

Hong Kong Baptist University

## HKBU Institutional Repository

---

Open Access Theses and Dissertations

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

---

6-24-2019

### Toward a schizo-natural writing :exploring the production of nature in Dung Kai-Cheung's Natural histories trilogy

Hosum Cheung

Follow this and additional works at: [https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/etd\\_oa](https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/etd_oa)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Cheung, Hosum, "Toward a schizo-natural writing :exploring the production of nature in Dung Kai-Cheung's Natural histories trilogy" (2019). *Open Access Theses and Dissertations*. 705.  
[https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/etd\\_oa/705](https://repository.hkbu.edu.hk/etd_oa/705)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Electronic Theses and Dissertations at HKBU Institutional Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Open Access Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of HKBU Institutional Repository. For more information, please contact [repository@hkbu.edu.hk](mailto:repository@hkbu.edu.hk).

**HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

**Master of Philosophy**

**THESIS ACCEPTANCE**

DATE: June 24, 2019

STUDENT'S NAME: CHEUNG Ho Sum

THESIS TITLE: Toward a Schizo-Natural Writing: Exploring the Production of Nature in Dung  
Kai-Cheung's *Natural Histories Trilogy*

This is to certify that the above student's thesis has been examined by the following panel members and has received full approval for acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy.

Chairman: Prof Hjort Mette  
Dean, Faculty of Arts, HKBU

Internal Members: Prof Lo Kwai Cheung  
Professor, Department of Humanities and Creative Writing, HKBU  
(Designated by Head of Department of Humanities and Creative Writing)

Prof Erni John N.  
Chair Professor in Humanities, Department of Humanities and Creative  
Writing, HKBU

External Member: Prof Rojas Carlos  
Professor  
Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies  
Duke University  
USA

Issued by Graduate School, HKBU

Toward a Schizo-Natural Writing:  
Exploring the Production of Nature in Dung Kai-Cheung's  
*Natural Histories Trilogy*

CHEUNG Ho Sum

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy

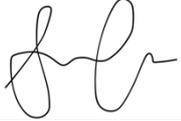
Principal Supervisor:  
Prof. John N. Erni (Hong Kong Baptist University)

June 2019

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of MPhil at Hong Kong Baptist University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines, and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures in accordance with the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC). I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, obtained the relevant ethical and/or safety approval (where applicable), and acknowledged my obligations and the rights of the participants.

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

Date: June 2019

## Abstract

How should nature be written? Writing has long been a way for people to understand nature. Still, we have come to an age that we need to reconceptualize our relation with nature. Nature can no longer be regarded as a passive stage upon which human beings act. How should we understand nature so that nature is made inanimate? I propose that the solution, known as “Schizo-Natural Writing,” can be found in Dung Kai-cheung’s *Natural Histories Trilogy*.

Hong Kong is commonly seen as a city. Correspondingly, when it comes to Hong Kong literature, the term appears frequently will be “city writing”. It is not surprising, given that Hong Kong has always been recognised as a highly-developed city, one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Famous literary works in Hong Kong like Xi Xi’s *My City* (西西，我城), *A Dictionary of Two Cities* co-written by Hon Lai Chu and Dorothy Tse Hiu Hong (韓麗珠、謝曉虹，雙城辭典), Wong Bik Wan’s *The City of Lost* (黃碧雲，失城), just to name some. This phenomenon is closely related to the historical background of Hong Kong. According to Chan (2009), the connection between Hong Kong literature and its cityscape can be dated back to 1950s. Though it does not mean that there are no non-urban writings, those were not in the mainstream.

However, in 2000s one of the most influential local writers, Dung Kai Cheung (1967-), has begun his *Natural Histories Trilogy*. He is the director in The House of Hong Kong Literature, a folk organisation of local literature. His publication includes, *Androgyny: Evolution of a Non-existent Species* (1996), a story about a female scientist who went into the wild and sought a nonexistent species, named as androgyny and *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City* (1997), an imaginary archaeology in the future Hong Kong, which has been translated into English. During 2005 to 2010, he published *the Natural Histories*

*Trilogy*, including firstly, *the History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera* (2018, which titled in Chinese, 天工開物 · 栩栩如真), secondly, *the Histories of Time: The Light of Nga Chi* (2007, 時間繁史 · 啞瓷之光) and thirdly, *on the Origin of Species: The Rebirth of Bui Bui - The Age of Apprenticeship* (2010, 物種源始 · 貝貝重生之學習年代).

In the trilogy, Dung Kai-cheung, echoing Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "nature=industry", highlighted the productivity of nature, or the naturing of nature. As such, he no longer writes nature. He writes schizo-naturally. I further adopted the term "ecology", which on the one hand pointed out the close relation between the item produced during the schizo-natural writing; on the other hand, echoed Guattari's *the Three Ecology*. In this thesis, there are four parts investigating four types of ecology: mental ecology, social ecology, environmental ecology and spatiotemporal ecology.

Through examining the trilogy, love, being standing outside oneself, is advocated to be the way out of the fragmented world.

Keywords: Dung Kai-cheung, the Natural Histories Trilogy, nature writing, Gilles Deleuze, Ecology

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. John Nguyet Erni for his supervision and advices on both the thesis and the attitude through these two years. I would like to thank Dr. Louis Ho for his co-supervision and guidance in the academic path. I am also grateful to Prof. Lo Kwai Cheung, without whom I would have been lost in the world of French philosophy. And certainly, I have to specifically thank the reading group *Rhizomateu\_* for reading those difficult books with me in these two years, especially Mr. Ernest Ip, with whom I discussed everything even when the whole Hong Kong should have slept. I think I cannot describe how I feel thankful to meet him. Machi and Haley provided invaluable mental support when I was broke down as well. Sometime I wonder who will read this acknowledgement but anyway thank you, though you may not see it.

All the translation in this thesis, if not specified, is done by me.

## Abbreviations

Books by Dung Kai-cheung are cited by the following abbreviations:

<i>VV</i>	The History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera <sup>1</sup>
<i>HT I</i>	The Histories of Time: The Light of Nga Chi I
<i>HT II</i>	The Histories of Time: The Light of Nga Chi II
<i>OS</i>	On the Origin of Species: The Rebirth of Bui Bui - The Age of Apprenticeship
<i>WW</i>	Write in the World; Write for the World

Books by G. Deleuze (and F. Guattari) are cited by the following abbreviations:

<i>DR</i>	Difference and Repetition
<i>Spinoza</i>	Spinoza: Practical Philosophy
<i>AO</i>	Anti-Oedipus

---

<sup>1</sup> The first volume is the only one translated in English.

## Table of Contents

<i>Declaration</i> .....	<b><i>Error! Bookmark not defined.</i></b>
<i>Abstract</i> .....	<i>ii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	<i>iv</i>
<i>Abbreviations</i> .....	<i>v</i>
<i>Introduction: The Beginning of a Schizo-natural Writing</i> .....	<i>1</i>
<i>Chapter 1: Mental Ecology</i> .....	<i>28</i>
<i>Chapter 2 Social Ecology</i> .....	<i>51</i>
<i>Chapter 3 Environmental Ecology</i> .....	<i>75</i>
<i>Chapter 4 Spatiotemporal Ecology</i> .....	<i>96</i>
<i>Conclusion: To write a word; to love a world.</i> .....	<i>119</i>
<i>References</i> .....	<i>133</i>

## *The Production of Nature<sup>2</sup>*

In the hills the cicadas wrung out their tune, sucking sap from the pines or their suitable species and synchronizing their calls into a huge, undulating hum. The cicada calls evoked the scent of bro xnze, and the dragonflies shook their metallic blue bodies as they mated above the streams, the trees grew closer together; the shade became dense. As they walked through this natural factory of life, they came across the production line of species, bathed in the surge of electric and magnetic waves. They walked for a long time. There was a vivid resonance in the living machine (VV, p.43).

---

<sup>2</sup> The last sentence “there was a vivid resonance in the living machine” was not included in the English version. It is translated by myself according to the Chinese version. The original sentence can be found in p.41.

## Introduction: The Beginning of a Schizo-natural Writing

That a real and true ensemble,  
Is a disease of our ideas.  
Nature is parts without a whole.  
This perhaps is that mystery they speak of.

Fernando Pessoa, as Alberto Caeiro (2006), *the Keeper of Sheep XLVII*

A city is mainly a collection of artefacts. It crystallises human civilisations. That may be why the story of Hong Kong always starts like “once upon a time, Hong Kong is a small fishing village. After decades of development, it becomes an international metropolitan”, as if the history before development does not exist. For a city, what has to be emphasised is the effort devoted by human beings, and Hong Kong is not an exception.

It seems to be common that Hong Kong is a city. Correspondingly, when it comes to Hong Kong literature, the term appears frequently will be “city writing”. It is not surprising, given that Hong Kong has always been recognised as a highly-developed city, one of the most densely populated cities in the world. Famous literary works in Hong Kong like Xi Xi’s *My City* (西西，我城), *A Dictionary of Two Cities* co-written by Hon Lai Chu and Dorothy Tse Hiu Hong (韓麗珠、謝曉虹，雙城辭典), Wong Bik Wan’s *The City of Lost* (黃碧雲，失城), just to name some. This phenomenon is closely related to the historical background of Hong Kong. According to Chan (2009), the connection between Hong Kong literature and its cityscape can be dated back to 50’s. Though it does not mean that there are no non-urban writings, those were not in the mainstream.

However, in 00’s one of the most influential local writers, Dung Kai Cheung (1967 -), published an article saying that “Hong Kong Literature as city writing seemingly lacked of

the concern of nature, or a reflective sense of nature” (Dung, 2011, p.235 natural).

Meanwhile, he has begun his *Natural Histories Trilogy*. He is the director in The House of Hong Kong Literature, a folk organisation of local literature. His publication includes, *Androgyny: Evolution of a Non-existent Species* (1996), a story about a female scientist went into wild and sought for a nonexistent species, named as androgyny and *Atlas: The Archaeology of an Imaginary City* (1997), an imaginary archaeology in the future Hong Kong, which has been translated into English. During 2005 to 2010, he published *the Natural Histories Trilogy*, including firstly, *the History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera* (2018, which titled in Chinese 天工開物·栩栩如真), secondly, *the Histories of Time: The Light of Nga Chi* (2007, 時間繁史·啞瓷之光) and thirdly, *on the Origin of Species: The Rebirth of Bui Bui - The Age of Apprenticeship* (2010, 物種源始·貝貝重生之學習年代).

### **Dung Kai Cheung and his trilogy of Natural Histories**

For the first book, *the History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera*, two parts are intertwining with each other. On the one hand, there is a history of Dung's family, narrated through different objects, like radio, TV, typewriter; On the other hand, there is a story of Vivi, the main character in the book, who lives in a character-world. The word “character” (人物) does not only mean the people in the novel but also, in Chinese, mean human-thing. In the character-world, some body parts of those characters are substituted with things. In short, the first novel is for the investigation the relation between human and thing to a large extent.

And the second book, *the Histories of Time*. It is a novel with a triple part, one part more than the first book. Firstly, *Yanyan and Baby Universes*, the main character, a shop assistant in a chain story, an ordinary girl, keeps receiving letters from a man called the Dictator. Those letters are related to a concept about Baby Universes, which I will explain more later. Secondly, *the Light of Nga Chi*, is about a story between the Dictator and her

wife, Nga Chi. It is 17 years after the first story. Since one of their sons was lost, they have not talked for these 17 years until a girl coming from overseas called Virginia came to visit and interview the Dictator. Thirdly, after around 50 years since the second story, *Virginia's Heartbeat*, presents a story about an always-17 years old girl Virginia in an abandoned library. Her memory is restricted to be a one-year memory only. And at the library, she meets a young man – Flower, the lost son of Nga Chi and Dictator. Summarising these three stories, I found that the second novel mainly focuses on the multiplicity of time-space.

And the third book is *On the Origin of Species*. This time, there is only a single storyline. It is a story about Ar-chi, whose name sounds similar to Nga-chi in the second novel, but they are not the same person. For at least, their name is not the same in Chinese (“啞瓷” and “阿芝”). Ar-chi had just graduated from university and moved to Sai Kung. There, she met some research students, who were studying at a university nearby. They formed a reading group and read 12 twelve books in a year. The book is arranged in 12 chapters, for each chapter, there will be a struggle between two terms, for example, man and woman, imagination and reality, and nature and culture.

These are the outlines of those three novels, about the interaction between things and human, the complexity of time and the mutation between everything. Dung explained his basic idea on this trilogy on a seminar. Basically, he thinks that our understanding to Hong Kong is restricted in the city. So, "I propose to dig out the literary meaning of natural histories [...] not to rehabilitate the nature writing for romanticism or environmentalism, but to push the urban civilisation upward, until its origin or margin. [I want to] reveal the existential conditions of human being in the contemporary world." (Dung, 2011, p.236). He shifted the perspective from the city to nature. Seemingly, this change can be regarded as an example manifesting the influence of nature writing, or ecocriticism, some may call. Yet, Dung Kai Cheung did not write much about nature, at least in comparison with what we

expect from ordinary nature writings like *The Walden* by Thoreau. It is true that the main scenes in the trilogy are mainly located in New Territories, the region less urbanised than Kowloon or Hong Kong Island. But the focus fell less on nature. For example, for the first book, many people will regard it as a history of the family rather a history of nature. While he does not really focus on nature, why did Dung Kai Cheung name it as *the Natural Histories Trilogy*? What is the difference between his writing and other nature writings, especially those in Chinese? For him, what is meant by nature?

In this introduction, important ideas on nature will be discussed, like environmentalism, ecocriticism and nature writing. Then, for the approach of this thesis, I will introduce Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "schizophrenia", which will help me to understand Dung Kai Cheung idea of nature throughout the whole thesis. After that, I will lay out the structure of this thesis.

### **Nature and nature writing**

For a long time, people's understanding of nature keeps changing and those interpretations to nature sometimes contradict with one another.

Nature can be chaotic and orderly, irrational and balanced, fierce and calm. In order to study the modern thoughts on nature, Gersdorf and Mayer (2006) reviewed Kate Soper's *What is Nature*. They found that, on the one hand, during the Enlightenment, nature was depicted as so chaotic, unruly, irrational that was needed to be improved, rationalised by human civilisation. On the other hand, in romantic age, nature was recognised as "an essentially innocent and benevolent power' and the source of 'truth' and 'authenticity'", and "as an ethically and aesthetically normative measure of human conduct" (Gersdorf & Mayer, 2006, p. 17).

Facing such a contradiction, some tried to explain it by discourse analysis and suggested that the difference between different versions of nature are due to the difference in

historical contexts. During the Enlightenment, nature was depicted as such because people at that time emphasised on the civilisation. And thus, nature was regarded as something needed to be corrected. This interpretation was widespread particularly for justifying the impending force of colonisation (Bewell, 2017). Whereas in the thinking of romanticism, one of the most critical missions for intellectuals was to “[liberate] (human) nature from the constrictive power of culture and civilisation” (Gersdorf & Mayer, 2006, p. 17). Consequently, the natural writers at that time, like Henry David Thoreau, promoted a return to nature. In short, the social constructivist dealt with the dilemma by a presupposition, that the concept of nature is socially constructed. For them, the understanding of nature is all about ideology.

As we can see above, both interpretations are concerned with human civilisation, even though in one case, civilisation was preferred while in another instance, nature was preferred. Still, both of them were inevitably determined by the concept of civilisation. For Enlightenment, nature was depicted so to justify the expansion and development of civilisation. For romanticism, nature was a solution to the problems of human society. As quoted by Gersdorf and Mayer (2006), “[t]he Romantic concept of liberating (human) nature from the constrictive power of culture and civilization [...] was and continues to be ‘a component of all forms of racism, tribalism and nationalism’” (p. 17). Regarding nature, the understandings of nature under Enlightenment and romanticism are similarly subordinated to human beings.

This stance was then challenged by ecocriticism. What is ecocriticism? There does not exist a unified answer. Still, to a large extent, it can be framed as “one that investigates aesthetic representations, discursive performances, and cultural functions of nature in historically, racially, and socially diverse communities and societies” and for ecocriticism, nature is both material reality and ideologically charged concept, as “an entity independent of human culture”, and, at the same time, keeps in focus “the impact on the environment of the

different historical modes of ‘human’ interaction with it” (Gersdorf & Mayer, 2006, p. 16-17). One of the major thinking in ecocriticism is to recognise nature’s autonomy and agency, to get rid of the anthropocentric thinking. Similarly, the notion of “post-human” sometimes emerges in the discussion of ecocriticism. For example, Westling (2006) pointed out that some U.S. ecocritics focused on the trending “environmental justice literature” recently and “posthuman” played a crucial in it. She also added that the core of ecocriticism was to reconceptualise the meaning of “human” and “literature” (p. 27-28).

