(Un)folding time: A philosophical analysis of "Cloud Atlas" (2012)/ (Des)dobrando o tempo: Uma análise filosófica de "A Viagem" (2012)

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the film "Cloud Atlas" (2012), directed by Lana Wachowski, Tom Tykwer, and Lilly Wachowski, through a philosophical lens. It explores the narrative structure and creative choices of the film, comparing it to the original book by David Mitchell. The analysis focuses on the film's editing and its impact on the portrayal of time, while drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of "the fold" and Pierre Klossowski's notion of "vicious circle". By investigating these philosophical ideas, the paper offers a deeper understanding of the suppression of time in the film and the persistence of essential gestures. It concludes by highlighting the significance of Philosophy and Film research in providing possible insights into complex philosophical concepts and artistic creations.

KEYWORDS: Cloud Atlas (2012); Time; Fold; Deleuze; Klossowski.

RESUMO

Este trabalho examina o filme "A Viagem" (2012), dirigido por Lana Wachowski, Tom Tykwer e Lilly Wachowski, através de uma lente filosófica. Explora a estrutura narrativa e escolhas criativas do filme, comparando-o com o livro original de David Mitchell. A análise concentra-se na montagem do filme e seu impacto na representação do tempo, ao mesmo tempo em que se baseia no conceito de "dobra" de Gilles Deleuze e na noção de "círculo vicioso" de Pierre Klossowski. Ao investigar essas ideias filosóficas, o trabalho oferece uma compreensão mais profunda da supressão do tempo no filme e da persistência de gestos efetivos. Conclui-se destacando a importância da pesquisa em Filosofia e Cinema ao fornecer compreensões possíveis sobre conceitos filosóficos complexos e criações artísticas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: A Viagem (2012); Tempo; Dobra; Deleuze; Klossowski.

Introduction

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Researching Philosophy and Film provides a unique perspective by emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of the field. It transcends traditional academic boundaries and encourages a diverse exploration of the cinematic medium's philosophical dimensions. Within this framework, the intertwining of film theory and philosophy emerges as a distinctive feature, with a focus on understanding the essence of film as a significant art form that can produce knowledge. This perspective delves into questions about the philosophy of film's necessity and relationship to empirical film studies, reflecting a deeper philosophical introspection. It also emphasizes the complex interplay of broader cultural and aesthetic contexts that are presanctified in the cinematic experience – this intersection provides a rich platform for exploring cinema's role as a source of philosophical creativity, artistic expression, and theoretical contemplation.

In this sense, the cinematographic adaptation of "Cloud Atlas" (2012) takes a deliberate step to portray the interconnections between individuals across time, geographies, and places. In fact, as Muñoz (2018, p. 228 -246) defends, it "stands out because of its ability to combine spatial and temporal dimensions and present a wide range of identities and cosmopolitan challenges as part of a planetary network of humans". While these connections are evident in Mitchell's literary work, the film's adaptors opted to visually depict them on screen.

> Subjugated persons inhabit spaces and geographies that form the geographies inhabited by the memories and spaces inhabited by their subjugators. Geographies are connected through history and culture atemporally and circularly. The translation [into film] of Cloud Atlas attempts to show these connections (Wight, n.d., p. 2).

"Cloud Atlas" (2012) reveals a multiplicity of impulses by drawing attention to different connections between different people set in different times and spaces, celebrating the transgression of a range of power relations, forms of oppression, violence, and dominance through time. Therefore, the thesis of this paper defends that, through a temporal mechanism, the film addresses interrelated and different types of oppression (such as race, class, age, sexuality, beliefs, ecological and environmental exploitation, etc.). Thus, concerning cosmopolitan discourses of contemporary cinema, it is worthy of getting our attention due to how it explores the borders of editing and narrative conventions.

However, although the film could be seen as visionary, especially regarding its original source, it did not go without further criticism. Interpreted as a divisive creative

choice, the casting (as an expression of its form) is intrinsically used to express narrative implications (expression of its content)[10]. Hence, the main subject of inquiry here is the nexus that created a network among these characters – distributed in different spaces and times but somehow connected (according to the Wachowskis, thought an after-life system). Regarding that, this paper will breathily introduce both versions – film and book – and show how the first folds time.

