

Elusive Play in the Adaptation *Cloud Atlas* (2012)

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ABSTRACT: This cognitively-oriented study is framed within the perspective of non-radical constructivism and it presents an analysis of a film adaptation using the adaptation-as-play model. It examines “elusive” adaptation, whose playfulness obscures specific adaptation techniques and leads to contradictory critical reception. The study focuses on the 2012 film adaptation *Cloud Atlas*,

directed by Tom Tykwer, Lana Wachowski, and Lilly Wachowski, based on David Mitchell’s 2004 novel of the same name. The findings demonstrate that the seemingly disordered playfulness of the adaptation systematically organises the adaptation through individual layers of (playful) adaptation processes.

KEYWORDS:

adaptation, *Cloud Atlas*, cognitive adaptation studies, David Mitchell, Lana Wachowski, Lilly Wachowski, Play, Roger Ebert, Tom Tykwer

INTRODUCTION

The aim of our study is to demonstrate how different playful adaptation techniques cooperate in the adaptation process using the adaptation-as-play model. The basic premise of this model is that adaptation (both as a product and a process), in an artistic context, can be understood primarily through exploratory and playful forms of interaction between the experient (percipient, interactor or creator) and the specific environment (material or social). We present the application of this model from the methodological perspective of non-radical constructivism, grounded in cognitive science.

The greatest challenge in interpreting playful adaptation processes is related to the inherent limits of interpretative intuition. These limitations can be identified through self-reflection on the possibilities of our understanding, which is a fundamental part of cognitive science interpretive procedures¹. Our research sample represents “elusive” adaptations that largely evade traditional creative, analytical, and critical approaches. For the purposes of our research, we have chosen the 2012 film adaptation *Cloud Atlas*.² Directed by Tom Tykwer, Lana Wachowski, and Lilly Wachowski, it is based on the novel of the same name by British author David Mitchell³, published in 2004.

ADAPTATION AS PLAY

The fundamental methodological conflict in adaptation studies resonates with the “tectonic plates” of contemporary humanities. “Should adaptation studies be driven by deductive (top-down) theory or empirical, inductive (bottom-up) analysis? Continental intermedialists continue to prefer the former approach, Anglo-American adaptations the latter.”⁴ Naturally, even within the primarily “bottom-up” constructivist approach of cognitive science, there are non-radical tendencies at work that actively reflect a “top-down” perspective. This ability to communicate between two approaches allows the pursuit of a “theoretical perspective that is at once formal and ‘experiential.’”⁵

Julie Sanders reminds us of the essential “sense of play that many theorists have stressed as central to the adaptive instinct.”⁶ However, recognising the importance of the category of play in adaptation studies does not change the fact that it is often

1 KUZMÍKOVÁ, J. Kognitívne súvislosti literárneho procesu (Krátky prehľad kognitívne orientovanej literárnej vedy). In *World Literature Studies*, 2011, Vol. 3, Issue 3, pp. 18–19. Available at: http://www.wls.sav.sk/wp-content/uploads/WLS_3_11/Kuzm%C3%ADkov%C3%A11.pdf.

2 TYKWER, T. – WACHOWSKI, L. – WACHOWSKI, L. *Cloud Atlas*, 2012. [Film].

3 MITCHELL, D. *Cloud Atlas*. Munich : Random House, 2004.

4 LEITCH, T. Introduction. In *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*. (Ed. T. Leitch). New York : Oxford University Press, 2017, p. 17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199331000.013.41>.

5 HUTCHEON, L. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York – London : Routledge, 2006, p. xiv. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203957721>.

6 SANDERS, J. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. New York – London : Routledge, 2006, p. 7.

used as a “nebulous concept.”⁷ It should be emphasised that the model of adaptation as play is not a definition of adaptation and does not defy research on “adaptation as adaptation.”⁸ “Since we will inevitably continue to theorise adaptations as other things, at least for now, what we need is a reciprocal discourse, in which other things are theorised as adaptations, as well as a dialogue between the two discourses.”⁹ The predictive possibilities of the adaptation-as-play model, therefore, arise from the reciprocal nature of theorizing about the two categories. A comprehensive view of our model was already presented¹⁰, but the main premises can be summarized in the following paragraph.