However, in the very brief history of the concept of nature presented above, I found that they shared a common ontological presupposition: both of them positioned nature as the outside of human society, no matter how they conceptualise nature. The existence of nature and that of culture are viewed as two separate things. Some ecocritics proposed that culture is inside nature, that is to say, culture evolves within nature, such as some ecological thoughts. However, they still thought that culture was realer other than nature. Also, methodologically speaking, ecocriticism insisted on representational thinking. For clarifying my point, I would like to state one more time the definition of ecocriticism, “one that investigates aesthetic representations, discursive performances, and cultural functions of nature in historically, racially, and socially diverse communities and societies” (Gersdorf & Mayer, 2006, p. 16-17, *italic added*). The meaning of ecocriticism is so diverse that hard to define explicitly. The above definition is just one of the proposed ideas. Yet, at least for the above quote, it is clear that, in ecocriticism, literature is regarded as one of the “aesthetic representations”. Under such circumstance, nature become something waiting to be represented. The represented and the representation eventually constitute a dichotomy. It is questionable if the representation can truly represent the represented, if any.

In fact, Soper’s attempt to explain nature through historical context can do little to nature itself. According to Gersdorf and Mayer (2006), Soper’s concept of nature included

two parts, on one hand, it “exists outside the reach of the human will, which I temporarily term as material nature; on the other hand, “it is also a functionally multivalent, historically complex and ideologically paradoxical concept”, which I term as conceptual nature, also temporarily (p.17). However, it seems that there is a gap between the two “nature”s. When this combination of material nature and conceptual nature becomes the foundation of ecocriticism, when it is adopted to study literature, which is almost unarguably artificial, it is inevitable that the focus is fallen on the discursive side. All in all, the material nature was mentioned for a glimpse and almost immediately hanged to nowhere.

### **Naturing Nature as Process**

I agree with Soper’s argument that political aims always influence people’s understanding of nature, and that cultural forces are shaping the concept of “nature” (though the cultural may be in the natural as well). However, I think we should not overemphasise the human agency to the extent that we ignore how nature is shaping itself. We cannot assume nature, or “material nature” whatever you name it, is inert.

This view of nature obviously does not match with Dung Kai-cheung’s writing as well. As I quoted at the very beginning in this thesis, Dung Kai-cheung’s depiction of nature is rather mechanical,

In the hills the cicadas wrung out their tune, sucking sap from the pines or their suitable species and synchronizing their calls into a huge, undulating hum. The cicada calls evoked the scent of bronze, and the dragonflies shook their metallic blue bodies as they mated above the streams, the trees grew closer together; the shade became dense. As they walked through this natural factory of life, they came across the production line of species, bathed in the surge of electric and magnetic waves. They walked for a long time. There was a vivid resonance in the living machine (VV, p.43).

The above paragraph will penetrate the whole thesis. Still, at the moment, I want to highlight the term “natural factory of life”. Obviously, there can be a nature naturing itself. Spinoza was one of the pioneers proposing a dynamic nature. He has been famous for his claim that everything is a part of God or Nature (“Deus, sive Natura”) and God is immanent rather than transcendent. However, I will focus on his active Nature. For him, Nature consists of two parts: natured nature and naturing nature (Deleuze, 1988b, p. 92). Natured nature, nature that has been natured, is caused by itself. And it is also the cause of everything. To become everything, Nature has been naturing itself. “[T]he cause of all things is affirmed of God as the genesis of natured nature, in the same sense that he is the cause of himself, as the genealogy of naturing nature” (Deleuze, 1988b, p. 92, emphasis added). Nature is its production and product, and its cause. This concept of Nature is greatly different from Soper’s view that Spinoza’s Nature is dynamic even if human beings do not exist. And instead of dichotomizing a material nature and cultural nature, Spinoza thinks that everything actually shares attributes from Nature or God.

This naturing nature is fundamental to avoid misunderstanding Spinoza’s concept of nature as the wholeness, as the higher being totalizing all things. For Spinoza, God or Nature is not transcendental that “within Nature there can certainly be nothing that is supernatural. If Spinoza is seeking to eliminate anything, it is that which is above or beyond nature, which escapes the laws and processes of nature” (Nadler, 2008, p. 67).

This rejection of a higher being can also be found in the way Spinoza discerns Morality and Ethics. Deleuze (1988b) clearly stated the difference in one sentence: “Morality is the judgment of God, the system of Judgment. But Ethics overthrows the system of judgement” (p. 23). While Morality (Good or Evil) is transcendent, if an action is ethically good or bad depends on the quality of the entities interacting. In other words, Ethics (good or bad) is immanent to the partakers. Deleuze then explained this point through the discussion of

what is poisoning: For Spinoza, a body consists of different parts. These parts gather together, relate to each other in many ways. In different bodies, the relation between parts is also different. Poisoning is that which interrupts or even destroys the relation between parts in a body. Death is the result of an utter destruction of such, “I understand the body to die when its parts are so disposed that they acquire a different relation of motion and rest”, said Spinoza as quoted by Deleuze (1988b, p. 32). In other words, whether a certain thing is a poison or not depends on the composition of both the body eating it and the thing. Arsenic can be poison and medicine. So, we can see in Spinoza’s emphasis on local relations instead of global laws.

If Nature does not nature, or if a naturing nature does not exist, Nature, with its natured nature, will be static. This static Nature will be the wholeness because it is everything and everything is it. But since Nature is naturing, it is always producing. In its production, something new may emerge, which keeps Nature evolving and thus keeps Nature from attaining the whole. The fact that Nature produces, provides itself with an opportunity not to be a transcendent Whole.

Another importance of naturing nature, especially for Dung Kai Cheung, is that, if and only if Nature produces, Nature can relate itself with time and thus have a history. It is why Nature has history, or histories: Nature natures itself. Understanding the dynamic view on nature, we can also understand the name of the trilogy. However, as we will see, the productivity of nature sometimes is restricted. The production stops and the product stands still. Therefore, the next question is: How can its productivity be released? It is to answer this question that Deleuze and Guattari re-examine the concept of schizophrenia, which is also the main concept that I explore in this thesis.

## **Schizophrenia and Productivity**

Spinoza's view of Nature certainly inspires Deleuze and Guattari. At the beginning of their book, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, they write, "[the schizo] does not live nature as nature, but as *a process of production* [...] What the schizophrenic experiences, both as an individual and as a member of the human species, is not at all any one specific aspect of nature, but *nature as a process of production*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, pp. 2–3 emphasis added). It is clear that they focus on the dynamics of nature, as same as Spinoza. This quotation also implies that one cannot fully grasp what nature is if one only tries to picture what one senses. For that is just one aspect of nature. It is the schizo who experience how Nature function and it is why they propose the schizo is Homo natura. Emphasizing the importance of the productivity of nature, Deleuze and Guattari (2009) de-dichotomize [culture-nature] binary because both culture and nature are also the processes of production: "Industry is then no longer considered from the extrinsic point of view of utility, but rather from the point of view of its fundamental identity with nature as production of man and by man" (p. 4).

The fact that Nature produces provides itself with an opportunity not to be a transcendent Whole, that is, not to be static. But sometimes, this opportunity cannot be actualized because the productivity of nature is restricted and limited. In fact, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari mainly investigate the desiring-production, how desire produces. But as they state clearly, the focus should be placed on the process of production. In terms of production, nature and desire can be regarded as the same thing. The following part is about their analysis of desiring-production, how to release the productivity of desire. Seemingly, it does not relate to the study of Nature. However, through reviewing the mechanism of desiring-production, I hope to gain new thoughts on the mechanism of the naturing nature.

Once the production is restricted, it keeps recurring along a specified path but cannot get rid of the path itself. Deleuze and Guattari (2009) spend many words to explain how this restriction is done. They propose that it is done through illegitimate syntheses, or oedipalisation when they are aiming at psychoanalysis. For they think that the disciples of Lacanian psychoanalysis restricted the productivity of desire through Oedipus complex.

The Oedipalisation is done through three illegitimate syntheses of desire. For desire as a flux of energy-matter producing, the desiring-production consists of three syntheses: the connective synthesis (the production of production), the disjunctive synthesis (the production of recording) and the conjunctive synthesis (the production of consumption). I will explain the details of the three syntheses later. Through these three kinds of operations, the flux is broken, stored, and flows, different kinds of machine are produced, then immediately produce other things and connect with other machines. However, the problem is how should it synthesis as so to release its productivity? Deleuze and Guattari (2009) thus distinguish a “legitimate synthesis” and an “illegitimate synthesis” with respect to each synthesis, while only the former can actually release the productivity of desire.

For the connective synthesis, there are two kinds of connection: “a global and specific use”, and “a partial and nonspecific use” (p. 70). They explain,

[w]hen we relate desire to Oedipus, we are condemned to ignore the productive nature of desire: we condemn desire to vague dreams or imaginations that are merely conscious expressions of it; we relate it to independent existences—the father, the mother, the begetters—that do not yet comprise their elements as internal elements of desire (p. 107).

Relating desire to Oedipus is by no means different from imposing a global and specific use to desire because it specifies the flow of desire, using a fixed structure, the Oedipus triangle (daddy-mummy-I). It ignores the fact that the flow of desire is non-

directional: there does not exist a certain direction for the flow. The flow was supposed to form and to connect with various machines. But once the desire is oedipalized, it loses its vitality and only recurs within the transcendental familial triangle. In short, oedipalization is an illegitimate connection.

For the disjunctive synthesis, whether it is legitimate or not depends on whether it is an inclusive use or exclusive use. For Oedipus, “[t]his is the reign of the ‘either/or’ in the differentiating function of the prohibition of incest: here is where mommy begins, there daddy, and there you are – stay in your place” (p. 75). Not only you are compulsory to be the “I” in the daddy-mummy-I triangle, but you also have to choose to be the “I” only. If it is a multiple-choice question, you can only tick one answer, either A or B. During disjunction, no matter of being parent or child, die or alive, man or woman, you can take only one side. This “either/or” game is the illegitimate connection for disjunctive synthesis. To release the productivity of desire, Deleuze and Guattari (2009) say the choice should be “either...or...or...”, “[t]he schizophrenic is not man and woman. He is man or woman, but he belongs precisely to both sides, man on the side of men, woman on the side of women” (p. 76). In an inclusive disjunctive synthesis, one can be both one or another one.

For the conjunction synthesis, it is about the application of the familial relationship to the social relation. Illegitimate use is that which assumes the elements in familial structure has a univocal, “one-to-one” relation with the elements in the social structure, like “father=order”, “mother=object of desire”. Jumping from father to the social order, the psychoanalysts can extend the analysis of Oedipus complex to the study of society. However, as Deleuze and Guattari (2009) clearly stated that even the familial relation is just an inductor to the formation of the subject that the former does not determine the later. If someone treats this inductor as a determining factor and apply it to other things, the intrinsic dynamic of the later will be ignored, and thus their productivities will also be restricted. It does not mean that

there is no relation between the family and the society. But their relation should be a polyvocal one, many-to-many, and thus the productivity will not be restricted.

All these three illegitimate syntheses actually concern how the desiring-production produces. In short, the principal problem Deleuze and Guattari want to point out is to ensure the production will not be obstructed by restrictive means.

### **The Schizo-natural Writing**

Reviewing these three illegitimate syntheses, Deleuze and Guattari propose the Schizoanalysis as the solution, which aims at releasing the productivity of desire.

Schizoanalysis advocates three legitimate uses of syntheses, 1) “a partial and nonspecific use of the connective syntheses [...] in opposition to the Oedipal use, itself global and specific”, 2) “an inclusive or non-restrictive use of the disjunctive syntheses [...] in opposition to their Oedipal, exclusive, restrictive use” and 3) “a nomadic and polyvocal use of the conjunctive syntheses [in opposition to] the segregative and biunivocal made of them” (2009, p. 110). In short, the schizophrenic is the way to actualize the productivity of desire. To attain this goal, Schizoanalysis needs to eliminate the transcendental Oedipus, the imposed Lack, the thought that a higher being controls everything so as to release the potentiality of desire.

One may ask, what is the relation between desire and Nature? Should not we be talking about nature, instead of desire? Seemingly, these two are hardly related to each other. Still, my concern is still the process of production. From this perspective, they may share something in common, if not everything. As stated as Spinoza’s quotation “God or Nature”, for Deleuze and Guattari, the notion can go on like “God or Nature, or desire, or flux, or hylè, or flow of energy-matter.....”, for what they really concern is the process of production, the genesis of everything. Just as they state, “[t]he question posed by desire is not ‘What does it mean?’, but rather ‘how does it *work*?’” (2009, p. 109, emphasis original), “the process of production wherein Nature = Industry, Nature = History” (2009, p. 25). In fact, the linkage

between productivity and nature should be familiar to many Deleuze readers. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze studied Lucretius' "naturalism" in a way that he suggested "[n]ature must be thought of as the principle of the diverse and its production" (Deleuze, 2015, p.275).

Emphasising the productive sides of the schizo and nature, I propose that, parallel to the schizoanalysis focusing on the production of desire, there can be a schizophrenic mode of nature writing focusing on the production of nature. It is what I term as a schizo-natural writing. The schizo-natural writing is a form of writing that recognizes the productivity of nature and aims at manifesting it in a schizophrenic way. Following those legitimate syntheses, not only can a schizo-natural writer write about nature, but he/she can also *write naturally*.

Through the notion of schizo-natural writing, we can understand Dung Kai Cheung's motivation of writing the trilogy, to be precise, what is meant by "not to rehabilitate the nature writing for romanticism or environmentalism". Nature certainly is the main theme in his trilogy. But he does not spend much time to describe the natural view or landscape, which is supposed to be the core part in romantic or environmental writing. That is because if one just describes the natural view or landscape, one can only grasp a particular nature at a particular moment. But for the naturing nature, one has to find another way to do so. In the present day, many people have recognised the importance to think in an ecological way, in which everything is connected with everything. Some even say that it is what rhizome, another Deleuze and Guattari's important concept, means. Still, I want to point out that a rhizome is not merely a picture describing everything being connected to everything. Just like the concept of schizophrenia, the concept of rhizome emphasises the dynamic between parts. If the rhizome is recognised as mere connection, it is just a picture, telling us what the world looks like. If those parts are static, it can hardly be regarded as a rhizome. This static understanding even contradicts with the original intention why Deleuze and Guattari

proposed this term. They proposed it in contrast to an arborescent thinking, in which “the tree is already the image of the world” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p.3). When one understands rhizome in a static way, it immediately becomes “the image of the world”. However, Deleuze and Guattari highlighted that “Nature doesn’t work that way: in nature, roots are taproots with a more multiple lateral , and circular system of ramification , rather than a dichotomous one. Thought lags behind nature” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p.3). So as not to lag behind nature, we cannot ignore that, in Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy, production and productivity remain the main concern.

### **“Nature is parts without a whole”**

Dung Kai Cheung discussed how different thinkers think of nature in his trilogy, like Humboldt, Huxley, Thoreau and so on. But for me, Fernando Pessoa, a Portuguese poet, is especially crucial to understand Dung Kai Cheung’s mode of writing. In the third book, he quoted Fernando Pessoa that “Nature is parts without a whole”. It means that Nature can manifest itself in a wide range that it cannot be totalized by a higher being. Just as Deleuze and Guattari (2009) point out when they analyse Proust’s writing,

Proust maintained that the Whole itself is a product, produced as nothing more than a part alongside other parts, which it neither unifies nor totalizes, though but has an effect on these other parts simply because it establishes aberrant paths of communication between no communicating vessels (p. 43).

In another book, Deleuze even directly link the “whole-part” relation with nature: “Nature is not collective., but rather distributive, to the extent that the laws of Nature distribute parts which cannot be totalized” (Deleuze, 2015, p.275). In other words, any part of Nature does not represent or mimic another part of Nature or Nature itself. Otherwise, the one being represented will become the whole. This conception of Nature makes a contrast with

the ordinary conception of nature, which is mainly connected to a kind of recurrent stability, and in which the cycle itself becomes a higher being to unify nature. But Dung Kai-cheung obviously rejected this common concept and pointed out that this kind of nature is too harmonious, too friendly and too meaningful (Dung, 2011). In Hong Kong literature, the danger of the harmonious view of nature has already been raised by another writer Wu Xu-Bin. According to Lo (1990), “[Wu] eddies between the polarities of bondage and freedom so as to avoid a simplistic harmony between living things and their environment, for a holistic view of nature will only lead to a self-enclosed space and a definite telos” (p. 98). In fact, Dung Kai-cheung (2011) also mentioned the special position Wu Xu-bin held with respect to Hong Kong literature, “she was a Hong Kong writer who singularly saw the edges of cities and, by means of writing, as an adventure, probed beyond the edges” (p.236).

There is no a pre-determined Whole. There are many parts, but they keep evolving in a way that no whole can be found to unify them. Instead of an essence, the morphogenesis of nature, the naturing nature is determined by singularities, which “characterize process” but unattainable (Delanda, 2005, p. 8). In contrast to the essence, there may be one singularity, determining a variety of morphogenesis of different things, while those things do not look like each other. For this point, Delanda gave an example: a soap bubble and a salt crystal are greatly different, but both of them are obeying the same law – minimising the energy needed to hold the molecules together (Delanda, 2005, pp. 7–8). This minimising principle can be regarded as a common singularity between the two. A singularity in no way can be an essence, for at least, the essence is timeless while a singularity can only manifest itself through time. That is to say, parts without a whole are dynamic and morphogenetic.