Film vs. book

Despite telling roughly the same stories, both versions of *Cloud Atlas* differ from each other in a few important ways, the most notorious of which is their temporal-narrative structures. As Wight (n.d., p. 2) said:

> Both the book and the film, Cloud Atlas, move to show how all persons are connected through time, geographies, and locations. However, the film takes the already complicated temporality of the book and attempts to show a common thread throughout by using the same actors to play multiple characters of different races and genders.

The temporal-narrative structure of the book has already been discussed before (Da Silva & Júnior, 2022). Its first half is organized in a linear chronological order, starting in the 19th century, with the first half of *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing*, followed by the first halves of *Letters from Zedelghem* in the early 20th century, *Half Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery* in the late 20th century, *The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish,* in the early 21st century ("present day"), *An Orison of Somni~451*, in a dystopian cyberpunk future, and at last, by the entirety of *Sloosha's Crossin' and Evrythin' After*, set in a far-future post-apocalyptic Hawaii.

After the conclusion of *Sloosha's Crossin' and Evrythin' After*, the book proceeds to conclude all the previous narratives, this time in reverse chronological order, thus

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[10] To Muñoz (2018, p. 238) by "constantly juggling times and places, the film establishes strong connections between characters by pushing the limits of intensified continuity, casting, performance, and make-up". However, in Estrada's (2014, p. 26-27) perspective: "Although Cloud Atlas attempts to defend an abolitionist stance (…). [And] Despite Halle Berry's heteronormative black woman heroism in Cloud Atlas, the lack of (…) gender, and political representation undermines the humanistic message of the Wachowskis who were unable to differentiate between abolitionism, assimilation, anti-racism, and anti-settler colonialism". In this sense, both comments are set on the same register of analysis: the tension between form (casting and make-up) and content (the adapted narrative).

starting with the second-to-last time period, that of *An Orison of Somni~451*, and ending with the conclusion of *The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing*.

From this description, one could say that David Mitchell's book can be abstractly conceived as a sort of narrative *Matryoshka*, also known as a Russian nesting doll. After all, the work is comprised of several nested stories, each somehow fitting within the context of another, their texts being quite literally enclosed within frames of the texts of previous stories, creating a sense of layers and depth, akin to the way smaller *Matryoshka* dolls fit within larger ones. Recurring themes, motifs, and symbols create thematic echoes across all the stories, providing cohesion to the book as a whole, much like the consistent design and painting style of *Matryoshka* dolls ties a set of them together. Just as each *Matryoshka* adds a new physical layer to the set, each one of the narratives adds further depth and complexity to the overall story. The reader peels back the narrative layers of the book, revealing an interconnectedness of characters, thematic interplay, and broader philosophical questions dealt with in the text.

Much like opening each doll in a *Matryoshka* set to reveal the one(s) within, this narrative nesting provides a rich and layered reading experience. However, the *Matryoshka* is not the only conceptual model for the understanding of David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas*. A more process-oriented approach is conceiving the narrative flow as the movement of a boomerang, which is propelled forward before eventually turning backward mid-air. This model is only possible because the later narratives, rather unusually, are nested within the earlier ones, and not the other way around, as one would expect from other examples of embedded narratives, such as those found in the *Arabian Nights*:

> The boomerang structure of Mitchell's novel, whereby the chronologically prior narratives end up swallowing the chronologically later narratives in the second half of the novel, destabilizes the temporal constraint implicit in most embedded narratives—that tales-within-tales are presupposed as antedating the narratives within which they are embedded (Parker, 2015, p. 131)[11].

