocence as a lamb is often associated with Jesus as the lamb of God, or sacrifice. However, Hugo is one of the least likeable and most selfish characters in this novel. His character even achieves immortality for the time being though unfortunate for him, at the end, his deal expires. Therefore, I argue that his name in a way foreshadowed his fate. Furthermore, it is ironic that Hugo is the one to use the phrase 'the bone clocks' and therefore explaining the book's title. The phrase is used to refer to the life of humans as they are "They [the anchorites] cured me of a terrible wasting disease called mortality. There's a lot of it about. The young hold out for a time, but eventually even the hardest patient gets reduced to a desiccated embryo, a Strudlebug ... a veined, scrawny, dribbling ... bone clock, whose face betrays how very, very little time they have left."⁷² Hugo, and the other anchorites, view human life as weak and limited. I argue that this makes the reader question their own mortality as they would be so called 'bone clocks' themselves.

⁷² Mitchell, *The Bone Clocks*, 501.

This time the reader is forced to think about their own place in the universe when the debate on being in control of one's own life starts.

To conclude this chapter, in *The Bone Clocks* we see a recurrence of metafictional strategies used in *Ghostwritten*. David Mitchell again uses specific language, in this novel, names, to make the reader aware of the fact that they are reading a book and loops to create a circular structure. He challenges the contrast between everyday settings and fantastical or out of our world narratives by pointing the readers attention to the creation of the novel and its status as a half-fantasy and makes them question the believability of such a work. This creates layers in the novel that function as metafictional elements. Finally, since his debut novel Mitchell has added the use of recurring characters to his strategies. If the reader has encountered them in one of Mitchell's other books, they bring with them a history or a reality. Because the other novel has brought them to life the reader regards their story as true and therefore brings a trustworthiness to the novel at hand.

Conclusion

In this thesis I examined the ways in which metafiction is achieved in David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* and *The Bone Clocks*. Postmodern authors often use metafictional strategies in their works to reject explicit meanings and make the reader aware of the works' fictionality. Mitchell uses various metafictional strategies to pull away from this label. In his debut novel he uses aspects such as structuring his novel in a circular way and creating characters that allude to their own sanity to make the reader question the trustworthiness of his narrative. The reader is invited into the debate of fiction versus reality. Additionally, in *Ghostwritten* Mitchell uses motifs to give deeper meaning to the text. As he often mentions in his interviews, Mitchell is very aware of his use of language and the effect thereof, by using recurring phrases the reader is invited into the process of creation and made to further question the meaning of the text. That Mitchell is skilled with the construction of words is additionally apparent in *The Bone Clocks* through the use of names. Whereas the motifs in *Ghostwritten* serve as metafictional elements that lead to a second layer in the text, the use of names fosters the same result in *The Bone Clocks*. The presence of these layers forces the reader to look below the surface level of the text and into the creation of the work. It makes the reader question the reality of the story.

After writing his debut Mitchell enlarged the use of recurring characters throughout one novel to a bigger scale. When reading Mitchell's works, one can always look for characters from different novels to make an appearance. These characters do not just exist merely for the entertainment of the reader, they also add a new layer to the story. Because Mitchell often uses metafiction to make the reader question the reliability of his narratives, we could lose faith in the truth of these stories. By adding recurring characters, the opposite is achieved. When a reader encounters a character that they perceived as real in another novel, that character brings with them a history that makes the narrative believable and because

they can be trusted the narrative at hand becomes believable. The novel regains a sense of truth through these characters.

Finally, Mitchell uses metafictionality to celebrate the power of imagination and to draw attention to the status of the book as a work of fiction. By addressing the reader directly or making his characters point out narrative tricks, as is done by the tea shack lady in *Ghostwritten* and Crispin Hershey in *The Bone Clocks*, the reader starts to look for these features in the text and think about their meaning. Using metafictional elements always comes back to making the reader think about the fictional status of a text. The text has a self-conscious layer and Mitchell's works have many of these layers for the reader to look for.

Works Cited

“About David Mitchell,” David Mitchell, accessed June 11, 2022, <https://www.davidmitchellbooks.com/about-david-mitchell/>.