Manifestations of the embodied mind (e.g., art as both process and product) are shaped by the nature of the interaction between the experient and the environment. More complex forms of this interaction can be modeled through manifestations of conceptually basic interaction – active or passive movement and growth within that environment. Constraints on some levels of interaction can be seen as filters, inhibiting movement and growth. To overcome the most impenetrable filters, a recognisable adaptation by the experient is necessary. Adaptation can be both telic (goal-focused) and paratelic (process-focused). The most successful overcoming of obstacles is achieved by strategies recognised as exploratory and playful expressions of the embodied mind. Thus, play, as a cognitive category is a prototypical manifestation of embodied mind adaptation, and can reciprocally shape a model of adaptation from an art and media perspective.

In addition to the exploratory and playful behaviour of the experients, the acceptance of paradoxes and related phenomena, model of adaptation as play particularly organises¹¹ Roger Caillois’s¹² basic types of play (or games). Thus, in its basic form, we can speak of adaptations and adaptation processes as mimicry, alea,ilinx, and agon. Caillois’s classification of play has sometimes been criticised for the absence of an apparent organizing principle, but “[i]f games can organise each of these drives and turn them into content, however, then there must be an element that unites them and makes them formalizable.”¹³ It is the (reciprocal) understanding of play as a form of adaptation that allows us to distinguish between different types of play, which are forms of progressively overcoming of obstacles in an ever-increasing interaction with the environment.

7 HUNTER, M. Bric[k]olage: Adaptation as Play in The Lego Movie (2014). In *Adaptation*, 2018, Vol. 11, Issue 3, p. 274. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/adaptation/apy015>.

8 HUTCHEON, L. *A Theory of Adaptation*, p. xvi.

9 ELLIOTT, K. *Theorizing Adaptation*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2020, p. 231. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197511176.001.0001>.

10 GETLÍK, P. *Pohyb ku kognitívnym adaptačným štúdiám: adaptácia ako hra* [Moving towards Cognitive Adaptation Studies: Adaptation as Play]. Košice : Univerzita Pavla Jozefa Šafárika v Košiciach, 2022, pp. 230–232. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.33542/ PKA-0176-6>.

11 Ibid., pp. 128–131.

12 CAILLOIS, R. *Man, Play and Games*. Urbana – Chicago : University of Illinois Press, 2001.

13 MCDONALD, P. D. The Principle of Division in Roger Caillois’s Man, Play and Games. In *Games and Culture*, 2020, Vol. 15, Issue 8, p. 862. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1555412019853080>.

The mimicry principle has a special character. In adaptations we understand it as the ability of an experient to imitate, simulate or construct elements of an environment, or to assimilate its properties. This level accompanies the other three aspects of adaptation as play, as it always directly reflects the influence of the environment at both the social (e.g., period) and artistic (e.g., genre) levels.

Random interaction with the environment occurs even without significant experient mobility. The alea level of adaptations is therefore most evident in the ability to elicit allusive processes and create meaning even from accidental arrangements of shape or unintended connections between source and adaptation.

The ilinx in adaptations represents the ability of binary interaction with the environment. While one cannot overcome the influence of the environment, one can take advantage of it by entering and exiting its recognisable processes. Semipassive ilinx is most manifested by the paradoxical shedding of control while striving to achieve the goal. This is most often seen in the adaptation of so-called “unadaptable” works, which are extremely dependent on the nature of the original medium, but it can also be induced by deliberately divesting oneself of the possibilities of the new medium.

Adaptation processes in the form of agon can be more explicitly formalised by the rules of a game that can be won or lost. The prototypical agon compares the properties of the players and is only truly applicable when the experients are actively moving. Processes of this type are most often seen in the comparison and competition of different adaptations, source and prototype, or different parts of an adaptation.

CLOUD ATLAS

The literary source of our research sample, David Mitchell’s novel *Cloud Atlas*, allows us to glimpse multiple layers of playful adaptation processes. *Cloud Atlas* metanarratively describes a musical composition – a sextet for six instruments that build upon each other. The literary source is similarly structured into six genre, style and clearly linguistically identifiable narratives, which are then played out in audiovisual form in the film adaptation. This composition includes a historical drama in the form of a diary, an epistolary romantic tragedy, the manuscript of a detective thriller, a humorously tuned memoir written with a vision of the future film treatment, an interview recording with dystopian sci-fi characteristics, and finally, an oral narrative set in a post-apocalyptic world.

