

國立臺灣大學外國語文學研究所碩士論文
Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures
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Master Thesis



時間無底的風景：

從德勒茲的角度閱讀卡爾維諾《看不見的城市》

The Groundless Landscape of Time:
A Deleuzian Reading of Calvino's *Invisible Cities*

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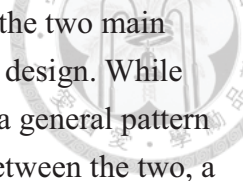
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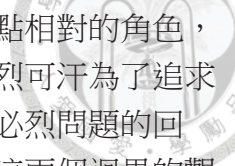
Abstract



The structure of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* corresponds to the two main characters' views which are reflected by the two parts of the novel's design. While Kublai Khan initiates the dialogue depicted in the frame to look for a general pattern for his empire, Marco Polo responds with many disparate stories. Between the two, a landscape of *Invisible Cities* emerges. In accordance with the unfolding of the stories created by the two opposed characters, the landscape is both monist and pluralist. This thesis explores how the landscape links up and recreates monism and pluralism by examining the time of Story in the novel. In the light of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of time, the novel is read to foreground a time of Story that constantly unveils aspects of itself and unfolds into a multi-layered landscape. The landscape is revealed in several stages in the novel: when Kublai's totalizing monism is undermined in the dialogue with Polo, the stories of the cities with disparate durations told by the foreign traveler form a landscape of time as a whole. Being the most plural, the whole makes monism and pluralism indistinguishable. Such a landscape is later doubly reflected by Kublai's atlas containing pure differences and Polo's stories achieving local consistencies between disparate details; monism and pluralism thus fold each other and become a pluralist monism and a monist pluralism. These two modes reveal two distinct aspects of the time of the self-becoming of stories, making monism and pluralism aspects of each other instead of contraries. This thesis examines these aspects of the groundless landscape of time unfolded by the stories to discuss the problem of monism and pluralism in the novel.

Keywords: Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, Gilles Deleuze, monism, pluralism, time, Story

摘要



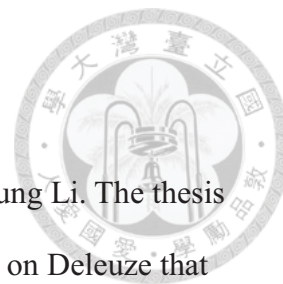
伊塔羅·卡爾維諾的《看不見的城市》雙重建構於兩個觀點相對的角色，小說的雙層結構呼應這兩個不同的觀點。小說的框架敘述忽必烈可汗為了追求帝國的普遍原則而開始的對話，小說的內容則是馬可波羅對忽必烈問題的回覆：對於單一原則的追求，他應之以無可歸類的諸多故事。在這兩個迥異的觀點之間，《看不見的城市》的風景浮現。這個風景產生於這兩方共同參與的對話中，因此必然是既一元又多元的。本論文從時間性來探討這種風景如何讓一元與多元互相關連而彼此創造。透過將小說與吉爾·德勒茲的時間哲學對話，本文指出這本小說聚焦於大寫故事的時間，並在時間呈現自身各面向的過程中，展開了多層次的風景。小說行進於這個風景的逐步顯現：忽必烈統攝性的一元觀點被他與馬可波羅的對話消解了，而馬可波羅口中時間各異的種種城市形成了一種時間整體的風景。這個整體被複數決定，因此一元多元不分。如此的風景接著雙重反映於忽必烈容納差異的地圖集，以及馬可波羅從分散的故事細節中看見的連續性故事。在這兩者中，一元與多元摺入彼此，變成多元一元與一元多元。二者是故事創造的兩個面向，使一元論與多元論只是彼此的面向而非對立。本文從這些層面檢視大寫故事的時間如何創造出無根基風景，以討論小說中多元與一元的問題。

關鍵字：伊塔羅·卡爾維諾、《看不見的城市》、吉爾·德勒茲、一元論、多元論、時間、故事



for my father

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Table of Contents



English Abstract	i
Chinese Abstract	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	
List of Abbreviations	
Introduction	1
Chapter 1	11
Dialoguing in a Crumbling Empire: Communication and the Time of Story beyond Monism	
Impossible Communication and Disparate Objects	12
Silent Language and Virtual Communication	19
Abstractness and Materiality	23
Story and the Empty Form of Time	28
Chapter 2	41
The Landscape among the Cities: The Virtual Whole of Pluralism	
Coexistence and Plural Wholes	43
Repetitions and Differences in the Whole	54
Rotation and Movement	60
Chapter 3	69
A Landscape Unfolding into Two: Pluralist Monism and Monist Pluralism	
Pluralist Monism and Monist Pluralism	69
The Doubled Lines of Happiness	77
Freedom between Plural Realities	93
Conclusion	98
Works Cited	104

List of Abbreviations

***ATP** Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*

***B** Bergsonism*

***C1** Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*

***C2** Cinema 2: The Time-Image*

***DR** Difference and Repetition*

***ECC** Essay Critical and Clinical*

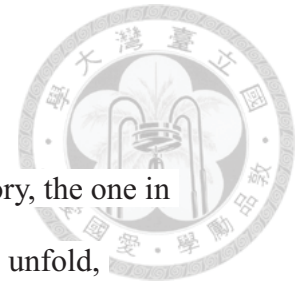
***IC** Invisible Cities*

***LS** Logic of Sense*

***WP** What is Philosophy?*



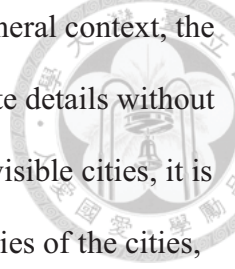
Introduction



In Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, there is a virtual level of Story, the one in which the stories of cities acquire an independent state and begin to unfold, differentiate, and synthesize by themselves. This dimension of Story appears in the dialogue of Kublai Khan, the monist emperor, with Marco Polo, the pluralist storyteller. The Story can be described but not determined by either the dialogue or the stories. What does this double structure (dialogue-stories) of the novel serve? What does Calvino intend to convey about monism and pluralism? How can the Story that includes these two perspectives be described?

At the outset of the novel, Kublai Khan, when facing the insalvable deterioration of the empire, is overwhelmed with emptiness and sadness. In deep melancholy, he listens to Marco Polo's stories, striving to discern "the tracery of a pattern so subtle" (1) that does not decay. Upon Kublai's quest for the general pattern that is irrelevant to the decay of the particulars, Polo recounts cities in brilliant shapes and kinds that stand against the bleak background of the empire. While Kublai keeps asking the monist question of a totalizing pattern to explain the particulars, Polo complicates the problem by making it plural with detailed descriptions of particular cities. The novel is structured precisely in this singular-plural format: while the nine chapters of the novel are all framed by italicized passages of the dialogues between Kublai and Polo, the chapters are independent accounts of the cities. Framed by the dialogues, the cities are named not directly in relation to the dialogues but after nine thematic categories, including memory, desire, sign, eye, thinness, sky, death, continuousness, and hiddenness.

Through three stages, the novel goes on with these two levels of the structure constantly linking up each other while not engulfed by each. While the frame of the



dialogues reflects Kublai's monist wishes for giving the stories a general context, the scattered stories reflect Polo's pluralist attention to the most disparate details without reducing them by patterns. With regard to the landscape made of invisible cities, it is doubly structured as both singular and plural; with regard to the stories of the cities, the Story has proceeds between two different views. The frame and the stories vaguely correspond yet remain independent to each other. In the first three chapters of the novel, the two characters struggle to make their communication precise, switching from gestures between foreigners to learned language and then to silence. As they fine-tune their communication to better suit the invisible pictures, the cities Polo describes are mainly about how a traveler approaches the invisible that best expresses the cities, a way that is beyond the imagination of both the monist and the pluralist. In the middle chapters of the novel, the characters talk about models and patterns that explain particular cities, looking for reasonable ways to define the relations between rules and existences. Corresponding to their discussions, Polo recounts cities in ridiculous, impossible, far-fetching structures and patterns, exploring patterns free of restrictions by not only rules but also the reality that the rules seem to be extracted from. In the last three chapters of the novel, the characters take their stands for the problem of the relation between things and their patterns. While Kublai tries to encompass particulars into a general system, Polo insists on the unclassifiable particulars. As their two different views oppose each other in the frames, the framed cities in these chapters are cities that are complicated and real, flickering with not only the almost unbearable weight of reality but also uncontrollable happiness escaping the heaviness. The novel ends in a paradoxical tone as Kublai is overwhelmed by sadness where Polo finds flickers of happiness. While Kublai's monism becomes a sad and passive monism, its interaction with Polo the pluralist gives rise to happiness beyond Kublai's control.

The dual views, monism and pluralism, can be examined in the context of Calvino's literary project. In his own words, "[i]n my *Invisible Cities* every concept and value turns out to be double—even exactitude" (*Six Memos* 72). In the talk about "exactitude" in *Six Memos for Next Millennium*, Calvino describes how the two views incarnated by the two characters are two tendencies of his writing. He points out that in the scene where Kublai tries to translate the detailed descriptions of things into abstract arrangements of chess, "Kublai Khan personifies the intellectual tendency toward rationalization, geometry, and algebra, reducing knowledge of his empire to the combinatoria of pieces on a chessboard" (74). The attention to abstraction along with that to details can be viewed in Calvino's larger project. Conscious of his pursuit of the knowledge of things in two opposite methods, he maintains that his

search for exactitude was branching out in two directions: on the one side, the reduction of secondary events to abstract patterns according to which one can carry out operations and demonstrate theorems; and on the other, the effort made by words to present the tangible aspect of things as precisely as possible. (74)

While the former is the exactness of the universal rules, the latter is the exactness of particular things. Rules are nothing but attempts to grasp the universe by the simplest order, while particular details resist being accounted in any way other than themselves. In other words, Calvino writes not only to look for abstract patterns but also to describe particular details. The vacillation between, or even the interaction between, the two ends and the attraction of both force him to write with the greatest creativity. *Invisible Cities* emerges in the tension between the two paradoxical views.

These two tendencies resonate with the two trends of literature that critics often associate Calvino with: the modernist and the postmodernist. As James discerns, these two trends correspond to two parts of the structure of *Invisible Cities*: the framing

with Kublai and Polo's dialogue (functioning mainly according to Kublai's logic) and the individual descriptions of the cities (provided by Polo). James says:

The book does not form a narrative whole but exists on two rhetorical levels which constantly slip by each other. These two levels correspond to the modern and the postmodern: the narrative which puts itself into question while seeking to recuperate its fragments into a whole—a dialectized economy of exchange and representation—as opposed to the numerically generated set of separates which do not add up but exist as being relative to one another. (155)

The two levels structure the novel to be in constant struggle between the modernist concern with the narrative and the postmodernist affirmation of fragments. While the narrative attempts to incorporate the details into a whole, the stories insist in expressing themselves separately and discontinuously.

Critics find *Invisible Cities* modernist because of its pursuit for a narrative to explain everything. The discursive frame exists as if to frame the fragments of cities under a kind of narrative. As Kerstin Pilz puts it, the novel is composed of:

a dialogue between two characters who embody diametrically opposed methodological approaches to knowledge: while Kublai Khan tries to comprehend his empire rationally by reducing it to a game of chess, Marco Polo's observations and descriptions provide the empirical data upon which the Khan's deductions and abstractions are based. (230)

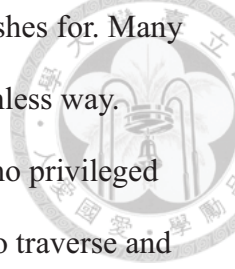
Pilz precisely points out Kublai's tendency to abstract the particularities, which Polo describes, into rules. From the same point of view, Laurence Breiner argues that "Kublai attempts, from his place in the frame, to make Marco's accounts of cities add up to something—as every emperor, from his capital, attempts to make his diverse conquests add up to an empire" (564). Concerned with a fixed sense of the empire,

Kublai is certainly looking for “unities” (Breiner 563) that confirms the existence of his empire as a totality. Since it is Kublai who initiates the conversation, the framing of the novel as a narrative follows Kublai’s modernist wish,

However, Polo does not seem to be only a rough material provider, since Kublai does not succeed in his abstraction. The complexity of the novel lies in that there is no response to Kublai’s modernist quest for the unified narrative other than Polo’s postmodernist descriptions of disparate cities. As Pilz further explicates, “Polo’s attention to difference continually undermines the Khan’s approach” (232). This failure of abstraction shows that Polo’s view makes abstraction and unity impossible or at least unthinkable if not considered along with difference. Since Kublai’s method is fundamentally constructed and undermined by Polo’s approach, Polo provides a procedure alternative to deduction. Or rather, Polo and Kublai together create a procedure to look for the “subtle pattern” that can only be asked for by a monist and answered by a pluralist.

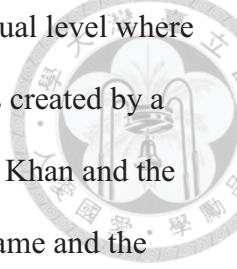
Is the “subtle pattern” quested by Kublai, as Breiner says, “only...a projection of the Khan’s occupational thirst for order, unrelated to the structure of the text before us” (564)? Is the order to be radically opposed to Polo’s accounts of the cities? Set against/along with Polo’s stories, Kublai’s pursuit consciously questions itself. This self-doubt reveals that the modernist narrative is overwhelmed by the postmodernist wave. Since *Invisible Cities* constantly poses questions to itself, critics find it, as Teresa De Lauretis argues, an open work in the sense that it challenges the narrative pattern itself, exposing its meaning, its logic, its power” (17). The narrative seems to reveal and undermine itself—the quest for unity shows nothing but the impossibility of unity.

Some critics opt for Calvino’s postmodernist penchant, considering the novel to be about narrative itself because of the seemingly random arrangement of the cities.



The stories of the cities overwhelm the singular narrative Kublai wishes for. Many critics discern the descriptions of the cities as arranged in a directionless way. Thinking of the structure as a collection of fragments that “implies no privileged direction” (291), Carolyn Springer claims that “[t]he reader is free to traverse and explore the text in any order he pleases” (293). The novel is a pure play for readers. Likewise, Peter Bondanella holds that by organizing the book around a traveler describing scattered cities, the novel “provides a great deal of narrative freedom to the reader” (169). These critics emphasize the meta-fictional characteristic of *Invisible Cities*, viewing the novel as an experiment of reading itself. They claim that the novel demonstrates possibilities and autonomy in reading that do not necessarily add up to any meaning. Lauretis even describes the arrangement of the cities as “random”: “Calvino’s distribution of the cities in eleven categories, each of which is repeated five times, appears to be a random one, where numbers and categories have no allegorical meaning, no logical or symbolic necessity” (18). The arrangement of the cities does not seem to follow any totalizing rule that makes the arrangement a necessity. In short, the stories of the cities are considered to be arranged so randomly that no totalizing principle may possibly be imposed on them. The stories are as independent as they can to affirm the contingency of particulars in a postmodernist way.

In short, Calvino’s divergent attention to the monist abstract rules constructed by the framing narrative and to the pluralist scattered particularities of the cities reveals his ambiguous position between being a modernist and a postmodernist. To put it another way, an investigation of Calvino’s double attention to monism and pluralism helps explain a core issue the critics of Calvino point toward while having not totally resolved: why is Calvino both modernist and postmodernist? How can the opposed characteristics of the two be reconciled in one novel?



In *Invisible Cities*, the two opposed views are resolved in a virtual level where stories germinate and become by themselves: the Story. The Story is created by a dialogue between two parties: the two characters, the monist Kublai Khan and the pluralist Marco Polo, whose views are reflected by the discursive frame and the stories in the structure of the novel. On the one hand, the Story is possible only through the interactions between both sides. While the encounter between a monist and a pluralist demands the Story to give rise to not only a consistent overview of the happening of stories but also disparate stories, this two layered structure of the novel forces the Story to stay in an ambiguous state presented but not determined by either the discursive frame or the separate stories. Through the opposed characters and the double structure, Calvino is asking: what is the limit of Story? What makes possible a Story that creates a landscape full of the most disparate details in one view? The novel explores this problem and figures out a way in which the monist and the pluralist may relate to each other without contradiction.

On the other hand, while it is the participation of the two views that make Story possible, it is by this peculiar form of Story that the two views correlate and transform each other by not being contradictory but becoming the constitutive aspects of one Story. While Kublai's monism is broken into by Polo's pluralism, the latter gains a view of the whole through the former. In other words, to foreground the Story of *Invisible Cities* is to foreground the problem of how to create a real dialogue for a monist and a pluralist to relate to each other. Calvino's exploration of Story thus becomes a metaphysical experiment of the philosophical question of one and many: How should the world be viewed, as an irreconcilable, contingent, disparate plurality or in one unchanging, universal totality? Where does the truth lie, the most particular details or the most abstract pattern? Since the novel is fundamentally doubly structured, Calvino's answer to these questions apparently leans toward a

reconciliation of the two sides. Although, as shown in his distinct design, he definitely affirms the radical difference between the two, he finds the highest creativity in the interactions of them. The Story of *Invisible Cities* answers the philosophical question by proposing a form the monist and the pluralist together participates in.

How can this Story in *Invisible Cities* be described? Being neither the dialogues of the two initiated by Kublai Khan nor the verbal expressions of Marco Polo, Story is something created by both while not limited to either. It goes on by continuing in the discursive and giving rise to the stories of Polo, while not reduced to either. It remains itself and transforms those that are involved in it. In what terms can this Story be captured and its inclusion of the monist and the pluralist be described? What is its most fundamental aspect that enables its double implementation of the two views? This thesis aims to explore the interactions of the monism and pluralism in the Story of *Invisible Cities* through time. I argue that it is as aspects of time that the two views correlate and influence each other and that the Story can relate the two because of the special time it creates. I will draw on Deleuze's theory of time to explore this complex *time of Story*. As such a time goes on, Kublai's general empirical rule is replaced by a whole made of pluralities and the particulars create their own local monist unities. This time unfolds a groundless landscape in which the invisible cities express themselves.

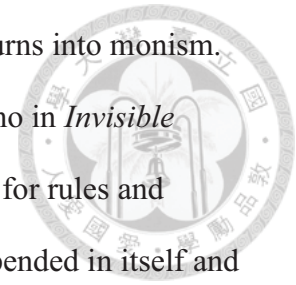
The Story requires the encounter between the monist and Polo the pluralist. As Kublai looks for a general pattern and Polo answers with disparate stories, the novel starts in the discrepancy between the two. The incongruity of the monist search and the pluralist stories is where the time of Story appears, which first of all attacks Kublai's general monism. Although the novel gains its apparent consistency in the frame describing the dialogue between the two invited by Kublai, what the frame does is to suspend Kublai's monism. Chapter One of the thesis examines the impossibility

of language vis-a-vis Story. It is only in the suspension of language that Story unfolds itself in a state not decided either by the plural or the monist while giving rise to both. Deleuze's idea of "counter-actualization" is appealed to explain how the actual dialogue is broken in order for the cities told in stories to appear in the virtual communication of the interlocutors. It is argued that counter-actualization is a function of the time of Story, which is compared to Deleuze's idea of "the pure and empty form of time" that has no content while constantly unfolding into differences.

Once the actual monism is suspended, a virtual whole is created by the plural. While the time of Story counter-actualizes Kublai's monism, it at the same time forces the plural stories told by Polo to form an overall pattern: the spiral constructed by the stories of the cities. Numbered under different categories and arranged in different chapters, the stories resist forming an overall pattern while forming one in their resistance. The result is a moving whole made in the common resistances of the different disparate elements. Chapter Two of this thesis discusses this strange whole made of the radically disparate, demonstrating what kind of a monist view is created by the most plural. Three features of this whole are analyzed: the coexistence of the elements in different layers, i.e. chapters of the novel, undermines while recreates a whole; secondly, as the categories of the elements repeat in different chapters, the whole creates differences in itself through repetitions; and, lastly, the rotation of the whole is made by the relations of all the elements, giving rise to a whole that is never static. In this chapter, the moving spiral of Calvino is compared with Bergson-Deleuzian cone of the pure past. While both of them are images of the virtual whole made of pure differences, the two models differ greatly especially when it comes to the minute and constant movements Calvino gives to every single stories.

As what will be shown, Kublai's monist search is suspended when encountering the plural, and Polo's plural stories lead to a monist whole. In other words, in the time

of Story, the monism is broken into pluralism while the pluralism turns into monism. However, instead of ending up with reversing the two views, Calvino in *Invisible Cities* reverses them to complicate them. If there is a monist search for rules and patterns, as started by Kublai, it cannot continue without being suspended in itself and supported by the plural; if the plural is expressed in the most disparate, it cannot help but form a monist whole which cannot be defined without the plural. In short, the result is: a plural monism and a monist pluralism. Chapter Three examines the plural monism that Kublai's monism is transformed into by analyzing the atlas he owns in the end of the novel, an atlas that collects differences into a whole. And the monist plural which Polo's pluralism ends up with is discussed in three aspects: how Polo's search for landscapes shows the consistency that can only be found in the discontinuous; how the most disparate details form a consistent line at some particular moments, giving rise to monist images of happiness; and how freedom is found in small switches found between the discontinuous. Deleuze's idea of Aion is used to explain the lines of time found in the discontinuous, of time-images to explain the monist images emerging between the interaction of the virtual and the actual, and of freedom to explain the freedom in switching between plural cities.