Beaumont, Alexander. “Cosmopolitanism without a World? David Mitchell’s Cloud Atlas.” *Open Library of Humanities* 4, no. 2 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.349>.

Bentley, Nick. “Trailing Postmodernism: David Mitchell’s Cloud Atlas, Zadie Smith’s NW, and the Metamodern,” *English Studies* 99, no. 7 (March 2018): pp. 723-743, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0013838x.2018.1510611>.

Beville, Maria. “Getting Past the ‘Post-’: History and Time in the Fiction of David Mitchell.” *[sic] - a journal of literature, culture and literary translation*, no. 1.6 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.15291/sic/1.6.lc.1>.

Brown, Kevin. “Finding Stories to Tell: Metafiction and Narrative in David Mitchell's Cloud Atlas .” *Journal of Language, Literature and Culture* 63, no. 1 (2016): 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20512856.2016.1152078>.

Childs, Peter. “Food Chain: Predatory Links in the Novels of David Mitchell.” *Études anglaises* Vol. 68, no. 2 (2015): 183–95. <https://doi.org/10.3917/etan.682.0183>.

Clark, Alex. David Mitchell: 'I think most writers have a deep-seated envy of musicians'. Other. *The Guardian.com*, July 3, 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/03/david-mitchell-i-think-most-writers-have-a-deep-seated-envy-of-musicians>.

Cross, Amy. “The (Im)Possibility of Objectivity: Narrating the Past in Young Adult Historiographic Metafiction.” *The ALAN Review* 42, no. 3 (2015): 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.21061/alan.v42i3.a.2>.

“David Mitchell.” The Booker Prizes. Accessed June 11, 2022. <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/david-mitchell>.

Hayles, Nancy Katherine. *Chaos and Order: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999.

Harris, Paul A. “Introduction: David Mitchell in the Labyrinth of Time.” *SubStance* 44, no. 1 (2015): 3–7. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2015.0012>.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Kaufmann, Michael. *Textual Bodies: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Print*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University, 1994.

Mashable. “Discuss ‘The Bone clocks’ with Author David Mitchell | Mashable” *Youtube, Mashable*, 37:50. October 2, 2014. <https://youtu.be/9Hw0oloUxnA>

- Mezey, Jason. "A Multitude of Drops: Recursion and Globalization in David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*," *Modern Language Studies* 40, no. 2 (2011): pp. 10-37, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/23339629>.
- Mitchell, David. *Ghostwritten*. London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1999.
- Mitchell, David. *The Bone Clocks*. London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 2014.
- O'Donnell, Patrick. *A Temporary Future: The Fiction of David Mitchell*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- Oza, Preeti. "Explorations of Meta-Fictional Elements: Convergence of Narratives in Different Genre." *Language, Literature and Beyond: The Postmodern Genre*, August 2n.d.. https://doi.org/https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343725062_Explorations_of_Meta-Fictional_Elements_Convergence_of_Narratives_in_Different_Genre.
- Puckett, Kent. *Narrative Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- "Quasar." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed June 11, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/science/quasar>.
- Reed, Cory A. "Chaotic Quijote: Complexity, Nonlinearity, and Perspectivism." *Hispania* 77, no. 4 (1994): 738. <https://doi.org/10.2307/345699>.
- Skotte, Kim. "David Mitchell Interview: Stories Have a Number of Beginnings." *Youtube, Louisiana Channel*, 17:25. August 3, 2015. <https://youtu.be/SbLNRxw3tZ8>
- Tokyonaturalist. "Cinnamomum Camphora: Camphor Tree." Tokyo Naturalist, June 2, 2021. <https://www.tokyonaturalist.com/post/cinnamomum-camphora-camphor-tree>.
- "Tokyo Subway Attack of 1995." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. Accessed June 11, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Tokyo-subway-attack-of-1995>.
- Vatazhko, Elvira. "The Concepts of 'Metatextuality' and 'Metafiction' in Literary Criticism." *Слово і Час*, no. 2 (2021): 100–109. <https://doi.org/10.33608/0236-1477.2021.02.100-109>.
- Vermeulen, Pieter. "David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* and the 'Novel of Globalization': Biopower and The Secret History of the Novel." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 53, no. 4 (2012): 381–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00111619.2010.511318>.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015.