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[11] This problem was also noticed by Hicks (2016, p. 73): "*Cloud Atlas* enacts a sort of time travel. But not, precisely, historical time travel. Mitchell's ability to capture moments in time through style and genre could, indeed, be argued to suggest that those time periods were distinct and that our recognition of them is predicated on this distinction. That is, the shifting styles and genres themselves index the linear passage of time. However, Mitchell himself seems to resist this understanding, destabilizing the historical implications of the various genres by breaking them up and reversing their order. This highly visible manipulation denudes the genres of their temporal specificity."

The cinematic adaptation of the work, as we already know, does not follow the same organized structure. In fact, it might be difficult to discern any pattern or rhythm in the way the movie arranges the individual stories. It can (and shall) be argued, however, that this is the feature, not a bug. The apparent narrative chaos has some profound philosophical implications, which despite being somewhat related, can also be considered altogether different from the ones seen in the original book.

Time structure

"Cloud Atlas" (2012) unfolds in six distinct historical periods (the same ones as in the book), divided into three parts: the Opening Scene, the narrative development, and the Conclusion scheme. In the Opening Scene, we are introduced to different temporal moments, starting with a Future 3 (which is not in the book but is set in a variant of Future 2 in space), followed by the 1st Past story, set in 1849 and titled "The Pacific Journal of Adam Ewing"; and the 3rd Past in 1973 known as "Half-Lives: The First Luisa Rey Mystery". The story then proceeds to the Present in 2012, called "The Ghastly Ordeal of Timothy Cavendish"; the 2nd Past in 1936, titled "Letters from Zedelghem"; and the 1st Future, set in 2144 and named "An Orison of Sonmi~451". Additionally, there is a Future 2 in 2321, entitled "Sloosha's Crossin' an' Ev'rythin' After," which is not initially presented.

In the narrative development (after the opening scene), the plot delves deeper into the various themes explored in the different periods. The 1st Past addresses the issue of slavery, with a significant development scene cut when Adam Ewing and Autua share a sight when the slave is being whipped. Next, the 2nd Past explores homosexuality, with its first development scene being cut when Robert Frobisher hits the melody for Vyvyan Ayrs. The 3rd Past highlights the governmental premise, with its development scene cut involving the exchange of contacts between Luisa Rey and the elderly Rufus Sixsmith. In the Present, the focus is on the fight against ageism, and the transition to the next historical moment occurs after the threat made to Timothy Cavendish in the bathroom. The 1st Future portrays class oppression under capitalist structures, with the transition made after Yoona~939's failed attempt to escape, resulting in her murder. Differently, the 2nd Future presents a dystopian and post-apocalyptic scenario, with its first cut made after Abbess's omen.

In the film's conclusion, a temporal shuffling occurs, compressing events into a different sequence. The final storyline follows this order: Present, 3rd Past, 2nd Future, 2nd Past, 1st Future, 1st Past, and finally, 3rd Future. This cinematic experience, however, leads to a different interpretation regarding the concept of time compared to the original portrayal in the story's sourcebook. The best moment to exemplify the time folding into one single instance is Zachry's dream montage, which commences and concludes with a unique sequence, featuring a topless Zachry asleep, portrayed in inverted close-up profile images. His dream unveils a swift full shot of the devilish ghost Old Georgie (Hugo Weaving) from 2321 Hawai'i, followed by a close-up of the same apparition.

The scene shifts to a shallow zoom-in close-up shot in 1934, focusing on a revolver stolen by Robert Frobisher from his boss Vyvyan (Jim Broadbent), who sleeps in the blurred background. This revolver will play a significant role in Robert's tragic fate when Vyvyan threatens to expose his homosexuality. In a quick succession of events, the film cuts back to 2321, presenting a profile close-up shot of Zachry's startled awakening in bed, followed by a shaky hand-held camera's extreme close-up of Zachry's brother-in-law Adam (Jim Sturgess) desperately calling for help and lamenting his son's murder, while being attacked by a face-painted Kona Chief (Hugh Grant). Zachry had witnessed this gruesome murder days ago, hiding in fear behind a rock.