Chapter One

Dialoguing in a Crumbling Empire: Communication and the Time of Story beyond Monism



The self-becoming of the stories creates a time in which many different stories are told consistently. How can the Story of the plural cities happen in monist dialogues? Why does Calvino tell the most plural stories in a very monist frame?

The Story of *Invisible Cities* is made possible by the confrontation of the monist Kublai Khan and the pluralist Marco Polo. Through the suspension of language and communication, *Invisible Cities* starts with the counter-actualization of Kublai Khan's monism. Encountered with Marco Polo's pluralism, Kublai's monism is revealed to be only a fixed system and is overwhelmed by the reality of things. As Kublai and Polo are engaged in the process of storytelling, what happens first of all is the suspension of Kublai's monism.

In order to find the pattern of his empire that does not decay, Khan initiates the dialogue with Polo. Kublai has a paradoxical position in the novel: he is the one who starts the storytelling, but he is also marginalized in the structure of the novel overwhelmed by various scattered stories of the cities. Critics even doubt if the figure of Kublai is dispensable in the novel that seems to be composed of nothing but scattered cities. Breiner, for example, tries to justify Kublai's position in the novel by suggesting that "[t]he emperor is invited into the book because he is the one who keeps asking about unities, thanks to his preoccupation with the idea of empire" (563). Longing for an empirical order for the disparate things in his empire, Kublai asks for a unity to describe all the differences. What is implicated in Breiner's argument is that *Invisible Cities* cannot be structured without Kublai's monism. Even though what occupies most of the novel is the scattered stories of cities, it is Kublai's quest for

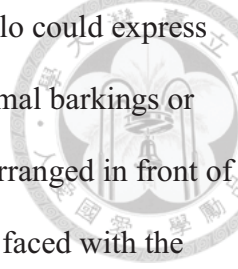
unities that summons all the different cities. The monist quest not only forces the cities to appear in plurality to resist the totalizing rule but also sustains the constant emergences of different cities during the process of Story. The position of the monist quest in the novel is shown in the structure of the novel; dictated by the monist quest, the dialogue between Kublai and Polo is described in italicized passages that frame all the chapters whose contents make up the stories of the cities. The italicized passages attempt to form a consistent narrative that dictates disparate entries of the various cities.

Kublai's monist uses of both language and logic, however, are shattered by Polo, the pluralist who invades Kublai's system as a foreigner. The framing of the novel, first of all, suspends the monist narrative itself, showing how a totalizing language is impossible and how abstract rules can never be gained without the disruption of particularities. In the face of Polo's foreign pluralism, two aspects of Kublai's monism are suspended: language and the rules of chess.

Impossible Communication and Disparate Objects

Kublai's monist wish is presented as the framing narrative that attempts to make a single sense out of the plural cities. Interestingly, instead of submitting the cities to a unifying significance, what the narrative does is to suspend itself. The dialogue between the two initiated by Kublai's totalizing quest does nothing more than suspending the dialogue itself, including the language they use and the communication between them. By narrating nothing but the suspension of the dialogue, the framing narrative suspends its capability to do anything but suspending itself.

As a foreigner, Marco Polo makes Kublai reveal the limit of his language and creates a way of communication through gestures and objects. In the beginning of

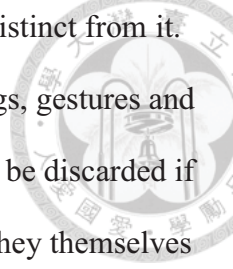


their communication, because of the barrier of language, “Marco Polo could express himself only with gestures, leaps, cries of wonder and of horror, animal barkings or hootings, or with objects he took from his knapsacks . . . which he arranged in front of him like chessmen” (*IC* 18). Polo intends to communicate, but he is faced with the impossibility of communication by language. He has to express himself as an outsider of not only the empire but also its language. As a result, he can only use gestures and objects to deliver his messages. His incapability in language as a foreigner is the reason why he is able to fundamentally invade the emperor’s territory of language. As his stories allure Kublai, his incapability makes Kublai’s language impossible, too. He makes Kublai a foreigner of communication and renders language inoperative. As two foreigners to the language, Kublai and Polo can strive to communicate as two outsiders for communication.

What foreignness can do to language may be explicated by Deleuze’s idea of a “foreign language within language.” He quotes Proust to argue that literature “opens up a kind of foreign language within language, which is . . . a becoming-other of language, a minorization of this major language, a delirium that carries it off, a witch’s line that escapes the dominant system” (*ECC* 5). Deleuze is arguing that literature makes a foreign language in the commonly-used language, setting the fixed language off to a becoming that cannot be limited by any system that determines the uses of language. A foreign language’s transformation of the major language is even more literal in *Invisible Cities*. Polo is literally a foreigner to the language Kublai uses, and the significance of being foreign is pushed to an extreme. Instead of making Kublai’s language another language, Polo opens up the foreign language within language, making the major language less active and alive than a foreign language that is hallowed out from it. Thus, Polo reveals all languages to be foreign languages that exist in their impossibilities. Polo gives Kublai a chance to be a foreigner to

language. Polo not only challenges Kublai's language but also reveals the impossibility of communication underlying every language. Showing the limit of language, Polo tries to communicate under the condition that language is impossible. Instead of making his own language or the language of gestures a major language in the place of Kublai's language, Polo makes all languages impossible. Anne Sauvagnargues explains that, in making a minor use of the major language, "[t]he minor does not aspire to attain a major position"; instead, "[t]he minor is supported by the existence of the major just as the body without organs requires an organism, but as a kind of tensor that describes the effects of protesting major norms" (96). The minor relies on the major in order to exist in a way radically against the major. What Polo does to the language gives an even more radical sense to the minorization of the major language: the most minor of a language is its impossibility, whether the language is major or minor. Polo makes language reveal its most fundamental impossibility.

What Polo uses to communicate is objects instead of language. Foreign objects and unfamiliar gestures invade Kublai and his fixed system of language. He values objects over any abstract system of language. While Kublai is used to commanding a single language to give a monist, unified sense, Polo undermines the monist method itself, conveying his messages through non-totalizable, disparate objects. In Breiner's words, "The merchant's mind is fundamentally additive: he wants everything to be everything, whereas emperors want everything to be *one* thing" (568). The notion of "additive" is not abstract addition, since Polo makes cities distinct from one another and even Kublai fails to add them up as an abstract number of three. However, Breiner is precise in stating that while Kublai wants *one* out of all things, Polo wants them to be as many as they are. And his most extreme method of making things as plural as they are is by presenting the plural cities with plural objects that have too multiple connections to be reduced to any abstraction.



Objects create surprises in language by functioning in a logic distinct from it. While language is a system composed of words that signify meanings, gestures and signs open up the system by being meanings themselves. Words can be discarded if their meanings are grasped, but objects cannot be abandoned since they themselves are what they refer to. The objects Polo brings open up worlds Polo intends to show Kublai. Words are used, but objects are displayed. In the presence of objects and gestures, all the experiences, ideas, and worlds are dramatized in the theatre set up between Polo and Kublai. While words lead to meanings, objects lead to colors, shapes, sounds, and worlds that cannot be fixed to stable meanings. For example, the “barking and hooting” of Polo display not merely the action of producing sounds, which words can express; the gestures are formed out of the material or physiological encounter with an animal. He barks and hoots with the impulses he has felt about the animal. His imitation of it surely fails to represent it. Instead of reducing the animal to a signifier that fully represents it, he brings out a diffusing image of it, affecting the listener as if the affect of the image is the purpose instead of leading him to the meaning behind. The gestures convey worlds full of impulses, sounds, and movements not limited to fixed meanings.

While gestures are affected movements Polo makes to demonstrate the animal he encounters beyond words, the objects he uses achieve a more abstract level of significance in their still state. Before picking up Kublai’s language, Polo also conveys himself through arranging objects as chess pieces. When Polo shows things he wants to convey, objects as expressions are not totally connected to the signified situation. Though arranged in the contexts Polo creates in his stories, the objects are beyond the original contexts. Instead of being only what they are in the particular stories Polo puts them in, the objects establish a new symbolization that is different from the signifying system of language. By being objects in themselves, their

materiality establishes connections between themselves, connections that are not fully in correspondence with the contexts of Polo's stories. By their material presences, the objects placed on the chessboard form constellations. Instead of only showing, Polo arranges things "in front of him like chessmen" (*IC* 18). What he wants to say is not only about things but the relations and positions on a virtual chessboard. The objects open up numerous possible connections that form various worlds while refusing to be stabilized in one of them. Using objects instead of words transforms the impossible communication into one that is without words. The interlocutors communicate in the impossibility of communication, fully involved in the connections made by objects instead of reaching an agreement in verbal language.

The two characters' involvement that is not established by verbal communication implies a transformation of the two and their relationship. Having their language changed, they themselves are changed, too. Unable to remain unified subjects with language, they enter a relationship constituted by disparate objects. How can objects throw subjects into a relation that transforms the latter? What relation is it when the subjects are more involved in each other than in their fixed selves? Deleuze and Guattari's idea about becoming and insignificant things may help explain this non-linguistic relation with the objects. Deleuze and Guattari think that insignificant things can trigger the process of becoming that happens to communication and language: "We can be thrown into a becoming by anything at all, by the most unexpected, most insignificant of things. You don't deviate from the majority unless there is a little detail that starts to swell and carries you off" (*ATP* 322). Insignificant things are significant in becoming. It is the little details that undermine the dominant structure of language. Instead of registering in the signifying system, they are *insignificant* to it. Thus, there are chances for them to present their significances that are not limited to the signifying system. When these objects give rise to a dazzling

symbolization, the system of language is upset. Triggered by insignificant objects, the communication between Polo and Kublai turns into their becoming, constantly placing them outside the system of meaning. They become objects. In the communication between the two characters, they do not understand each other but deviate from communication. Entering the process of becoming, the two interlocutors relate themselves to the relations of the objects. They communicate as two objects communicate among various other objects outside the impossible communication between subjects.

Kublai's becoming-objects in the communication is shown when he relies on the relations of objects to understand. When Polo masters Kublai's language, precise communication disappoints both of them, as evidenced by the following passage:

Polo's accounts were the most precise and detailed that the Great Khan could wish and there was no question or curiosity which they did not satisfy. And yet each piece of information about a place recalled to the emperor's mind that first gesture or object with which Marco had designated the place.

(19)

As Polo masters the language, he fluently communicates with Kublai in the latter's language. The language successfully conveys information and completes the communication, which becomes dissatisfactory. What Kublai looks for is something different from information, so he keeps relating the pieces of information to the former objects and gestures. What Kublai, the listener, feels connected to is gestures and objects that express more than represent the worlds Polo tries to bring out. As Polo expresses the moments which have affected him, Kublai is affected by, and thus connected to, Polo's gestures. And while Polo uses objects to dramatize the worlds, both of the characters are involved in the relations of the objects. While the gestures and objects Polo adopts function as expressions that involve the interlocutors, words

are only secondary representations. Polo's adaptation of gestures and objects confronts Kublai's system of language, forcing him, as a subject, to open up to things indefinable by his system. Kublai as a subject is changed as the language changes. Instead of merely functioning in the logical, linguistic system, his mind is now composed of things and becomes as one of the things. inseparable from the objects and their relations, he feels through things and grasps the rules through the relations between things.

Besides the immediacy between Kublai and objects instead of language, the other evidence showing his becoming-object is Polo's response to his question. When the objects Polo uses to tell stories of cities are viewed as emblems, the Khan asks Polo, "On the day when I know all the emblems, ... shall I be able to possess my empire, at last?" (19). This dialogue happens in the very beginning of their interactions. At that stage, Kublai has just started to participate in the process of becoming, so he is still stuck in the view of his own subjectivity, wishing to make the empire his property through knowing the symbolic aspects of it. However, Polo anticipates a view not limited by fixed subjectivity and replies that "[o]n that day you will be an emblem among emblems" (19). At the time when the world expresses itself fully through different emblems, the subject perceiving the emblems will become equal to the things and stories. Thomas DeLio argues that the idea of "an emblem among emblems" shows a unique structure of objects emerging in consciousness: "A structure is open as it presents no single fixed view of reality but instead reinforces those variable conditions under which each unique consciousness becomes manifest" (359). In other words, the object and the subject are both consciousnesses manifesting themselves, and the subject's perception of the object is not distinguishable from the emergence of both the subject's and the object's consciousnesses. The subject and the object participate in each other without hierarchy. In the case of Kublai's

transformation, Kublai has become a subject at the same level of the object without any priority.



Silent Language and Virtual Communication

As Kublai and Polo's impossible communication goes on, the impossibility of language forces their communication into the most extreme state. As Polo tells more and more stories, language gradually breaks down. The lack of language in the beginning is due to Polo's incapability. This time, the breakdown of language is also because of incapability. However, since Polo has mastered the language, the incapability becomes explicitly the inadequacy of language itself. As insignificant things, gestures and objects have gradually hollowed out the core of language. No language is possible any longer. The language that has been left out from the communication is deactivated at the final stage of their communication. This suspension is the condition for the appearance of a foreign language in a language. According to Deleuze, "a foreign language cannot be hollowed out in one language without language as a whole in turn being toppled or pushed to a limit, to an outside or reverse side that consists of Visions and Auditions that no longer belong to any language" (*ECC* 5). The appearance of the foreign language is made possible by the impossibility of language that upsets the major language as a whole. As language is suspended, there appear Visions and Auditions that are not linguistic but purely visual and audial images. They are direct expressions of the expressed instead of linguistic representations.

Kublai and Polo's dialogue more or less goes through the process Deleuze describes. As Polo hollows the major language of Kublai by his foreignness and objects, language itself is forced to its limit. Thus, even though Polo later masters the language, Kublai is no longer satisfied with it since the impossible communication

they are involved in has to be without language. After language is suspended, what emerges is the other side of language: Visions and Auditions. Here we need to distinguish between two different kinds of objects and gestures. While the first kind, as discussed above, is the medium by which Kublai and Polo get access to the non-linguistic visions and auditions Polo experiences in his trips, the second is the actual expressions that indicates virtual Visions and Auditions. As language is no longer satisfactory, Kublai cannot help but recall the gestures and objects Polo uses. Then, Polo once again uses gestures as “words failed” (33). He “went back to relying on gestures, grimaces, glances” (33). However, the gestures at this stage are different from those at the first stage. The “new kind of dialogue” works like this:

the Great Khan’s white hands, heavy with rings, answered with stately movements the sinewy, agile hands of the merchant. As an understanding grew between them, their hands began to assume fixed attitudes, each of which corresponded to a shift of mind, in a shift of mood, in their alternation and repetition. (33)

The gestures of “fixed attitudes” are different from the gestures and objects Polo adopts before he masters Kublai’s language. While the gestures before are actual, the gestures now are comparatively dry and motionless, serving to index virtual alterations in Kublai’s and Polo’s brains. This is why the more expressive the gestures are, the more fixed and stable they become—they have to be reduced in order to summon the virtual contents within the two persons’ heads. The actual communication has to be suspended and de-actualized in order for virtual changes to proceed. The Visions and Auditions do not come from the dry gestures but the changes in the two characters’ brains. As a result, “[t]he pleasure of falling back on [the gestures] also diminished in both; in their conversations, most of the time, they remained silent and immobile” (IC 33). Not only language but also gestures are no

longer necessary or possible. Only silence is left as the two get access to the changes and variations that language cannot express. Michael Wood describes what appears in their communication as “a discreet and calculated punctuation of silence” (2). The silence is carefully achieved as they suspend both language and gestures.

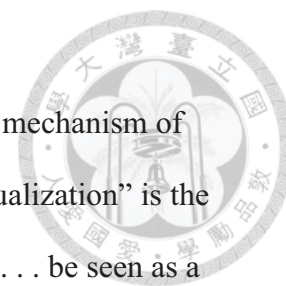
To get access to the fundamental other side of language, or the ultimate content of language, one has to suspend language. This paradox can be approached in terms of the process of artistic production. As Deleuze maintains, artists are “bizarre athletes of the ‘fasting-artist’ type, or the ‘great Swimmer’ who does not know how to swim” (*WP*172). In order to get access to the virtual where the images come from, the artist firstly has to be able to suspend himself from the actual language. He has to be impassive to the determinations of the system of language in the actual. If the artist wants to access the virtual, he must deliberately suspend what he usually does with language because a subject’s perception is limited by the fixed language he uses. Language furnishes the subject with merely organized and molar perceptions. In Deleuze and Guattari’s words, “it is necessary to annul the organs, to shut them away so that their liberated elements can enter into the new relations from which the becoming-animal, and the circulation of affects within the machinic assemblage, will result” (*ATP* 287). New relations that have been hidden in the virtual can appear when the fixed order of molar perceptions determined by language are shut down. Minute and different changes happen when fixed determinations are suspended, especially those of language since they limit meaning and expression. Since the artist’s mission is to create something new, it is crucial for him to access the virtual where new relations happen. Peter Hallward describes the artist as “someone who hollows out the domain of the lived in favour of the pure or virtual living that courses through it” (105). The virtual can appear in art only when the lived or the actual is hollowed out, or suspended. The artist finds a way to set aside the existing ways of making sense of

things, and the virtual thus becomes the only content that is shown.

The suspension of the actual for the access to the virtual is the mechanism of counter-actualization. According to Manuel DeLanda, “counter actualization” is the mechanism “to extract virtual events from intensive processes may . . . be seen as a veritable *counter actualization* since it would follow a direction opposite to that which goes from the virtual to the intensive, and from there to the extensive and qualitative” (133). In order for the virtual to be extracted in a direction opposite to actualization, there has to be a mechanism that undoes it: counter-actualization. It works by releasing things from the exterior order of actualization that makes them part of extensive organizations. Hallward further explains this function as what “will tempt the organism to forego all concern for the present and for its actual interests or needs. A contemplative inaction can now prevail over action” (105). Organisms are concerned only with their actual functions, and the virtual can longer be found in the organized actual. While actions are dictated by the rules the organism follow, inaction is a way not to be actual. In other words, if one wants to extract the virtual, one has to stop action and practice inaction.

Deleuze’s idea of counter-actualization can help explain the silence Kublai and Polo reaches in *Invisible Cities*. While gestures and language are all representations and actual systems, the virtual events between the two persons can be accessed by suspending the actual. Language has to be de-actualized, and the subject has to become impassive to any major language. As silence falls between Kublai and Polo, they enter a virtual state. The silence in language does not mean that nothing happens in the silent contemplation that replaces the dialogue of the two; on the contrary, a virtual communication happens between them. As Calvino describes:

Marco’s answers and objections took their place in a discourse already proceeding on its own, in the Great Khan’s head. That is to say, between the



two of them it did not matter whether questions and solutions were uttered aloud or whether each of the two went on pondering in silence. (23)

Words and expressions no longer matter. Questions and solutions no longer depend on their being uttered or not. Everything virtually happens in the interlocutors' heads that create a plane of communication. As Polo maintains, "[e]verything I see and do assumes meaning in a mental space" (93). This inactive interaction creates a plane that cuts across both of their brains, a virtual plane more consistent and communicative than any actual interaction. Having opened up the system of language, Kublai and Polo participate in a virtual plane where their thoughts coexist with and penetrate each other. As Polo suggests, "[p]erhaps this garden exists only in the shadow of our lowered eyelids" (93). It is only in the shadow that the virtual can be seen and that the subject becomes where the virtual happens. There is a garden of thoughts only when two persons both lower their eyelids, de-activating their extensive and sensory language.

Abstractness and Materiality

Kublai's monist wish for a general rule for disparate things is carried out not only in his use of a major language in an attempt to control the dialogue between Polo and him but also in Kublai's attempt to extract rules from the game of chess Polo arranges objects into.

In the framing dialogue of Chapter Eight, having listened to many stories Polo tells with the help of objects arranged on the floor, Kublai observes the existence of certain rules and translates them onto a chessboard. Kublai thinks that "[i]f each city is like a game of chess, the day when I have learned the rules, I shall finally possess my empire, even if I shall never succeed in knowing all the cities it contains" (*IC* 109). Kublai's monist wish is to seek the general rules that explain all the particularities. For

him, to know the rules that determine the empire is to truly possess it. He sees not the particulars but their relation: “Ignoring the objects’ variety of form, he could grasp the system of arranging one with respect to the others on the majolica floor” (109). In his view, there is nothing more important than the abstract rules. From the relations and movements of the things Polo uses for storytelling, Kublai abstracts rules of chess by which he can play. He enjoys the position above the whole empire, a position in which he gains the complete control over the particularities of the empire. He is not afraid of decay or oblivion any more, since the rules and their infinite combinations are all-explaining and regardless of what is doomed to be decay or be forgotten.