This emphasis on becoming is one of the reasons to account for the absence of whole. But for Deleuze, there is another reason: because there is a virtuality beside the actuality in terms of ontological category. The actual consists of actualized things, like what we can

sense every day. While the virtual, which is as real as the actual, “contains all possibilities by virtue of the philosophical concept or idea which expresses differentiated variations” (Young, Genosko, & Watson, 2013, p. 331). In other words, those parts we can sense are only the actualized, beside which there is something virtual and not-yet-become.

### **Writing in a way that there is no whole**

Some may think that I am going farther and farther away from Dung Kai Cheung. Or some may even start thinking I am trying to fit Dung Kai Cheung into Deleuze and Guattari’s thought and start attacking this connection as the illegitimate conjunction. However, it is Dung Kai Cheung who provided me with a concrete example to understand these concepts. All I have quoted above are proof for the key notion in Dung Kai Cheung’s writing “nature is parts without a whole”, written by Fernando Pessoa. To comprehend Dung Kai Cheung’s thought, we need to understand characteristics of Pessoa’s writing first.

As Dung Kai Cheung mentioned in the third book, Fernando Pessoa is famous for that he wrote in heteronyms. These heteronyms have their own biographies, writing styles, writing languages and philosophical stances. For instance, the poem we repeatedly mentioned was written by one of the heteronyms, Alberto Caeiro, who was considered as a natural poet. As far as people know, Pessoa has at least 70 different heteronyms. As such, we can say that all pieces of work Pessoa has even written are parts without a whole. This is because Pessoa himself actually does not exist, rather, it is those heteronyms who actually exist. Within the book, Pessoa is not the author. Some heteronyms may be more similar to Pessoa than the other, but we can never know what Pessoa himself really. What we can see are only those numerous and diverse heteronyms. And they composited the Pessoa we name. But those 70 heteronyms are just for the actualized part. There are more heteronyms that Pessoa did not write, and more experience that those actualized heteronyms have not experienced yet. For

example, Alberto Caeiro was reported to be dead in 1915 (Pessoa, 2006, p. xx), though he kept publishing after that. So, we know that heteronyms can die. However, many of them did not die or had not died yet, for example, Álvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis. The death for them is still in the realm of virtual. Just as his book *the Book of Disquiet* cannot be finished, the morphogenesis of his personality, or personalities, cannot also be finished. Determined by singularities, they keep evolving endlessly. It is endless, not due to time constraint, but due to that, the multiplicity cannot be exhausted. There is always the virtual that has not been actualized yet. Therefore, Pessoa wrote, “I gave birth to my infinite being, but I had to wrench myself out of me with forceps” (Pessoa, 2003, p. 23 emphases added). But one thing he might miss is that the forceps can never pull out himself entirely because the entirety, the whole, does not exist.

These heteronyms produced different faces of Pessoa. Yet, these different faces sometimes inter-cross with each other. They wrote letters to each other, no matter for arguing or agreeing. Some of them are relatives, for example, Frederico Reis is a brother of Ricardo Reis. Most of them wrote in Portuguese while some of them wrote in English, such as Horace James Faber and Frederick Wyatt. These heteronyms are heterogeneous and associated with each other. They are crocheted to be a rhizome we called as Fernando Pessoa. For common understanding, the schizophrenic is the one who divides oneself. However, Deleuze and Guattari inverse the relation that the one can only be completed through those splitting. The one is not a stable subject, but is a nomadic subject, “All the name in History is I”. The case is similar to Pessoa: there is a common reading to Pessoa that he adopted such writing strategy and split himself up so as to dialectically construct an evolved subjectivity. But why cannot we think it in an opposite way? Pessoa wants to destabilise the subjectivity, so he split himself up. What he needs is not evolution, but revolution. He revolves around nomadically, just as a Dung Kai Cheung’s image frequently emerges in his novel, the Great Dictator keeps

revolving in the middle of the ice rink, and during the revolution he splits himself up into different parts, which scatter around the ice rink, forming multiple histories.

### **Dung Kai Cheung's writing machine**

In the above discussion about Dung's writing, we can grasp how writing becomes schizophrenic. The next question is, why does writing become schizophrenic in Dung Kai Cheung's novels? That is because, for Dung Kai Cheung, to release the productivity of nature, nature has to produce schizophrenically. In the third novel, he quotes the whole poem of Fernando Pessoa,

I saw that there was no Nature,  
That Nature does not exist,  
That there are mountains, valleys, plains,  
That there are trees, flowers, grasses,  
That there are streams and stones,  
But that there's not a whole to which this belongs,  
That a real and true ensemble  
Is a disease of our ideas.

Nature is parts without a whole.

This perhaps is that mystery they speak of (quoted by Dung, 2010, p. 430).

Dung's writing style is highly schizophrenic; I will discuss it in detail in chapter one. and also in accordance with nature. Dung Kai-cheung's writing shared the mechanism that we can see in naturing nature. We can modify a few words in the above poem then it will

become a description of Dung Kai Cheung, “That Dung Kai Cheung does not exist/ That there are characters, stories, narrations/ That there are pasts, presents and futures/ But that there’s not a whole to which this belongs”. Through the study on Dung Kai Cheung, I hope to find a new way to write about nature, other than romanticism or traditional nature writing. That is a schizo-natural writing. A schizo-natural writing is possible based on that Nature can express its productivity only when it produces schizophrenically. Dung writes schizophrenically. That is, he writes with revolutionary imaginary, pointing to all possible worlds through words, exploring parts of nature. That is, he does not only write about nature, he also writes naturally. It is the reason why he distinguish himself from romanticism or environmentalism.

This kind of writing is a move toward a schizo-natural writing. Dung Kai Cheung starts his writing machine, for the machine is “a system of interruptions or breaks (coupures)” (AO, p. 36). He controls the machine that is “related to a continual material flow (hylè) it cuts into” (AO, p. 36). His connection is so schizophrenic that the flow stops and continues to every possibility. “A photon attains its destination through all possible ways... Enrico Fermi’s invention of the probability calculation method is named as “sum over histories”, Dung lays down his scientific background of his trilogy and he continues to tell the function of imagination, “only in the imaginary time, we can see all possible histories” (Dung, 2007a, pp. 122–123). Considering writing as a form of imagination (in fact all kinds of production can also be imagination), it is clear that Dung Kai Cheung writes in order to see all possible histories. This mission can be regarded as one of the most influential singularities for Dung Kai Cheung’s writing, at least for the trilogy.

Schizo-natural writing is different from nature writing, which I would define as an attempt to represent Nature. Such nature writing relies on a representation system. Under such circumstance, writing can only be the representation of nature the author catches, a

particular natured nature at a particular moment. It may capture different parts of nature, but barely nature. I am not suggesting that there a wholeness waiting for writing to capture. In contrast, I think that the wholeness of Nature does not exist transcendently. Nevertheless, schizo-natural writing is written in the way that nature is naturing itself. Through this schizo-natural writing, the author touches upon all possible worlds. The possibility probably cannot be exhausted, but there is where newness lies. Dung is holding a pair of pens as the forceps, wrenching them.

### **The structure of the thesis**

Drawing the study of the schizo from Deleuze and Guattari, I would like to further develop this thesis basing on Guattari's framework of three ecologies (mental, social and environmental) (Guattari, 2014). Still, d by Dung Kai Cheung's writing, I add one more type of ecology in this thesis, a spatiotemporal ecology. In total, four ecologies will be discussed in four respective chapters, so as to examine if the schizo-natural writing is suited with Dung Kai Cheung's *Natural Histories Trilogy*.

In the first chapter, I will focus on the mental ecology and explain why Dung Kai Cheung can be regarded as a schizo-natural writer. I will further elaborate what is meant by schizophrenia through the close reading to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Schizophrenia and Capitalism I*, especially how schizophrenia can attain a kind of wholeness different from conventional understanding. In terms of content, Dung Kai Cheung writes schizophrenically in a way that his ego and his characters can be found highly schizophrenic in his trilogy. In a particular part of the second book, *Virginia's Heartbeat*, the narrative angles kept changing, as if the writer situated himself in multiple places simultaneously. This remarkable form of writing is an expression of schizophrenia in Dung Kai Cheung trilogy also. Through the investigation of these two aspects, content and form, I want to establish a linkage between Dung Kai Cheung's mode of thought and schizophrenia. After that, I will

term Dung Kai Cheung's way of writing in the trilogy as a schizo-natural writing. His mode of writing is closely related to Fernando Pessoa. From this point, I found the author-character relationship changed drastically in Dung Kai-cheung's writing.

Writing is not the only form of creation that can be schizophrenic. In the trilogy, the author discussed many other modes of creation too, including painting, music, drama, poem and even engineering. These forms of creation scattered in all the three books like that painting played a crucial role in the second book while drama became indispensable in the third book. No matter which form of creation, no matter in which book, the author always pointed to a schizophrenic mode of creation. This expansion in the scope of discussion, from writing to other kinds of creation, showed that for Dung Kai Cheung, creation in itself should be schizophrenic. His emphasis on schizophrenic creation, I argue, is entangled with his ontology. In his book *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, Delanda (2005) proposed the importance of studying the ontology of a philosopher that "[a] philosopher's ontology is the set of entities he or she assumes to exist in reality, the types of entities he or she is committed to assert actually exist" (p. xii). I believe this notion is also applicable to a writer, particularly to who is as theoretical as Dung Kai Cheung. What exists and does not exist, it is the primary question which Dung Kai Cheung deals with in his exploration of natural histories. When nature, as Spinoza suggested, is the totality of existence, the question of nature is also the question of existence, and it is what ontology does. While scepticism remains sceptical to one's sense and thinks that one's experience does not necessarily exist, Dung Kai Cheung adopted an opposite approach: imagination exists. For him, the existence of imagination relies on a schizophrenic creation. Since imagination and creation concern the subjectivity of the creator, I regard this section as a discussion of the mental ecology.

In the second chapter, the socius ecology in Dung Kai Cheung's trilogy will be examined closely. Different from conventional nature writing, Dung Kai-cheung's schizo-

natural writing emphasises the social aspect. From the discussion in the reading group in OS, I found that Dung Kai-cheung made a profound criticism of Thoreau's *Walden*, which again highlighted the difference between conventional nature writing and schizo-natural writing. Sometime, nature is regarded as benevolent. Sometime, ethics in the society is regarded as the protection of human beings from natural fierce competition. The problem is, how should we perceive the notion of "natural ethics"? When one lives naturally, how should one behave? My answer to this question is first of all to re-conceptualize ethics as a form of coding, as suggested by Deleuze and Guattari.

To further examine the notion of ethics as a form of coding, I found that Dung Kai-cheung designed a reading group full of contradiction. For example, there were two characters Kok (阿角) and Zi (阿志). The former is a PhD candidate in science while the latter is a PhD candidate in philosophy. Sometimes, they have contrasting worldviews, such as that Kok tends to be a realist whereas Zi obviously is a social constructivist. Other examples include the narrator Buibui and her friend Chung. Through the entanglement of group-members, Dung Kai Cheung listed a series of diagonality: nature/culture, rural/urban, contemplation/action, body/mind and so on. However, rather than being dialectically united, those group-members inter-became each other. For example, at the end of the third book, Buibui becomes more like Chung while Chung also becomes more like Buibui. However, it does not mean that they merge together. They have taken some characteristics from each other and, by doing so, both of Buibui and Chung become a new Buibui and a new Chung respectively. It is *the rebirth of Buibui*, the title of the third book.

I propose that both Buibui and Chung are affecting and affected by each other. How is it possible? I will explore this process of inter-becoming through, once again, Deleuze and Guattari's idea of schizophrenia. According to them, "[s]chizophrenia is the process of the production of desire and desiring-machines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 24) and "[the

schizophrenic] does not abolish disjunction by identifying the contradictory elements by means of elaboration; instead, he affirms it through a continuous overflight spanning an indivisible distance. He is not simply bisexual, or between the two, or intersexual. He is transsexual. He is trans-alive/dead, trans-parent/child” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p.76-77). Deleuze and Guattari emphasize its productivity of schizophrenia, which drives the schizophrenic to exhaust all possibilities and maintain the difference between them. Buibui, at once, is driven to become Chung while maintain the distinction between Chung and her. They are constantly mutating. Every group-member is constantly mutating. Consequently, in Dung Kai-cheung’s schizo-natural writing, I found two keywords in the social ecology: transgression and inclusiveness. A code itself should be transgressive and inclusive toward another code. In this sense, I propose that Dung Kai Cheung’s schizophrenic view on nature renews our understanding to the formation and mutation of societies, for building the worldiness proposed by Hannah Arendt. In the third book, Dung Kai Cheung suggested that love is indispensable to connect everyone. What is Love? Why is Love? How does Love function? I will answer these questions on love in this chapter too.

In the third chapter, I focus on the environmental ecology. Dung Kai Cheung structuralises his first book by a list of things, including radios, telegraphs, telephones, lathes, televisions, cars, books, typewriters, and so on. To explain this cluster of things, Hee (2006), according to Lacanian psychoanalysis, suggested that it is due to Dung Kai Cheung’s fetishism, which is the combination of erotic fetishes and official fetishes. For fetishism, He borrowed Richard von Krafft-Ebing’s definition that it is a set of strong desire to a certain part or clothe of a woman (p.35). He further explains that it is a (material) fetishism and Dung Kai Cheung tries recover the lost history by means of these things. However, I think this proposition is not sufficient to account for the phenomenon. About author’s selection of things, that is, why the author chose that thing, Hee goes back to the grand historical

background. For example, lathes were chosen, he suggested, because they played a crucial role in the period of China Communist Party's Great Leap Forward. He then provides explanations for a few more things. For instance, to account for the role of television in the fiction, he uses the concept of "soft-power" and claims that those television reflect the history of true colonialisation done by "soft-power". But then he does not explain the rest, as if the rest is self-evident. I think that he rushed to attach these things to respective historical events too fast that he ignored the intra-relation among those things themselves. Instead of regarding those things as representations of the history, I focus on those things themselves: what do they do in the story? I suggest that those things are not relating to a specific history. Rather, they opened the gate to multiple histories, which is also the main theme in the second book at the same time. Those things in Dung Kai Cheung's writing are machines which produce. Dung Kai Cheung emphasised the productivity of those things, like that the lathe, which importance in the story cannot be overstated, is named as "the mother of the machine". While in Deleuze's terminology machines actualize the virtual, the lathe becomes the mother of the actualization of the virtual.

This emphasis on the productivity of machines revealed that Dung Kai Cheung's idea of nature cannot be detached from productivity. He repeatedly mentions a "workshop of words" in the story, and finally, he writes, "the imaginative mode of the workshop of words, in fact, follows the way how nature works. And you, Vivi, is the daughter of nature". Therefore, it is necessary to understand the function of things, how things work, so as to understand Dung Kai Cheung's view on nature. Still, it is not only about the productivity of nature, but also the way in which it produces. It is where schizophrenia should be introduced. Schizophrenia, in the description in *Anti-Oedipus*, "is the process of the production of desire and desiring-machines" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2009, 24). It is a crucial aspect when we investigate Dung Kai Cheung's schizo-natural writing. In this chapter, I argue that those

things in Dung Kai Cheung's writing are not the proof for his fetishism. Rather, it is the way he understands how nature functions and produces.

In the fourth chapter, I will analyse the spatiotemporal ecology in the trilogy. Interestingly, quantum mechanics seldom appears in Deleuze and Guattari's work. Still, Dung Kai-cheung is obviously influenced by quantum physicist, such as Richard Feynman. It may be the reason why in Dung Kai-cheung's work we can find such a supplement to Guattari's three ecologies. Referring to many resources from quantum mechanics and cosmology, Dung Kai Cheung, in his second book, explored the multiplicity of time-space and the baby universe. We need to pay attention to the name of the second book in the trilogy, *the Histories of Time*. "Histories" suggested that there is more one history. As the notion of writing naturally runs through the whole thesis, in the spatiotemporal ecology, the problem becomes how should we perceive of time? Time can be artificial or natural. How should we understand its different modes of existence? And what does it mean in terms of time when we "write naturally"?

I firstly resituated the question because natural-artificial time may be a fake dichotomy. The real contradiction lies on the cyclical-linear. Mainly through *Virginia's Heartbeat*, a part in HT, I found that Dung Kai-cheung explored the synthesis of time to deal with the dichotomy. Through Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, I explained in detail how Virginia presented a repetitive and habitus time and consequently cannot possess memory. Still, Fa, another character in the story, cannot possess memory neither because he cannot generate meaning from the fragmented memory. To deal with this problem, Dung Kai-cheung innovatively proposed a notion called "the memories of future", which fabricated the spatio-temporal ecology. By willing the memory, the sum over histories can be attained.

After analysing these four ecologies, I will start my conclusion of the thesis by the Martin Heidegger's statement, "poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building". Instead of writing the nature, Dung Kai Cheung writes naturally and, at the same time, schizophrenically. It renewed the meaning of nature writing and that of writing as well. Writing becomes ontological and an act of building in the schizo-natural writing. The notion of love carries the meaning of standing outside oneself. As such, it is justified to say that, one writes because of one's love for the worlds.