The montage continues with a high-angle close-up shot of the aged Vyvyan sleeping, followed by an extreme close-up image of the enslaved Moriori Autua's (David Gyasi) bloody hands in chains during the 1848 whipping scene, witnessed by Mr. Ewing. The scene is briefly interrupted by an extreme close-up shot of Zachry's blue-green button necklace, a *memento* from 1848 that has found its way to 2321, where Adam met his fate. Then, Old Georgie appears in a full shot surrounded by whirling clouds, shaking Zachry's profiled sleeping body to awaken him in the cloudscape bed. The film shifts to two neo-Seoul 1144 fabricant clones (Doona Bae and Xun Zhou), gazing at a handheld electronic display of Hanks playing the heroic movie version of the 2012 anti-ageism protagonist. Rapid incarnations of Halle Berry flash on the screen, first as a smiling East Indian woman wearing a red and gold sari in 2012 and then as the benevolent black Meronym in 2321, dressed in her white bodysuit.

Finally, an overhead shot captures the 1975 birth-marked Luisa Rey's car being forced off a bridge by another car. The trajectory of Luisa's car plunging into the river is briefly interrupted by an overhead full shot of Zachry overlooking the sea and an extreme close-up of Old Georgie grimacing in Zachry's profiled face. As the car sinks, an extreme

close-up of expanding bubbles obscures the sinking vehicle, superimposed upon Zachry's inverted sleeping close-up. Zachry gasps for breath, and his upside-down image rights itself as he gains terrified consciousness. The camera zooms out to reveal a full shot of Zachry gasping for air on his rustic bed. The intense higher-range diegetic *Cloud Atlas Sextet* music comes to an end, transitioning into a subtle pulse of bass-range instruments.

Thus, it is possible to notice, as Parker (2015) pointed out, a shift from what he calls "time's boomerang" (presented in the book) to a "pointillist mosaic":

> It [the novel] 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, 2012).

This structure, despite being criticized by Parker (2015), also allows for a potential positive interpretation. Yes, the novel's erring humanity and need for global cooperation expressed in the temporal *matryoshka*-like reversing time was substituted by the film's plot of solitary redemption, in which one soul can be saved when acting heroically. However, this "pointillist mosaic" (which can be seen as a temporal compression into a time fold of differential gestures) also expresses the eternal return of the resistance.

The fold and the vicious circle

The fold can be defined as a relationship of strength with oneself, a power to affect oneself; an affection of oneself by itself (Deleuze, 2005, p. 108). Concerning its agency, the "subject" is approached as an experience arising at the intersection of the epistemological dichotomy between "structure[12] and action". There is no established maximal structural supremacy of social arrangements, nor a mere autonomy of individual wills, which would result in a supremacy of the personal-subjective. In this sense, the subjective is not only that which is "within", nor is it merely a receptacle of the "external"; it is also a fold of the outside (a force, as Deleuze would say) to constitutes an interiority. This interiority engenders an intense process of individuation born between powers and

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[12] Structure could be defined as the weight that previous social arrangements exert on the actors (or furthermore), the coercive aspect of these arrangements.

knowledge, to become a self-relation. This is a heterogeneous process of producing this subjectivity in space and time.

According to the Foucauldian perspective, the subject is not only shaped by the influence of disciplinary *dispositifs* but also by someone who learns to self-constitute by acting upon oneself through self-technologies, also referred to as "techniques of the self". They enable individuals, either on their own or with the assistance of others, to carry out a certain number of operations on their own bodies, souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, to transform them to achieve a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (Foucault, 2004, p. 234).

It is in the operation that Deleuze's (2005, p. 104) analysis of the Baroque emerges, where everything folds, unfolds, and refolds, alluding to the image of folding as the bending of force, of the outside, of power. Thus, the baroque would not refer to an essence, but above all to an operative function, to a trait that ceaselessly creates folds. Hence, the outside is not a fixed boundary, but a mobile material, animated by peristaltic movements, folds, and creases that constitute an inside: nothing beyond the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside.