Calvino even describes what Kublai contemplates as the “essential landscapes” (110). What is “essential” for Kublai? He looks forward to “discovering a coherent, harmonious system underlying the infinite deformities and discords” (110). In other words, he believes in the existence of a set of harmonious rules that can explain all the unclassifiable and heterogeneous particularities. The essential landscape he searches for here is a model which the particularities follow. And he finds that “no model could stand up to the comparison with the game of chess” (110) because it is not fixed but encapsulates the endless combinations the most basic units of the universe. Kathryn Hume observes, “Chess squares prove as divisible as the supposedly indivisible atom. Symbolically, one black and one white squares seem to epitomize the whole concept of minimal units, yet when subjected to the visionary lens of Calvino’s mind, they suck us into multitudinous, burgeoning worlds” (138). Kublai views particular things not as copies of a model but as elements that constitute different relations and combinations. The elements in chess seem to open to countless possible results, resembling the simplest units of the universe that give rise to all the rules of the universe. Ermanno Bencivenga associates this model with the art of combinatorics: “If one were able to reach these final (or initial) principles, and they were limited in number, one might be

able to set up an upper bound on the number of possibilities and thus achieve completeness—the next best guarantee of security once you take the perilous path of denying ordinary reality” (210). Here Bencivenga reveals the ambition of the art of combinatorics, which does not consist in deriving the ultimate infinite combinations but a closed set of possibilities that can be fully anticipated. This form of knowledge claims completeness by limited elements and rules. Thus, even though working in such a form that is more variable than model, chess is still an art of combinatorics that limits objects by extreme abstraction. It is still a closed system that attempts to grasp the infinite world within a finite set.

Kublai dialogue with Polo seems to imply a hidden purpose. Polo is asked to tell stories in order for Kublai to extract rules from them. As Pilz puts it, “while Kublai Khan tries to comprehend his empire rationally by reducing it to a game of chess, Marco Polo’s observations and descriptions provide the empirical data upon which the Khan’s deductions and abstractions are based” (230). Pilz accurately observes Kublai’s tendency to abstract from particularities. As Polo tells more and more stories, Kublai is gradually able to derive patterns from the various particular cities. However, Pilz may have over-valuated Kublai’s capability and under-estimated Polo’s role in the process. In *Invisible Cities*, Kublai’s ambitious abstraction ends up in a deadlock which, however, does not trap Polo. It is Polo who leads Kublai out of the deadlock by undermining the emperor's approach in every detail.

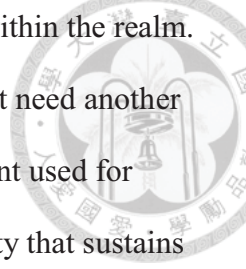
Kublai’s extreme abstraction leads to nothingness. He knows that each game is about relations and numbers, ending “in a gain or loss: but of what?” (110). The abstract game ends up with no content. Facing the empty squares of chess he uses to show the rules, he drowns himself in the sense of nothingness, for what remains is “black square, or a white one” (110). The abstraction proves irrelevant to the

particulars. Polo answers the sadness by pointing out the materiality of the chessboard:

Your chessboard, sire, is inlaid with two woods: ebony and maple. The square on which your enlightened gaze is fixed was cut from the ring of a trunk that grew in a year of drought: you see how its fibers are arranged? Here a barely hinted knot can be made out: a bud tried to burgeon on a premature spring day, but the night's frost forced it to desist. (118)

While Kublai focuses on the abstract significance of the black and white squares so that he eventually falls into a sense of emptiness, Polo sees the squares not as abstractions but as contents. He sees the squares not in an abstract and seemingly unchanging eternal time but in the time that makes the wood. The materiality of the chessboard itself contains traces of time. The chessboard has far more complicated temporalities than the abstract time of Kublai's game: the board is intensively formed out of the struggle of a tree in its own duration against the duration of natural forces. More than one forces and durations coexist in the board. The board contains temporalities that resist being totalized by the abstract temporality of Kublai's model. In other words, even the equipment of the model escapes the model. As Beno Weiss argues, "Polo shows [Kublai] that a basic design exists, but that it is so complicated that it cannot be understood by logic alone" (148). More precisely, various basic designs exist, so their entanglements cannot be understood by a simple homogeneous logic. There are patterns that explain the world, but the patterns are not as totalizing and systematic as Kublai thinks.

While Kublai is trapped in abstraction, Polo escapes from it. Springer claims that Kublai "prevents Marco Polo from leaving on any new expeditions by engaging him in interminable games of chess" (295). Kublai surely attempts to give abstraction the priority over particular expeditions. Interestingly, Kublai's self-entrapment prevents



Polo from leaving physically but not from leaving for expeditions within the realm. Polo escapes by following the materiality of the objects. He does not need another realm to escape than where Kublai is stuck. It is within the equipment used for abstraction that irreconcilable durations can be found; it is materiality that sustains while refusing to submit to abstraction. The materiality is implicitly depicted. When describing Kublai's obsession with chess, Calvino cunningly indicates the texture of every tool that is used for Kublai's abstract play. Although not explicitly pointed out nor noticed by Kublai until Polo identifies the wood the chessboard is made of, the materiality is never absent. With texture and light, Calvino depicts the scene in which they play chess: "The Great Khan's chessmen were huge pieces of polished ivory" and "Marco recreated the perspectives and the spaces of black and white cities on moonlit nights" (110). Later, when Polo answers Kublai's anxiety of emptiness with materiality, these descriptions are revealed to be not just decorations. The materiality that constantly evades the rules is what constitutes them.

Although Polo's eyes for materiality do not see the emptiness the abstract rules end up with, Calvino does not propose that materiality is superior to abstraction or that abstract rules should be discarded. Instead, Calvino depicts the two concerns as both necessary though always evading each other. The image in the novel that best describes this interrelated opposition is the bridge. When "Polo describes a bridge, stone by stone," Kublai asks, "which is the stone that supports the bridge?" (74). While Polo pays attention to the particular stones, Kublai asks for a single object that accounts for the existence of the bridge. However, Polo answers that the bridge is supported not by particular stones but by "the line of the arch that they form." There are differences between the matter as the particular stones and the form the stones give rise to. However, Polo is not suggesting that matter and form are two: when Kublai continues to ask why Polo speaks of stones since the arch is what matters, Polo answers, "Without

stones there is no arch” (74). Even though Polo points out the importance of the arch, he proposes the necessity of both the abstract form and the material particular. The former determines the structure and function of the stones while the latter gives rise to the form. The interrelation of the two is no less important than their distinction. Polo involves Kublai in the dynamics of the two concerns. When Polo describes particular stones, he asks Kublai to grasp the arch the stones form; and when Kublai looks for the arch, Polo reminds him that there is no arch without stones. The dialogue becomes a constant process of thoughts which waver between the two characters’ different concerns.

This dialogue about the arch epitomizes the dynamic process between Kublai’s monist wish for abstract rules and Polo’s pluralist concern for material particulars. In the process of silencing the language, Kublai’s monist wishes are suspended in the dialogue between the two characters; in the game of chess, Kublai’s monist grasp of the rules is undermined by the evading materiality. In both cases, Kublai’s monism is made ineffectual. On one level, his abstraction fails to stay general as it is constantly undermined by objects and materials; on the other level, his monist wishes weirdly resonate with patterns in a virtual state, patterns that are different from what he can imagine in his general, totalizing view¹. The virtual state is accessed in the two characters’ silence and is approached while never captured by the game of chess.

Story and the Empty Form of Time

As the dialogue between the two characters goes on, Kublai’s monist language is suspended, and his method of abstraction is constantly undermined by Polo’s concern with the radically plural materiality. Thus, a question about the novel’s structure needs to be asked: what does the framing narrative serve if not the totalizing wishes of Kublai?

¹ The monist view of the virtual whole is further explicated in Chapter Two and the first part of Chapter Three.

Since the dialogue between the two continues to frame the various stories Polo tells, it foregrounds the storytelling as something too important to be just discarded alone with Kublai's totalizing monism. However, what happens is no longer Polo's storytelling, since his language is suspended. Instead, what happens is that the stories seem to tell themselves by themselves at a virtual level: Story replaces Polo's storytelling.

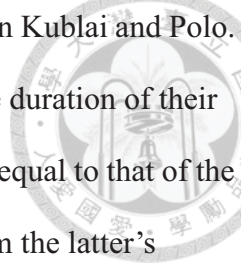
Furthermore, it seems that it is Story that demands Kublai's monism to be suspended. While the dialogue proceeds in a linear time to suspend itself, the Story unfolds in a different time. Happening in while not determined by the linear time of the dialogue, the Story creates an aspect of time that is more fundamental to the time of the dialogue and overwhelming the latter. Unfolding into various plural cities, the time of Story is too creative to be told in systematic language or captured in the dialogue. In other words, the time of Story is not equal to the time of the dialogue or the time of Polo's narration.

There is a gap between the stories told in the entries within each chapter and the dialogue in which stories are told, a dialogue meta-fictionally depicted in the narrative in the beginning and in the end of each chapter. While the stories of the cities are in fluent words and colorful images, there is actually no traces in the depicted dialogue to show that the stories are produced by the dialogue. In the dialogue, the interlocutors' language is fragmented and suspended, and Polo's methods of expressions are objects and gestures. Breiner describes that "the accounts of cities that we read do not correspond to the text's own description of the content of the dialogues between the emperor and the ambassador; the form in which the cities are presented to us fits none of the methods by which Marco is said to communicate to the Khan" (561-62). The Story in its special time is what unfolds between the dialogue and the stories, deactivating the dialogue while making stories happen one after another. What makes the stories appear is not Polo the storyteller but the indescribable Story. Although the

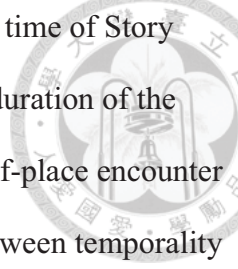
Story happens in a dialogue, it can never be described by how the storyteller Polo speaks and how Kublai listens. Furthermore, in *Invisible Cities*, only when the dialogue is described to show the impossibility of language can the Story express itself.

In *Invisible Cities*, Story is even more paradoxical. It is a process that endlessly tells of disparate, pluralist details while maintaining a monist view that sees the landscape the details give rise to. Pluralism refers to the unclassifiable disparity of the cities Polo tells. Monism alludes to the one view of Kublai which includes all the different cities in a whole. Story strangely is created by and then implicates both the pluralism and the monism, and its development turns the couple into another pluralism and another monism. Story happens when the two opposing concepts encounter. They wish to see at the same time not only the most disparate details but also the landscape or the world as a whole, Story proceeds because of Kublai and Polo's dialogue. The two characters' opposing views make the novel fundamentally double-structured. On the one hand, the plural stories express itself in their plurality, making the dialogue open up to the plurality. On the other hand, although the language and communication dictated by Kublai's monism are suspended, the Story seems to proceed in a monism different from Kublai's. This monism different from Kublai's has two aspects: It is not only a consistency that renders Kublai's general consistency inoperative but also a consistency that continues only in the most disparate differences of the cities. It is not only the force of the cities demanding to tell their own stories, a force that destroys Kublai's empirical imagination, but also a force that passes through all the cities, making all the cities' creation one. Interestingly, the monism and pluralism in the Story are not in the relation of whole to part, which is merely spatial or a spatialized rendition of time. It is through destroying the linear time of the dialogue that Story creates its own time and thus recreates the meaning of pluralism and monism.

The time of the Story emerges out of empirical times, but different from them. One



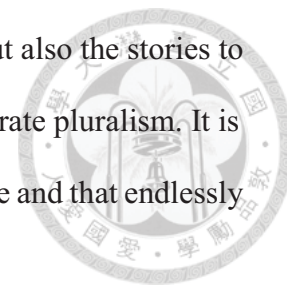
of the empirical times in the novel is the time of the dialogue between Kublai and Polo. Even though their dialogue works to undermine communication, the duration of their dialogue is still an empirical time. However, the time of Story is not equal to that of the dialogue. The former develops from the latter or more precisely from the latter's intervals. It is in the interval of language that the Story tells itself; and it is in the intervals of empirical times that the time of the Story appears. What interrupts the communication is the time within the stories of the cities—Polo interrupts Kublai's stable sense of time by bringing up stories of his travels. The time of Story emerges in the encounter between two temporalities: the duration of the traveler and the duration of the city and its inhabitants. In the novel, arrivals at cities generally interrupt the empirical time of travel. Many descriptions of the cities begin "by transmitting a sense of movement" (Chiesa 405). Or, in relation to temporality, the descriptions in the novel begin with a measurement of time in travelling: "Leaving there and proceeding *for three days* toward the east, you reach Diomira" (IC 6); "When a man rides *a long time* through wild regions he feels the desire for a city" (7); "*At the end of three days*, moving southward, you come upon Anatasia" (10); "You walk *for days* among trees and among stones" (11; all emphases added). By time in his duration, the traveler measures his movement and the landscape he passes. The space he crosses loses its own spatial measurement. Laura Chiesa argues that travelers "are forced to stop in their tracks, and it is in this way that, reading, we see the city as an image burnt onto closed eyelids, at a kind of standstill" (405). In terms of movement, a city is a stop in the track, giving rise to images born in and out of movements. In terms of time, the arrival at a city is described as a pause in the measurement of time in travelling. Rather than located in a static landscape, cities emerge in confrontations with the duration of travel. To express their own particular stories, cities in their own duration interrupt the traveler's counting of time.



Both times of the travel and communication are empirical. The time of Story clashes with the empirical at different levels. On the first level, the duration of the traveler clashes with that of the city dwellers, giving rise to an out-of-place encounter between the two durations. The stories of the cities float in an in-between temporality that does not belong to each of the constituent durations. The time of the stories is the emptiest and the fullest of all times, expressing the cities to the traveler in their fullest. On another level, the time of the stories clashes with that of the interlocutors. Through Polo, the temporality of the stories constantly invades that of the dialogue between Kublai and Polo. It is in the tension between the disrupted time of travel which the Story accounts for and the disrupted time of the dialogue which the storyteller tells the stories that the time of Story emerges. More precisely, the time of Story emerges when the fracture of the travel time and the fracture of the dialogue time overlap.

The time of Story emerges in the intersection of the dual views of monism and pluralism. The fracture in Polo's time of travel lets the plural cities express themselves in their different durations instead of being homogeneous to the time of travel; the fracture in the two characters' dialogue undermines the procedure of communication, replacing the general monism of Kublai with a monism of time. These two fractures overlap as Polo recounts the first fracture (encounter with a city) in the second fracture (encounter with Kublai); to be more precise, Polo's failure in communication leads to the second fracture that enables the expressions of the cities through the overlapped fractures of the two. In the double fractures, the cities express themselves in a time that is not empirical. A different kind of time is there for the disparate stories to appear in the linear time of dialogue and for the stories to appear one after the other although they are disparate and unclassifiable. This time of Story is not the time of Polo's speech but this discrepancy makes the appearance of stories in the dialogue possible; The time of Story is not the time of individual cities, but it makes the appearance of cities one after the

other possible. By causing not only the dialogue to be suspended but also the stories to appear, the time of Story links the suspended monism and the disparate pluralism. It is actually one time of Story that replaces the linear time of the dialogue and that endlessly expresses itself as nothing but disparate plural stories.



How can this time of Story that impels the appearance of stories and the continuity of the dialogue be described? What is the time that appears as both monist and pluralist in the fractures? In other words, since the time of Story is different from but fundamental to its contents, including the dialogue and the stories, how can this sort of time serving as a form be described? How can this sort of time as a form remain unmoved by its contents while breeding endless stories?

The strangely empty but full time of Story can be explained by Deleuze's idea of Aion, the empty form of time which abandons orders and refuses to become a form that dictates the content while constantly unfolds itself into endless contents. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze argues that

time out of joint means demented time or time outside the curve which gave it a god, liberated from its overly simple circular figure, freed from the events which made up its content, its relation to movement overturned; in short, time presenting itself as an empty and pure form. Time itself unfolds (that is, apparently ceases to be a circle) instead of things unfolding within it (following the overly simple circular figure). (88)

Instead of following any spatial model or becoming a model itself, the empty form of time moves aberrantly from any order that attempts to define it. While any time that is regulated is doomed to be limited to the contents they determine, this time remains itself unmoved by the contents. How can a time not be limited by its contents? How can a time be imagined without the movement it measures? Deleuze brilliantly explains that time "itself unfolds" (*DR* 88). Instead of being only the measurements of happenings,

time itself may be what happens. Time itself is what moves. While remaining a form, it is a moving form that does not need contents to fulfill it. It unfolds different contents endlessly while remaining independent of all contents; it leads to different contents instead of being caused by the contents.

In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze further explicates that this time is Aion: “Aion is the eternal truth of time: *pure empty form of time*” (165). Deleuze contrasts Aion with Chronos. While Chronos is the time hinged to movement, Aion is the time out of joint. He claims, “Whereas Chronos was limited and infinite, Aion is unlimited, the way that future and past are unlimited, and finite like the instant” (165). Chronos is limited even though it may go on infinitely since all it has is presents that are determined by circular movements. Chronos is the time that is defined spatially “inseparable from circularity” (165). Instead of being the eternal present, Aion empties itself of presents and welcomes unexpected times. As Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier describes, “[w]hereas Chronos is nothing but the present, there is no present possible in Aion” (22). The present is absent from the realm of Aion. Even in finite instants shorter than any presents, Aion expresses time itself unlimited by the regulated presents. Aion empties the present to become an empty form in which numerous heterogeneous times stretch out; what is expressed in Aion expresses is never fixed and always pointing toward what is not in the present.

What Deleuze enlightens is that if time itself unfolds, it is no longer defined by its contents and its movement is nothing but its own unfolding. This unfolding time presents itself as an empty form in an empty present. The time of Story in *Invisible Cities* can be described by this kind of unfolding time, since it is what makes the dialogue and the stories possible while strangely maintaining empty in itself and being seen only in empty presents in the dialogue and the stories. While both the time of the dialogue and the travel are Chronos dictated by known orders and rules, the time of

Story is the Aion that escapes from both in its own creativity, leaving the times of Chronos with fractures. Calvino even doubles the fracture in Chronos, fracturing both the time of the dialogue and of the stories. Interestingly and paradoxically, it is in emptying the presents of the dialogue and the stories that the time of Story unfolds itself and makes stories happen. When the time of Story empties the time of travel and that of dialogue, how does it relate to them? What does it do for the plural accounts of the cities and the monist narrative of the dialogue? How can the function of the time in causing stories to happen and dialogue to proceed be described? In other words, how does Aion function, if Chronos is the only present? How does Aion recreate while not destroying Chronos?

Deleuze proposes that Aion functions between two mechanisms of Chronos. For Deleuze, the emptying Aion does not contradict with the emptied Chronos; Instead, he places Aion very delicately in relation to Chronos. He distinguishes between three kinds of the present: two of Chronos and one of Aion. The two presents of Chronos include “the measureless or the dislocated present as the time of depth and subversion” and “the variable and measured present as the time of actualization” (*LS* 168).

Subjecting time to a spatial order, Chronos present itself through not only a present matching the measurement but also a present underlying and subverting the measured. If there is a totalizing measurement, there will be forces subverting the measurement, because the heterogeneous and forceful time cannot be reduced to any measurement. However, the present of Aion is still different; it is less a present than an instant emptied of the presents:

This present of the Aion . . . is the present of the pure operation, not of the incorporation. It is not the present of subversion or actualization, but that of counter-actualization, which keeps the former from overturning the latter, and the latter from being confused with the former, and which comes to

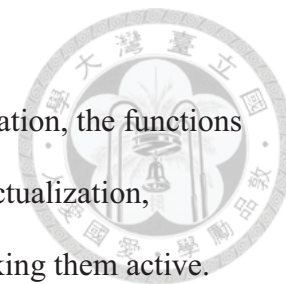
duplicate the lining (*redouble la doublure*) (168).

The pure operation of Aion does not exclude subversion or actualization, the functions of the two presents of Chronos. Instead, Aion operates in counter-actualization, suspending the two functions of Chronos to some degree while making them active.

While subversion and actualization seem to be two opposing mechanisms which aim to cancel each other, counter-actualization maintain both by making either of them too overpowering. On the one hand, counter-actualization keeps subversion from becoming the only rule of reality, preventing it from destroying all the actual; on the other hand, counter-actualization makes actualization still actualizing without being “confused” with subversion, keeping subversion as a line different from and coexisting with actualization. Thus, counter-actualization makes actualization possible by sustaining the measureless forces (and thus underlie) instead of completely destroying what is actualized; while making total subversion impossible, counter-actualization also reminds the actual of the incorporating powers of subversion that tends to swallow up any organizations.

Thus, Aion makes the formless actualize continuously, and actualization goes on with the terrible help of subversion. Through counter-actualization, Aion makes both actualization and subversion possible while rendering each of them empty. There is no actualization that is not subverted, and there is no subversion that is not engaged in actualization. One of the meanings of to “duplicate the lining” would refer to the role of Aion in the double functions of subversion and actualization. Aion makes each of the function suspend from totally realizing itself and thus makes possible their interrelation and coexistence with each other. In this way, the double is redoubled in the divergence in themselves: they not only maintain themselves but also suspend themselves from complete realization to yield to each other.

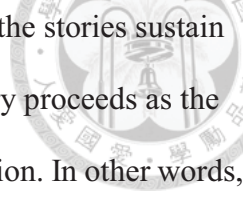
The time of Story in *Invisible Cities* functions in a way that resonates with Aion.



The time of Story operates between the two characters' dialogue and the scattered stories of cities told by Polo. While remaining empty in itself, the time of Story forces the dialogue and the stories to sustain each other. However, Calvino's time of Story is different from Deleuze's Aion. Or, perhaps more precisely, Calvino's time does not contradict with Aion but expresses a problem that remains implicit and not clarified in Deleuze's theory. For Calvino, monism and pluralism transform each other since the counter-actualization of the time of Story functions between the dialogue of monist pursuits and the pluralist stories. In other words, trying to find the counter-actualization in Calvino's time of Story is an attempt to find a way in which the monist and the pluralist reconcile. What is counter-actualized is not the mechanisms of actualization and subversion as in Deleuze's description but the dialogue and the stories. Not only is Kublai's monism counter-actualized, the relation between Kublai's monism and Polo's pluralism is also recreated through counter-actualization.