Through the case of Dung Kai Cheung, I hope I can suggest another way to think about the relationship between writing and nature. The way I found is a schizo-natural writing and I hope that it can deal the problems in our contemporary fragmented worlds.

## Chapter 1: Mental Ecology

How can we enter into Kafka's work? It is a rhizome, a burrow. The castle has multiple entrances whose rules of usage and whose locations aren't very well known (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 3).

In their book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, Deleuze and Guattari started the discussion by stating that Kafka's work is a rhizome because, first of all, it has numerous and ambiguous entrances. If Dung Kai-cheung's work can likewise be a rhizome, it may be due to those diverse and vague selves in the novel. Little Danny in VV, the Dictator in HT, Dark in OS and so on are suspicious to be the fragments of Dung Kai-cheung. I do not intend to equalise these characters with Dung Kai-cheung, which obviously would be a great mistake for any literary criticism. I will further discuss the relation between an author and his/her characters in this chapter. Dung Kai-cheung, writing his thoughts on his another novel *P.E. Period*, also said that "I have emphasised for several times that I am not Dark and Dark is not me. The incommensurability between an author and his/her characters is a common sense in literature" (Dung, 2013, p. 231).

The key point here is that, in Dung Kai-cheung's writing, there is no more "self", but "selves". It echoes with Guattari's statement in *the Three Ecologies* that, "[r]ather than speak of the 'subject', we should perhaps speak of *components of subjectification*, each working more or less on its own" (Guattari, 2014, p. 231 original emphasis). These components may not be coherent with each other. Instead, they form an ecology of mind, or as I would call it in this thesis, mental ecology. This mental ecology, fundamentally, works natural-schizophrenically.

In this chapter, I would like to answer several questions: why should we regard the mind as ecology? How was it expressed in the trilogy? What are its implications regarding writing, like the relation between the author and the characters? Why did Dung Kai-cheung

adopt such an approach? How does it relate to Nature? For answering the above questions, the parts about creation and creativity will be examined. Why should we consider the mental ecology first? Especially the mental ecology of creators? That is because, through creation, a creator makes a product in a material form. The product is a product of the creator's mental ecology. It is how the mental ecology expresses itself. And also, how a creator engages into the world.

To analyse the mental ecology, one cannot avoid investigating the subjectivity at the same time. I would begin the investigation with a chapter in OS, which is mainly concerned with a Portuguese Poet Fernando Pessoa and through which Dung Kai-cheung examined the problematics of subjectivity. Next, topics like "subjectivity", in any sense, are too large that cannot be coped with in just a chapter. To be precise, I would like to focus on the subjectivity of creators, based on the trilogy. Writers play a crucial role. But the trilogy tried to include more forms of creativity like drama, art, music, and even engineering, which can be done schizophrenically respectively. These forms of creation show us the endless re-assembling of those components of subjectification. It aims at attaining a "natural subjectification". The core question in this chapter is, while I propose to write naturally, to see if there is a way to subjectificate naturally in Dung Kai-cheung's writing.

### **The Integrity of Self as a Problematics**

I would like to begin the discussion with the beginning of the first book in the trilogy, that is, the preface of the VV<sup>3</sup>. In the preface, Dung Kai-cheung has split himself into the author and the reviewer, in the name of the Dictator. It does not only mean that Dung Kai-cheung adopted a pseudonym, given that it does not suggest any sense of the differentiation

---

<sup>3</sup> The preface is only available in the Chinese version. The following quotes are translated by myself and the page numbers refer to the Chinese version:

Dung, K. C. (2005). *The Genesis of Everything: The Realness of Vividness*. Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Co.

of an author. To a certain extent, we can also regard the Dictator as a character created by Dung Kai-cheung. However, it is not accurate enough that it seems to dichotomise authors and characters. This issue will be explained more later in this chapter. By any means, the Dictator is not the same person as the author, as he wrote, "/the author/ has already known that there are differences between us in the stances on literature" (VV, p.3). Here we can see the schismatizing of the self of author. And what the Dictator wrote again focuses on the same subject that "real integrity is so difficult to attain, to the extent that one cannot reach. We cannot help self- schismatizing, self-contradicting" (VV, p.3). In this quote, given that it is the preface of the novel, Dung Kai-cheung stated clearly, one of his most significant concerns or his literary missions is to cope with the problem of integrity.

What is his attitude toward integrity? The Dictator further explained, "as far as I know, what this book signified is the persuasion toward the integrity, and the lost and anxiety for its unattainability" (VV, p.4). Nevertheless, the way how Dung Kai-cheung searched for integrity is not to avoid the schism, avoid contradicting. In contrast, he keeps making himself, or "himselves" precisely, contradicting. His integrity is not done by exclusion, but by inclusion. While in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the second volume of the series of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari wrote that "[t]he two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p. 1), Dung Kai-cheung must be regarded as being several as well. Little Danny, the Dictator and the Dark Rider are probably the result of the fragmentation of Dung Kai-cheung, at least. More than that, the characters in the trilogy can also be considered as such too.

### **Nobody is born to be an author**

Characters are usually considered as the products produced by the author. It is an intuitive way to understand such a relationship because it is the author who writes about and constructs the image of the characters. As such, Vivi, Not Apple, Bui-Bui..... primarily all

the characters, including those who resemble Dung Kai-cheung himself, are Dung Kai-cheung's products. In this sense, real schizophrenic writing is not possible. This impossibility lies in the fact that all traces of splitting are well-planned by the author, or precisely the author, given his absolute power over his writing. In other words, the author is the Whole containing and governing his/her writing. Given that there is a pre-determined Whole, the schizo, under all circumstances, subjects to the generality and there is no differentiation or productivity.

It seems that the author-character relation is not only a problem in literary criticism. Now, it is an obstacle with which a movement toward schizo-natural writing must cope. If we still understand the relation in the conventional way, the author inevitably becomes the whole, which schizo-natural writing rejects. To deal with this problem, we, on the one hand, can find a theoretical guide in Deleuze and Guattari's writing. They simply pointed out that, "[p]uppet strings, as a rhizome or multiplicity, are tied not to the supposed will of an artist or puppeteer but to a multiplicity of nerve fibers, which form another puppet in other dimensions connected to the first" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p. 7). It will become an endless recursion to trace for an ultimate transcendent end. On the other hand, Dung Kai-cheung also suggested a more direct way to deal with this author-character relation in the trilogy, to accomplish his literary mission. I would like to go back to the novel. In VV, Dung Kai-cheung was aware of the fact that all the characters probably were his creation and he wrote about this issue through "my" reflection on the motivation of creating Vivi.

In the chapter "Real World", Vivi crossed the boundary and walked from the Character World to the Real World. She met the narrator, who was a writer and created the story about Vivi through his letters to Vivi. This narrator is not simply a narrator but can somehow be perceived as a character referring to the author himself. In the story, he explained why he created Vivi: at his youth, he lost a girl called Vera (如真). The name of

Vera, in Chinese, means “as if real” and combining the name of Vivi in Chinese, “Heoi heoi jyu zan” (栩栩如真) means “lifelike”, and it is the name of VV in Chinese. Losing Vera, the narrator wanted to compensate this loss through creating Vivi, “[now], as a writer, I had used the only magic I knew to imagine the fictional return of Vera, but instead came this girl called Vivi. I watched as Vivi walked away, just as Vera had walked away before” (VV, p. 405). Later in the novel, we can see that the narrator almost confessed for his act of creation, “in that possible world, I lost Vera. In another possible world, I created you. You and I cannot live in the real world at the same time. So I meet you in the imaginary world in the disguise of Little Danny. *Perhaps, as a character, Little Danny is on his own. He is no longer me*” (VV, p. 483, emphasis added). This part is crucial because here the narrator pointed out the potentiality of a character, originated from the writer himself, *to differentiate himself from the creator*. Certainly, the case is more complicated given that the narrator is a writer in a story created by Dung Kai-cheung. Extremely speaking, the narrator is also a character created by Dung Kai-cheung, though he resembled Dung Kai-cheung to a large extent. Still, the potentiality that Little Danny's case reminds us can be found in that of the narrator as well.

We now know that the characters can differentiate themselves from the author. However, it is too soon to conclude that the characters have nothing to do with the writer. For at least, they are created by the writer. Instead of an investigation of to what extent the characters resemble the author, my focus is on *differentiation*: How was a character differentiated to be a character? What’s more, how was an author differentiated to be an author simultaneously? Some may conceive that an author creates a character, that is, the author exists before a character. It is in this sense that the author is viewed as the Whole. However, before the birth of a character, *the author does not exist* indeed.

An author and his/her characters are born at the same time. That which happens before them is the act of writing. Inspired by Joe Bousquet's poem, "[m]y wound existed before me", Deleuze (2015) wrote one should "become the offspring of one's own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one's carnal birth" (p.154) when one faces an event in one's life. Writing can also be an event. Through a productive writing, an author is born, or reborn.

This view on writing can be discovered in the trilogy too. As I have mentioned in introduction, in OS, the third volume of the trilogy, there was a reading group, which members have read a book per month and finally finished 12 books. In chapter 7, "I am me; I am not me", Fernando Pessoa's work was discussed. T, the temporal moderator of the group, introduced Pessoa that,

it is common that an author disguises himself/herself by pseudonyms, or adopting different pseudonyms for different kinds of writing, like one for publishing poems, one for writing fiction, one for commenting current events. Pessoa's case is that what he created through names are not just characters or functional pseudonyms, but *authors* (OS, p, 384, emphasis added).

T made such a judgment that those were *authors* because those heteronyms were different in the sense of, namely, ideologies, philosophical stances, writing styles and thus they are not just some pseudonyms. That is to say, there are some certain qualities determining if a name is an author. What those qualities are can arouse endless debate. However, it is clear that, no matter what those qualities are, they have to be expressed for us to make a judgment. In other words, an author is an author only when he/she has expressed such qualities.

### **Characters as partial objects**

It is obvious that no person is born to be an author. Even if one is unbelievably talented, he/she has to write to become an author. What should be counted as the expression of an author? Plenty of things, like rhetoric, style, genres and so on. Nevertheless, no one can deny the fact that characters can be seen as one of the expressions of an author. To further explain the concept of "character-as-expression", I want to borrow the discussion on "partial objects" in *Anti-Oedipus*.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari (2009) quoted how Melaine Klein, a psychoanalyst, tried to explain the behaviour of her patients, Dick (p.45). Dick was a child, and when Klein met him, she gave him a bigger train and a smaller train, symbolising Dick's father and Dick respectively. Then, Dick moved the smaller one toward a window, which he called a station. Immediately, Klein claimed that the window-as-a-station symbolised his mother, "Dick is going into mummy". Deleuze and Guattari (2009) commented on it that, "[s]ay that it's an Oedipus, or you'll get a slap in the face" (p.45). They were not satisfied with the fact that the psychoanalyst always reduced everything to a component inside the Oedipus triad. "So the entire process of desiring-production is trampled underfoot and reduced to parental images" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 45). Rejecting such a reductionistic treatment, they suggested that

partial objects are produced by being drawn from a flow or a nonpersonal hylè, with which they re-establish contact by connecting themselves to other partial objects. [...]

A partial object is not representative, even though it admittedly serves as a basis of relations and as a means of assigning agents a place and a function; but these agents are not persons, any more than these relations are intersubjective. They are relations of production as such, and agents of production and antiproduction (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 47).

That is to say, when we examine a partial object, which is originated from a flow and connects with other partial objects, we should focus on the production. We may ask, “what is its role in the production?”, or “what does it produce?” But we should not overemphasise what it represents. For a machine, partial objects do not represent any component of an pre-determined blueprint. *They are components*. They connect with each other, run and produce. For a writing machine, there are also numerous types of partial objects for writing, one of which is the character. Characters originated from an author are then plugged with different things as if components of a machine. Characters are components of a writing machine, at least for a novel. Relying on these components, the machine runs and produces. However, frequently, the productivity of the machine is unfortunately ignored in some criticism, as stated by Deleuze and Guattari (2009), "oedipalization is one of the most important factors in the reduction of literature to an object of consumption conforming to the established order" (p.133). The established order, unmistakably, means the Oedipal triad. Learning from the above discussion, maybe we can regard the schizo-natural writing as a counter-oedipalisation of the character from the author, to free them from the established order.

What does the anti-oedipalisation of character mean when it comes to the mental ecology of an author? We have to shift our perspective. What we should focus on is not how characters reflect the mental state of the author but how the character functions, coordinate to produce its author. The author is a product. That is to say, it is not that Dung Kai-cheung created, like Little Danny, the Dictator and the Dark Rider. The thing goes in another way: it is due to Little Danny, the Dictator and the Dark Rider that Dung Kai-cheung becomes an author. Consequently, we cannot presuppose that there is a stable or consistent mind creating characters. Preferably, the mind of a creator is an ecology. As I stated in the introduction, the concept of ecology, or rhizome, highlights the dynamic between parts. It is in this sense that

characters should be considered as partial objects of the author. Or put it simply, they are character-authors.

Next, the questions are: why did Dung Kai-cheung write in such approach? And how does it relate to Nature? These are crucial questions especially for the way toward a schizo-natural writing.

### **Pessoa and Schizo-natural**

To understand Dung Kai-cheung's motivation, OS is the best entrance. As I have explained, there was a reading group, reading 12 books in the story. Those 12 books selected to a large extent can be regarded as some of the triggering points for Dung Kai-cheung's writing. Through the reading group in OS, Dung Kai-cheung made a dialogue with those references and investigated in some particular topics. In chapter 7, "I am me; I am not me", the reading group was reading *the Book of Disquiet* by Fernando Pessoa and the discussion focused on the fragmentation of subjectivity. Through a close examination of the discussion, the above two questions (why did Dung Kai-cheung adopt such approach? And how does it relate to Nature?) can be answered.

Pessoa's sensationalism contained a certain perspective toward Nature, from which Nature is ever-changing and fragmented. At the beginning of the chapter, the protagonist, Archi started talking about Pessoa with a poem written by Alberto Caeiro, one of Pessoa's heteronyms, that,

when we see everything, we see a mountain, we see water, we see plants and trees, we always want to seek for a deeper meaning of those things. We also ask, why does everything exist? But the poet said, 'because the only hidden meaning of things/ Is that they have no hidden meaning at all,/ That things are really what they seem to be/, And there's nothing to understand.//Yes, this is what my senses alone have learned:—

/ Things don't have significance: they only have existence./ Things are the only hidden meaning of things' (OS, p.373).

Through this quotation, the writer revealed Pessoa's sensationalism, emphasising on the sensation and rejecting to treat sensation as a representation, which represents a hidden meaning. So the protagonist continued that, "I close the book, look up, let my sense lead my consciousness. Cool air, body wrapped tightly, the fragrance of toasts and coffee, light that is neither dim nor bright, fallen leaves on the stone steps of the promenade..." (OS, p.373). The writer listed the feelings of the protagonist, without trying to dig deep into their meaning.

Pessoa's sensationalism is essential in the schizo-natural writing because it describes a particular relationship between human beings and Nature. How does a person relate to Nature? One cannot deny the crucial role played by sensation. We rely on our sensation to "get in touch", literally, with Nature. Before any interaction, we need to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch, or by any means, to feel an object, no matter consciously or unconsciously. But for sensation, it can in no way be regarded as representation. Things exist for themselves. Without a transcendental being to unify the objects, one experiences an "a-unifying", discontinuous flow of matter, the *hylé*. One may be concerned if Pessoa's thoughts are compatible with Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts. Still, interestingly, Deleuze (1988a) made relevant comments on the problem of sensation too, "[w]hat, in fact, is a sensation? It is the operation of contracting trillions of vibrations onto a receptive surface" (p.74). The sensation is not an act that an object is passively perceived, but an act of encounter (Young, Genosko, & Watson, 2013, p. 276). Every encounter leaves affection on a subject.

Then, the writer elaborated how a person experience under such circumstance through Pessoa's poem,

Ricardo Reis said, 'Countless lives inhabit us,/ I don't know, when I think or feel,  
Who is thinking or feeling./ I am merely the place/ Where things are thought or felt.//  
I have more than just one soul./ There are more I's than I myself'. Here comes a view  
of selflessness (無我觀) that all is one, one is all. In addition to that Pessoa  
metaphorised himself as an "empty stage" which allows actors act, it is almost an  
image of contemplating emptiness (空觀) (OS, p.373).

Some may find it paradoxical that, given the multiplicity of I's, how did the  
protagonist come to the notion of "emptiness"? While many things are passing through, it is  
not reasonable to claim it as "empty". It is not paradoxical because what she called  
"contemplating emptiness", in the thinking of Buddhism, does not mean there is nothing.  
Rather, in The Heart Sūtra, it is said that "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form. Emptiness  
is not other than form; form is not other than emptiness" (Lopez, 1988). Form and emptiness  
cannot be separated. Emptiness does not mean that there is no form, but that form keeps  
changing without stationary. Emptiness is not the negation of form but a property of form (諸  
色性空). Not only Nature is empty, but "I" am also empty that multiple "I"s vibrate together.