It is precisely through this lens that the temporal-narrative structure of "Cloud Atlas" (2012) must be understood. In the movie, we witness multiple storylines across various genres and historical periods, from the 19th century to a distant post-apocalyptic future. These narratives are surely not presented linearly but rather in a way that folds and loops back upon itself. Thus, the movie's script exhibits fold-like properties, highlighting the intertwining of different layers, the intricate connections between different elements, and the nonlinear blending of time itself.

The weaving together of different genres, including historical drama, science fiction, and dystopian thriller, results in a multi-layered narrative experience. This folding of different styles and themes onto one another creates a multi-layered narrative experience with intricate connections and resonances, thus reinforcing the concept of the fold. Of course, the same can also be said of the dynamic nature of the narratives themselves. Often, characters' actions at one point of the timeline have consequences that ripple across time and space, such that the film, as did the book before it, highlights the interplay of cause and effect across each one of the stories, thus embodying the fold as a *locus* of boundless transformation and interrelation.

Overall, it can be said that this temporal-narrative structure, through its fold-like storytelling, which is interwoven, cyclical, and multi-layered, showcasing intricate

connections between seemingly quite disparate elements, themes, places, and time periods, serves the purpose of suppressing the very concept of time. In the film, time as experienced by the audience cannot be expressed in terms of *Chronos*, which is to say, a neat and straightforward linear chronology of events. There is no "arrow of time" to speak of. Rather, time in "Cloud Atlas" (2012) can only be understood as non-Euclidean.

The absence of linearity and the presence of cyclicality, reincarnation, symbolic resonances, ripple effects, and genre-bending ultimately create a unique watching experience, in which history itself assumes a non-Euclidean "chronotopography", so to speak, folding upon itself. Just as non-Euclidean geometry deviates from the constraints of the more familiar Euclidean geometry in which parallel lines never meet each other, so does non-Euclidean time introduce alternative models for the progression and experience of time, pushing the boundaries of how we perceive and conceptualize time itself, thus allowing for more imaginative and complex temporal frameworks beyond the narrow constraints of linearity, which is typically experienced as constant unidirectional progression.

Non-Euclidean chronotopology and the suppression of (linear) time are very common tropes in works of fiction revolving around time travel. Of course, this is no mere coincidence, as the very concept of time travel, by default, involves shattering time *qua Chronos*. In a certain sense, "Cloud Atlas" (2012) can be interpreted as a time travel movie type. However, conventional time travel narratives typically involve an internal plot device (*e.g.* a time machine) to offer justification for this shattering of *Chronos* and the consequent unbounding of non-Euclidean fold-like time. In "Cloud Atlas" (2012), this is evidently not the case, but still, "time travel" nonetheless makes itself present not through an internal plot device, but through an external framing device. In other words, while the movie's characters might experience time in a linear, Euclidean fashion, the audience most certainly does not. It is the form bending the content from the outside to within.

The aforementioned factors contribute to the feeling that the film exists outside the constraints of a singular temporal framework. Despite this suppression (or rather because of it), in the context of "Cloud Atlas", the concept of time remains a central focus. The film's editing technique compresses the diverse (hi)stories (creating a fold), revealing yet another layer of experience. An interesting observation emerges with the consistent presence of actors across these varied possibilities, creating a discernible continuity within the aforementioned narrative fabric. While the content of each time period retains

its distinct storyline and specific characters, the preservation of certain structural elements becomes evident. This pertains not to the content itself, but rather to the underlying form that connects these narratives over time.

It can be philosophically seen, for example, in Foucault's analysis of "Nietzsche, Freud et Marx" (1994, p. 80), where he observes a dual repetition gesture conveyed through Roberte's hand[13]: the coexistence of two Robertes with one existence and two existences with one Roberte. In "Roberte ce soir" (Klossowski, 1953), these differential gestures intricately point towards a vicious circle and its simulacrum. This resonance emphasizes the return of difference, represented by a dislocated sign[14] or of return (Muñoz, 2019). The semiotic significance lies in the fact that the gesture is something that extrapolates the content and operates throughout time.