The literary source is only slightly more diffuse in time than the dramatic film treatment. Based on a variety of literary clues, the adaptation unfolds the story across the years 1849, 1936, 1973, 2012, 2144, and 2346. Although the parts of *Cloud Atlas* are relatively separated in space and time, one can perceive a relationship of causal chains, nested narratives, and parallel motifs between them. As a result, the literary and cinematic media manage to maintain a tension between the fleeting variations of physical lives (the clouds) and their invariant transcendental historiography

(the atlas). One of the dominant motifs of both versions of *Cloud Atlas* is reincarnation. David Mitchell emphasises this through recurring birthmarks in the form of a shooting star. To highlight the reincarnation motif, the directorial trio also employs the principle of asymmetry between actor and character, with an ensemble of fourteen actors playing a total of over sixty roles across different times and spaces.

In an interview with *The Washington Post*, the author of the novel *Cloud Atlas* states that the primary inspiration for his work was the compositional structure of "*If on a Winters Night a Traveler*, by Italo Calvino – an experimental novel in which a sequence of narratives is interrupted but never picked up again."¹⁴ In this interview, the author likened his creative endeavors to placing a mirror behind a series of these narratives, naturally bringing them to a close at the cost of temporarily interrupting five of the six stories. Mitchell's metafictional bracketing can be illustrated by the formula (A1(B1(C1(D1(E1(F)E2)D2)C2)B2)A2), which is organised chronologically in the first half and then in reverse chronology.

In the first segment of the complex narrative, mid-nineteenth-century lawyer Adam Ewing (A) becomes an abolitionist after a slave saves his life on a voyage in the South Pacific. His diary is read before World War II by the English queer composer Robert Frobisher (B), who refuses to be blackmailed by his "mentor" in a dispute over the authorship of the sextet *Cloud Atlas* and subsequently commits suicide. Robert's letters to his lover and his musical work encourage American reporter Luisa Rey (C) to successfully expose the political-economic secrets of the energy industry in the 1970s. A manuscript about the journalist's adventure reaches publisher Timothy Cavendish (D) in the "present." He escapes from a despotically run senior care facility where he accidentally ended up after a series of bad relationship and financial decisions. Timothy writes his memoirs as the basis for a future film adaptation – its seemingly naive revolutionary lines capture the attention of genetically modified "fabricant" Sonmi-451 (E) a few generations later. Sonmi sacrifices her life to report on a genocide in a dystopian corpocratic society centralised in a Korean metropolis. Her words and records of her actions are archived before her execution, and the interview with the convict thus serves as the seed for the post-apocalyptic religion that deifies Sonmi. In this distant future, native Zachry (F) and "prescient" Meronym meet on the Hawaiian Islands and attempt to preserve the last shreds of a peaceful civilization from the influence of the "plague" and cannibalistic slave traders.

Because of its fragmentary nature, *Cloud Atlas* quickly fell into the category of "unfilmable"¹⁵ books. The *Cloud Atlas* adaptation does not attempt to maintain the strict chronological compositional symmetry of the source. It arranges the individual scenes alternately in a complex mosaic, with the inevitable exception of the six

14 TURRENTINE, J. Fantastic Voyage. In *WashingtonPost.com*, 22 August 2004. [online]. [cit. 15 March 2024]. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17232-2004Aug19.html>.

15 Reflecting on several critiques, this is demonstrated in PEBERDY, D. Narrative trans-actions: *Cloud Atlas* (2012) and multi-role performance in the global ensemble. In *Transnational Cinemas*, 2014, Vol. 5, Issue 2, p. 168. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/20403526.2014.960775>.

exposition sequences between the 5th and 38th minutes of the (172-minute-long) film. In the more than two hundred transitions between different levels of the story, the principle of parallelism dominates, and “[w]e viewers are propelled back into the past and forward into the future and vice versa, such things as doors and bridges often serving as links.”¹⁶ In addition to the editing’s simulation of continuity, the aforementioned asymmetry between characters and actors serves as a significant catalyst for the parallel perception of storylines. Consequently, actor-character split reinforces the suspension of disbelief, allowing the audience to tolerate the inconsistencies of the fictional work. The viewer ceases to seek support in the fragmented plot from the familiar face of the actor and instead pays closer attention, almost theatrically, to the mask and mise-en-scene, thereby simultaneously separating and connecting the stories as needed.

