Perhaps the most well-known of Lacan’s ideas is his insight that “the unconscious is structured like a language.” Lacanian psychoanalysis’ prime directive is to use our understanding of the structure of language as a means of understanding all variations of human experience. In this project, I will use Lacanian theory to show how David Mitchell, in his novel *Cloud Atlas*, engages with time and language. Mitchell’s virtuoso ability to adopt a wide range of styles and to shift from one genre to another connects language and storytelling to many ways of experiencing and understanding time. I focus on two of the six narratives that make up *Cloud Atlas*, specifically *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing* and *Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery*, leaving room to expand this project into a longer study of the novel as a whole. I argue that a Lacanian reading of these two chapters unveils a distinction not made by Lacan between the concepts of *signifying* and *signification*. This distinction reveals a far-reaching philosophical implication: that despite Lacan’s insistence that psychoanalysis is materialistic, it is in fact thoroughly idealistic, specifically in the form outlined by Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges in his essay “A New Refutation of Time,” which relegates our experience of time as well as absolute space to the realm of mental processes.