Aligned with Deleuze's perspective, Klossowski's interpretation of Nietzsche's eternal return unveils that this repetition is far from being a mere type of duplication. Instead, it represents a masked repetition of difference, one that is profoundly productive, engendering differences:

> To repeat is to behave, but in relation to something unique or singular, which has nothing similar or equivalent (…). The mask is the true subject of repetition. It is because repetition differs in nature from representation that what is repeated cannot be represented, but must always be signified, masked by what signifies it, itself masking what it signifies (Deleuze & Guattari, 1884, pp. 17-18)

Klossowski's narrative pieces are characterized by a continuous repetition, propelled by an unchanging motion. Essentially, it is a perpetual reenactment of the identical scene. As noticed by Smith (2005, p. 14):

> The rape of Roberte in *Roberte, ce soir*, the theatrical representations in *Le souffleur*, the vision of the goddess in *Diana at Her Bath*, the description of the statue of Saint Teresa in *The Baphomet* – all articulate one and the same phantasm: the woman discovering the presence of her body under the gaze or the violence of a third party, who, whether an angel or a demon, communicates a guilty voluptuousness.

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[13] As Smith (2005, p. 14) says: "Readers of Klossowski's fictions will be familiar with the phantasm that was the primary object of his own obsession: the Figura of Roberte, which he calls (in his postface to the trilogy The Laws of Hospitality) the 'unique sign' of his work".

[14] As Foucault (1994, p. 571) revealed, there is no first and enigmatic sign but only a cloth of violent interpretations. The interpretation precedes the sign, in which signs are interpretations that rehears justification, not the other way around.

In effect, the unveiling of the eternal return marked the culmination of Nietzsche's pursuit to discover the ultimate, most affirmative effect and impulse. As Klossowski (1984, p. 76) writes: "the simulacrum, in its *imitative* sense, is the actualization of something in itself incommunicable and nonrepresentable: the phantasm in its obsessional constraint". Interpreting this approximation among Foucault, Klossowski, and Nietzsche, Muñoz (2019, p. 97) notices that it masks an "eternal present", in which eternity is thought without unit and the present without plenitude. In this sense, the repetition gesture constitutes and propels the script, impacting the mask behind the mask that masks the temporal fold existent in the film "Cloud Atlas" (2012).

Thus, as said by Ruiz (2013, p. 280): "all characters have the same gestures and fall into the same gestures; the eternal is the gesture. It is not the person or the character that is eternal, but the gesture itself"[15]. All performed acts are eternal because they are all collectively made in a constellation of correlations, forming a bridge between all these moments, and offering a feeling of eternity. Moreover, in "Cloud Atlas", in every story, in all periods of time, there is a *surplus sign*, always dislocated and extrapolating its own present – this resonance returns as an eternal gesture that produces differences. As a surplus sign, this return is not a form of content understood as difference, but rather the difference itself, always nomadic and anarchic.

Furthermore, Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche also interestingly conceives the German thinker's eventual descent into madness as an integral element of his philosophy, for it is a consequence of the dissolution of the Ego and a consequent identification with the very cycles of recurrence, as the memory of history itself. The Nietzschean tragedy consists of an inevitable choice between true madness, or at the very least the creation of something equivalent to it. Between the two, Nietzsche chose madness itself, such that his loss of identity and reason to delirium are not to be understood as a downfall, but rather as a form of triumph (DIAS, 2004).

Other than the suggestion of reincarnation, of course, this Nietzschean dissolution of fixed identity into the ever-changing flows of a process-driven, cyclical universe is precisely the effect created by the choice of casting the same actors repeatedly to play different roles in each of the stories. Much like Nietzsche himself, the actors, who represent not merely the characters they play, but ultimately also the undifferentiated "substrate-souls" (if such a thing can even be spoken of) which are repeatedly

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[15] Text as consulted: "todos os personagens têm os mesmos gestos, caem nos mesmos gestos e que o eterno é o gesto. Não é a pessoa ou o personagem que é eterno, mas o gesto mesmo".

reincarnated as these characters, experience their very own process-driven ego-deaths on screen. Thus, in "Cloud Atlas" (2012), there is no such thing as Tom Hanks' character or Doona Bae's character, for example, but rather various temporally contingent instances or avatars of a "Tom-Hanks-Soul" or a "Doona-Bae-Soul", so to speak, which cannot be reduced to a single subjectivity.