These two directorial decisions also reflect the film’s significantly mixed reception, as “[t]he main criticisms levelled against the film related to the handling of the narrative and the approach to casting and performance but the same areas also generated the most positive accolades.”¹⁷ The most significant criticism is directed at the insensitive approach to the depiction of the diverse racial and gender aspects of the work.

Gabriel S. Estrada critically responds, for example, to the often-emphasised parallel between the portrayal of characters of multiple races or genders by individual actors and transgender filmmaker Lana Wachowski in relation to the portrayal of other minority-majority relations: “In other words, her speech purports that her experience of transgender and queer oppression offers key insights into all intersectional oppressions, an appropriation that actually masks her simultaneous commitment to queer settler colonialism.”¹⁸ Stephen Trinder acknowledges the filmmakers’ attempt at a multidimensional work but judges the result “unsuccessful in disseminating the fluid and hybrid nature of transculturalism.”¹⁹

The attempt to unify six separate worlds through editing and casting becomes a significant obstacle to the purely “realistic” perception of the film, in the sense of minimizing formal and logical discrepancies. On a figurative level, however, it frees the actors from the impossible task of actually living the six lives in the full depth of their physical experience. It allows for an otherwise inaccessible experiment in which the actors have an “opportunity to showcase their acting range and test their ability.”²⁰ The difficulty is not only in adapting but also in critically engaging with

¹⁶ PARKER, J. A. From Time’s Boomerang to Pointillist Mosaic: Translating *Cloud Atlas* into Film. In *SubStance*, 2015, Vol. 44, No. 1, Issue 136, 2015, p. 127. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2015.0002>.

¹⁷ PEBERDY, D. Narrative trans-actions: *Cloud Atlas* (2012) and multi-role performance in the global ensemble. In *Transnational Cinemas*, p. 170.

¹⁸ ESTRADA, G. S. *Cloud Atlas’ Queer Tiki Kitsch: Polynesians, Settler Colonialism, and Sci-Fi*. In *Journal of Religion & Film*, 2014, Vol. 18, Issue 2, p. 11. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol18/iss2/5/>.

¹⁹ TRINDER, S. Encounters with the Other: Transcultural Possibilities in the Wachowskis’ and Tykwer’s *Cloud Atlas*. In *Open Cultural Studies*, 2019, Vol. 3, Issue 1, p. 241. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1515/culture-2019-0021>.

²⁰ PEBERDY, D. Narrative trans-actions: *Cloud Atlas* (2012) and multi-role performance in the global ensemble. In *Transnational Cinemas*, p. 176.

this work, which indeed resembles describing the behavior of clouds. *Cloud Atlas* “is possibly as unfilmable as it is unreviewable, but it’s not unenjoyable.”²¹

The findings of cognitive linguistics clearly show the limits of processing long causal chains or other more complicated manifestations of causality, such as systemic causality²². Research in the cognitive narratology setting yields similar results. The distinction between narrative levels also requires nontrivial cognitive effort, and “division of attention explains why narrative stacks rarely reach more than three or four levels.”²³ *Cloud Atlas*’s sixfold metaleptic expansion thus goes well beyond the standard demands for the division of an experient’s attention. In the following paragraphs, we summarise in turn the four levels of adaptation processes (“plays”) that make it possible to explain how *Cloud Atlas*’s gestalt of adaptation is at once shaped into a whole and divided into parts.

CLOUD ATLAS ADAPTED AS PLAY

With ten narrative shifts, the book’s compositional arrangement does not require nearly the same unifying framing as a film that “juggles six narrative balls” more than two hundred times. The aforementioned parallelism of plots is required here, but the universal symbolism is also extremely effective. Mimicry through the simulation of the first storyline, for example, actively exploits the existing framing of racial inequality familiar from the American milieu, despite the fact that “US plantation-style slavery featured in *Cloud Atlas* was simply not the hegemonic form of colonial Polynesian oppression in 1848.”²⁴ Here again, the film’s realistic-historical viewing is emersive²⁵. The reduction of realism in the symbolic realm, however, also allows for a re-immersion for the oriented viewer through the visual-symbolic linking of parallel narratives. There are a number of similar assimilations in the film. Most of them use support in genre parameters or in specific films.