The above understanding of subjectivity is different from romanticism, which was  
inadequate in dealing with the question of subjectivity and the mental ecology because it  
enclosed itself that it cannot recognize the ecology. The writer is also aware of it. In the  
discussion in the story, the writer made a distinction between the understanding of  
subjectivity in Pessoa's thinking and that in Romanticism that "what kind of mentality is it? It  
is a mentality of self-erasure, self-elimination. It is opposite to the self-centred romanticism"  
(OS, p.384). Referring to Pessoa's sensationalism and the Buddhism, Dung Kai-cheung, as he  
proposed "not to rehabilitate the nature writing for romanticism or environmentalism" (Dung,  
2011), has found another mode of nature writing. He did it through a re-examination of the

concept of subjectivity, that becomes fragmented, vibrant, a-unified, like Nature. According to the above, a philosophical foundation for schizo-natural writing is constructed in Dung Kai-cheung's trilogy.

### **Literary operation to write naturally**

Given this ontological statement, Dung Kai-cheung further developed an ethic for the creator. He wrote that "[Álvaro de Campos] said in *the Passage of Time* that 'to feel everything in every way,/ to live everything from all sides,/ to become all possible things at the same time,/ to actualise all humanity at every moment/ in the diffuse, profuse, complete, and alienated instance.' It does not only mean *carpe diem* but also *inter-being*" (OS, p.375, emphasis added). For a creator, what he/she has to do is to grasp this inter-beingness and to become everything in every way.

So far, I have discussed how Dung Kai-cheung adopted Pessoa's approach, to fragmentise the self to become selves, to attain schizo-natural writing. It is just one of the ways he did it. Next, I would like to focus on the second book, HT. Dung Kai-cheung made a more experimental move to write schizophrenically.

In HT, there were three parts as I mentioned in the introduction. For the discussion of the problem of multiple subjectivities, I would like to focus on *Virginia's Heartbeat* (a story about an always-17 years old girl Virginia in an abandoned library. Her memory is restricted to be a one-year memory only). In this part, Dung Kai-cheung developed a distinctive style to "become everything" — writing with a nomadic subjectivity.

"In the third voice, the Dictator and I choir with each other, or struggle against each other, forming contraposition and variation of the consciousness" (HT, p.5), Virginia Anderson, one of the character-authors, wrote in the preface of HT. The narrative perspective

is so complicating that keeps changing throughout the story. The following passage can exemplify it:

*She* looked out the window. *He* followed her sight. Drops of water drew short lines on the glass. The transparent glass seemed to be a screen. It's drops of rain, cutting across. *You* and *he* hid in the tiny car abandoned beside a trail and were watching the rain brushing the windshield like a waterfall, which isolated both of you and the outside world (HT, p.116-117, emphasis added).

Within a few sentences, the narrative perspective keeps jumping, from a third-person narrative to a second-person narrative. Sometimes, the writer even shifted to a first-person narrative, using the perspective of "I". The above narrative strategy penetrates the whole third part of HT. What's more, the "I" and "you" alternated during narrative too. On the one hand, the "you" can be Virginia in the library (from now on called Virginia) and the "I" can be Fa, "I found her in the little garden on the roof of the library" (HT, p.114). On the other hand, "I" and "you" shifted to become the Dictator and Virginia Anderson,

For writing itself, it is just a masturbation. It seems that we are entering a dangerous situation. Who? You and me. Fa and Virginia also. You and I pass through Virginia and Fa. It's Fa and Virginia pass through you and me. Shouldn't I escape from it timely? Then you would rather die than discover the possibility of being. Sill possible? (HT, p.346).

Suddenly, the two character-authors, the Dictator and Virginia Anderson, jumped out and started their conversation. It is more complicated than that an author directly engages in the story because the character-authors drifted back and fore between the realm of the author and that of character. The character-writers are conscious of the fact that they are writing. It

is an additional layer of how the subjectivity shifts, compared with that an author jumped into a story.

Here are four pronouns (I, you, she, he) and four character-authors (Virginia, Virginia Anderson, Fa, the Dictator). Still, these two pairs are not related biunivocally. That is, the elements in the two sets cannot be one-to-one related. The "I" can be Virginia Anderson, or Fa, or the Dictator. So does the "you". Pronouns are just pronouns used for designation, without a fixed destination. "The spring equinox. You came here at the spring equinox. Fa also arrived the library in spring. Actually, you are Fa, while I am more likely to be Virginia. So, there does not exist questions like 'who saved whom', or 'who crushed on whom'. At the same time, we can save each other, crush on each other. Between selves and others, there are others-within-selves, and selves-within-others [...] So there is neither any easy harmony nor any casual co-content" (HT, p.426). As such, the multiple subjectivities is not a static network, being merely a list of what exists. It is a dynamic one that those different selves-others cross over each other. Then, the story is fabricated. It is not just literally changing from a pronoun to another. The key is that, whose perspective is it? With different perspectives, different lived experiences were expressed. For example, through the narration by Virginia, the details of the library can be told; the description by Fa tells readers the impact of the encounter between them; The dictator and Virginia Anderson give information out of the story. Given that a narration without perspective does not exist, the shift of perspective allows a rich story. Perspectives shifted in *Virginia's Heartbeat* not only as a way to express the multiplicity of the mental state of the author but also as a way to explore the complexity of space-time. It is the central theme in HT, and I will elaborate on this point in chapter 5, the spatiotemporal ecology. Anyway, this shift is, on another level than heteronyms, a literary operation of the mental ecology. It does not mean that the sum of those narration represents

the authentic story if any, but that the multiple perspectives can agree, confront or struggle with each other.

The need for those multiple character-authors also determined how the trilogy is organised. Letters played a constitutive role in it. This style penetrated the whole trilogy. In VV, the half of the novel, the history of Dung's family, was told in the letters sent to Vivi, without stating who the sender is. In HT, the Dictator kept sending letters to Yan-yan as a way for him to write a story about her, which became a story within a story; In OS, there were 12 chapters, and each chapter is a letter sent to Dark Rider from Ar-chi (as Bui-bui). The combination of these three parts have already expressed three modes of interaction between the author-characters. In VV, though in the letters there was no sender's signature, we can know that the sender was an un-specified author, from the content of the letter, like the sender's relationship to other characters. In other words, the story writer wrote letters to his character in VV. Next, in HT, the Dictator wrote letters to Yan-yan. The Dictator, as I repeatedly said, is an author-character. Therefore, it can be regarded as that an author-character sent letters to another character. Comparing with that in VV, the positions of the sender and the receiver were closer. Then, in OS, Ar-chi and Dark were the sender and the receiver respectively. It can be said that the position between the sender and the receiver reversed, given that Dark in no small extent resembled Dung Kai-cheung himself, for example, in the story he wrote books similar to Dung Kai-cheung's works.

Here we can see three different modes of communication, from an author to a character, from an author-character to a character and from a character to an author-character. Epistolary basically is a try to communicate. Just as Kauffman (1986) stated, "[t]he fundamental category of epistolary is that it must be written to be read. It does not necessarily follow that the letter will be read, much less that it will evoke a response, but as an utterance, it is 'dialogic'; its existence depends on sustaining the illusion of a dialogue with the reader"

(p.36). No matter if there is any response, notwithstanding there is no reply in the trilogy, writing a letter, in itself, implies a dialogue. Does not it just reveal the true scene of writing? An author can never assure that his/her work will be read. In a normative sense, writing as such cannot be regarded as a communication because the existence of receiver is unclear. However, Dung Kai-cheung made use of the form of epistolary to sustain an illusion of a dialogue. Through those letters, characters, or author-characters, become embodied and have linked together to form mental ecology of the creator. Writing becomes a concrete act of communication.

### **The mental ecology of creators and late style**

All of the above focus on writing only. However, in the trilogy, the importance of recognising the mentality as ecology is more far-reaching.

In the twelfth chapter of OS, *the Restart Later Than Too Late*, due to a series of issues, the reading group could no longer operate normally (the details of those accidents will be discussed in next chapter, the social ecology). However, the main character, Ar-chi, in the late June suddenly found that she needed to accomplish the unfinished project for other people. Therefore, she asked the Alumnae, another member of the reading group, to gather for the discussion on the last book for the group, *On Late Style* by Edward Said. The Alumnae was a crucial character in the story. In the middle of the story, she got a PhD in Chinese. One of her research interests was about Said's *On Late Style*. In light of her educational background, she was called as the Alumnae by members of the reading group, though most of them did not study in the same institution.

Through *On Late Style*, Dung Kai-cheung continued the critics on the totalities. The Alumnae introduced the book that this book has not finished before Said dead, “strictly speaking, this book has neither finished nor been complete. Even the concept of ‘late style’

has not been defined clearly. Still, as a concept, perhaps, the ‘late style’ and its content necessarily include the properties that are difficult to define and reject to be fixed” (OS, p.697-698). Here we can see the tension between the totalities and the fragmented was building up. The importance of the concept of “late style”, in this thesis, is that it expanded the discussion of creators’ minds from writing to other forms of creation. The Alumnae further elaborated,

it has to be a relative concept. Relative to time and relative to epoch. Relative to time means the so-called late properties relative to the early and middle stages in the creative life of an artist. Relative to epoch means being relative to the mainstream art value and social consciousness at a particular period in the history (OS, p. 698).

As explained by the Alumnae, Said elaborated not only writers like Jean Genet, but also pianist Glenn Gould, composers Johann Strauss and Wolfgang Mozart. Said started with reviewing Theodor Adorno's works on the late style of Beethoven. Bui-bui and the Alumnae focused on the first chapter of the book, "Timeliness and Lateness".

The late style does not mean that an artist becomes mature and harmonious at the late stage of his/her life. Instead, their works become fierce and indignant. "The works are filled with oppositions and fragmentations, and even reject the totalities stubbornly" (OS, p.698). They further developed this rejection to the totalities and related Said's late style with the Hegelian teleological historical view. Said (2006) commented on Adorno that "Adorno's counter to false, and in Hegel's case untenable, totalities is not just to say that they are inauthentic but in fact to write, to *be*, an alternative through exile and subjectivity” (p. 15). Therefore, a rejection to totalities is the reason why Beethoven’s late works are so complicating and extreme. Said, at the late stage of his life, recalled how Adorno, also at the late stage of his life, recalled Beethoven, again, at the late stage of his life. This move aimed

at revealing the way to differentiate from the totalities originated from the society or the lives of the artists. That is *an exile* for all creators in the late style.

The concept of late style was explored not for positing that there are different kinds of things. What is more is the constant interaction and differentiation. The study in the late style is crucial to our investigation in the mental ecology not only because it further develops the concept of schismatic creation but also because it highlights the dynamic of the ecology, how the ecology differentiates. The meaning of ecology does not only mean there are multiple elements. The Alumnae concluded, "the late style is an attack on [the system of Zeistgeist] with its stubborn untimeliness" (OS, p.700). Hegelian historical dialectic has already pointed out the existence of multiple elements, theses and antitheses. The contradictions between them drive the system forward. However, the reason why the late style is different from the historical dialectic is that the Hegelian dialectic regards the multiple as the initiator while the late style regards the multiple as both the condition and result. The difference should be regarded as a progress, that is, *differentiation as progress*. Lateness is embodied in the continuous differentiation. If the style of a creator does not differentiate, one can hardly to distinguish his/her late work from the others.

It is due to this point that we can see the compatibility between Said's late style and Deleuze and Guattari's schizophrenia. More than resonance with schizophrenia, the late style furthermore helps us to understand the dynamic within ecology: 1) there are multiple elements; 2) All of the elements interacted with each other; 3) The interaction differentiates the system-product. And it is not exclusively applicable to writers. Rather, all kinds of creative activity can also be examined in this ecological sense.

### **Between Nature and mental ecology**

We have talked a lot about the mental ecology and how it differentiates. Still, we should not forget that we aim to explore schizo-natural writing as a critique of the traditional nature writing. Let us go back to nature now.

Dung Kai-cheung did not forget his main concern, namely, the natural histories. It is notable that Ar-chi and the Alumnae started their discussion on *On Late Style* by citing Said's elaboration on the difference between the realm of nature and secular human history. While "[t]here are all sorts of connections between the two realms, between history and nature, but for now [Said wants] to keep them apart and focus only on one of them, history" (Said, 2006, pp. 3–4).

Ar-chi further elaborated what is meant by Nature and social that "the former is biological, bodily time, the growth and death of everything and seasonal circular time; the latter means how human beings comprehend the former, through which they create the time of civilisation" (OS, p.609). In the natural circular time, the late stage should be corresponded to decay, a decrease in energy. However, the late style, emphasising on its lateness, is contrastingly full of "nonharmonious, nonserene tension". Consequently, the late style cannot be contained in the natural order. Ar-chi then cited the theory of evolution to explain that "survival of the fittest. Untimely things have no chance to live in Nature". According to it, social Darwinism has risen and has become a dominant ideology for a period in the social history. Then, the social history has been turned into a progress marching to a specific totality.

Does it mean that the late style is an action against Nature? In the story, it has not been clarified. However, basing on the concept of Nature expressed in the story, I would instead suggest that the late style is a must for Nature to nature itself. According to the above, it seems that Dung Kai-cheung resisted natural histories. However, to be precise, what Dung Kai-cheung is opposing is not a general history of Nature, but a specific view on Nature and

the view on History derived from it. When we reviewed on the other parts of the trilogy, we can find that Dung Kai-cheung did appreciate a certain kind of Nature, which I termed as schizophrenic-nature. For example, in VV, Dung Kai-cheung kept exploring the productivity of Nature and described Nature as a factory, through which I connect his thought with Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "Nature=Factory" in *Anti-Oedipus*. More details can be found in chapter 4. In OS, Jesus, a character in the story, also expressed his thought on an ever-changing Dao when there was a discussion on what is Nature that "what can be fixed and grasped is not the truth" (OS, p.446). What Dung Kai-cheung rejected to is not nature, but a concept of Nature constructed socially. The late style is natural is the sense of an ecological Nature. That is, Nature naturing and differentiating.

### **Death and its social aspect**

For the understanding of differentiation, the concept of death has to be re-examined also. It is another reason why Dung Kai-cheung chose *On Late Style* as the last book for the reading group. On the one hand, after this book, the group would be dismissed, though it had already dismissed practically. On the other hand, it also provided a chance for the members to rethink the death of one of the characters in the story, Ah-gok. Ah-gok committed suicide himself in an environment protection protest. Generally speaking, death is interpreted as an end. However, Said (2006) gave us another interpretation that "late style does not admit the definitive cadences of death; instead, death appears in a refracted mode, as irony" (p.24). In mental ecology, the death of an element may sometime be misunderstood as its end and its disappearance, that is, in a reductionism sense. It leads to a loss of the diversity in ecology and thus is the contrast to the differentiation.

Still, Said proposed death in a refracted mode. What is meant by refracted? For if reflection means copying the original, and thus is related to the concept of mimicry, refraction can be regarded as a change in direction, differentiating from the original direction

of movement. When Death becomes refractive, it implies a possibility to disclose a multiplicity. In this sense, Said's concept of death can be linked to the rebirth of an author, which I explained by Deleuze's interpretation of Bosquet's poem in the early part of this chapter.

Though Ah-gok dead, his death does not mean the end of ecology. Somewhat, his death became an element inside the mental ecologies of other group members. Is not this transformation the fundamental mechanism of OS? Most of the authors of those twelve books are dead but then their creations, the products and the processes of their mental ecology, becomes the elements forming Dung Kai-cheung's mental ecology. It is in this sense that death can be affirmative and productive (about this point, further elaboration can be seen in chapter 4).

Concluding what we have learnt in this chapter may help us understanding how death can be affirmative and productive. At the beginning of this chapter, the integrity of self has been resituated as a problematic. Contrary to a stable self, the self should always be a selves, under endless internal contradiction. In Dung Kai-cheung's writing, we can find that characters, in some cases, are not merely characters but they are author-characters. Some characters like Little Danny and Dark, to a certain extent, resemble Dung Kai-cheung himself. Therefore, I proposed that, in Dung Kai-cheung's writing, characters should not be regarded as the products of his writing. Instead, an author and his/her characters are born at the same time. That which happens before them is the act of writing. I further theorised the mechanism of author-character by the notion of partial object according to Deleuze and Guattari's elaboration. The author-characters are productive components connecting with each other. Then, I traced back how the mechanism works and what it aims at through Pessoa's writing, which was mentioned frequently in the trilogy. The selves, as a multiplicity, inter-crossed with each other echoing the production of nature. So far, all we have discussed

is about creation, namely the simultaneous creation of author and characters. Nothing turned into something in writing. It is the production. But for the theorization of the schizo-natural creation, we have to also crack down the, seemingly, anti-production. That is, death. Death seemingly reversed the production and eliminate what is produced. However, death, as Said (2006) said, “appears in a refracted mode” (p.24); in other words, it can be affirmative and productive as well.