As seen in the film, there is a permanent, a *surplus sign*, that remains. This gesture keeps returning through different interpretations, transforming all characters' lives, societies, relationships, power struggles, etc. However, as not yet mentioned, this gesture can be named as a form of *resistance against external oppression*. The Nietzschean experience of the Eternal Return of the Same in "Cloud Atlas" comes as an awakening that gradually emerges as a revelation – the characters unveil the sign of the rise against the maintaining structure of oppression in post-modern society. As Klossowski (1997, p. 60) quotes from Nietzsche (KSA, v. 9, p. 505, 11[163]. Spring-Fall 1881): "live in such a way that you must desire to live again, this is your duty – you will live again in any case!". In "Cloud Atlas" (2012), what makes life worth living is the eternal gesture of resistance.

Final considerations

Finally, in "Cloud Atlas" (2012), there is a productive field for philosophical experience; by considering the aesthetic structure of this film, especially through the post-structuralist perspective, we can push further some philosophical intakes. In this sense, art folds in on itself, making the exhaustive work with its own signifier a project or even an obsession. This would reappear as a condition of modernity (the source of the oppression presented in the film is also its criticism) when the fragmentation and multiplication of expressions are taken to their ultimate consequences when the history of art rescues multiple buried worlds (Gomes Jr., 1992). It is through a Deleuzian reading that this condition enables the work to categorize and re-categorize multiple forms, producing new expressions and sensitivities. This allows the discovery that signs engage in dialogue by creating differences amidst resistance.

The ultimate bet made regarding "Cloud Atlas" (2012) is that the non-Euclidean pointillist mosaic of its chronotopography has a virtual echo in the Baroque (at least a possible reading of it). This expresses a fold in which the temporal experience of the film is bent, creating a compression between all stories that allows the audience to the

viciousness of the gesture being reacted throughout this vicious circle. The characters, as previously reinterpreted, are just masks, spokespersons, or simulacra of the historical substrate: the resistance itself. As Smith (2005, p. 20) defends: "with this circuit of impulse-phantasm-simulacrum, Klossowski has isolated the baroque and labyrinthine logic of the simulacrum, with its complex operations of similitude, simultaneity, simulation, and dissimilation".

Although the film leans towards supporting the idea of reincarnation, it presents not a direct reliving but rather a simulacrum of reincarnation[16]. What is always coming to the present is the Soul from what is behind the mask, another tragic mask of madness that can only be perceived through the fold produced by the film. As noticed by Parker (2015, p. 133):

> As the film hurtles to its conclusion, each story comes to closure, (…) the film jumps between stories, reinforcing the omnitemporal quality and links we have experienced throughout the film—so, for example, as Haskell Moore scornfully warns Ewing that his actions may cause him to be "lynched or crucified," the scene switches to the Christ-like Sonmi's execution. Yet all that dynamic omnitemporality is enclosed.

When narrated by Zachary in the 3rd Future, it is all fixed in a faraway past. Whereas Frobisher says about his work: "the unspeakable forms waiting around history's corner", its frame-narrative structure closes off the potentiality of the future. What remains open is the Present in the creation of folds until its infinite extension in its various variations. It is the baroque fold of images over images, in the creation of simulacra[17], which allows the creation of the line of flight that leads to infinity. It is a heterogeneous process of space and time in the production of these masks of resistance, in which, through the bifurcations, divergences, and compossibility of the Baroque, resistance emerge, developing compossible spaces and times.

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[16] The criticism to the mechanism found to do so can be found in Estrada (2014).

[17] As stated by Foucault (2005, pp. 137-174) the Figuras of transgression and death need the space of the simulacrum to be realized. Thus, the simulacrum happens simultaneously, sometimes with the transgression, sometimes with death.

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