The alea aspect of the adaptation is encouraged particularly by the allusive connections between the six levels of the book. Even the “accidentally” recognised connections between the works rearrange and reinforce each other in an ever-growing web of relationships intertwined with one’s own life experiences. In the process of creating a new work, this individual reading needs to recede to allow for a functional simulation of the fictional world in another experient. To see the work through “strangers’ eyes” it can be helpful to at least partially randomise the individual inputs.

21 MUIR, K. *Cloud Atlas*. In *TheTimes.co.uk*, 22 February 2013. [online]. [cit. 20 March 2024]. Available at: <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/cloud-atlas-q25rtptqzsg>.

22 LAKOFF, George. *The ALL NEW Don't Think of an Elephant!: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate*. Vermont : Chelsea Green Publishing, 2014, pp. 36–40.

23 RYAN, M.-L. *Avatars of Story*. Minneapolis – London : University of Minnesota Press, 2006, p. 205. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttv622>.

24 ESTRADA, G. S. *Cloud Atlas' Queer Tiki Kitsch: Polynesians, Settler Colonialism, and Sci-Fi*. In *Journal of Religion & Film*, p. 15.

25 See the contrasting relationship between immersive and emersive experiences when perceiving an adaptation. GETLÍK, P. *Pohyb ku kognitívnym adaptačným štúdiám: adaptácia ako hra* [Moving towards Cognitive Adaptation Studies: Adaptation as Play], pp. 102–104.

The creators of *Cloud Atlas* encountered the same obstacle. They clearly recognised the basic motivic arc of the future film between the first and last story, but “they had no idea what to do with all the other story lines and characters.”²⁶ It was through the alea adaptation process that they overcame this filter. They physically implemented the reading deconstruction and reconstruction of the work on a daily basis until they found the right order of scenes. “They broke the book down into hundreds of scenes, copied them onto colored index cards, and spread the cards on the floor, with each color representing a different character or time period.”²⁷

Once a certain order of scenes or connections between the six stories is accepted, the invariant qualities of the new work inevitably take shape. Thus, a “stream” emerges that can no longer be controlled. This obstacle to interaction with the environment can be adapted to within the ilinx strategy. By shedding control and finding it again, the experient indeed goes to unexpected places. In *Cloud Atlas*, the asymmetry between character and actor directs this flow the most. Thanks to the actors’ invariants, the viewer always finds similarities between at least two storylines and verifies the validity of the rule in other segments. Often we are reassured of the similarity of threes or fours, but since the authors avoid complete narrative schematism beyond the basic motifs, it is rarely possible to maintain a unified interpretation in five and almost never in six stories.²⁸

The transition from alea-type to ilinx-type film adaptation processes in meta-fiction is best illustrated by Roger Ebert’s review.²⁹ A decade after the death of arguably the most famous film critic, a review of *Cloud Atlas* leads an editorial selection of Ebert’s republished writings.³⁰ In his review, Ebert abandons any attempt at a purely rational interpretation of the work. He writes of a review he could have written about the film and didn’t, because we would be none the wiser for it anyway: “I was never, ever bored by ‘Cloud Atlas.’ On my second viewing, I gave up any attempt to work out the logical connections between the segments, stories and characters. What was important was that I set my mind free to play.”³¹

A fundamental precondition for a strong agon principle in adaptation is the possibility of a high degree of interaction of the experient in the environment. One can only compete if there is something to compare with. The criteria for evaluating this film are also extremely varied since *Cloud Atlas* is both production-wise (especially economically) and stylistically on the borderline between a European art film and a Hollywood blockbuster. Comparisons in the context of other directors’ work or

²⁶ HEMON, A. Beyond the Matrix. In *The New Yorker*, 3 September 2012. [online]. [cit. 27 March 2024]. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/09/10/beyond-the-matrix>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The partially inconsistent karmic evolution of souls is noted by PARKER, J. A. From Time’s Boomerang to Pointillist Mosaic: Translating *Cloud Atlas* into Film. In *SubStance*, p. 130.

²⁹ EBERT, R. Castles in the sky. In *RogerEbert.com*, 24 August 2012. [online]. [cit. 10 May 2024]. Available at: <https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/cloud-atlas-2012>.