Through creation, including writing, the creators and his/her works are born. While the material body of the creator is doomed to die, his/her works are not. Even if the material body of Dung Kai-cheung, unfortunately, dies, those author-characters in his work, as partial objects of his selves, will still act vividly in the story. In this respect, Dung Kai-cheung cannot die, which echoes with Arendt’s statement in *The Human Condition*, “[b]y their capacity for the immortal deed, by their ability to leave non-perishable traces behind, men, their individual mortality notwithstanding, attain an immortality” (Arendt, 1958, p. 19). In fact, it can be said that Arendt has really done the job because, at least, her non-perishable book, as a partial object of her selves, became an indispensable element in OS, the third book in Dung Kai-cheung’s trilogy. The same can be seen in the case how Ar-chi unfolded Ah-gok’s notebook after his death.

The truly affirmative and productive are not those works left behind. It is death itself. Heidegger (1962), being one of the significant sources inspiring Dung Kai-cheung, proposed the notion of being-towards-the-end, “[d]eath is a way to be, which Dasein takes over as soon as it is” (p.289). As such, death impends us to do something, “[d]eath is something that stands before us – something impending” (Heidegger, 1962, p.294). It is under such pressure that a creator is born through his/her imperishable creation, his/her partial-subject. In fact, these works we have talked, *On Late Style*, *The Human Condition*, *Being and Time*, and even

*the Natural Histories Trilogy*, are the proof of the affirmativity and productivity of the impending death with respect to subjectivity.

In other words, when we read a book, we are reading the-partial-of-the-deceased-subject. However, it did not solve all problems. Rather, it revealed to us another aspects of question. Explaining his concept of being-towards-the-end, Heidegger (1962) pointed out that, “[i]n tarrying alongside him in their mourning and commemoration, those who have remained behind *are with him*, in a mode of solicitude” (p. 282). He stated that, “[t]he deceased has abandoned our ‘*world*’ and left it behind. But *in terms of that world* those who remain can still *be with him*” (Heidegger, 1962, p. 282). In other words, for us, the left behind, the key problem is how to understand the deceased.

Heidegger certainly has dealt with this issue. However, in OS, we can see the criticism posed by Dung Kai-cheung’s author-character, Ar-zhi,

the focus of Heidegger’s analysis still fell on an individual or ‘Dasein’ or ‘the solipsistic self’. These individual or ‘Dasein’ or ‘the solipsistic self’ has his/her own world but does not have a publicity. It is a rather strange situation. Is not this conclusion, ‘Dasein as world’, too self-inflation? It is said that the reason why Heidegger’s writing of *Being and Time* stopped in the midway is that he found that he covered being by the analysis of the human being and raised the importance of human beings too high (OS, p.293).

Under such circumstance, the investigation of the schizo-natural subjectivity finally leads us to problem of ethics, the way human beings interact with each other. It brings us to the next chapter: the social ecology, where I would explain what is meant by the schizo-natural ethics.

## Chapter 2 Social Ecology

For me, the secretive community Goethe imagined is somehow acceptable or even appealing. [...] [I]n a world at the edge of crisis, a group of people assemble for the same idea and play a reformatory role in the collapsing world. [...] Reading about the small groups formed forcibly in José Saramago's writing additionally, I have thought if our reading group can develop into a more directive and active organisation [...] when words can express, actions speak everything. (OS, p.157)

Dung Kai-cheung's writing is always crowded, even if we compare it not with other works in nature writing but with some ordinary fictions. Those characters form groups and argue with each other fiercely. They engage in social movements in every volume of the trilogy. In VV, we can see Vivi accidentally triggered a revolution against the Rules of Characters; in HT, we can see there was a group protecting a heritage; in OS, the reading group organised a series of actions to prevent the demolition of a temple. They, ironically, all dismissed at the end of the story. Generally speaking, it is unusual for a nature writing to have so many characters interact with each other. As such, we have two possible ways to respond: either we deny the trilogy as a nature writing, or, I would prefer, we dig into the communities in the stories to see their function(s) in the stories. Why does Dung Kai-cheung write in such manner? It is a question. Moreover, my answer, after examining those cases, points toward an ethics of the Schizo.

### **The social aspects of nature writing**

The problem of the social differentiates the schizo-natural writing from the conventional nature writing.

What role does the social play in the conventional nature writing? If *Walden* can be regarded as a typical work in conventional nature writing, which should raise little controversy, we can say that the role the social plays is an object to be excluded. Thoreau, in *Walden*, praised a lifestyle that withdraws from the social,

I discovered that my house actually had its site in such a withdrawn [...] part of the universe. If it were worth the while to settle in those parts near to the Pleiades or the Hyades, to Aldebaran or Altair, then I was really there, or at an equal remoteness from the life which I had left behind, dwindled and twinkling with as fine a ray to my nearest neighbor (1989, p.88).

From the above quote, Thoreau explained how his ideal life looks like: a "remoteness" and "withdrawal" from the social. He stated that he wanted a life in the simplest form. Therefore, he, so to speak, farmed his food and built his own house. We can say that he sustained his life by himself. However, we can also say that he sustains no one but himself. His simplest form of life started from isolating himself from the social. He even embraces the solitude, "I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time" (1989, p. 135). Though he immediately pointed that solitude has nothing to do the spatial distance between a person and another, he without a doubt believes that "[a] man thinking or working is always alone, let him be where he will".

Thoreau made great contribution to how people understand nature, and from this point, he developed his political stance as well, namely, the civil disobedience, which with no doubts is one of the most influential political ideas concerning the tension between civil and liberty . Still, Dung Kai-cheung may not be content with his thought about nature. In OS, he pointed out the paradox hid in Thoreau's way of living, , as Zit-dou, a member of the reading group in OS, stated,

He [Thoreau] was supported by many people. The land where he built his house was bought by his friend Emerson, so he did not need to pay any rent. Yes, he built himself a house with the second-hand material, farmed himself and worked himself. However, it should be reminded that his house was not far away from his home in the village. He walked back to the village for his friends almost every day. Whatever happened, his family would help him. After two years, he thought he finished the experiment, and then he moved back to his home immediately (p. 211).

That is to say, though Thoreau embraces solitude, he does not successfully cut himself off from any relationship. The problem of the social is still haunting around his so-called experience of solitude.

As exemplified above, the conventional nature writing does not account for the problem of the social. Rather, it regards the social as a problem. It is not simply an ignorance. It is a structural exclusion. It has to exclude the social because the social becomes the scapegoat for every fault. This kind of writing insists on the authentic nature covered by the various obstacles and the most notorious one is the social.

I am not going to blame Thoreau for his exclusion, consciously or unconsciously, of the social. We cannot ignore the social context in which Thoreau lived. In 1850's, it was during the time that in Thoreau's society the urban becomes a problem. With modernisation, the urban unceasingly populated. Over-population posed, and is still posing, a serious threat to human living condition. Therefore, it is understandable that Thoreau treats the social in this way. Dung Kai-cheung also noticed Thoreau's shortcoming. In OS, we can find the following discussion by Zit-dou,

Thoreau believes that to solve the so-called social problems, the answer cannot be found inside the social, but to exceed the society, to go back to Nature. That is

because it is Nature, not the society, where human beings root. Thoreau does not talk about the social reformation because it cannot uproot the problem. He proposes a personal reformation, that is, to restore the relation between human and Nature (OS, p.224).

Though Thoreau obviously made a significant contribution to human's understanding toward nature undeniably, Dung Kai-cheung did completely agree with former's view on nature. If I have to criticise Thoreau, my criticism will be based on the restriction of his contextual restrictions rather than on Thoreau himself. As Zit-dou concluded well, "Thoreau's 'I' indeed is a product of Romanticism in the 19th century. Nature, in his writing, to a large extent is the mirror image of his ego" (OS, p.226). To a certain extent, I agree with Soper's idea that the concept of Nature is socially constructed, as I pointed out in the introduction. Following her idea, when the concept of Nature is socially and contextually constructed, we should be able to find the difference between Thoreau's concept of Nature and "Chinese" concept of Nature, if any. Unfortunately, regarding the role of the society in Nature writing, little difference can be observed as shown by Wu Ming-Yi (吳明益), one of the most important nature writers in Sinophone literature.

One may immediately ask if there is any compatibility to compare European, or Anglophone to be specific, nature writing with Sinophone nature writing, given the tremendous contextual difference between the two. I have a two-fold explanation for this doubt. Firstly, the Anglophone nature writing has been undeniably influential for decades, if not centuries. Its influence has spread across different realms, including art, culture, economic and political. Rather than isolating Sinophone nature writing from that tradition, it will be more valuable to criticize the latter by the former. Secondly, these two streams of thought are inseparable. For the modern Sinophone nature writing, Wu Ming-Yi made a considerable contribution not only for his renowned pieces of nature writing like *The Stolen*

*Bicycle* (2015) but also for his theorisation of Taiwan nature writing. It is notable that in his opium *The Search for Modern Taiwanese Nature Writing 1980-2002* (2011), he explicitly connected the Taiwan nature writing and the Anglophone through, for example, the notion of "the preservation of the wilderness", "with this idea of the preservation of the wilderness, we found that the early nature writers were not willing to disclose the place of observation. It reminds me of a British working mocking at the imperialism, *Gulliver Travel* (1626) by Jonathan Swift" (p.222). It is not a single case. He proposes six characteristics of nature writing and widely adopted examples from the European literature as well.

I have showed how society had been expelled from the nature writing, with Thoreau as an example. Still, according to Wu Ming-Yi, the same thing can be discovered in Taiwan Nature Writing too. Wu Ming-Yi's theorisation of Taiwan Nature Writing based on the notion of "wilderness", which means the exclusion of any human being except the writer, as an observer, not allowed to intrude nature. He also further emphasises on the personal narrative that how a person travels in the wilderness alone. As I have stated, if there is a society for nature writing, it is outside the society. The society is the scapegoat for any ecological disaster.

However, this view unavoidably leads to a dichotomisation between Nature and Culture. It exaggerates the tension between them, which cannot be dismissed indeed. However, environmental fundamentalism is not an solution as well. It may finally encourage people to convert themselves to be hermits like Thoreau and thus to detach themselves from the community. However, even Thoreau himself received plenty of help from his friends and family. To attempt to withdraw oneself from the community is to shut a blind eye to the social network tightly fabricated.

### **Huxley and Spencer, Darwinism and the Social**

Imagine there is a map depicting the world, on which three elements can be found: Nature, the society and the human being. Different discourses will assemble them differently. On the one hand, in the view we have discussed above, the society disappears, and the human being detaches themselves from the society inhabits, at least seemingly, in nature. Perhaps we can call it a particular form of escapism. On the other hand, we can find another form of assembling, which can be called the Social Darwinism. Instead of withdrawing oneself from the society, we have to learn from nature to construct a nature-like society.

It is not necessary for the construction of a nature-like society to lead to a social Darwinistic society. Sometimes another version pops up: Nature is so harmonic and beautiful that human society should learn from it. However, this view immediately faces a challenge: Nature is not always as harmonic as depicted. Sometimes nature is cruel. That animals eat animals by no means an exceptional case. Animals need to compete with each other for survival. Nature is not always prosperous, and as a matter of fact, death and decay are nothing but necessary processes.

While the harmonic view cannot sustain itself under such circumstance, another way of adaptation shows up. It admits the cruelty of nature and takes it as the law of society, which can be called as Social Darwinism. The belief of Social Darwinism accords to Darwinism, the "survival of the fittest". Nature is a battlefield that different species compete with each other to survival. It de-dichotomises nature and culture by eliminating the difference between the two.

Social Darwinism had been popular in the history of civilisation. There are different forms of Social Darwinism. However, they commonly supposed that natural selection is also applicable to human society. Notions like colonialism, progressivism, laissez-faire capitalism, neoliberalism and so on to a large extent are derived, if not originated, from social Darwinism.

In OS, Dung Kai-cheung spent a chapter on discussing social Darwinism. The reading group selected Yan Fu's "Tian Yan Lun" (嚴復《天演論》) translated from Thomas Henry Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*. Yan Fu, in China in the 19th Century's, translated a variety of books for the development of the country. China, at that time, faced plenty of challenges, one of which is the adaptation of the European-American knowledge. How should the adaptation be made? Should China give up all Chinese tradition to "westernise" itself? Alternatively, how could Chinese tradition merge with European-American knowledge? Echoing with the time, Yan Fu's translation included Spencer's *The Study of Sociology* (1874), Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), John Stuart Mill's *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843), etc..

Yan Fu can hardly be regarded merely as a translator. Based on a variety of Chinese philosophy, he commented on those work as well. His aim was not only to introduce but also to accommodate those foreign thinking into China. On the one hand, he translated the work. On the other hand, he also made plenty of remarks. Just as in the novel, Aa-Lik said, concerning the relationship between individual and community, "Yan Fu was influenced by Nineteenth Century English Sociologist Spencer. Seemingly, Yan agreed with Spencer more than Huxley. In *Tian Yan Lun*, Yan Fu always cited Spencer's points to question Huxley's statements" (OS, p. 455).

In this chapter, we can see the debate mainly between Huxley and Spencer. Dung Kai-cheung did not openly express which side he took. The debate in the reading group was quite ambiguous. Both Huxley and Spencer were supported and criticised. While, in the following, social Darwinism is criticised, one should not simply overthrow it. It has its points, according to the evaluation by the characters. Perhaps, what Wa-wa said summed up the discussion comprehensively,

I propose a wholeness in which body and mind are connected. [...] A man totally socialised is fragmented, or alienated. He has to seek for his relationship with the land and thus rehabilitate the wholeness. Huxley's nature-versus-culture concept is fatal to the modern society. It evaluates bodies badly and cut off the connection between bodies and nature. For Spencer's theories, it goes to another extreme that recognises the body principles only and ignores the principles of spiritual civilisation (OS, p.484).

Indeed, it is not possible to cover everything discussed for the time's sake. However, it is clear that, for the reading group, the focus question is "how and why should society take care of the minority?" In other words, how should one deal with one's relationship with others? Given that an other means someone different from you, what should you do when you confront with other? It is the meaning of ethics in the novel. Here is the dilemma: either we disconnect culture with nature to build ethics, as what Huxley did, or we follow the rule of nature, "survival for the fittest," so for the most parts ethics does not exist.

Under such circumstance, we need a new way to rethink the relation between ethics, culture and nature. It is time to see what Dung Kai-Chueng schizo-natural writing can offer us.

### **Ethics as a form of coding**

Maybe it is time for us to look back at what we have discussed. There are two laws right now: the law of nature and law of culture. What a social ecology hopes to emphasise is, fundamentally, the inseparability of the two. There is a naive romanticism which adores the law of nature while ranks the law of culture second. However, Darwinism rejected such a naive idea of nature. Then, there are two conflicting ideologies, represented by Huxley and

Spencer respectively. The former cuts the connection between the two, though Huxley pointed out a transition between the two. The later substitutes the law of culture by the law of nature. Neither one seems promising. However, before we continue our journey, we may first need to re-theorise what is meant by "law" under this circumstance.

Since this thesis is based on Deleuze and Guattari's theory, one may immediately suggest that a social ecology means a rhizomatic society. "Everything connects with everything," one may say. However, it may miss a crucial point. While Deleuze and Guattari reject a seemingly pre-existing Oedipus Complex and focus on the formation of such a complex, they also reject a pre-existing society. Therefore, they do not focus on the exchange in the society but the coding, the inscription allowing or channelling the exchange.

We see no reason in fact for accepting the postulate that underlines exchangeist notions of society; society is not first of all a milieu for exchange where the essential would be to circulate or to cause to circulate, but rather a *socius* of inscription where the essential thing is to mark and to be marked (AO, p.142).

Here is the difference between the society and *the socius*: "the society" can be regarded as an organisation in which people exchange with each other while the *socius* is the way to organise which offers people their positions in the field respectively, which is the coding. For example, if the society is a financial market, which allows people exchange stocks, then the *socius* would be the regulation of that market, which determined roles of people and respective right and obligations. The connection is important, whereas coding is the core.

What is meant by law and why does it is so crucial in the discussion of social ecology? According to Deleuze and Guattari, laws can be regarded as the coding, as it "marks" the organising process of a society. The problem of law is the problem of *socius*.

But seriously is there a *law* of nature? To clarify, in Deleuze's terminology, a law of nature, understood in a conventional way, may not exist. In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze distinguished morality and ethics that,

Ethics, which is to say, a typology of immanent modes of existence, replaces Morality, which always refers existence to transcendent values. [...] Morality is the judgment of God, the system of Judgment. But Ethics overthrows the system of judgement. The opposition of values (Good-Evil) is supplanted by the qualitative difference of modes of existence (good-bad). (Spinoza, p.23)

Ethics, as an immanent mode of existence, implies that whether one thing is good or bad does not relate to a transcendental law. Instead, it depends on the bodies interacting in itself. In other words, the ethics are always about *encounters*. Furthermore, Deleuze explained why we should opt for ethics, instead of morality, to understand Spinoza's nature philosophy,

The illusion of values is indistinguishable from the illusion of consciousness. Because it is content to wait for and take in effects, consciousness misapprehends all of Nature. "The application of the word 'law' to natural things seems to be metaphorical, and the ordinary meaning of law is simply a command..." As Nietzsche says concerning chemistry, i.e., the science of antidotes and poisons, one must be wary of the word law, which has a moral aftertaste (Spinoza, P.23).