In *Invisible Cities*, the time of Story emerges between the extreme plurality of the cities as shown in their encounters with the traveler and the suspended monist line in Kublai and Polo's dialogue. Being neither the time of travel nor the time of dialogue, the time of Story counter-actualizes both kinds of time and makes each escape from themselves while undermining each other. In the time of Story, both the dialogue (with the underlying monist wish of Kublai) and the stories (told in by pluralist Polo) exist in their own suspension. Both of them exist in a state of being counter-actualized, submitting themselves to the time of Story. On the one hand, the stories exist by being fictionalized in the time of Story. Even the particular stories do not have the primacy over the time of Story that constantly gives rise to them while making them nothing but products by the unfolding time of Story. On the other hand, the dialogue is made impossible by being undermined by the Story. Communication is suspended, and the Story takes the place of the dialogue by giving rise to more and

more stories.

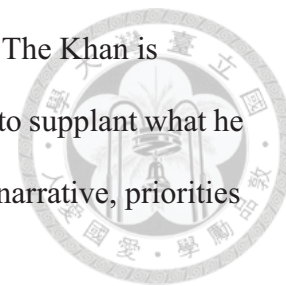


Through the functioning of the time of Story, the dialogue and the stories sustain and undermine each other at the same time. In the dialogue, the Story proceeds as the two characters explicitly exclaim how the stories are nothing but fiction. In other words, the Story is foregrounded when the two characters recognize that stories are nothing but fiction. The actuality of the stories is maintained in their being counter-actualized as they do not become realities without being meta-fictionally revealed as fictions. From the first sentence of the novel, Kublai openly doubts Polo's stories: "Kublai Khan does not necessarily believe everything Marco Polo says" (5). Polo also constantly questions his ability to tell stories. He often starts a story with his considerations for telling stories as if he is himself struggling with the process. His hesitation invades the stories, making them fundamentally unstable and fictional. For example, Polo begins the story of Zaira with "In vain, great-hearted Kublai, shall I attempt to describe Zaira" (9). By doing so, Polo creates an irreconcilable gap between the dialogue and the story. No matter how hard he describes, the city remains indescribable; he describes the city in such a way that description remains impossible. Furthermore, by rendering stories of the city impossible, Polo summons the most extreme fictionality from the indescribable core of the city. By revealing the entire attempt to tell stories to be vain, the exclamation invites even more fictive stories to show their strongest power of expression. The monist narrative gives the plural cities the power to fictionalize by submitting the actuality of the plural stories to the time of Story that constantly fictionalize.

The time of Story, while influencing the stories by reminding their actuality of their fictionality, makes the stories invade the dialogue by giving priority to images over the narrative. The contrast between the dialogue and the cities are also the contrast between the verbal and the visual, as Franco Ricci points out,

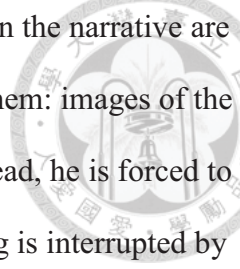
[a] type of verbal/visual interaction is installed between the active scenes of

the frame tale and the descriptive scenes of the cities. . . . The Khan is apprehensive that Polo's image-laden discourse threatens to supplant what he considers to be the rational, logical, literal, and therefore narrative, priorities of his word-laden temporality. (108)



The temporality of Kublai's words is logical and linear, conforming to reductive causality as words follow each other. He tries to rule his empire as he is able to speak of it with words that are logically linked to each other under some generality. He wishes to live in an immobile temporality where time does not really pass as it passes predictably in a stable speed, just like a narrative whose temporality is successive by an order. On the other hand, the temporality of Polo's stories does not pass stably. Either time does not pass or its passing is fundamentally uneven. The stories are visual images that coexist, not submitting to a stable rhythm of passing time. Instead, the images, existing for themselves and relating to each other in a non-logical way, coexist instead of succeeding each other.

Though the time of Story is at least partly produced by the dialogue, the time of the dialogue is not the time of Story. The dialogue submits itself to the time of Story by being fundamentally changed in nature by the latter. The dialogue is overwhelmed by cities which also appear. The frame is no longer solid but also penetrated by images. For example, at some point of the novel, Kublai interrupts Polo, demanding that "[f]rom now on I shall describe the cities and you will tell me if they exist and are as I have conceived them" (37). Kublai then tells a story of a city, but Polo replies, "Sire, your mind has been wandering. This is precisely the city I was telling you about when you interrupted me" (37). What is shown by Kublai's interruption of Polo is that the story interrupts the dialogue. In the time of Story, instead of the dialogue unitarily determining the stories framed by it, the stories also dictate the dialogue narrative. If originally the narrative attempts to think, the thought as transformed by the time of



Story is no longer that of the narrative but of images. The thoughts in the narrative are counter-actualized from the actual verbal form to what constitutes them: images of the stories. Kublai no longer thinks in the logic of verbal narrative; instead, he is forced to think in images of the cities. Even the verbal narrative of storytelling is interrupted by Kublai's imagination by images. Kublai no longer regards the storytelling as a verbal dialogue between him and Polo. What Kublai perceives in the process of storytelling is the cities' images, even though they are also provided by Polo. Kublai becomes one emblem among the emblems; he is not different from the images of the cities. The dialogue is sustained by the images of the cities since it becomes a weak procession that lets itself overwhelmed and pushed forward by the images.

While the monist narrative fictionalizes the plural stories, the images of the stories invade the narrative. The linear temporality of verbal communication and the multiple temporality of images sustain and undermine each other in the time of Story which gives rise to the reciprocal influences while remaining itself empty. The narrative line in the frame and the monist language are suspended to yield their places to the time of Story, giving rise to images of stories that express cities in themselves. The time of Story unfolds, on the one hand, to continue the dialogue in a suspended state, in its constant fictionalization of the stories and to make cities continuously appear in themselves on the other. The time of Story is a time consisting in itself by endless unfolding into disparate stories, forcing the monism of Kublai to subject itself to another monism of time; the time of Story remains an empty form that makes the pluralism possible in the constant appearances of differences.

Chapter Two

The Landscape among the Cities:

The Virtual Whole of Pluralism



While Kublai Khan asks for a monist narrative, Marco Polo answers with plural cities. As they go on communicating, their dialogue is suspended, rendering the linear narrative Kublai desires impossible, and simultaneously meta-fictionally turning the dialogue of the two, through which Kublai strives to comprehend the empire as a monist, into a play of disparate objects. Interestingly, while the monist plans for a totalizing explanation is doomed to fail, the pluralist answer gives rise to a view of the whole. The suspended dialogue makes a whole of communication of elements possible at another level; that is, the general monist narrative is replaced by another form of the whole. Springer contends, “In the vast ruin which is the modern novel, only a ‘Marco Polo’ can invent a narrative scheme capable of surviving the crisis of the Empire, which is at the same time the crisis of narrative” (294). To extend his argument a bit further, it is only in the ruins of narrative that a non-narrative narrative can be structured. Only Polo the pluralist can create another structure in the collapse of Kublai’s narrative. Polo tells stories about distinct and disparate cities, but the cities themselves structurally form a whole.

The cities in the novel form a structure bigger than themselves by relating to each other through their titles. The cities are numbered under eleven categories: “Cities & Memory,” “Cities & Desire,” “Cities & Signs,” “Thin Cities,” “Trading Cities,” “Cities & Eyes,” “Cities & Names,” “Cities & the Dead,” “Cities & the Sky,” “Continuous Cities,” and “Hidden Cities.” Placed under these categories, the cities form series and thus are related to some others in a level more abstract than the actual particularities. Each category contains five cities, and each city is under a title consisting of a category

and a number, for example, “Cities & Memory 1.” In this title made of combination, there is such a strange coldness and detachedness as if the particularities of the cities were irrelevant. The titles are tags indicating nothing more than the cities’ places in the structure of the novel. The structure matters no less, if not more, than the particular cities. In other words, the novel is conveyed by not only the specific stories of cities but also a structure in which the cities are only elements. Thus, a study of the overall structure itself is crucial to understanding the novel.

The cities under eleven categories are arranged under nine chapters. Each chapter is composed of five cities from different categories, except for the first and last chapters which contain ten cities from five different categories. Instead of exhausting one category before moving on to the next, the chapters have the cities of different categories appear by turns. Every chapter counts down its five cities from five to one, starting with a fifth city of one of the categories and ending with the first city of a new category that has not yet appeared. The chapters are interwoven by series under various categories, making the series form an inter-serial structure. The following graph is a form presenting the first part of the arrangement of the cities.

Chap1	Memory 1						
	Memory 2	Desire 1					
	Memory 3	Desire 2	Signs 1				
	Memory 4	Desire 3	Signs 2	Thin 1			
Chap2	Memory 5	Desire 4	Signs 3	Thin 2	Trading 1		
Chap3		Desire 5	Signs 4	Thin 3	Trading 2	Eyes 1	
Chap4			Signs 5	Thin 4	Trading 3	Eyes 2	Names 1
Graph				Thin 5	Trading 4	Eyes 3	Names 2

Laura Marello discerns that the cities are distributed in the form of “a spiral” (96).

She observes that the structure of the cities has two features: on the one hand, it is a parallelogram that starts with a triangle, continues in a square, and ends with another triangle; on the other hand, it is almost a circle as the cities in different categories rotate. To explicate Marengo's observation a bit further, the spiral circulates between the categories, rotates in repeated categories with differences in position, and comprises intertwining series of categories across different chapters. In the spiral, elements play different roles as they enter new combinations as they are arranged in a vertical relation in the series and a horizontal one with the neighboring elements in the same chapters.

The arrangement of the cities is one of the most special features of the novel, and what this structure is for has perplexed many critics. Even when noticing the perfect structure of the form, the critics still struggle to see the significance of it. There are three major features of Calvino's structure of the spiral that expresses a whole: coexistence, repetition, and rotation. These three features characterize a virtual whole whose significance may be clarified in reference to Bergson-Deleuze's model of pure time as a whole: What Calvino's critics read as a random, contingent, pure play, I read as a state of coexistence of radically random elements; what critics read as differences in the same categories in different contexts, I read as the fundamental repetition of circles of the spiral; lastly, I read the whole of the spiral's opening up and closing down as a rotation, a movement toward the outside and participated in by many series.

Coexistence and Plural Wholes

One paradox of the criticisms of the novel is that even though the stories form a perfect structure of a spiral, critics still perceive the arrangement of the cities directionless and random. Since the structure does not seem to have significance, the spiral is a perfect but empty form to which the elements give rise but do not submit. It is

then interesting to ask: Strictly determined by the directionless and random elements, what kind of structural whole the spiral is? What is the significance of such a structure? Since coexistence is a state without hierarchy, can a whole be made of coexistences?

Many critics find the arrangement of the cities directionless. Springer, for instance, thinks of the structure as a collection of fragments that “implies no privileged direction” (291), and thus “[t]he reader is free to traverse and explore the text in any order he pleases” (293). He considers the novel to be structured meaninglessly as a collage that can be read in any other way—the structure is meaningless except making the novel a free space for the reader to explore. Similarly, Peter Bondanella holds that by organizing the book around a traveler describing scattered cities without trying to make a general sense out of them, the novel “provides a great deal of narrative freedom to the reader” (169). These two critics emphasize the meta-fictional characteristics of *Invisible Cities*, viewing it as an experiment of reading itself. They think that the novel demonstrates possibilities and autonomy in reading that do not necessarily add up to any meaning. They emphasize the directionlessness so strongly that they regard it as the utmost goal of the novel. Their consistent interpretation reveals that even though the spiral structure is obvious and the novel progresses in some spiral direction, Calvino still gives a strong sense of directionlessness. Even though the chapters and the cities are both numbered, the numbers do not seem to give an orientation to the story. Why is the sense of directionlessness so strong that the structure of the cities is ignored? To answer this question is to ask: what fundamental role does directionlessness play in the structure of the novel?

The sense of directionlessness is derived from the cities’ refusal to submit themselves to fixed structural or categorical orders. Even though numbered under a certain categories, the cities refuse to exclusively serve the vertical movements designated by the categories. It is quite difficult to read through the cities while keeping

the sequences of the categories in mind, not to mention figuring out the consistency each category creates. Reading through the book is like wandering through the cities instead of receiving consistent arguments made by different categories. The cities resist being vertically totalized by different categories by means of horizontally creating a plane within the chapters where they coexist. The different series under different categories resonate with each other and form a plane together. Each chapter is a plane where the elements from different categories coexist and form a small landscape.

There is a strong sense of coexistence within the chapters because they are separately framed by Kublai and Polo's dialogue concerning different themes. The themes are more or less reflected in the stories of the cities within the chapters. The first cities of the first chapter can be taken as an example to demonstrate how the cities horizontally coexist on the plane of the chapter to resist being submissive to the categorical series. In the frame of the first chapter, Kublai claims that the search for "the tracery of a pattern so subtle that could escape the termites' gnawing" (5), so he asks the traveler Marco Polo to tell stories about the cities. The italicized passages in the beginning and the end of the chapter deliver its theme as the search for the pattern for the decaying empire, and depict the change in the two characters' communication to express the inexpressible pattern. In short, the theme is how the pattern of things can be accessed. While the frame deals with the suspended dialogue that enables an exploration of the pattern, the stories of the cities within the chapter construe the approach to the pattern through travelling.

The cities from different categories in this chapter unveil the theme step by step. A landscape unfolds the multiple dimensions of the theme. First of all, the city of Diomira shows that the pattern can be approached only through a singular moment that cannot be defined by spatial designs and predictable movements. In the story of Diomira, the traveler is faced with structures determined by spatial measurements: it

is “a city with sixty silver domes, bronze statues of all gods, streets paved with lead, a crystal theater, a golden cock that crows each morning on a tower” (6). Metal materials structure the city through a spatial design designed and meticulous calculation, holding up a measurable time embodied by the golden cock. The time of the golden cock is the measurement that divides a day from another, but the time itself is measured by the spatial design. However, to the traveler, what is special to the city is not the spatial design but something else:

the special quality of this city for the man who arrives there on a September evening, when the days are growing shorter and the multicolored lamps are lighted all at once at the doors of the food stalls and from a terrace a woman's voice cries ooh!, is that he feels envy toward those who now believe they have once before lived an evening identical to this and who think they were happy, that time. (6)

This long sentence about the singularity of the city includes several times: a specific season, a specific moment in a specific day, and a specific moment when daylight and lamp lights alternate. Lamps are lit up not according to the time of the golden cock but in response to the changing daylight. The daylight signifies the duration of natural seasons while lamp lights indicate the duration of social activities. The former is measured by the movement of the sun while the latter by human activities. However, there is something more than movements. Between the two durations, or the two times measured by two kinds of movement, in the intersection of two lights, a moment emerges. It is brought into existence by the intersection of the two durations, but not defined by either. Escaping from both, the moment presents the fullness of the season (the dimming moment in a day in the dimming month of September in a year) and the fullness of human life when colors of living are revealed all of a sudden. It is the special moment that shows the city's core while creating an interval in its chronology.

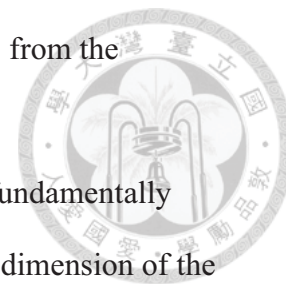
While the story of Diomira proposes that the singular moment happens between durations, the city of Isidora suggests that it be radically emptied in order to present a view of the pattern that cannot be defined by any present movement. Isidora contains all a traveler dreams of, but the difference is: “[t]he dreamed-of city contained him as a young man; he arrives at Isidora in his old age,” and all he does is sitting with the old men of the city watching “the young go by” (7). The one who experiences time has to age and to step aside from the center of happenings. The desired can be arrived at only when the present seems to slip away instead of belonging to those who are watching in a distance. The pattern of the city can be accessed only in the moment when immediate experiences are impossible. The patterns are never in the immediate presents.

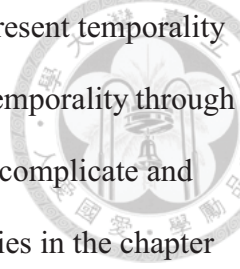
The first two cities of Chapter One unveil a moment emptied to yield its place to the fullness of a city. The succeeding story of the city of Dorothea further probes into the question by showing how the moment changes people by changing the temporality that has been deemed as objective. The empty moment in Dorothea happens in an extreme movement caused by people’s gathering at a special market, a movement that disrupts the routines of city life. At that moment, movements are out of place: “many people were hurrying along the streets toward the market, the women had fine teeth and looked you straight in the eye, three soldiers on a platform played the trumpet, and all around wheels turned and colored banners fluttered in the wind” (8). At that moment, different things participate in an extreme movement that pushes all things out of their regular trajectories when different routines intersect. Having participated in that movement, a camel driver leaves the city with a different self; at that moment, the core of him is changed secretly. The moment fundamentally transforms his temporality, and from then on, even though he keeps going on his routines, he knows that his “path is only one of the many that opened before [him] on that morning in Dorothea” (8). Having experienced the fullness of different durations at the empty moment, he

includes all in his one duration by making his route as what unfolds from the intersection of all.

While the story of Dorothea is about how the empty moment fundamentally changes the subject, the subsequent story of Zaira explores another dimension of the empty moment through which accesses to subtle patterns are possible: the city is made of traces left by events which create empty moments indefinable by routines of the city. The city is a line brimming with events. Polo tells Kublai that the data including numbers, lengths, and degrees of the city tell nothing about it. Instead, the city can be fully expressed only in a certain point of view, all the curves, scales, and tilts line up in an uneven line. In one long sentence, Calvino describes the city as made of traces about “the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen’s illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock” (9). The city is surely made of traces subject to measurements. However, what gives rise to the traces of the city is certainly not the spatial units but the events, such as the usurper’s failure, the queen’s demonstration of power, and the passing by of a cat. The city is carved by these kinds of undefinable moments. As a space, the city fills itself with traces of different ways of going through it. While the events in their empty moments create different ways of crossing the city, it can be said to be founded by moments.

In the first chapter, the subtle patterns of the first cities are accessed through a kind of empty moment. Different cities coexist in this chapter to open up a horizontal landscape where different aspects of the approach are developed into different cities. Although the cities in this chapter belong to different categories, they resist expressing only the categories of the series that seem to determine the cities vertically, such as memory and desire. Instead, the stories of the cities relegate memory and desire to being aspects of the subtle patterns. For example, three of the cities analyzed above belong to the category of “Cities & Memory” (Diomira, Isidora, and Zaira) and one





belongs to “Cities & Desire” (Dorothea). Concerned with the non-present temporality of memory, the three cities about memory lead to the disruption of temporality through empty moments. And Dorothea brings in the dimension of desire to complicate and enriches the subtle pattern discussed in the chapter. The different cities in the chapter contribute to the theme by not only revealing more facets of the theme but also probing deeply and deeply into the core of the theme of the chapter. Their different categories become differences that open up the theme of the chapter. In the beginning of the first chapter, the variation of categories has not shown its fullest. Most of the cities are from the category of memory, but the cities are already in the structure of coexistence to present a theme. The coexistence is even more apparent in the following chapters. Each chapter is one of Marco Polo’s explorations in a particular thematic direction, explicating a landscape unfolding a thematic problem. A problem opens up a landscape with cities in different shapes and colors and from different categories. A landscape is thus defined as a presentation of a theme—what it would be like when a problem unfolds its reality as a landscape.

Triggered by a problem asked or presented in the dialogue between Kublai and Polo, the cities in each chapter swirl into a circle that does not complete itself. As a layer of the spiral, a chapter is a circle in which cities are gathered by a non-totalizing problematic. Furthermore, each layer/chapter not only gathers elements for a theme but also includes as many categories as possible at once. Besides the first and last chapters, each of the rest contains elements from the maximum of categories; they contain as many categories as the number of the cities in them. In other words, the gathering is for not only a theme but also the diversity of the elements themselves. They form a plane to present a small whole of differences in a category. The coexistence explains the sense of directionlessness—the cities coexist more than moving in a particular direction. They are less in a linear sequence than in a state of

coexistence. In other words, the sense of lacking direction does not mean that the structure of the novel makes a reading of it completely free, as many critics perceive. Instead, the novel gains its most precise structure by being directionless, which expresses coexistence fundamental to the whole the novel conveys through its structure.

In addition to lack of direction, another feature of the spiral structure that requires further consideration is randomness. While directionlessness is Calvino's approach to resist being overturned by the vertical directions of categories by creating chapters as planes of different themes, randomness is his approach to enable the cities to resist being subordinated to the thematic planes. While categories become series offering elements to planes crossing over series, the planes themselves are deprived of totalizing powers, too. As Lauretis points out, "Calvino's distribution of the cities in eleven categories, each of which is repeated five times, appears to be a random one, where numbers and categories have no allegorical meaning, no logical or symbolic necessity" (18). The arrangement of the cities does not seem to follow any totalizing rules that make it necessary. Since the organization under the categories seems to be random, the planes composed of elements from different categories seem to be full of differences that are randomly displaced even in their own categories. When the cities are viewed separately, their particularities seem to match more than one category. They seem to just happen to be placed where they are.