³⁰ WORTHINGTON, C., et al. Ten Years of Presence: In Honor of Roger Ebert and the Empathy Machine. In *RogerEbert.com*, 4 April 2023. [online]. [cit. 10 May 2024]. Available at: <https://www.rogerebert.com/features/memorial-feature-2023>.

³¹ EBERT, R. Castles in the sky.

comparisons with other mosaic films are hardly avoidable. Since *Cloud Atlas* has not yet produced a massive adaptation series, it is not possible to effectively compare this adaptation to other adaptations of that source, but comparisons to the “unadapt-able” source material are inevitable. Moreover, the composition of the work allows for a strong internal agon principle, as the six “small films” can compete for position in the different layers of the work and in the performance of the adaptors (directors, actors, make-up artists...).

In negative reviews of the *Cloud Atlas* adaptation as a whole, we note an increase in external comparisons and a decrease in internal ones, though they are never entirely eliminated. A noticeably negative assessment of the film is presented, for example, by Radomír D. Kokeš, who comprehensively evaluates this adaptation first in competition with the source material and with other mosaic films. The mutual comparison of the story lines is sometimes suppressed by the criticism of their overall lack of formal differentiation. For Kokeš, *Cloud Atlas* is “a lousy adaptation (which some may not care for), and at the same time a very transparent, simple and literal film in its ‘complexity.’”³² According to him, a more distinct differentiation of the different storylines would arise if “one segment is black-and-white expressionist, another in the form of a silent film, another in the form of a modernist blank, another in the form of a Soviet montage, another in the form of a classical Hollywood montage, and so on.”³³

It should be noted that a similar formal experiment had already been attempted by the Wachowski siblings when they combined nine short stories in *Animatrix*³⁴. However, it is true that they may not have fully explored this approach creatively, as they did not attempt it fully in a feature film. The intention of our study is not prescriptive but descriptive. Therefore, we do not delve further into a discussion of how differently the filmmakers could have (or should have) more explicitly separated the various segments stylistically. On a qualitative level, we observe that the mosaic reinforces the agon principle in general. A more in-depth descriptive analysis of *Cloud Atlas* film segments may require quantitative support, which is beyond the scope of this paper.

CONCLUSION

In our study, we aimed to examine the playful adaptation process with the model of adaptation as play. To this end, we used the 2012 “elusive” adaptation *Cloud Atlas*, which lies at the intersections of multiple adaptation and other creative processes, thereby causing a significantly contradictory critical reception of the work.

³² KOKEŠ, R. D. Recenze: Jednoduchý, doslovný, mechanický. Atlas mraků. In *Aktuálně.cz*, 25 November 2012. [online]. [cit. 2 May 2024]. Available at:

<https://magazin.aktualne.cz/kultura/film/recenze-jednoduchy-doslovnny-mechanicky-atlas-mraku/r~i:article:764264/>. Translation by P. Getlík.

³³ Our translation from: “jeden segment černobíle expresionistický, další ve formě němého filmu, další modernisticky vyprázdněný, další v podobě sovětské montáže, další klasicky hollywoodský atp.” KOKEŠ, R. D. Recenze: Jednoduchý, doslovný, mechanický. Atlas mraků.

³⁴ JONES, A. R., et al. *Animatrix*, 2003. [Film].

The mimicry level of the *Cloud Atlas* adaptation is mainly observed in the imitation of different styles and genres, and the simulation of familiar cultural contexts, even at the expense of historical accuracy. The alea layer of the adaptation process is most evident in the relationships between the six storylines, which can also randomly stimulate diverse navigations through the works. The existing mental representation of the source had to be regularly re-randomised by the authors until they found a composition acceptable in the film medium. The ilinx processes of stripping away control of the cinematic form were particularly evident in the adaptation in the asymmetry between actor and character, whereby the filmmakers denied the viewer a primarily realistic grasp of the work. By linking storylines through the same actors, both the outward action of the parts and the inward forces of the whole were simultaneously adapted. The agon adaptation principle allows for varied competitions, but mosaic structure adds competitions between the six stories and emphasizes the main principle of composition: to structure the work in such a way that the whole does not fall apart when divided into parts.

Based on the results of the analysis, it is clear that although the playfulness of the film may at first glance appear only in the disorderliness of the “clouds,” individual playful adaptation processes also organise the film via cognitive “atlas.”

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