Whether a drug is an antidote or a poison depends on who takes it. It is the encounter determining any ethical decision. If the naive romanticism, Huxley's evolution and ethics and social Darwinism had made a common mistake, it is that they assumed a transcendental law of nature, which "has a moral aftertaste" but ignores the detail of the encounter.

Ethics, concerning the *soucis*, that is, the intersubjective immanent coding leads us to a way to think of the problem of encountering. From now on, here we can see the real purpose of this chapter: given that the de-dichotomisation of nature and culture leads to a de-dichotomisation of natural law and social law, what should I do when I encounter with an other? What is a geo-ethics, if any? The answer, as we can see in Dung Kai-cheung's schizo-natural writing, is to be *schizo-natural*.

### **The Strange Pairs: Ar-chi and Chung**

What is meant by being schizo-natural in social ecology? The developments of two characters in OS exemplify the case well.

If OS, as implied by its title *the age of apprenticeship*, is a Bildungsroman, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, as the archetype of the European Bildungsroman, certainly influenced Dung Kai-cheung profoundly, no matter in what sense. In the novel, Dung Kai-cheung mainly focused on the Bildung of the two female characters, Ah-Chi and Chung. The significance of Goethe's work, as Moretti (1987) pointed out, transformed the meaning of youth from a "pre-scribed" one to an "uncertain exploration" one,

Already in Meister's case, 'apprenticeship' is no longer the slow and predictable progress towards one's father's work, but rather an uncertain exploration of social space, which the nineteenth century - through travel and adventure, wandering and getting lost, 'Bohême' and 'parvenir' - will underline countless times (p.4).

We can see in the novel that Ah-chi (as Bui-bui) and Chung met each other unexpectedly. They coincidentally lived together, read together and starred on the same stage, though they were totally different. Ah-chi was a gentle and quiet teenage girl having just graduated from the university and started working in her mother's store. Chung, almost in a

contrast, suffered from gender dysphoria that she was biologically a male but mentally a female (see OS, p.80). Throughout the whole story, Chung tried hard to learn how to become a woman. As Ah-chi said,

none of the words indicating human relationship could tell the relationship between Chung and me. Friends, confidants, sisters, buddies, comrades, lovers, damon and pythias and so on. None of them can signify. What I can say is that it is a relationship surpassing words and concepts and linking bodily. I did not say, there is a “body relationship” in a narrow sense between her and me. No, what I said is that it is a relationship that can be built and known only through bodies (OS, p. 64).

It is at the beginning of the novel, regarding the timeline. It may not be exaggerated to say that the story indeed started from their encounter.

In the later part of the novel, Ar-chi and Chung starred in the same drama, as two main characters, Bui-bui and Not Apple. One may notice that the names of these two characters repeatedly appear in Dung's writing. In the novel, the title of the drama they played was "P.E. Time" (體育時代), which is similar to Dung's another novel, "P.E. Period" (體育時期). The two stories are similar in many respects, including plots and characters setting and the most significant one is that both of them evolved around two girls. Hence we can see a repetition between these three stories, Ar-chi and Chung in OS, Bui-bui and Not Apple in the drama, and another Bui-bui and Not Apple in the novel. Dung Kai-cheung even wrote clear his idea in OS, and there is a scene that Chung was singing and T, the director of the drama, said, "Bui-bui and Not Apple are here now! P.E. Time can be replayed finally!" It ended with a sentence, "life, unexpectedly, replays endlessly" (OS, p.166). However, for each repetition, the story differentiated. Something new happens, in a bodily way.

For example, we can see plots of abortion in all stories. In both "P.E. Time" and "P.E. Period", it was Not Apple who aborted whereas, in OS, the one who had the abortion was Ar-chi. Here, we can see a reversal in plots. Not only did the actor change, but also the willingness was reversed too. Not Apple willed to do so while Ar-chi's abortion was induced by the shocking made by the death of Ah Kok. Similar cases can be found somewhere else too. In the drama, Not Apple had sex with Bui-bui's boyfriend, while in OS Chung also had sex with Ar-chi's boyfriend, Ah-zi. However, in OS, due to the background of Chung, we can say that it is a move for Chung to learn to become a woman,

That is the only proof that I can be a woman [...] I [Chung] suddenly remembered that I had seen Ar-zi and you in a similar position. At that time, I envied you, for you, as a complete woman, being able to do such thing with Ar-zi. Now, as an incomplete woman, I did so with him as well and, inversely, you witnessed it. Everything seems to be a cycle. I suddenly experienced you, your joyfulness, and your painfulness (OS, p.626).

It does not only mean the ability to have sex with a man but also the ability to love, which equalises the capability to bear, as implied in OS.

The difference between OS, the drama and the novel implies that one cannot understand the two-girl setting as an archetypical plot. Instead, I suggest, Dung Kai-cheung made trails for two girls to encounter with each other. He amended the initial setting to see what will happen between the two. Alternatively, even let those stories encounter, as Ar-chi said, "living and acting, without my witness, merge with each other (OS, p.630)". The mechanism for Dung to start his writing machine is nothing other than *split*, a differentiation. In the novel, this mechanism was explained through Ōe's works, "[r]eading *Farewell, My Books!* gave me a strong feeling: why is this guy always writing himself? [...] And he did

witness this persistence, even resist to it, attack this ego by all means, and try to destroy and destruct it. He named such a self-splitting as a 'strange pair' [...] making a confrontation between the two" (OS, p.637-638). Dung's character setting may follow this thought. Ah-chi even directly said, "Ah-zi and Ah Kok, Chung and I, aren't we strange pairs too?" (OS, p.644-645).

However, Dung's mechanism, which referred to  $\bar{O}e$ 's, differed from it as well. Ah-chi, as the narrator, pointed out a characteristic of the strange pairs in  $\bar{O}e$  that the death of a partner is necessary for the mechanism of the strange pairs (OS, p.645). She, nonetheless, questioned if it is a desirable approach,

[To] *make use of* and then *execute* or *sacrifice* one of the two, to what kind of logic does it accord? Is it a way to save the self of the creator? Is it a way resembling exorcism that one attaches one's evil to an anti-self or a mask to remove it? Fine, if so, there are no other ways. Yet, removing one part of a self, will another one part be better then? Can a more completed self-grow in the wound? (OS, p.645)

From the above quote, we can see Ah-chi, as Dung's character, one of the players in strange pairs, is critical to such an approach. It may not be ethical to kill one only for another's survival. The destiny between her and Chung, as a matter of fact, does not follow the above mechanism as well. It is through this difference we can see Dung revealing his schizo-natural ethics. Instead of sacrificing one of the two, both of them behaved in another way, in a schizo-naturally ethical way, which allows the transgression and inclusiveness in a socius.

### **Transgression and Inclusiveness**

What is Dung Kai-cheung's aim? One, with one's impatience, may ask, aren't we talking about ethics? Why does it become a story between the two girls? Where does the

schizo-natural ethics go? Their circumstance has already pointed out what is schizo-natural ethics.

The character setting of Ar-chi and Chung are crucial because it has already indicated the two principles of a schizo-natural ethics: inclusiveness and transversity. These are the names of the wooden sculptures Jesus gave Ar-chi and Chung, "有容乃大" for Ar-chi and "知雄守雌" for Chung. "有容乃大" is a phrase meaning that one becomes great because it is inclusive. It described the characteristic of Ar-chi concisely. We can observe it from a discussion. In the novel, there is a scene that all members of the reading group went to having desserts. After reading *Tian Yan Lun*, they started arguing what the origin of human being is. Chung proposed that it may sex. Only human beings have sex for sex's sake. Then, Ar-chi's answer is interesting that

I remembered what I said when Ar-zi and I were having sex on the day he came back from mainland China. At that time, I am deeply convinced that what we have is not sex only, but that which is slightly more than sex. As if explaining for something with anxiety, I said that, perhaps what I said was not more fundamental or more original to sex, but I thought it was more important. I thought that the origin of human beings was love! Let me assume as such: In the ancient time, the simians, though having a certain degree of intelligence or sense of community or sense of time, did not know how to love. A simian as such is just a species but not a human. [...] But one day, a female simian and a male simian, aside from the need to survive and breed, felt like attached to each other. And this feeling was even stronger than all other factors to an extent that they would sacrifice themselves for the counterpart (OS, p.504).

Sex for sure is significant in the discussion. In terms of natural production, sex is one of the most significant mechanisms to sustain the production among living things. It is "the

production line of species” in “the natural factory”. Still, as of how Chung said why she envied Ar-chi, sex for Ar-chi means neither breeding, nor pleasure, but a sense of *inclusiveness*. It is all about *bearing*, bearing the other. It is *love* as well, “[according to Hannah Arendt,] love is the greatest power thriving toward forgiveness. That is because what love reveals is *who* a person is instead of *what* did a person do, which means action, a thing within the realm of politics, a world people co-habituate. That is to say, love is a-politics, a-worldliness. The world and every mediatory between human beings are completely annihilated in love. There is no obstacle and space between human beings in love” (OS, p. 580).

In OS, as a Bildungsroman, which is a literary genres aiming at an uncertain exploration of social space according to Moretti (1987), the mission for Ar-chi’s exploration is to learn to bear the weight of an other. In the novel, Ar-chi is an inclusive, open subject from bodily to mentally. This origin of human beings involves two people. In other words, the being of a human is always intersubjective. For inclusiveness as one of the principles of a schizo-natural ethic, it means that during an encounter, an ethical scenario, one has to first include an other within oneself.

It is at this point that we know the reason why one has to be subjectively a schizo as I presented in chapter one. One is like Pessoa, a Pessoaic subject. Consequently, *the intersubjective and intra-subjective becomes one and the same thing*. While, as we discussed in the introduction, the schizo = the natural, the schizo = the social now.

The importance to be inclusive also explained the reason why Ar-chi became a professional actress later. As I have said, OS is consisted of twelves retrospective letters Ar-chi sent to Dark. In those retrospective narrations, we can see that Ar-chi, at the moment of her writing, became an actress and was preparing for her next act, *the History of the Adventure of Vivi and Vera*, the first volume of the trilogy. That Ar-chi is an actress echoes

with Pessoa's famous saying, "I'm the empty stage where various actors act out various plays". While those various actors play, Ar-chi becomes others.

Becoming others is at the same time a transversity of an original self. It is the reason why Chung's transgression is one of the principles of schizo-natural ethics. Transgression does not precisely translate the meaning of "知雄守雌". It is a phrase from *Tao Te Ching* by Lao-zi that literally means "knowing the masculinity and holding the femininity". This sentence precisely described Chung's situation, a female identity inside a male body. Under such circumstance, Chung neither denied her gender identity nor rejected her physical body. Rather, she chose to be nomadic between the two. While Ar-chi was an actress, Chung was a singer in the story. Rather than being stereotyped as a female singer, she can sing songs for both genders, "more manly than a man! [...] And yet remains more womanly than a woman [...] she is a miracle" (OS, p.335).

Here is the mechanism for schizo-natural ethics: one, due to one's inclusiveness, can accept others to enter oneself; Then, the other one can transverse between the self and the other, or the self and the other may combine. Maybe it is time to introduce the concept of *becoming* properly for further develop schizo-natural ethics.

The concept of becoming may have different meanings throughout Deleuze and Guattari's work. Nevertheless, the one I would like to adopt, to be specific, is the one in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In the introduction, there is a famous example of the inter-becomings of a wasp and an orchid,

The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome. [...] something else entirely is going on: not imitation at all but a capture of code,

surplus value of code, an increase in valence, a veritable becoming, a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp. Each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities pushing the deterritorialization ever further. There is neither imitation nor resemblance, only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying (ATP, p.9-10).

Becoming does not lead to homogeneity as Deleuze and Guattari clearly stated. It is a capture of code, instead of coding or being coded one another. Generally speaking, the code they mention is closely related to bio-material like DNA. However, in the realm of literary criticism, perhaps we can regard a code as a component the author assembled to be a character. A character is like a program in the sense that he/she, inserted different *procedure*<sup>4</sup> (in the form of coding), generates the different results. To specify, I want to focus the discussion on the foetus in Dung's writing. Ar-chi and Not Apple are respectively pregnant in OS and *the P.E. Period*. And both of them experienced miscarriages. Foetus, as a quasi-object opening a new situation, can be a code implemented into the character. It is Dung Kai-cheung's experiment. That Ar-chi experienced a miscarriage as what Not Apple did in the drama does not mean that she was as same as Not Apple.

Comparing with the inter-becoming between a wasp and an orchid, the case presented in the novel is even more tricky. For Deleuze and Guattari's becoming, it is an encounter

---

<sup>4</sup> In programming, a program may have a variety of procedure. Procedures are the coding can repeatedly be retrieved when the program is operating. In this sense, both programs and produces are fundamentally sets of coding.

between two things. However, in OS we can see there is a quadruple becoming, namely Ar-chi and Chung in mainline and Bui-bui and Not Apple in the drama as shown.<sup>5</sup>

Mainline story	Ar-chi	⇌	Chung
	⇕		⇕
Drama	Bui-bui	⇌	Not Apple

The code Ar-chi captured is not merely from Not Apple. It is through a more complicated route. She captured it from Not Apple through capturing codes from Bui-bui. What we are talking about is a quadruple dynamic. Let us discuss layer-by-layer. To begin with, let us consider the Drama part. As described in the novel, the encounter between Bui-bui and Not Apple formed a struggle,

Bui-bui and Not Apple were two representatives of *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa*. [...] Instead of regarding them as two characters to analyse their characteristics, we might regard them as two life forces. The one Bui-bui presented was repetitive self-reflexion and confession while that which Not Apple presented was ceaseless action[...] She felt that she was living only when she was acting. [...] Not Apple's miscarriage was a miscarriage of her actions. [...] She needed a person who could release her from such a life-denying nightmare. Thus, Bui-bui played such a role, as a confessor and releaser (OS, p. 570).

While we can see Not Apple being a trouble-maker due to her ceaseless actions, Bui-bui had her own problem as well: she witnessed a sexual assault on her friend, but she did not help her. Therefore, she, with her guilty, felt like an accomplice, "Strangely, she, the

---

<sup>5</sup> For the sake of simplicity, the original novel *P.E. Time* is not discussed here.

confessor, could not confess herself. She could not confess herself with her crime of thought within her self-reflexion [...] she needed to take action, to be an actor." (OS, p. 570).

After this discussion, there came a scene in which Ar-chi and Ah-zi had sex and Ar-chi got pregnant. "There was a moment I suddenly felt that it might be a pregnancy" (OS, p. 585). It kicked off the procedure which Ar-chi, as Bui-bui becomes Not Apple. "There is neither imitation nor resemblance" (ATP, p.9-10); For Not Apple, the foetus, as a code, meant the consequence she needed to bear due to her reckless actions. For Ar-chi, the same code, in turn, meant Ar-chi's inclusiveness and, as Chung said, femininity.

"[There is] only an exploding of two heterogeneous series on the line of flight composed by a common rhizome that can no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying" (ATP, p.9-10). Unlike the case in Ōe's strange pairs as discussed in OS, the explosion does not only take place solely in Ar-chi's side but in Chung as well. In the mainline story, the role Chung played was in contrast the witness. Due to her bodily limitation, she cannot get pregnant, "[inserting a badminton racket into my vaginal], I could not imagine this action. [...] That feeling which did not relate to desire but an utter invasion into my body" (OS, p.571). A humiliation as such, as Chung described, is unattainable for Chung, "my humiliation is not the humiliation of a woman, but the humiliation of not being able to be a woman though I desire" (OS, p.571). She had to witness Ar-chi's pregnancy and miscarriage. She could not take action — it's her turn to be *vita contemplativa*. However, Chung then turned the contemplative witness into positive power. Before the encounter, she was struggling if she should have a sex reassignment surgery, which could turn herself into, biologically speaking, a woman. Witnessing Ar-chi's miscarriage, Chung said, "when you told me you had Ah-zi's child, I felt unwell in my heart. I was thinking, that is why I can never win over a real woman" (OS, p.692-693). Then, she finally gave up to become "a real woman". In front of her audience in the pub, she publicly announced that she was a man

biologically. The audience was well accepted and encouraged her. Then she said, "anyway, it was a blessing that a person like me could stand right here right now, no matter how small it was, and have your appreciation and your love" (OS, p.705). She finally accepted herself as such, as a transversal subject. She held on both sides and transversed between them. She affirmed herself.

Both Ar-chi as Bui-bui and Chung as Not Apple captured the codes from their counterparts, and deterritorialised and reterritorialised themselves. When we talk about rhizome, we are talking not only that the interconnectedness of everything but also this dynamic. "The interaction between Bui-bui and Not Apple cannot be explained through characteristics or mental motivation" (OS, p.570). Why? That is because it assumed each being is an intact self. That means there are inner characteristics or mentalities for them, with which other people cannot interfere. However, it is not the case. Instead, Bui-bui and Not Apple are two living forces, in the form of intensity, crushing with each other, reaching out of oneself.