Thus, while being in their specific positions in the spiral, the elements are fundamentally twice displaced. Their positions are random in terms of both their categories and the chapters they are in. As Lauretis points out, their positions are deprived of necessity. The cities are placed precisely to make them interchangeable. Their "randomness" is crucial for the whole they form. The elements have to stay contingent so as not to become parts subordinated to the categories or themes. Thus the

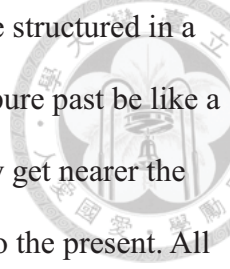
elements resist submitting themselves to either their categories or the themes made out of the convergence of the categories, a resistance that forces themselves to be read as themselves instead of serving known orders. Staying random, they can escape the fate of being incorporated into any generality and have a chance of showing a whole that is not a particular organization. Not submitting to general orders, they present themselves and a whole. The general orders of categories and themes become nothing but partial patterns and derivative features. The series and planes are surely organizations, but they never become a whole. They remain aspects of the whole.

The randomness of arrangement radically implies that the elements exist as themselves instead of submitting to a certain model or order. Letizia Modena points out that the cities in the novel are “*simulacra*-like” (32). They are simulacra—elements without models and without intension to turn themselves into models. They themselves are born out of nowhere instead of following any exterior rule. Remaining contingent and random despite of any secondary patterns that attempt to encompass them, the random elements in the spiral express their own fullness and make it possible for further combinations. They are in numerous combinations: the series, the planes, and the whole. Their randomness makes possible all these kinds of combinations. The order of the whole can be found only when the elements become radically contingent and random.

Refusing to be organized into any general order, the stories of the cities form a structure of some whole that appears only when its elements are extremely random and scattered. The cities form patterns out of their relations with others in the series and planes while constantly rendering the relations contingent and random. This non-totalizing, random but patterned whole cannot be understood as a phenomenon since it is beyond empirical rules that cannot help but totalize. The whole of the cities is in a level different from the empirical time of the cities and of the dialogue between

Kublai and Polo. The two characters' suspended dialogue makes possible another temporality when the cities are suspended from any exterior order and form a whole or in a temporality that cannot be comprehended empirically. The non-empirical whole Calvino presents through the seemingly random elements in the novel may be explicated in reference to Deleuze's idea of Bergson's whole of the past, a whole that is fundamental to the empirical while remaining non-totalizing. Deleuze deals with the virtual whole directly, imagining a state where the elements, while accounting for the existence of actual things, stay random and coexist with each other.

Deleuze believes that the "pure past" (*DR* 81), or "ontological Memory" (*B* 59), is the "ground" (*DR* 79) for the empirical. The actual existences and experiences in the present are possible because every actual present exists contemporarily with its virtual past. Every present happens as a virtual element in the virtual whole is actualized; and once a present happens, it is recollected into the virtual whole. For Deleuze, the actual presents are not truer than their corresponding virtual elements that form a whole. Even though the presents seem to be successive after one another as independent units, their virtual doubles are virtually elements that coexist with each other. Deleuze finds the truest picture of a whole not in any organization or rule the presents form but in the virtual whole where all the past presents coexist as virtual elements. Interestingly, when the presents become part of the past, they are free from fixed orders of succession and can form a plural whole. When the past presents are viewed as virtual elements with utmost differences, their extreme plurality strangely becomes a whole. In Deleuze's words, "[d]uration is indeed real succession, but it is so only because, more profoundly, it is *virtual coexistence*: the coexistence with itself of all the levels, all the tensions, all the degrees of contraction and relaxation" (*B* 60). Time's most fundamental form is coexistence instead of succession, and the only valid succession is based on the coexistence of different elements.



Instead of falling into a formless chaos, the virtual elements are structured in a special way. Adopting Bergson's model, Deleuze proposes that the pure past be like a cone with different levels. The levels are more contracted when they get nearer the acme of the cone, which is the point where the past is actualized into the present. All the elements coexist on every level of the cone while different degrees of contraction make different elements clear in different levels. Deleuze argues that "[e]ach of these sections or each of these levels includes not particular elements of the past but always the totality of past" (*B* 60). Every level of the whole is a small totality where all the elements coexist. Deleuze imagines that the plural elements coexist in each layer, giving rise to a whole with multiple kinds of coexistence.

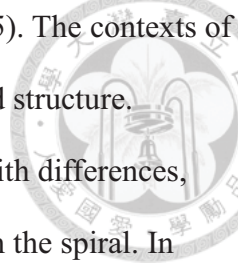
Deleuze's view of the virtual whole sheds light on Calvino's spiral made of cities. Just as Deleuze's pure past is the ground for the empirical presents, Calvino's virtual structure of the spiral is the condition for the particular cities. The cities are like the virtual elements forming a whole that is different from the empirical presents of either the dialogue between the two characters or the cities. More fundamental than the cities experienced, the whole of the spiral is the condition for the cities to exist. As the dialogue is suspended, the numerous stories of various cities are seen to coexist in a virtual structure. Paradoxically, like the Deleuzian pure past, the structure of Calvino's spiral pre-exists while not gaining a form before the particular stories of the cities. Deleuze's pure past as a whole is the condition that makes the appearance of every present possible, while the pure past as a whole has no other way to exist than contemporarily with the particular stories. In addition, Calvino's structure is the condition of the empirical stories, offering positions in the novel for the elements to present themselves; however, the structure cannot be said to exist exterior to or before the elements. For both Calvino and Deleuze, a virtual structure can be seen when things in the present are stripped down to their barest elements. The virtual

coexistence of elements constitutes the pattern underlying all the random elements.

Besides being the condition of the empirical, Calvino's spiral is close to Deleuze's description of the virtual whole in its various levels of coexistence. Both Calvino's and Deleuze's images of the whole consist of layers of totality. In Calvino's spiral, every chapter is a plane where the maximum of cities from different categories coexist to present a landscape as a small totality. Furthermore, the layers are different either in the degrees of contraction (Deleuze) or in the categories of elements (Calvino). A whole has to consist of differences. In François Zourabichvili's words, Deleuze's "whole can only be thought by means of a synthesis of heterogeneous dimensions of time: hence the fundamentally temporal sense of the virtual" (216). The virtual whole is fundamentally heterogeneous. The virtual is the maximum of differences instead of a homogeneous order. The whole can be a whole only with multiple (and so multiple that it seems to be infinite) ways of being a whole. The elements and series composing the whole have to remain heterogeneous, and the planes and layers composing the whole have to be radically heterogeneous, too. The planes present their different totalities, making the whole a totality with different aspects that are all total in themselves. What coexists is not only elements in the whole but also totalities as aspects of the whole. Deleuze's picture of the virtual whole explains the complicated structure of Calvino's whole—a whole where elements, dimensions, and different wholes coexist.

Repetitions and Differences in the Whole

Calvino's spiral is a coexistence of layers where purest elements coexist. The coexistence of layers gives rise to repetitions that express extreme differences. The elements express their differences with the help of the categories' repetitions in different roles in the structure. Carol P. James argues that "the components of a series



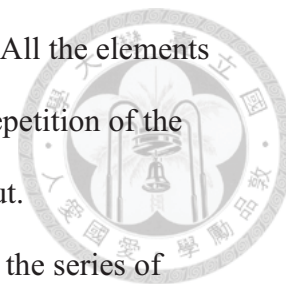
derive their value by creating their own ever-changing context” (145). The contexts of the elements are made by their different positions in the complicated structure. Repeating the categories (Memory, Desire, etc.), the cities appear with differences, giving their categories a different sense in every different position in the spiral. In Calvino’s spiral, the elements of one category repeat in different chapters. For example, “Thin Cities” appear in five chapters in different positions and numbers, contributing themselves to five different planes. While the cities are in the same category, they are in different positions in relation to the different layers they are in. The elements gain significances in the chapters with different themes. Each repetition of a category creates a structural position where a difference can not only appear in itself but also be brought to the whole. It is the repetition of elements that makes extreme differences in the whole—differences become differences in many levels, including differences in themselves, different layers made of differences, and the coexistence of different levels. The repetition of positions enables the non-organizable differences to give difference to the structure of the whole. Furthermore, the layers construct absolute distance between two repetitive elements—the elements of the same category in different layers are more distant to themselves than any others. For example, there is more tension between two different kinds of memory than between a memory and a desire. The different series are accompanied by the strongest internal tensions.

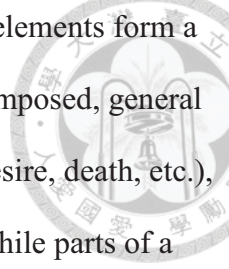
The repetition creates a structure of the whole where not only differences define the whole but also continuities between differences are possible. As every city is a difference located in the intersection of two orders, the category (series) and the chapter (plane), a city makes a multi-layered expression of the series possible. All the elements in the same category succeed each other through different layers. While the novel explores various themes and advances more deeply into the realm of time, the elements

repeat themselves and appear one after another in various contexts. All the elements under the same category probe into the same direction, and every repetition of the category reveals a different face of the problem the category is about.

To exemplify, we can turn to the structure as it is expressed by the series of “Cities & Memory” that dominates the first chapter. The series of “City & Memory” deals with the problem of how actual presents are intruded by memory and how the truth of presents can be accessed through memory. While some of the cities of that series coexist with other cities in the first chapter to express the theme of how to access subtle patterns, they also relate to each other within the series of memory. As the structure of the whole novel reveals itself deeper and deeper in relation to the problem of the untimely pattern in deeper dimensions of time, the series of memory probes into the problem of time step by step. In the beginning, the memory is personal memory recalled in the encounters with the cities (Diomira and Isidora); then, the memory is discussed as the traces by which the city remembers events that make it what it is (Zaira); lastly, the memories are turned into pictures of the cities in the form of either psychic memory (Zora) or postcards (Maurilia). In the last two cities of the series, memories are the forms in which the traveler comprehends and remembers a city in its totality. The series of “City & Memory” demonstrates the process of gaining access to the cities through special moments of personal memories, seeing the memory of the cities, and then makes personal memories adequate to the totality of the cities. The repetition of the categories in the swirling spiral of the novel enables small continuities between the planes, continuities in series that are composed by discontinuous elements.

James employs the term “seriality” to offer an adequate angle in an attempt to comprehend the categories of the cities: “The serial arrangement displaces thematic for a rhetorical pattern of non-origin and non-causality”(150). The categories that





organize cities as elements are not principles but series. In a series, elements form a pattern by themselves instead of following or giving rise to a superimposed, general theme. Even though the categories seem to be thematic (memory, desire, death, etc.), the themes are empty, suspended from the series of cities it links. While parts of a theme submit themselves to the unifying theme, the elements in a series are linked to each other by differing from each other. As in the example of the series “Cities & Memory” above, a series is formed by one element repeating the other in categories and stepping more deeply into the problem raised by the category. The elements form a pattern without aim, causality, or origin by placing themselves in relation to nothing but each other.

The repetition of categories on different planes constitutes the whole as a structure consisting of not only differences within planes but also consistent series among different problems. Repetition brings to the whole of coexistence plural connections, saving the whole from being simply and plainly chaotic. What picture of coexistence do the repetitions of elements in series make? What is repetition of layers in a whole like? The fact that coexistence needs repetition in order to be a whole adequate to multiple differences is a complicated problem that may be clarified by Deleuze’s description of the repetition in the virtual whole of coexistence. Deleuze elaborates on the relation between coexistence and repetition in *Bergsonism*:

Duration ... is *virtual coexistence*: the coexistence with itself of all the levels, all the tensions, all the degrees of contraction and relaxation (*détente*). Thus, with coexistence, repetition must be reintroduced into duration—a ‘psychic’ repetition of a completely different type than the ‘physical’ repetition of matter; a repetition of ‘planes’ rather than of elements on a single plane; virtual instead of actual repetition. (*B* 60-61)

Deleuze introduces the notion of repetition in his discussion of coexistence because he

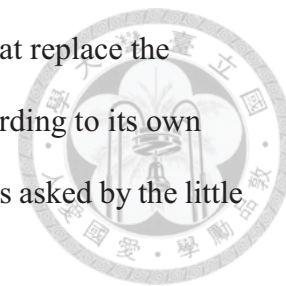
tries to figure out how the whole exists in all the different levels. Since the whole exists in all the levels, what structure of the whole makes difference between levels possible? The answer he proposes to this question is that the whole is composed of planes of different degrees of contraction and relaxation. While the whole repeats itself at all the layers, the layers are different from each other in their different degrees of contraction and relaxation. Thus, repetition of the whole in layers is necessary for the whole to have differences in itself. The whole can contain all the memories and actualize into images because the latter correspond to specific layers of the past. Also, each present image is able to an actualization of the whole of the past because of the coexistence of all in the layer which the one who recalls jumps into.

For Deleuze, virtual coexistence needs to actualize in order to move, either by the act of recollection or the actualization with *élan vital* (B 113). For Calvino, the coexistence repeats in each layer and moves in itself. The whole of Calvino's spiral does not actualize; or rather, the whole of Calvino is not static before expressing itself. Expression of the whole is the only state that it exists. To say that Deleuze's whole is more static than Calvino's lively whole is unfair to Deleuze, since his static whole is only one aspect of his idea of time and his virtual whole is further explicated to be put into the movement of *élan vital*. What should be maintained is that while it takes Deleuze the philosopher two steps (virtual whole and *élan vital*) to analyze a virtual whole in actual movement, it takes Calvino the novelist only one procedure to express it. While Deleuze provides meticulous theory, Calvino presents a literary image. Deleuze's virtual whole in the process of actualization is certainly larger in scope than Calvino's novel since the former is a philosophical view that explains everything while the latter is only a particular literary example. However, it is hard to imagine such a virtual whole in movement through Deleuze's model of the static cone. In other words, what Calvino offers is an image of the virtual whole in movement that is more

particular in scope while more lively in nature than the model of static cone. In Calvino's image of the spiral, coexistence repeats at different levels to make all the elements and layers happen at once. The repetition gives every city and chapter its positions, allowing different elements and layers to make difference to the overall structure by being different from each other. For Calvino, repetition is not related to contraction and relaxation as for Deleuze. While Deleuze's cone, repetition is static in all the levels, Calvino's spiral exists inseparable from its active repetition between levels. While for both Deleuze and Calvino, repetition makes the occurrence of the whole possible in every element and at every layer, the two differ in whether repetition between levels is shown as static or active: Deleuze's coexistence repeats in all layers but stays static waiting for the actualization of *élan vital*. In other words, in such a cone, it is hard to imagine the movement given to the whole. Differently, Calvino's repeats in all layers, and all the elements in all the layers actively emerge altogether.

Besides the relation between coexistence and repetition, there is another problem related to repetition. Deleuze's repetition is "psychic", so is Calvino's. What Deleuze means by psychic here has two meanings. First and more derivatively, we can say that the psychic refers to one way for the layers of the cone to actualize is through the psychic recollections of an individual. In recollection, the individual jumps into one layer of the cone, and the whole of the cone repeats itself in the individual's mind. Second and more fundamentally, the "psychic" refers to the virtual in contrast to the actual. The psychic presents a repetition of the whole of pure past that is different from material repetition. Every appearance of any actual thing is more fundamentally a result of the virtual whole. For Calvino, the repetition of categories in each chapter is also psychic. It is Kublai's and Polo's psychic activities that make each chapter a psychic plane that repeats the whole. Interestingly, the objective order according to which stories form a chapter is also revealed to be psychic. To be more precise, every layer

possesses a little and mysterious psyche of its own, little psyches that replace the subjectivity of Kublai and Polo. Every chapter asks a question according to its own psychic perspective; the whole novel is initiated by various problems asked by the little psyches.



Rotation and Movement

The greatest distinction between Deleuze's and Calvino's models lie in the problem of movement. The overall movement of the spiral is rotation. Calvino's structure of the whole is constantly leaning to the outside. As a result, even though the structure shares features with the Bergson-Deleuze cone, such as the coexistence of all the elements in one level and all the levels in a whole, Calvino's structure, different from the cone, is a spiral that constantly rotates forward: the Bergson-Deleuze cone in action. The Deleuze cone is a static virtual whole put into two movements. In terms of the actualization of memory into matter, the point of the cone is actualized as the most contracted layer of the cone. The movement is the contraction that reaches its extreme state at the point of the cone. The other movement is that in recollection an individual jumps into one of the layers of the virtual whole. Either movement only makes one layer of the cone move. Most layers of the cone remain static while one particular element presents itself. It may be said that the most contracted point of the cone reveals that the whole of the cone is rotating and moving towards the point like a piece of rinsed cloth, making the point emerge. In other words, all of the cone moves while only one element is presented. Or it might be said that the fact that a recollection actualizes one layer of the virtual whole reveals that every plane is ready for actualization. Nevertheless, in either way, only one element is foregrounded at a time.

However, in the Calvino spiral, all the elements in all the layers emerge at the

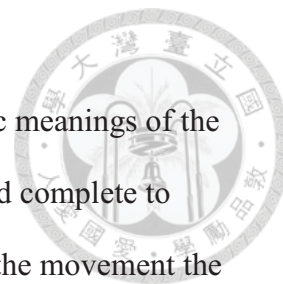
same time. And all of them form a spiral constantly moving forward—the forward movement is not only from the whole to the point (as in the case of Deleuze’s cone) but also from each element to the one next to it. What may be inferred from this difference between Deleuze and Calvino’s is: in Deleuze’s cone, movements only occur between the virtual and the actual—either in recollection, a leap from the actual to the virtual, or in contraction where the virtual is actualized into matter. The movements are always at the edge between the virtual and the actual, an edge that can be shown only one at a time. On the other hand, in Calvino’s spiral, movements are everywhere and all the time. There are movements from one element to another in a series as the problem asked in the series is passed on element by element and probed into more and more deeply; there is a movement in each chapter where a thematic problem makes the elements from different categories swirl together and make a plane; and there is a movement of the spiral as a whole that is constantly pushed forward by both the series and the planes.

The example of the first part of the novel can also explain these multiple movements. First, in the first chapter, the cities from different categories coexist on a plane to express the theme of subtle pattern. Second, the series of memory probes into the theme even more deeply. Thus, two local movements emerge: the movement in the open circles the first chapter makes and the movement in a discontinuous straight line between the cities in the series of memory. Unlike the middle chapters with only one circle, the first chapter is formed in four circuits: (1) “Cities & Memory 1”; (2) “Cities & Memory 2,” “Cities and Desire 1”; (3) “Cities & Memory 3,” “Cities & Desire 2,” “Cities & Signs 1”; (4) “Cities & Memory 4,” “Cities & Desire 3,” “Cities & Signs 2,” “Thin Cities 1.” They are circuits because the rotation of cities returns to “Cities & Memory” and then starts another circle. In the end of each circle, a new city is proposed. Thus, every circuit is a circle that does not close up but opens itself up to

another circle with a new element.

On the one hand, the circuits make circles that present thematic meanings of the chapters in semi-circular movements. The circles seem to be full and complete to some extent in being a unit of significance, though it is full only in the movement the cities make. There is no nearly full circle without movements within each chapter. On the other hand, the circles open themselves up to give place to a new element in the end. As shown in the first chapter, every return to the series of “Cities & Memory” forces a city from another category to appear. For example, the first return to the “Cities & Memory” forces a “City & Desire” to appear to explicate another dimension of the chapter and the overall structure of the novel. Besides the semi-circular movements, the other movements are of the series. The movement of the series is what forces the planes/chapters to open up their circles. Since within the series, the cities as elements of the series do not stop differing from one another, and there is no chance of returning to the same element in the same series. Every movement of returning to a series is itself a movement in the series: the second city in the series of “Cities & Memory” is radically different from the first city in the series. Viewing the semi-circular movements within chapters and the linear movements within series together, an overall movement of the spiral appears: the whole structure of the novel moves like a spiral in both circular and linear directions. The spiral is a moving structure—a structure only in being a movement composed of various layers of smaller movements.

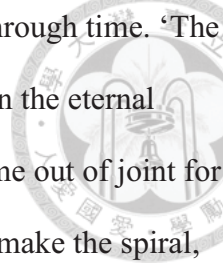
In the moving structure of Calvino’s spiral, all the elements and levels of the structure move to make the whole structure move. All of them are not only in a virtual state where they exist in their fullest differences but also move all at once. Deleuze’s movements are between the virtual and the actual in the process of actualization; Calvino’s movements are always virtual. The virtual elements do not have to be actual



in order to move; they move in themselves. More precisely, in Calvino's fictional world, the virtuality of things expresses themselves without the help of actualization. The movements between the elements express the cities in their purest virtual state.

Calvino's model thus evades a difficulty Deleuze faces in his philosophy. In *Difference and Repetition*, after proposing the whole of the pure past as the ground of presents, Deleuze encounters the question if this whole would become another "illusion of the in-itself" i.e., "a correlate of representation" (88). He doubts if the whole would become another order to which all the elements of time subject themselves according to the logic of representation. While proposing a whole that is not subjected to actual movements in order to give time its autonomy in itself, Deleuze finds himself risking making the static order a rule again. The way Deleuze solves this problem is through making time an empty form in which everything is subjected to the most drastic transformation qua the eternal return by which only pure differences survive. For Deleuze, the eternal return seems to be incompatible with the whole of the pure past. At least, the whole has to be subjected to another transformation in order to disobey the rule of representation. However, Calvino's whole does not run the risk of being representational from the very beginning. His whole, which is radically made of the most disparate and random differences, keeps being a non-totalizing whole by keeping moving in every unit, from the smallest unit to the largest. There is no need of eternal return for Calvino's whole because the elements have always been moving. As the stories geminate and vary themselves, his virtual whole is full of differences and their movements, a moving whole that is beyond Deleuze's philosophical model.

While Deleuze proposes that the whole of time be put out of joint in order to make it non-representational, Calvino's spiral is a whole of time that is out of joint in its very structure. Jean-Clet Martin thus describes Deleuze' in this way: "No number could prevent the spiral of time from leaning, from decentring itself; no plumb line



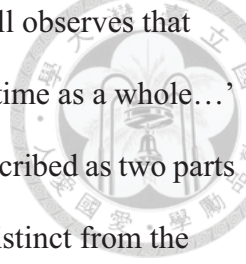
would know how to control the force of the declinations that run through time. ‘The time is out of joint!’ ” (61). While for Deleuze time out of joint is in the eternal return instead of the virtual whole, the virtual whole itself is the time out of joint for Calvino. Calvino’s whole circles in many layers of the circles that make the spiral, and the circles are also fundamentally decentering themselves. The circles are traces of the activities of being attracted by while running away from the center, forming a whole that is on the run. The theme of each chapter, the problems of each category, and the lines of development between the two characters all seem to be centers that the elements may circle around. Nevertheless, the elements are influenced by the centers precisely by being both drawn and pushed away by the centers. No numbers under the categories can hinge the decentering forces. Instead of organizing the elements under a general totality, the numbers of the categorized series serve to signify the ongoing direction of the process. The numbers account for nothing but the declinations of the forces from one element to another, and different series participate in one declination of the spiral. All is in constant movement.

While Deleuze’s virtual coexistence is more static in itself than Calvino’s spiral, it is intriguing to perceive that Deleuze also refers to a model in the shape of a spiral when talking about a whole in *Cinema 2*: “The whole is the organic totality which presents itself by opposing and overcoming its own parts, and which is constructed like the great Spiral in accordance with the laws of dialectic” (C2 153). The context of this sentence is Deleuze’s description of the whole in classical cinema. He observes that the classical whole still tries to surrender images to a totality. However, while Deleuze observes that the organic whole of the Spiral is constructed according to one logic, he also claims that even in the model of the great Spiral, the whole “does not follow like a logical effect, analytically, but synthetically as the dynamic effect of images ‘on the whole cortex’” (153). The Spiral, in capital letter, is a whole less

composed of static units than created by the dynamic between elements. The whole presents itself precisely by its elements differing one from another in the direction it leans toward. The whole of spiral is pushed forward by the elements that differ from one another. The meaning of “dialectic” here may be explained as the movement of constantly differing from the former step, moving forward with the force of difference. The whole is formed because of the movement between elements. Later in *Cinema 2*, Deleuze even more explicitly says: “The whole is produced by the parts but also the opposite: there is a dialectical circle or the spiral, ... The whole as dynamic effect is also the presupposition of its cause, the spiral” (154). The spiral is both the dynamic form made of various parts but also a monism, the whole. The dynamic and the whole are two dimensions of one, neither of which can exist without the other.

Deleuze explains the Spiral as a dynamic whole in relation to movement. While the Spiral is in movement, it is analyzed as to be given rise to by the dynamic spiral. The relation between the whole of the spiral and the dynamic whole is discussed in *Cinema 1*, in which Deleuze explores the view of time that is still limited to movement, and he distinguishes two movements as two aspects of time: “Time as interval is the accelerated variable present, and time as whole is the spiral open at both ends, the immensity of past and future” (*C1* 32). When time is still viewed in movement rather than in itself, the whole of time is an open whole that extends itself in both ends of the movement. Even though intervals can be found between movements, intervals do nothing but serve the acceleration of presents. In Spenser Shaw’s words, “[t]he temporality of movement-image . . . includes an expanding arche and telos; the universal, temporal spiral that extends into both past and future” (150).

Movement-images are indirect images of time that are still subject to movement. Thus, the Spiral of movement is “universal” and made of time of the spiral extended along with infinite movements. However, even when describing movement-images, Deleuze



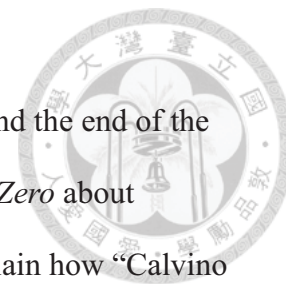
is already aware of the presentation of time opening up. Anna Powell observes that “[i]n the movement-image, Deleuze identifies two temporal types: ‘time as a whole...’ is distinct from ‘time as an interval’” (145). Although the two are described as two parts of one thing, they are fully distinguished. By making the intervals distinct from the whole, Deleuze is pointing toward another whole made of intervals. Ronald Bogue summarizes that “[i]n the classic cinema, the whole is an open whole, but in the modern cinema, ‘the whole is the outside’” (173). Bogue observes that while the whole in classic cinema, i.e., the Spiral, is an open whole extending toward the future and the past, a whole made by the dynamic spiral with intervals that point toward the outside. The dynamic of the spiral is hidden in every Spiral; as argued above, the spiral is the fundamental constituent of the Spiral. As the movement of the dynamic spiral keeps extending toward two ends, a Spiral of the whole is formed. Different from the model of the cone borrowed from Bergson, the Spiral describes not the static virtual whole but the whole formed by the movement. The Spiral is not a direct expression of the virtual but the closest image of the virtual whole the movement can create. While it is difficult to imagine how the cone is like in actualization, the Spiral provides a close image to the whole in movement.

Strangely, this description of the whole of the spiral seems to be close to Calvino’s spiral. Calvino’s spiral resonates with the picture of the virtual whole in movement that Deleuze imagines but does not clarify. Being a whole made of multiple movements, Calvino’s spiral resolves the opposition of one and multiple. According to Pilz, “[t]he form of the spiral ... resolves the dichotomy of binary logic—it is both the One and the multiple, infinity-finitude” (237). The spiral leans vertically towards one direction while horizontally detouring in numerous others. The circuits repeat the shape of a circle at different levels, and the circles make a continual spiral of circuits. The whole of spiral is the whole of time that is both singular and

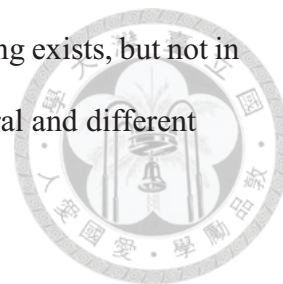
plural.

The opening up and closing up of the spiral in the beginning and the end of the novel unfolds a trace of time. Marengo quotes Calvino's words in *T-Zero* about "Hubble's theory of an expanding and contracting universe" to explain how "Calvino has created the structure of the universe" in the novel: "time will retrace its steps, that the chain of minutes will unroll in the opposite direction, until we are back at the beginning again" (96). The spiral of the novel structures a universe, or something adequate and eloquent in expressing the universe. The spiral is not only the whole of time but also the process of time in action. Since the spiral is both the whole and movement, it is open. In the discussion of the whole as a spiral, Deleuze maintains, "[t]he whole is constantly *open* (the spiral), but so that it can internalize the sequence of images, as well as becoming externalized in this sequence" (C 156). The series and sequence of images not only are contained by the whole but also express the movement of the whole. While the whole is nothing but the coexistence of series in movement, the whole remains open as the series proceed. The elements are swallowed into the whole while the whole has no other expression than the elements. Deleuze's idea of the whole strangely resonates with Calvino's spiral more than the Bergson-Deleuzian cone perhaps because Calvino's whole is created in the process of the story that enacts both the time of the whole and the movement at the same time.

Calvino's spiral rotates with all the coexisting elements in one moving structure. In such a moving structure, all the elements coexist in various coexisting totalities; elements from series repeat in various planes; the planes and series are all moving, which gives rise to the overall movement of the spiral. As such a moving structure, a whole is born from Polo's pluralism. Strangely, while Kublai fails to find a monist pattern for his empire, Polo's disparate stories express a whole that dissolves the opposition between monism and pluralism. The whole born of pluralism responds to



Kublai's quest by suggesting that the whole which contains everything exists, but not in the way Kublai thinks, as the whole is created only by the most plural and different stories.



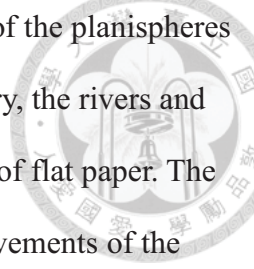
Chapter Three
A Landscape Unfolding into Two:
Pluralist Monism and Monist Pluralism



The fact that stories germinate and connect with each other redefines monism and pluralism that participate in the process. The contradictory views participating in the genesis of stories can be transvaluated as two dimensions of a time. As the time of Story unfolds itself, the two distinct views undergo transformations: Kublai's general monism is turned into a monism enveloping, rather than eliminating, differences singular to particular cities; Polo's disparate plural cities, into a pluralism constantly giving rise to monist visions. Monism and pluralism can be transformed so as to be not contradictory with or incorporated by each other. If the double views are to coexist without subordinating each to the other, their relation should be double, too. It cannot be dictated only by either general monism or particular pluralism. Instead, they are related to each other twice: monism is related to pluralism in a pluralist way, and pluralism is related to monism in a monist way. Monism becomes pluralist monism in which plurality becomes the essence of it; pluralism becomes monist pluralism in which the plural takes a monist shape. Monism and pluralism gain two new meanings while remaining in their most radical state. This chapter is devoted to examining the doubly structured relation between the transformed monism and pluralism.

Pluralist Monism and Monist Pluralism

Pluralist monism is presented by the atlas Kublai gains in the end. In the beginning, when he tries to comprehend his territory, he finds himself owning a planisphere that shows nothing but the collapsing of the empire (*IC 5*). As the emperor tries to gain a totalizing understanding of his empire through cartographical



representation, “rivers and mountains tremble on the fallow curves of the planispheres where they are portrayed” (5). Once fixed in the depiction of territory, the rivers and mountains tremble to resist being incorporated as curves on a piece of flat paper. The landscape overwhelms the single rule of the empire because the movements of the particular cannot be contained by the general. In other words, if the empire (and its monist imagination) is nothing but the general subsumption of particularities, it is doomed to break apart. As stories go on, Kublai learns to comprehend the landscape through another cartographical imagination. In the end of the novel, he “owns an atlas” enveloping the differences and possibilities of all the known, unknown, visible, and invisible cities. The atlas “depicts cities which neither Marco nor the geographers know exist or where they are, though they cannot be missing among the forms of possible cities”(124). The atlas contains cities that are paradoxically possible but unknown. Even though possible cities seem to be predictable from the rules governing their emergence, the possible cities here remain unknown. Being unknown defines their possibility in the strictest sense, which is the possibility of the new instead of only alternatives deduced from what already exists. Different from the planisphere which tries to incorporate the ungraspable particulars into one flat piece of paper, the atlas offers no rule by which particularities of the landscape are abstractly located on the paper.

Regarding rules, orderings, and the atlas, Breiner argues that “[t]he atlases are catalogues not of cities but of empires of cities, an exponential ordering of orderings, a wealth (precisely that) of higher order abstractions that Kublai ‘owns’” (567).

Breiner claims that there are differences between the method of generalizing according to rules and the method of the atlas. However, instead of seeing the atlas as containing the unknown possible cities that cannot be deduced by preexisting rules, Breiner holds that the atlas contains the known of the known, i.e. , the rules of rules.

Breiner's interpretation runs the risk of making the atlas as abstract as rules. Although it is possible that the atlas offers a vision of rules beyond ordinary generalities, the rules beyond rules cannot be derived from the rules. Instead, if such rules beyond rules exist, they can only be expressed, or even created, by purest differences themselves.

What the atlas preserves is not possible elements or general rules (like the chess) but purest differences. In Kublai's atlas, the particulars are collected as purest differences in themselves, even purer than the particulars Polo experiences in his trips. As Polo describes to the Khan, "[t]raveling, you realize that differences are lost: each city takes to resembling all cities, places exchange their form, order, distances, a shapeless dust cloud invades the continents. Your atlas preserves the differences intact: that assortment of qualities which are like the letters in a name" (125). As Polo points out, on his particular journeys, the cities become alike for two reasons. On the one hand, the cities in experiences remain shapeless. Since particular cities mix with their actual surroundings and exist in negotiation with them, the purest differences of them do not present their clearest forms. The empirical landscape is always foggy. On the other hand, the rules Polo relies on to recognize the cities are general. For convenience's sake, on the empirical level, Polo needs to treat cities as combinations of elements from a standard set of rules in order to know his way between different cities. In short, he has to put the differences of the cities on the same general scale. The cities are grasped through homogeneous rules and combinations of elements as "form, order, and distances."

However, differences are not reducible to elements or rules, since every reduction eliminates differences. In the ultimate pluralist view Polo experiences, the particular cities cannot present their purest forms of differences. Strangely, differences can only be seen in a monist view that is neither empirical nor general. As discussed

in Chapter Two, the cities are arranged in the form of a moving spiral, which expresses the interrelation of the cities in a whole formed by pure differences of the particular cities which express themselves. In the end of the novel, the description of the atlas meta-fictionally folds the formal structure of the whole of the cities again into the novel, which, with the scattered cities forming a spiral, is parallel to Kublai's atlas. Although the novel's unfolding is more complex than mere unrolling of the atlas, the atlas epitomizes the monist view of the whole which the novel consistently maintains.

Although strictly defined by the plurality it contains without a general rule, the atlas is indispensable in terms of its monist form. The form sets one and only one strict rule: the cities have to be contained in it as purest differences. No rule of generality or similarity should replace the differences. All the stories of the cities have to follow this strangely plural-monist rule; the plural should refer to the most disparate differences that form a monist whole which seems to dictate the existence of them. This plural monist view can be described by Deleuze's idea of the "virtual point" from which the purest differences can be seen. According to Deleuze, "virtual point . . . is itself located beyond the turn in experience; and which finally gives us the sufficient reason of the thing, the sufficient reason of the composite" (*B* 28-29). While things in experience exist as composites, from the virtual point things are viewed in terms of purest differences. It is one single point, but all differences can be viewed only through it. In *Invisible Cities*, Kublai's atlas is this kind of virtual point that ensures the visions of the cities are for their purest differences.

Differences are preserved in Kublai's monist view in their purest state. They are "like the letters in a name." These differences as letters are an extreme case of portmanteaus words (*DR* 121). While the latter have two or more parts from different series, the words of Kublai's atlas are formed by many letters from different

heterogeneous series. The atlas is made of impossible differences from divergent series instead of elements submitted to a same order. The description of differences as letters of a word shows that, at the virtual point, the differences relate to each other in ways empirical things cannot. The role Kublai plays as the owner of the atlas is different from an emperor, since his empirical ambition for his empire is undermined from the very beginning of the dialogue. In the end of the novel, he opens up his monist view to contain the plurality beyond his previous general monism; he owns the atlas by having his view overwhelmed by impossible and extreme differences. Furthermore, he lets them relate to each other in a new way in their purest state.

In the end of the novel, owning the atlas that contains all cities found or unknown, Kublai asks if Polo can foretell the cities of the future: ““You, who go about exploring and who see signs, can tell me toward which of these futures the favoring winds are driving us”” (147). The interesting paradox here is that even though Kublai is the one who owns the atlas, when he wants to know about some cities, he has to ask Polo, the pluralist who explores and sees. In other words, even though Kublai’s transformed monism is able to contain all the differences, it is a pluralist monism which cannot function without the pluralist Polo. The atlas of whole is not Kublai’s property but a creation of Kublai and Polo. While the atlas is the way Kublai as a monist grasps the particular, the access is adequate only when Polo participates as a pluralist. Instead of being a fixed property, the atlas is active and can be read only in the unfolding of stories.

The fact that the whole novel ends with the future shows that the time of stories or the genesis is ultimately a question of the future. It is in the future that the transformed monism and pluralism relate to each other in the sense of creation. As an extraordinary aspect of the time of Story, the future in *Invisible Cities* seems not to be only a point of time in contrast to the past in a linear timeline. Perhaps some nostalgic

cities can be said to be about the past, but cities of the future are not simply about what has not yet come, i.e., what follows up and is different from what has come in its location in the linear temporality. Or, more precisely, “what has not yet come” asks for a more radical reading: “what has not yet come” is the complete newness that cannot be defined by the past at all, not even in contrast to the past. The new future even destroys the linearity the empirical past seems to construct. The future is the purest difference that cannot be read in the logic defined by any anticipations according to the present or in relation to the past. In other words, asking a question about the future is asking for the ultimate creativity of the time of Story.

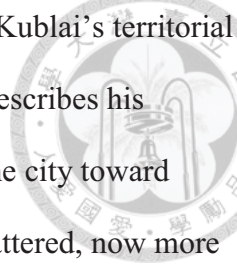
To answer Kublai’s question about the future cities, Polo pictures the most plural way to approach them. While Kublai’s virtual monist atlas ensures the cities to express their purest differences, Polo’s trip ensures that the approach itself is not fixed. Polo maintains that he cannot “draw a route on the map or set a date for the landing” (147). Although contained by the atlas, the future cities are strictly off maps since every map is in its fixed eternal present. Kublai’s atlas cannot decide the cities it contains; Polo also fails to determine his journey to the future by cartography. The only way to approach the cities is through the impossibility of grasping them. Here is how Polo describes his way to approach them:

At times all I need is a brief glimpse, an opening in the midst of an incongruous landscape, a glint of lights in the fog, the dialogue of two passers-by meeting in the crowd, and I think that, setting out from there, I will put together, piece by piece, the perfect city, made of fragments mixed with the rest, of instants separated by intervals, of signals one sends out, not knowing who receives them. (147)

In this description, the landscape is “incongruous” in two senses; it is inconsistent in itself and fractured in its relation with the approach to it. At first sight, it seems that

the landscape is only the environment in which cities are found, since they are the landscape but are in the “opening in the midst of an incongruous landscape.” The cities appear where the landscape is interrupted. To provide openings where cities can be glimpsed, the landscape has to become incongruous. In Kublai’s imperial imagination in the beginning of the novel, the landscape is never incongruous since it gains its consistency in the flat general surface where all the particularities are located. In Kublai’s virtual monism in the end, the landscape is not necessarily incongruous either. The virtual differences may easily fall back to a fixed state of things without creativity if they do not constantly engender themselves; the differences of the cities in Kublai’s atlas can be creative only when Polo constantly searches for them in the landscape viewed incongruous.

In Polo’s description, the incongruity has two senses: the cities form a landscape in their incongruity with themselves and in relation to the approaches to them. Instead of being a single entity “the perfect city” is “made of fragments.” It undeniably has to be consistent in itself in a certain way in order to be a city, but its consistency can only be found in plural fragments. Even when the consistency is recognized, the plurality of the cities can never be denied. However, knowing the consistency of a city by putting the pieces together does not grant Polo a metafictional position detached from the city. He does not thus become an abstract monist whose general comprehension eliminates the plurality within the cities. In his description, the perfect city is not only made of simple fragments but also “made of fragments mixed with the rest, of instants separated by intervals, of signals one sends out, not knowing who receives them” (147). The consistency in plurality is not only in the city itself but also between it and the search of it. Cities are shown through signals that are constantly interrupted in their processes of being sent and received. Furthermore, the cities can be seen only when the time and space of the search for them become incongruous.



Polo has to escape the fixed schema of both his empirical rules and Kublai's territorial imagination in order to get access to the cities in themselves. Polo describes his incongruous journey and its necessity to Kublai: "If I tell you that the city toward which my journey tends is discontinuous in space and time, now scattered, now more condensed, you must not believe the search for it can stop" (147). The city is always discontinuous and constantly changing its state, between being scattered and condensed. In his search, Polo has to make his own schema of time and space discontinuous, too. He has to enter into the discontinuous, viewing the cities in their plurality. In other words, to make the plurality of the cities appear, Polo has to continue his search in discontinuity.

To make the landscape incongruous is not only to make Kublai's general territorial imagination ineffective but also to make the virtually consistent differences in the atlas inconsistent. While the actual landscape which Polo experiences in his travel is inconsistent, the virtual landscape of Kublai's atlas seems to create a consistency different from his former general monism. The virtual landscape which is in the moving spiral of the novel's structure and depicted in Kublai's atlas is the ground for the inconsistent actual landscape Polo experiences, since the latter expresses the virtual cities the former collects in their purest differences. Though being the ground, the virtual landscape has to be made inconsistent by Polo's search. The ground has to be groundless.

Deleuze's idea of groundlessness may explain the discontinuity Polo provides to virtual consistency. In Deleuze's words, "the ground has been superseded by a groundlessness, a universal ungrounding which turns upon itself and causes only the yet-to-come to return" (*DR* 91). Even though Deleuze recognizes the virtual whole to be the ground of time (79-80), he contends that a groundlessness has to take the place of the ground. The ground has to be made groundless; the ground has to be

ungrounded. Then, “only the yet-to-come” returns. The virtual consistency has to stay creatively unknown in order to remain yet-to-come; the yet-to-come can never be consistent in order to stay unpredictably yet-to-come. In other words, in Deleuze’s words, to ask for the incongruous is the only way to ask for the creative. The radically incongruous is the new itself, undefinable by either territorial or virtual ground.

To constantly create the radically yet-to-come, both monism and pluralism have to be made groundless in *Invisible Cities*. Or, more precisely, monism and pluralism have to be recreated as folded into each other in order to make both of them constantly renewing instead of falling into a fixed ground. A monist view has to grasp the universal in the most pluralist sense, as shown in the previous discussion of Kublai’s atlas; a pluralist view would give rise to instants of local monisms. On the one hand, the most plural differences are folded into the virtual monist atlas of Kublai; the virtual monism is made incongruous by the plural searches for it. On the other hand, the most plural particulars should fold monist views into them, gaining local consistencies in the most inconsistent. The following section goes on to discuss the other half of this double folding: how Polo unfolds local consistencies in the most plural from time to time.

The Doubled Lines of Happiness

In the most plural particularities of the cities, the monist views unfold in the form of a line. Distinct from the empirical linear time, the line momentarily formed by the most different expresses the cities by their purest differences. Calvino recounts two cities in relation to this particular form of a line. Not only is the city depicted as a line (formed by traces or movements in the city), but the depiction itself is syntactically a line of one single sentence. The two cities are Zaira in the first chapter and Raissa in the last. It is no coincidence that the two depicted by a line are situated

correspondingly in the beginning and in the end of the novel and that the names of the two cities share the same vowels showing their correlation. Calvino consciously makes important moments unfolding in the form of a line.

In the story of Zaira, the city is depicted as a line of traces resonating with a line of events (9). Polo tells Kublai that recounting the spatial measurements, including numbers, lengths, and degrees, of the city, tells nothing significant about it. Instead, it makes sense only when, in a certain point of view, all the curves, scales, and tilts line up into an uneven line. Quoting one lengthy sentence from the novel should help grasp how Calvino expresses the city by a line of events:

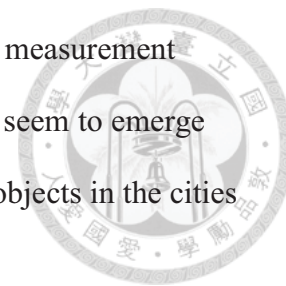
The city . . . consists . . . of relationships between the measurements of its space and the events of its past: the height of a lamppost and the distance from the ground of a hanged usurper's swaying feet; the line strung from the lamppost to the railing opposite and the hestoons that decorate the course of the queen's nuptial procession; the height of that railing and the leap of the adulterer who climbed over it at dawn; the tilt of a guttering and a cat's progress along it as he slips into the same window; the firing range of a gunboat which has suddenly appeared beyond the cape and the bomb that destroys the guttering; the rips in the fish net and three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen's illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock. (9)

This account point out two lines, formed by two series, that are in relation to each other; the series of "measurements of its [the city's] space" consists of visible traces that engrave the concrete objects, turning the abstract space into scenes that are measured by events (activities and movements) happening in them. Instead of an empty backdrop of the city waiting for the events to happen, the space of the city

seems to appear just when the events happen; instead of an abstract measurement pre-existing the appearance of events, the measurements of the city seem to emerge along with or thanks to the events. Because of them, the particular objects in the cities are related to each other.

The city is measured by a series of events. As they take place, the height of the lamppost, the distance between the lamppost and the railing, and the tilt of the guttering are all in tension. Although being extensive traces, they are caused by the intensive tension the events give to the space. Corresponding to movements, the space expands without being extended. In Polo's words, "[a]s this wave from memories flows in, the city soaks it up like a sponge and expands" (9). The city soaks up the events as its own memories and expands without extensively expanding. The size of the space remains the same, but the city becomes more and more folded with traces of events, more and more abundant in heterogeneous measurements. As a space, the city fills itself with different ways of being crossed over, being again and again measured by activities that constantly recreate measurements.

While the line of events constantly undermines any fixed form of spatial measurement, this line seems to be fragmented in correspondence to segments of the particular objects of the space. For example, the hanging of the usurper and the procession of the queen, though related to each other in the political history, are incongruous in the actual space because the events take place between particular objects of the city and thus are determined to be expressed by the height of the lamppost and the distance between it and the railing. The two events are thus two disparate happenings in the actual city. However, their relation in the actual space through the lamppost where the two events overlap is brimming with the relation of the events themselves. On the one side, the line of events seems to be partly determined by the extensive relations of actual objects in the city; on the other, this line is actually a pure



line of events that give rise to the traces of the city. Furthermore, instead of disappearing after the emergence of the city, the line agitates quietly under its space, measuring the concrete city constantly differently. The line owes its existence the groundlessness that ungrounds the ground.² The line is the volcano constantly acting under actual existences in the city. The ungrounding is at two levels: first, the line ungrounds the actual of the city, making the seemingly quiet a volcano where events constantly redefine the city; second, the events on the line are subject to the groundless, too. Particular events are ungrounded by the line that crosses over all events, making them not fixated but gaining significance on a larger scale of Story, a becoming that paradoxically is also located in the actual scenery of the city.

The two series as two aspects of the line participate in each other's ungrounding. This participation can be explained by Deleuze's idea of the resonance between two series, and the story of the fishermen may be explained by the role the dark precursor plays in the resonance. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze explains:

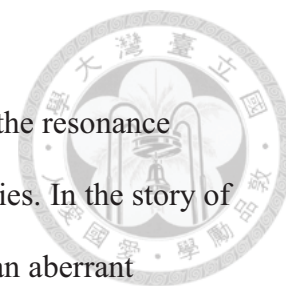
A system must be constituted on the basis of two or more series, each series being defined by the differences between the terms which compose it. If we suppose that the series communicate under the impulse of a force of some kind, then it is apparent that this communication relates differences to other differences, constituting differences between differences within the system. . . . This state of affairs is adequately expressed by certain physical concepts: *coupling* between homogeneous systems, from which is derived an *internal resonance* within the system, and from which in turn is derived a *forced movement* the amplitude of which exceeds that of the basic series

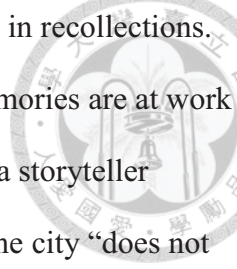
² As explained in the previous section, the "groundless" is an idea of Deleuze depicting what constantly undermines the ground. The previous section discusses the functioning of the groundless with regard to Kublai's atlas, i.e., the whole of differences. Now the idea is used to explain the events at a very local level.

themselves. (117)

As two disparate series couple, they resonate with each other. And the resonance engenders a movement that is stronger than the two constitutive series. In the story of Zaira, the series of spatial measurements of the city participates in an aberrant movement, ungrounding fixed measurements. It is the series of events that forces the city to abandon and recreate its own measurement. Pertaining a city that brims with traces of events, the aberrant movement is the constant escape from fixed extensive measurements. On the other hand, the line of events is forced into movements, too, that line up particular happenings in a historical manner. They are scattered and reorganized in the space of the city. If the extensive measurements do not resonate with the events, the latter will either remain particular, fragmented or relate to each other in a chronological order, instead of being scattered and waiting to be creatively recounted by the fishermen. Because of the resonance, the city expresses itself as a system consistent in its inconsistency.

The series of “events of its past” includes movements that seem to happen only between two concrete objects in a location but nevertheless correlate with each other in a larger scale, as told in the fishermen’s stories. Instead of only disparate and unrelated happenings in particular places, the events converge into an uneven line. Living in the actual city, the fishermen folds the line of events in their own point of view. It is through their storytelling that the resonance between the two series is possible. Deleuze maintains that “[w]hat takes place in the system between resonating series under the influence of the dark precursor is called ‘epiphany’” (*DR* 121). It takes the intervention of a third party to initiate the resonance. To create or receive epiphany is the task of storytellers who make sense of the series in a single gesture. It is in recounting the events, in being inspired by memory of what has happened, that the resonance can be created.





The hidden linkages between events themselves are discovered in recollections. Or rather, the linkages collect themselves in a recollection. Two memories are at work here. While the city remembers the events as traces, the memory of a storyteller recounts the events in stories. One is the memory of the city itself: the city “does not tell its past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls” (9). The city remembers the events as traces, re-measuring what happens in the measurements of spaces and reconnecting the events in spatial relations. The other kind of memory is that of people in whose stories the events on the line collect themselves. In this kind of collection, the underlying line of the city finally appears in a larger scale. The particular details are collected in a monist view.

Interestingly, in the one-sentence description of Zaira, the point in the end where the line collects itself is the fishermen’s storytelling: “the rips in the fish net and three old men seated on the dock mending nets and telling each other for the hundredth time the story of the gunboat of the usurper, who some say was the queen’s illegitimate son, abandoned in his swaddling clothes there on the dock” (9). The memory of the city in its actual existence is recounted by the fishermen. The events appear once again, this time not as particular events in relation to their traces but as elements of a consistent story. In the fishermen’s creative repetition by storytelling, the series of events form a small image. This monist image captures the plural events, giving not only the events a significance but also the city a local image of the whole. The fishermen’s storytelling enables the series of events to resonate with the series of traces in the city. While the traces constantly remind the fishermen of the events that make the city what it is, the events enable the fishermen to explain the actual existence of the city. Epiphany happens in the fishermen’s storytelling when the series

of events and of traces are captured in one image. The fishermen's storytelling is an expression of the genetic power of stories in their becoming. Initiating the resonance between virtual events and actual traces, Story itself is creative, accounting for the engendering of stories. If the world is in constant creation, Story is also endlessly creative. In Alessia Ricciardi's words, "[i]t should come as little surprise . . . that for Calvino the depiction of the world ultimately describes the process of writing itself" (1072). Calvino's world not only ends up to be about writing but also makes writing a creative reflection of the world. The world thus exists twice, once as the actual world and the other as stories. As the story told gains its autonomy and germinates in times that are not limited to a particular fisherman, the story enters in to a state of Story where the unfolding of the story has priority over the subjects and their environments.

As they tell the story "for the hundredth time," the fishermen invokes the existence of a special time, that of story creation; Story is in a time different from all the times that can recollect events in different times. Ingeniously, Calvino's description of the spatial city corresponds to this time that is able to touch upon all the times. The city is a collection of all the times in it as if in a palm, waiting to be read and told in stories repetitively and creatively. In other words, cities are best expressed by stories, unfolding endlessly by repetitive storytelling. The time of stories which repeat themselves and never finish being told resonates with Deleuze's description of Aion: "Always already passed and eternally yet to come, Aion is the eternal truth of time: *pure empty form of time*" (LS 165). A story is about what has already happened, but its content remains yet-to-come, waiting to be recreated in the next telling. Being a time outside any present but able to instigate retelling, the time of story is a kind of pure empty form of time. It makes sense of fragmented times and spaces while itself keeping renewing.

In the city of Zaira, the plural details unfold into a line that is folded in one

monist story of the fishermen, while the monist story is once again made plural; the story is subject to Story in which it varies by being recounted for hundreds and hundreds of times. Resonating with Zaira, the story of Raissa also ends with a line folded in a point in the end. However, in Raissa, the whole line of events is folded in a philosopher's words.

The city of Raissa is an unpleasant city overwhelmed by sadness. All the sadness is within expectation; or, to be more precise, it is the expectable routines that lead to sadness. In Raissa, “[i]n the morning you wake from one bad dream and another begins” (133). Instead of waiting for a sweet dream, one bad dream after another is expectable. At work, “every moment, you hit your finger with a hammer or prick it with a needle” (133). The damages are no longer accidents but routines that happen at every moment, without surprises. Even inside houses, “you do not have to enter to learn this: in the summer the windows resound with quarrels and broken dishes” (133). Unhappiness is bound to happen such that even witness is unnecessary. The happiness of the city lies in a line that draws many events together. The line of happiness hidden in the city is also dealt with in a very long sentence:

at every moment there is a child in a window who laughs seeing a dog that has jumped on a shed to bite into a piece of polenta dropped by a stonemason who has shouted from the top of the scaffolding, “Darling, let me dip into it,” to a young serving-maid who holds up a dish of ragout under the pergola, happy to serve it to the umbrella-maker who is celebrating a successful transaction, a white lace parasol bought to display at the races by a great lady in love with an officer who has smiled at her taking the last jump, happy man, and still happier his horse, flying over the obstacles, seeing a francolin flying in the sky, happy bird freed from its cage by a painter happy at having painted it feather by feather, speckled

with red and yellow in the illumination of that page in the volume where the philosopher says: “Also in Raissa, city of sadness, there runs an invisible thread that binds one living being to another for a moment, then unravels, then is stretched again between moving points as it draws new and rapid patterns so that at every second the unhappy city contains a happy city unaware of its own existence. (133-34)

The line in Raissa is linked by actions themselves, by gestures and movements of small characters and things. Every event on the line is an accident not defined by an ordinary succession, throwing the characters and things out of their daily routines. While the sadness of Raissa is defined by the routines, or the sadness itself has become the habit of the city, its happiness happens in moments that are purely contingent and accidental. Then, the particular existents of the city all of a sudden escape from themselves in uplifting gestures: the dog jumps; the stonemason shouts in height; the officer jumps; a francolin flies. They all become “moving points” linked to each other, giving rise to momentary “patterns” between them.

The happiness in Raissa keeps jumping off the city. The elements form a line in the air when they are in movement. All these elements move according to their own rhythm and due to their own reasons; however, in their different movements, the different and cracks they make in their routes form a line where many particularities of the city exist as a totality in a moment. The bird, the horse, the couple in love, the umbrella-maker, the maid, the stonemason, the dog, and the boy are lined up. While all of them leave their routines for a moment, they are linked with each other in such a way that a monist happiness crosses over the plural events. All of a sudden, the city appears in a line formed by particularities. The cracks in the different routines give rise to a totality of time that is different from chronological time.

Something unlimited by particular events passes through them and gives rise to

them. What is this force that connects all the particulars? What is crucial in this description of happiness is still time. In the beginning of the description, it is “at every moment,” and in the end, it is “at every second the unhappy city contains a happy city unaware of its own existence.” Happiness is momentary. The particulars are combined with each other only “for a moment” and then unravel. The patterns drawn by the thread appear only momentarily too. As soon as a small totality composed of local connections is made, it is cancelled and remade. What makes such a constant creation possible is the creativity of time itself passing through all the events. It is the forceful moment that appears in itself and forces the particular events out of their routines. The time of happiness shifts swiftly, emerging when the aberrant movements of things line up.

The non-chronological time which aberrant movements reveal can be further explained by Deleuze’s idea of Aion.

Aion is the eternal truth of time: *pure empty form of time*, which has freed itself of its present corporeal content and has thereby unwound its own circle, stretching itself out in a straight line. It is perhaps all the more dangerous, more labyrinthine, and more tortuous for this reason. (*LS* 165)

Aion is free from the chronological routine. While the routine defines time to be a circle, Aion is in the form of a straight line as time itself unfolds regardless of the regular movement of ordinary time. It is even more labyrinthine because the line of Aion is entirely made of accidents that cannot be predicted by the regulation of movements. In the city of Raissa, the moments of happiness appear as Aion, in contrast to the regular movements of bad dreams, work damaging the body, and quarrels in houses. Happiness happens when events give rise to aberrant movements that the routine cannot define—the fall of a crisp of bread, the line of flight of a bird, and the laugh of a child. The moment of happiness is what links the events. In

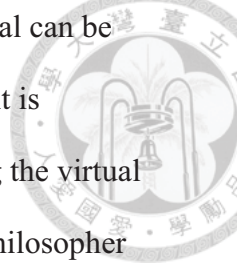
Deleuze's words, "the entire line of the Aion is run through by the Instant which is endlessly displaced on this line and is always missing from its own place" (166). The line of happiness is surely full of particular events. However, all different instants express the Instant; all particular events are expressions of the Instant that constantly runs through the line and displaces itself in different positions and places. The line of movement in Raissa is the line of happiness run through by Aion. The Instant is nothing but time itself unfolding. Happiness is the instantaneous unfolding of time as an arrow shooting through different disparate existences. To see the line of time is to see what happiness of the city truly is, instead of only its fragments.

Why does it take a minimal instant for abundant events to happen? What is the importance of this instant? Deleuze further contends that "[w]hereas Chronos was limited and infinite, Aion is unlimited, the way that future and past are unlimited, and finite like the instant" (*LS* 165). While Chronos, the time defined by regular movements, is as vast as extensive movements, Aion escapes from the vast regulated time and appears in moments. While Chronos is in a general view in which all particulars are presented in a whole, Aion takes only an instant to fully express itself. While Chronos is limited by the predictable regulation of movements, Aion is unlimited in its maximal unfolding in an instant. Infinite events can happen in a minimal instant; a totality of disparate durations can be expressed in a moment. In other words, in the story of Raissa, Polo sees a totality in the most plural existences. The most plural expresses different monist totalities in different moments. And it is in the small, local totalities, in the instants, that the maximal plurality finds expression. It is an instant that the abundance of the plural can be seen.

The ultimate result of pluralism is monist totalities composed of fragments. In terms of totality of this kind, Deleuze indicates that this kind of whole "is no longer the logos which unifies the parts, but the drunkenness, the pathos which bathes them

and spreads out in them” (C2 154). The totality functions like the drunkenness of all different particular movements. All of a sudden, the dog jumps; the stonemason shouts in height; the officer jumps; a francolin flies. At that moment, the particular gives rise to a totality in a discontinuous image of happiness. Springer states that “[i]n the vast ruin which is the modern novel, only a ‘Marco Polo’ can invent a narrative scheme capable of surviving the crisis of the Empire, which is at the same time the crisis of narrative” (294). The only narrative possible for Polo is like a line, a totality of cracks and fragments. The most plural remains the most plural, but it gives rise to moments of monism in which the plural is expressed. The most radical pluralism is monist pluralism in which differences are expressed on a line instead of scattering around and risking being totalized by space or movement. It is in the unfolding of time that purest differences can be seen, and the unfolding of time is refolded by different moments of happiness.

Interestingly, different levels of unfolding and folding are at work here. In the long sentence describing Raissa, the time of happiness unfolds twice from the point where the philosopher’s words touch upon actual reality. The point is where all the events are folded and from which the two parallel lines of events unfold: one in the direction of the bird flying in front of a horse which wins, leading to a series of events actually happening; the other in the philosopher’s words where the significance of the series of events is recounted. At the point from which the two lines unfold is the resonance of the actual world and the philosopher’s words qua virtual. The point is opened up by a bird, a perfect symbol of flight. Reflected by the picture of the bird on the page, the bird flies away. In other words, the philosopher’s page even initiates the unfolding of the two lines of happiness in the city and in the book, since the bird flies once the picture is completed, as if a virtual version of the bird initiated a line of flight, a line of happiness.



This actual series of events triggered by a point that is the virtual can be explained by Deleuze's idea of counter-actualization. In his words, it is counter-actualization that "duplicate[s] the lining" (*LS* 168), making the virtual double the virtual in such a way that the actual is changed. As the philosopher counter-actualizes the bird, triggering a series of events, the virtual image of the bird opens up a doubled lining in actual reality. In other words, in Calvino's description, counter-actualization is creative. It opens up possibilities inspired by the virtual that is completely new to the actual world. Interestingly, while opening up an actual line of flight, the philosopher's words keep a line of flight. By abstractly describing the line again and by letting the line unfold into the abstract words, the philosopher's words fold the line of events in a state where constant creation is possible. This state of folding and double unfolding makes momentary patterns visible in relation to the pattern described by the philosopher. The time of Story is here created by the philosopher. While the philosopher counter-actualizes and maintains that time is creative in itself in its many patterns, the time of Story unfolds itself in both directions of the actual world and the words of the philosopher.

There are the two operations: the philosopher's counter-actualization and the flight of the bird. Between these two operations, a double image appears. The city of Raissa expresses itself not only is the series of events showing momentary happiness but also in a virtual sentence of the philosopher. In other words, the image of happiness not only draws particular events together into a series but also expresses two different series in relation to each other. With these two series, the virtual and the actual, reflecting each other, the image shines of the sparkles between the two reflections.

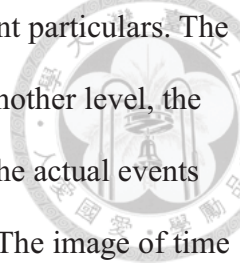
How can such a double image of fragments be described? Deleuze's theory on images can explain this special one between the virtual and the actual. In Raissa, from

time to time, some fragments and cracks put themselves on a consistent line. The local line expresses a totality in one image formed by different cracks. Deleuze explains that there is an image that “draws together the totality of time” (*DR* 89):

the idea of the totality of time must be understood as follows: the caesura, of whatever kind, must be determined in the image of a unique and tremendous event, an act which is adequate to time as a whole. This image itself is divided, torn into two unequal parts. Nevertheless, it thereby draws together the totality of time. It must be called a symbol by virtue of the unequal parts which it subsumes and draws together, but draws together as unequal parts. (*DR* 89)

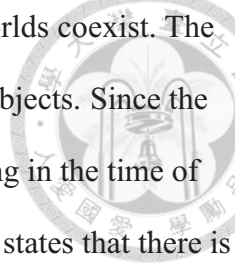
Interestingly, for Deleuze, the totality can be drawn together by an image only in a caesura or a crack. Only in the discontinuous can the greatest continuity be found. Thus, to express the whole of time, it is necessary to create the totalities formed by parts too particular and plural to be equal to each other. The emergence of the image is the biggest event adequate to an expression of the whole. In Zourabichvili’s words, “[t]he event is ... is the transcendental synthesis of the irreversible, which gathers and distributes the before and the after on either side of a static caesura” (110). The emergence of the image puts different fragmenting events together. The image can happen only in the caesura where the events are so scattered that no consistent time is able to generalize them. Only the broken is adequate to the whole, since a totality can be drawn only by cracks. The image is the biggest event that draws unequal, different, incongruous parts together and makes them remain unequal, different, and incongruous. The image gives the unequal parts one single significance, making them one expression of time itself.

What are the unequal parts of time? Calvino’s city of Raissa offers a multi-leveled example of the image that draws unequal parts together. At a level, the



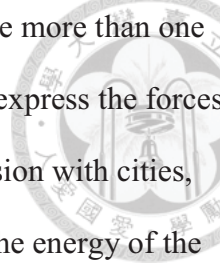
line of events in Raissa draws together events that happen as different particulars. The various happenings form a single image of happiness on a line. At another level, the line of events draws two even more heterogeneous series together: the actual events happening in the city and the virtual description of the philosopher. The image of time is not only an image connecting all the particular happenings in the city but also an image with two sides. The image of Raissa is a mirror image in which the time of happiness emerges because of the double structure of the image. The two sides make it possible for time to express itself. The image is formed of the actual and the virtual, making the two (story) lines an image that is disoriented from any linear direction. According to Vanhanen, “[r]ather than telling a story, the time-image presents disoriented, discordant movements that form other patterns than narrative structures” (112). Time expresses itself when not dictated by any narrative progress. The image of time is expressed through actual happenings that escape from their routines in aberrant movements. A thought of time is triggered by not what routinely functions but by what cannot be thought. In Gregg Lambert’s words, “thought would find its cause no longer in the image, but in what the image refuses to be thought” (163). Thought is caused by what forces the image to be what it is and refuses to be integrated into the regular movements.

The reason why the image expresses time directly is explicated by Deleuze in *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*. An time-image is able to express, using Deleuze’s description of Buñuel, “a plurality of simultaneous worlds; to a simultaneity of presents in different worlds. These are not subjective (imaginary) points of view in one and the same world, but one and the same event in different objective worlds, all implicated in the event, inexplicable universe” (C2 100). The reason why a time-image can express heterogeneous series of time is that it is an image in the time of events which is fundamentally structured by simultaneous times. When any event



happens, it creates a time in which all of the presents in different worlds coexist. The time of event is the truest form of time, truer than the time of any subjects. Since the subject exists only in the actual world, these virtual worlds coexisting in the time of event are even more “objective” (100) than the actual. Daniela Voss states that there is no subject when time itself unfolds: “Pure and empty time is now the true subjectivity. It has become an infinite, straight line, which will cut right through the consciousness of the subject. Its effect is tortuous and inhuman in the sense that it carries the subject to the border of the livable and destroys the well-constituted identity of the subject” (215). The unfolding of time is what fundamentally constitutes the consciousness of subjects, and as the time expresses itself regardless of the completeness of the actual subjects, all subjects are destroyed. Time itself is the only subjectivity. The unfolding of time is the only event. Time itself unfolds and let worlds coexist. This is why Deleuze states that a time-image may express “*undecidable alternatives* between circles of past, *inextricable differences* between peaks of present” (101). At that state, the presents are no longer actual; they become “inextricable differences” in the virtual peaks of presents. They are aspects of the images, images whose other aspects are different “circles of past.” In either form, impossible, divergent differences of time coexist. In the time of event, all the different times are expressed in one event.

The line of happiness in *Raissa* is an image of the city that expresses peaks of presents of the heterogeneous series of different people. The image comprises of not only the two series of the happenings and the philosopher’s words but also the disparate durations of the different existences in the city. It exists in the time-image made possible by the complicated structure of the event; as the bird flies away, different series in the city resonate and create an image. Since the city gains its significance only in the image, every image opens up a completely new city hidden under the name of *Raissa*. Since the philosopher claims that this kind of image



happens at every moment, the line of happiness implies that there are more than one time, more than one city hidden in the city of Raissa. One city may express the forces and differences of the whole universe. Speaking of Calvino's obsession with cities, Angela M. Jeannet affirms the existence of a city as the witness of the energy of the whole universe: "The very presence of the City reasserts that, although they are imperfect and perhaps unequal to the task, human reason, fantasy, and concern can provide the energy for the continuing possibility of a survival of the universe. Even the chaos of universal entropy may be a vital 'broth,' nourishing a cosmic renewal" (148). Although Jeannet is talking about the actual existence of a city and its role as expression of the energy of the universe thanks to civilization, the significance of the city can be explained further by suggesting that all the cities are significant because stories are told of them. Cities are abundant in themselves because they allow different stories to be told of them. As hinted by Jeannet, through "fantasy" on account of the fact that cities keep becoming stories, cities demonstrate how the universe is full of energy.

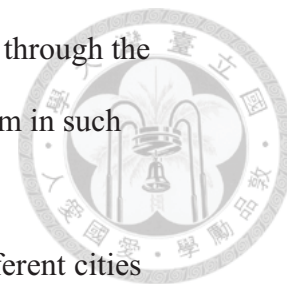
Freedom between Plural Worlds

In one single instant, different events unfold one creative time of story-genesis and Story. The cramming together of the discontinuous forms a landscape of the disparate, making differences stay with each other without eliminating each other. In such a moment full of differences, is there freedom not to be defined by any of the plural differences? In such a single unfolding of the time of Story, does the coexistence of differences lead to a determination by the plural or a freedom among heterogeneous durations? A kind of freedom is possible precisely because of the complex moment full of heterogeneous times: a freedom of switching between differences. While Deleuze's theory of time-image and Calvino's story of Raissa

suggest that the coexistence of different layers of time is accessible through the creation of images, Calvino, in one city, further explores the freedom in such coexistence.

In the city of Marozia, Polo finds a way to switch between different cities coexisting in one. There are two oracles of Marozia as the sibyl sees “two cities: one of the rat, one of the swallow” (139). While some people question if the two oracles mean that the century of one will be succeeded by the other, the best explanation of the oracle is: the city of the rat and the city of the swallow have always been coexisting. Instead of different points on a chronological line, they are pure coexistents. In the city, there are both people with “heavy eyelids” lowered in their sadness, and people believing “they are flying” like swallows. These are certainly visible only in the observation of Polo as a foreign traveler who has not taken either of the sides. Such an observer is able to see that in a moment many different cities with different temporalities may coexist. Polo is even able to inspect the point where the switch is possible: “if you move along Marozia’s compact walls, when you least expect it, you see a crack open and a different city appear” (139). Cracks in the compact walls open up to other worlds. Through the most discontinuous points on the walls, different cities coexist and communicate with each other in one city. It is as if the fragmentary and discontinuous best express the continuities between worlds. Once a traveler knows how to decipher a crack, he is able to enter the continuity between worlds and switch between the different cities within one city.

Besides, for Deleuze, cracks are where the most subtle truths can be found: “If mental objects . . . (that is to say, vital ideas) have a place, it will be in the deepest of the synaptic fissures, in the hiatuses, intervals” (*WP* 209). Deleuze reveals that the task is to explore the intervals. All creativity and interesting observations lie in where the world is in its most discontinuous. For Calvino, visiting the fissures and the cracks

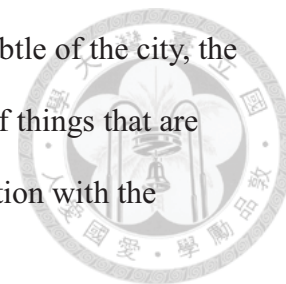


on the compact walls as a traveler is the way to get into the most subtle of the city, the point where different cities coexist. The cracks open up the facets of things that are not only the actual or the particular. With respect to the cracks' relation with the knowledge of things, Martin says:

In the misery and despair of the world, to think is perhaps to create a space of transversal communication between the disjointed sheets of time and the layers of the external world; it is to weave—with the pure form of time and the visibilities that time causes to bifurcate—the links that enable to traverse the abysses and the micro-cracks that crack ideas and worlds alike. (116)

To think is to move between worlds in their virtual communication, which is made possible by the coexistence of times. Felicity Colman argues that “[t]ime provides access to thinking, to the very nature of being itself” (145). It is on the sheets of time that thinking happens and that access to the being of things is possible. When pure time unfolds itself, it bifurcates, giving rise to impossible communication between differences. The cracks are where time expresses its own differences above the abyss and where different times are still different but no longer exclusive. The impossible communication happens between different worlds in the cracks of time. The only landscape that exists is the groundless landscape of time itself, groundless because no ground takes over another. The only ground is groundless in the communication between all worlds in the state purest difference. While images are local monist views of the plural, it is in the monist images that the most plural can exist and the most different virtual differences can coexist. The groundless landscape of time is expressed by the local images of monist pluralism.

Freedom is the ability to switch between different worlds coexisting in a single moment and to wander between coexisting times. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze contends that freedom lies in the ability to be in different layers of time.



Interestingly, he explains freedom with regard to destiny. He argues that destiny is the virtual whole's acting on the cracks of the present, instead of being linear "deterministic relations between presents" (83). The presents under the influence of destiny is determined by "non-localisable connections, actions at a distance, systems of reply, resonance and echoes, objective chances, signs, signals and roles" (83).

Different layers of the past communicate regardless of the succession of happenings that are actualized. Thus, destiny can be comprehended only through an exploration of fragments and cracks. Successive presents express a destiny functioning in a non-successive way when they "play out the same thing, the same story, but at different levels: here more or less relaxed, there more or less contracted" (83). While the presents are diverse and actual, they are performances of virtual differences that relate to each other in a whole. The virtual story as a whole is told in different fragmentary versions and thus gives rise to different destinies.

Deleuze finds freedom not contradictory to destiny. On the contrary, freedom is the ability to wander in destiny, to play alone with destiny: "destiny accords so badly with determinism but so well with freedom: freedom lies in choosing the levels" (83). Freedom does not betray destiny; freedom is the ability to choose between layers of destiny. Freedom is to know destiny as it is, i.e., a coexistence of alternatives that communicate with each other, and to do as what destiny does— to choose between the layers. Levi R. Bryant claims that destiny produces freedom when something new comes out of the expectation of cause and effect: "The notion of destiny produces a degree of freedom from the present insofar as it allows something new to be introduced into the present" (128). While all alternatives come from the virtual whole, a choice between the layers creates something new for the actual present. In the case of Marozia, the oracle is surely about the destiny of two different layers of the swallow and the rat that communicate in the virtual whole of the city; however,

freedom lies in choosing between the two and in communicating the two. Freedom is not being as happy as a swallow but being capable of switching between the two virtual destinies. Freedom is to be able to wander in the groundless landscape that makes the ground, i.e., the virtual whole of destinies, emerging constantly and inconsistently. The wandering in the groundless landscape affirms the plurality of worlds coexisting in a city while discovering continuities in them.

While forming a whole of pluralist monism, what the pluralism in the end creates to express itself is local monist totalities; what enables freedom in pluralism is wandering in continuities between the disparate. It is only in local monist expressions that pluralist particularities express the coexistence of utmost differences, differences that are linked by the unfolding of the time of Story. It is only in wandering between coexisting differences that the plural is found to be free in being plural instead of determining the wanderer by an alternative of the plural. In other words, to be extremely plural, pluralism would become monist pluralism. While the monist whole of Kublai's atlas consists of nothing but differences, Polo's pluralism ends up with folding itself into monist moments in correspondence to the power of Story that is both monist and pluralist. To put it another way, the time of Story requires a monism which unfolds to be pluralist and a pluralism which unfolds to be monist.

Conclusion



Twists and turns in *Invisible Cities* create many different landscapes, which gradually unveil themselves to be different aspects of one groundless landscape.

The novel starts with the landscape of Kublai Khan's empire, a landscape that undermines itself. While Kublai attempts to make the landscape a territory by putting together all the disparate details of it on his map, he fails in comprehending the collapsing empire. Unfit for his totalizing view, the landscape in itself remains indescribable, even threatening to disintegrate the monist narrative Kublai wishes for. In contrast to the Khan's territory of depression, Polo's landscape offers endless happiness which is conveyed to the emperor with colorful objects and lively gestures. The landscapes shown in this encounter discussed by Chapter One of this thesis are Kublai's abstract territory which represents the impossibility of a landscape and Polo's abundant landscape that evades any generalization.

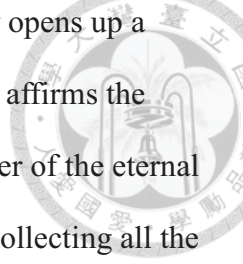
Polo views the landscape as disparate cities and unclassifiable stories. This landscape is no less paradoxical than Kublai's imagination of the territory that cannot possibly describe the landscape. Although the attention to particulars seems to contradict the search for a landscape in totality, the differences create a whole as described by Chapter Two of this thesis. Without propaganda, Polo lets the plural form a landscape as the whole. Serving as elements of the whole, the stories of the cities relate to each other even without Polo's conscious manipulation. Unfolding itself, the landscape no longer belongs to Polo. Between the stories, the landscape directly unfolds itself as one consists of the many cities.

However, the one landscape of all the cities does not maintain a state where one and many are indistinguishable. Instead, this landscape develops into two aspects: the one consisting of many as reflected by the atlas Kublai possesses in the end of the

novel, and the many containing one as shown in Polo's accounts of the cities. These two aspects are explored in Chapter Three of this thesis: while Kublai's atlas presents a landscape collected in one but including nothing except radically plural differences, Polo's stories constantly create a landscapes of monist totalities in local particulars.

The foldings of pluralism into monism and of monism into pluralism create two landscapes that reflect the core landscape made of disparate stories. While the core landscape is both monist and pluralist, the two reflective landscapes link the two views by folding one view into each other. This prevents both landscape to be exclusive and creates a complex, two-folded landscape. What the whole novel presents is thus one landscape with dual reflections that reconcile monism and pluralism while maintaining their distinctness.

This thesis ends with a discussion of freedom in moving between the differences in the landscape created by both monism and pluralism. The last part of Chapter Three seems to maintain that the happiest activity in such a landscape is the freedom of choosing between layers of time. Undeniably, from a Deleuzian perspective, this ending is still limited. The thesis generally follows the sequence of Deleuze's three syntheses of time elaborated in *Difference and Repetition*: looking under the presents to see the ground that undermines them; presenting the virtual whole where all differences coexist; and finally exploring how the virtual time actualizes—how the virtual whole presents itself in particular presents and how the flow of time is transformed by such presents. However, the culminating last part of Chapter Three merely arrives at the second thesis in Deleuze's framework. While Deleuze in the third synthesis affirms the flow of time, emphasizing the eternal return without identity and thus without freedom on the individual level, the freedom discussed in Chapter Three pertains to the freedom to move between the layers of the virtual whole in the second thesis.



This imbalance of the thesis in following Deleuze's philosophy opens up a difference between Deleuze and Calvino. As a philosopher, Deleuze affirms the radical flow of time that submits all elements to the destructive power of the eternal return; as a novelist, Calvino in the end still appeals to some form, collecting all the stories in Kublai's atlas. No matter how plural and full of differences the atlas is, it still maintains an ultimate form that is different from Deleuze's eternal return. As discussed in Chapter Two, Calvino makes the virtual whole itself moving instead of submitting the whole to the movement of eternal return. Thus, in terms of Deleuze's framework, Calvino does not fully embrace the eternal return by abandoning the virtual whole to it. This is also why there is such a stifling sadness and heaviness, especially on the side of Kublai, in the end of the novel—by remaining structured doubly and by giving Kublai the atlas, the novel still struggles with the inevitable heaviness the act of collection brings. On the other hand, in terms of Calvino's own framework, the freedom discussed in Chapter Three points toward but does not fully account for the complexity of the landscape the novel creates. Unlike Deleuze, Calvino has no intension to present the most radical state of time: the eternal return. Or rather, the most radical state for Calvino is the complex interrelation between monism and pluralism: Polo's happiness and Kublai's sadness are both necessary for the complicated participation. The moving virtual whole combining both the pluralist monist view of the whole and the monist pluralist view of the particulars is the ultimate landscape for Calvino. Thus, the freedom of Polo to move between the differences of Kublai's atlas is an important indicator of Polo's participation in Kublai's virtual whole in the end of the novel. The second synthesis persists to the end and explicitly remains the landscape of *Invisible Cities*.

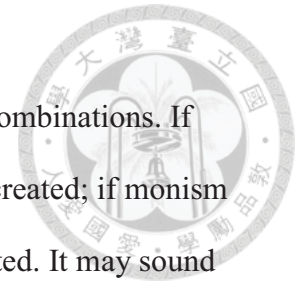
It takes a landscape to tackle the problem of monism and pluralism. If not in terms of a landscape, these two abstract views can never be reconciled without one

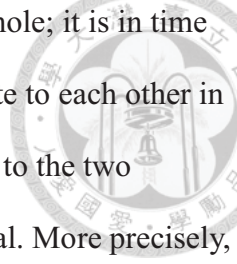
subordinating the other.

When put together, monism and pluralism necessarily create combinations. If pluralism is folded into monism, the landscape in Kublai's atlas is created; if monism is folded into pluralism, those in Polo's local consistencies are created. It may sound ridiculous that landscapes can be folded back and forth between monism and pluralism. Undeniably spatial imagination is inadequate, and thus the landscape of monism and pluralism can only be that of time which may unfold into distinct aspects that do not contradict. If the relations between monism and pluralism cannot but be aspects of time, why using landscape, such a spatial image? Why does Calvino deal with the opposition fundamentally irreconcilable in space through a novel of cities and the landscape?

The "landscape of time" is not a metaphor that describes something about time that is irrelevant to space. This phrase indicates the fundamental interrelation between time and space. While cities seem to stay the same in space, monism and pluralism are differently established in time. In the beginning of the novel, while Kublai wishes but fails to gain a territory through a map symbolizing eternal present of his rule, Polo affirms the irreconcilable durations of disparate cities in themselves, which virtually form a whole of time when all the durations relate to each other. The replacement of Kublai's view with Polo's indicates that the wishes to spatialize everything in a present that does not pass gives way to the affirmation of the indescribable differences of time. Each of the two views creates a landscape. While the landscape of Kublai is spatially imagined, it shows nothing but corruption and the impossibility of being fixed in an eternal present. On the contrary, Polo's is temporal, caused by the emergence of the different durations of particular places.

Interestingly, singularities of different cities can only be affirmed through an exploration of their temporal aspects. If thought spatially, as what Kublai does, the





cities can only be imagined as homogeneous parts adding up to a whole; it is in time that differences can not only be affirmed in themselves but also relate to each other in a non-totalizing way. These two different imaginations seem to lead to the two landscapes. In other words, landscapes seem to be spatial or temporal. More precisely, since the spatial one process to be impossible, the landscape can only be temporal. Being temporal does not mean being irrelevant to space, since a landscape does unfold itself in space. However, the space of a landscape is recreated by time which expresses the diversity and difference, as Kublai gains the atlas corresponding to the whole that comes into existence when different durations are opened up by Polo. In short, a landscape is a space recreated by time. It is the correlation of things that is no longer limited by the spatial rules of relations. Space is not excluded from the landscape but is transformed. In other words, time is more fundamental to abundant differences than space. In the light of time, relations of things in space may follow the fluid rules of time, and time may unfold into different spatial relations.

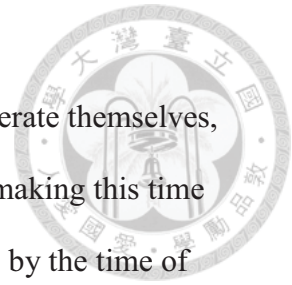
In the end of the novel, as time unfolds in relation to space that is recreated, Kublai owns an atlas that cannot impose its present on the cities in their own durations, while Polo finds momentary consistencies in time between the different durations within a city. Space seems to be irrelevant to the atlas with no fixed present while being fractured at every moment to give room to Polo's consistencies. Strangely, landscapes are most expressive when space is discarded. Time creates its own landscape that redefines space. In an aspect of the groundless landscape, the *one* landscape is lively in Kublai's atlas, shining with utmost differences; in the other aspect, the many landscapes express remarkable moments in Polo's accounts. Time unfolds itself and creates a landscape with double aspects that cannot be compossible in space.

Why does a discussion of time in *Invisible Cities* matter? What does time

enlighten with regard to the novel and to monism and pluralism?

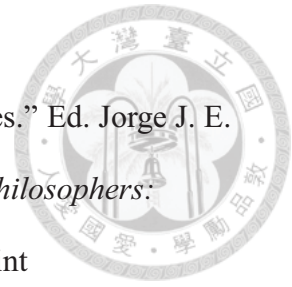
The time creating a landscape, or the time in which stories generate themselves, i.e., the time of Story, is essential to the novel, which is devoted to making this time that gives rise to stories appear as a landscape. Creating a landscape by the time of Story is the answer Calvino gives to the problem of monism and pluralism. The time proceeds and does not proceed, suspending the dialogue of the two characters while constantly giving rise to different stories. The time is monist and pluralist, maintaining one empty form in itself while unfolding into many contents. The time of Story unfolds a groundless landscape where the philosophical opposition is replaced by creation.

The time of Story is something that can only be described philosophically while being created literarily. That is to say, the philosophical problem of monism and pluralism can be addressed in the time of story creation and literary time expresses something a philosopher strives to describe. For Calvino, the opposition between monism and pluralism is never a problem but what maintains the tension for creativity.



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