Their intensities were so far-reaching that affect Mo-dau's (魔豆) paintings. At the very end of the novel, Mo-dau, an artist, asked if Ar-chi and Chung could be her models. In the possessive drawing process, both of them had to present simultaneously because "there is mutual sensation between the two" (OS, p.706). Next, Mo-dau finished two portraits, "[Chung and I] looked at our images in the portraits, looking like ourselves while at the same time looking like others" (OS, p.707). I can be myself and the other at the same time while the other simultaneously can be himself/herself and me. This above sentence may be the best illustration for schizo-natural ethics: inclusiveness and transversality.

**Conclusion: the lost and found of worldliness**

The above case is just an example. The pub in the story was named as *Paixões Diagonais*, which means Diagonal Passions in English. It can be said to an illustration of the interaction among those characters in the pub. Passions, as a form of intensities, go diagonally, "Chung and I as a pair, Ah-zi and Ah-kok as a pair, Wawa and bald-headed as a pair, Zit-dou and Chau-kit as a pair, Ah-lik and Alumnae as a pair....." (OS, p.561). These pairs, as a matter of fact, were places where inter-becomings took place.

Basing on the concept of becoming, the schizo-natural ethic can concurrently maintain the singularity of a subject and the community. Deleuze and Guattari put it well that there is "only an exploding of *two heterogeneous series* on the line of flight *composed by a common rhizome* that can *no longer be attributed to or subjugated by anything signifying*" (ATP, p.9-10, emphases added). Ar-Chi and Chung, connected through passions and sharing a common rhizome, are two heterogeneous singular series, while neither one nor another is subjugated to another or a transcendental commonality. It is by through this way that the schizo-natural ethics can solve the renowned dilemma between singularity and communality.

What is the point to introduce the social ecology in schizo-natural writing? Dung Kai-cheung stated clearly that through his writing, he wants to deal with the problem of "worldlessness". He did it rightly through refabricating the social ecology as I analysed. It is the meaning of social ecology in his schizo-natural writing. In his another book, *Writing in the World, Writing for the World (WW)*, he quoted Arendt, "modern people [...] lost the sense of belonging that human beings are together living on Earth" (p. 231). The reasons behind are that, on the one hand, the great advancement in science and technology provided human possibilities to get rid of the Earth and, on the other hand, there are mental ruptures among people. Dung Kai-cheung further criticised that "it is a world constructed by a worldview without a world that lacks a sense of communality. In other words, it is a paralysed,

disintegrated world without possibilities. Perhaps it is what is called as nothingness" (WW, p.231).

To deal with the worldlessness, Dung Kai-cheung hoped to find a way to re-world the world while at the same time avoid triggering a dictatorship. Schizo-natural ethic is a way Dung Kai-cheung examined for worlding a world, which builds communality without falling into a fascist society, in which everyone is coded and is subjugated to a so-called unification. Perhaps we can call the community built schizo-naturally as a differential community. It is a community with differences, characterised by an inclusiveness-transversality. "At this moment it is the birth of 'love', that is, the birth of 'human'" (WW, p.225). In AO, Deleuze and Guattari have already proposed that the schizo as *Homo natura* and *Homo historia* (AO, p.21). In Dung Kai-cheung's work, the schizo is furthermore *Homo amāre*. Here, love is a verb, sharing the mechanism of becoming, being a continuous movement. As Nancy (1993) put it well, "love, provided it is not itself conceived on the basis of the politico-subjective model of communion in one, exposes the unworking and therefore the incessant incompleteness of community. It exposes community as its limit" (P.38). Under such circumstance, "the lovers are shared, their singular beings — which constitute neither an identity nor an individual, which effect nothing — share each other, and the singularity of their love is exposed to community" (Nancy, 1993, p.39). There are no overwhelming codes. But one captures codes from an other, who in turn captures codes from another.....

Perhaps Dung Kai-cheung has already written his statement clearly for such a schizo-natural community, "We are a multitude. Are we singular and more than singular? We are the worlds" (WW, p.232). Yet, I want to specify the meaning of "we". It is commonly regarded that those included in "we" are human beings. However, if it is the case, is not Dung Kai-cheung repeating the fault made by those anthropocentric nature writing? For schizo-natural writing, we must not ignore the word "natural". For the production of nature, "we", the

worlds, should include non-human beings. As the opening quote stated, there, the place we walk into, is “a vivid resonance in the living machine”, “a huge, undulating hum” of non-human. The establishment of the social ecology is far from attaining this aim. It is why we need to turn to the next chapter: the environment ecology.

## Chapter 3 Environmental Ecology

Not an everyday object or a familiar machine or something that yields immediate pleasure or solutions: a lathe is cold, hard, more unpoetic than everyday objects, more unqualified for art and literature than what it produces. It is just a tool (VV, p. 104).

Have you ever seen a lathe? Do you know what it is? Ordinary people may be unfamiliar with a lathe. Still, Dung Kai Cheung spends a chapter in *the History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera* to write about it. My question is merely that, why is there a lathe? In the last part of the previous chapter, I suggested that the notion of “we” in Dung Kai-cheung’s schizo-natural writing may not simply denote human beings. In this chapter, I propose that through the analysis of the role of the lathe in the novel, the above notion can be justified and the mechanism of the environmental ecology can be found. I would first connect the objects in the trilogy with the concept of productivity. Showing the agency of objects, I would continue with the analysis of the relation between humans and objects in the trilogy. At the end of the chapter, gathering the arguments found in the novels, I would conclude with Dung Kai-cheung’s idea of ethics toward nature-culture.

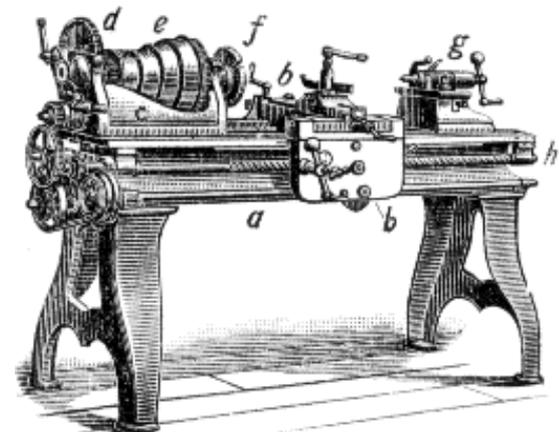


Figure 1 A Lathe

By G & C Miriam Co. Springfield, MA. [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

### Lathe and Productivity

Why is there a lathe? Some pieces of research have also asked the same question. Hee (2013) focuses on the first volume of Dung’s trilogy *the History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera* and proposes a framework “Fetishism, commodity fetishism and Gewu” (拜物、戀物與格物) to analyse the roles the objects played in the novel. When it comes to the lathe, he contextualises the lathe as a sign representing the

industrialisation of the People's Republic of China, as known as the Great Leap period. He claimed that the lathe is the starting point for Dung Kai Cheung to return to real Chinese history:

with the help of the things of labours, like father's lathe and mother's sewing machine, [the author] reconstitutes the economic relation of the social production at that time, so as to connect their youth memories with this kind of economic relation [...] the author obviously intends to go back to the history through writing – the fundamental relationship between human and thing, for a better and clearer understanding of the previous generation (p.41).

On the one hand, Hee contextualizes the lathe. On the other hand, he also borrows Hei Chu's (朱禧) concept of "Gewu Zhizhi" (格物致知), which means that "if there is an object, there will be knowledge. To study is to exhaust the knowledge" (Hee, 2013, p.39). Nevertheless, he does not realise that these two approaches contradict each other, at least in his analysis. His contextualization reduces the lathe to a mere symbol. Consequently, the knowledge carried by the lathe, the speciality of the lathe and the materiality of the lathe, disappear. In other words, he quotes but fails to make use of Chu's concept.

While Hee is too rapid to connect the lathe with the historical context, he cannot understand its speciality. Hee (2013) writes, "in 1957, factories in Hong Kong for the first time adopted machines made in China. In the next year, there were at least 3500 types of those machines flowed into Hong Kong, including lathes and radios" (p. 40). According to his statement that the lathe is just a symbol of the industrialisation of China, there should not be any difference no matter Dung Kai Cheung to start his writing through either the lathe or the radio. Even if the name of the chapter changes into "the radio", the content should remain unchanged. However, the fact is that, in VV, the lathe is irreplaceable.

## The function of a lathe: symmetry-breaking

It was originally just a piece of material. Metal, stainless steel, cylindrical, one inch long and 1/3 inch in diameter. Rough, uncut. Indistinguishable, faceless, useless like a piece of mud before creation. It was less than that: non-being, the initial state. [...] It is the process from nothing to something, the Genesis of Everything (VV, pp. 97-98)<sup>6</sup>.

At the beginning of the chapter, Dung describes how an unidentifiable material is processed to be a screw on a lathe and calls the process as “the Genesis of Everything”. It is the process from nothing to something. “Something” means there are some things to which can be pointed. However, “nothing” does not simply refer to “none”. As the process goes on, nothing generates something. Therefore, “nothing” actually means “not-yet-born”. The “beginning of nothing” is not none because it contains multiple possibilities. Before being processed in the lathe, it can be a screw, a screwdriver, or even another lathe, if it is large enough. The lathe becomes the producer and the product at the same time. The production is not an increase, but it is a cutting – cutting off the possibilities-not-actualized. This kind of Genesis echoes with the concept of “symmetry breaking” in physics.

In *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, Delanda (2002) merges modern science theory with Deleuze’s ontology. To explain the concept of morphogenesis in Deleuze’s theory, he cited a term from physics, “symmetry breaking”. Delanda (2002) defines symmetry as that “degree of symmetry is measured by the number of transformations in a group that leave a property invariant” (p.18). For example, a ball is more symmetrical than a cube because no matter how you rotate the ball, the appearance of the ball always remains unchanged, while the cube only keeps its appearance in certain angles (e.g. every 90° along

---

<sup>6</sup> The translation has been adjusted to facilitate the discussion. The last sentence in the English version is “The holy inception of a thing”. Still, it may not state clearly the original meaning in Chinese, “那就是從無到有的創造。天工開物。” (p. 84).

axis X). Symmetry breaking means the process that the symmetry of a thing is broken because of alteration. From this perspective, the “indistinguishable object” is indistinguishable because it has the highest degree of symmetry. No matter how you see it, it is still the same as before. To turn it into something is to break its symmetry. As Dung Kai Cheung then writes, “the object held in the rapidly rotating chuck seemed to have become a whirling mass of silvery vapors [...] The silvery whirlwind slowed to a stop and became a solid cylindrical object, carved with a helical thread” (VV, pp.97-98). This quote describes the process how the unidentifiable object consumes its potentiality, that is symmetry breaking, to become a screw. In other words, it is *the actualisation of the screw*. Therefore, the lathe can be regarded as a machine that *things* a thing, breaks the symmetry of things and cuts off those possibilities not actualised.

Now, we can understand the role the lathe plays in Dung Kai Cheung’s novel, apart from the grand historical context. The lathe is productivity.

### **Histories as production**

I am not saying that the grand historical context can be neglected. Otherwise, we will repeat the fallacy of formalism. While it is necessary to understand how the lathe functions in order to understand its role in the novel, the social-historical context around it should not be ignored. In fact, history and the productivity of the lathe cannot be regarded as two distinct, unrelated things. I suggest that in the *Histories of Nature* history and literature are re-intervened in another way — literature and history become the condition and the product of each other.

History, or histories, is a crucial element in the *Histories of Nature* definitely. However, what kind of “history” does it mean? Researchers or critics of the trilogy, more or less, can be divided into two by two different perspectives towards “history”. On the one hand, some of them hold that there is a grand history belonging to the whole generation, like

Hee (2013). On the other hand, there is an understanding of history as a private, personal historical experience, like Chau (2011), who adopts Baudrillard's concept of "singular object" to study the objects in Dung Kai Cheung's novel. However different they may seem to be, both approaches tend to understand writing as a recovery of *the history*. It implies that there is *the history* covered by some kinds of "curtain" and to write is to dis-cover it.

Nevertheless, this approach immediately meets an obstacle: it cannot explain why Dung Kai Cheung devotes a half of the novel to write a story in the "character world". As the author names it, the first volume of the trilogy is a biphonic novel, meaning that there are two stories intertwine with each other, 1) the Genesis of Everything, about the familial history, 2) the Realness of Vividness, about a story in the "character world". There are some possibilities for the first one to be a real story. But almost certainly, the second one is a fictional story. Therefore, those who hold a grand historical view cannot explain why there is a fictional part. Chau (2011), holding a private historical view, proposes that that part is a redemption so "I" in the fiction can be brave to "face to the irreversible regret", for example missing a girl in "my" lifespan (Chau, 2011, p.128). This interpretation, however, implies that the fictional part aims at supplementing the part of familial history and to justify the "reality". Vivi's story becomes only a mirror for people to reflect on the real living experience. The focus still falls on the familial history. However, it is questionable to ask whether it is still a biphonic novel if one part is subordinate to another.

Both approaches have their shortcomings. In order to comprehend Dung Kai Cheung's writing objective, we have to re-examine our concept of "history".

During the writing of the trilogy, Dung Kai Cheung (2007) published an essay titled "A Prologue, or Epilogue, of Time". He explained his multiple-worldview through Feynman's path integral formulation,

a proton arrives its destination by all possible paths [...] It is not a necessary and absolute measurable path, but is the most possible path under a particular circumstance. The formulation of the possibility invented by Feynman is named as ‘sum over histories’ [...] In the real time, we can only experience one single history. Only in the imaginative time, we are able to see all possible histories (2007, pp. 122–123).

It points out that time should be regarded as a multiplicity, that is *histories*.

Considering the coincidence of the dates of writing of this essay and the trilogy, we can say that both pieces of work share the similar understanding of time and histories. For Dung Kai Cheung, there does not exist a “History” that represents a necessary and absolute path. Preferably, it is histories that Dung Kai Cheung hopes to explore.

It means that both the two views on Dung Kai Cheung’s concept of history made a wrong assumption that there is a History waiting for people to write or discover. In the contrast, I would like to suggest that histories are the products of writing. Then the function of VV can be justified that writing fictional stories is a way to create, or explore, histories other than the actualized one. This argument may sound similar to how new historicism understands “history”, that history is the product of various discourse. Dung Kai Cheung does not only want to challenge the discursively constructed history, but also to produce other histories. It is Deleuze who understands the force of writing as profound as Dung Kai-cheung. In *Essays Critical and Clinical*, he directly asserted the meaning of writing,

To write is certainly not to impose a form (of expression) on the matter of lived experience. [...] Writing is a question of becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed, and goes beyond the matter of any livable or lived experience. It is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived (Deleuze, 1998, p. 1).

Is not “the other histories” a synonym of “the livable”? What Hee did was to reduce literature to lived experience while it is necessary to clarify the productivity of Dung Kai-cheung’s writing. But so far, I have no intention to describe how Dung Kai Cheung fabricates his spatiotemporal ecology in detail. I will continue the discussion in the next chapter. What I am trying to do is to clarify the meaning of context in Dung Kai Cheung’s trilogy. It is time for us to continue the analysis of the role of machines play in the fiction.

It has been a long time for the human being to be recognized as *Homo faber*, characterised by his/her ability to make tools. From this naming, we can somehow notice that human beings take the active role. It is human beings who make and use the tools. Under this circumstance, comparing with the primacy of human beings, tools are secondary. However, in Dung Kai-cheung’s writings, we can see other depiction of the role of tools, or objects. As Chau (2011) mentioned, Dung Kai-cheung has investigated the relationship between objects and human beings in his previous writing (p. 241). For example, in *The Catalog*, the author uses trendy objects like Red Wing, ICQ, bucket hats and so on to propose the concept of “private use of objects” (物品的私人用法). It connects ordinary objects with the personal experience. It is one of the cases how Dung Kai Cheung wrote about things. Nevertheless, in the trilogy, Dung Kai-cheung thinks about and writes about objects in a more profound way – – Dung Kai Cheung starts manifesting the agency of objects, that is how objects differentiate the traces of our lives. Next, I would like to explain it by an example of the sewing machine.

### **Females and the Sewing Machine**

In VV, there is a chapter titled as “sewing machine”, which mainly focuses on the stories of three females. Undeniably, the sewing machine is a symbolic machine in Hong Kong history. In the industrial age, Hong Kong has been famous for its light industry, including clothing industry. At that time, many women took orders from factories and

worked at home. Therefore, they were able to make a living and take care of their children at the same time.

Still, as Chau (2011) analysed, Dung Kai-cheung narrates the above background information by some negative words like “show off”, “nostalgic”, “a textbook-like tone, which paralyses one’s nerve”, which shows that Dung Kai-cheung attempts to avoid a grand historical approach. Therefore, Chau (2011) argues that Dung Kai-cheung’s focus is on personal experience of the object (p.255). To some extent, I agree with him, but Chau does not pay enough attention to the object. He successfully articulated people with objects. But how does the object modify people’s lives? It is the question that Chau does not cover, and I want to answer by an analysis to the chapter “Sewing Machine”.

More specifically, I would like to focus on a character named Little Ring. She was one of the daughters of the landlady Ms Hui, from whom Dung’s family rented a room when the narrator was 5 years old. She was a teenage girl but interestingly she did not need to go to school. She mainly stayed at home and went out at night. Consequently, Little Ring was always with the narrator in the daytime and talked to him. Dung Kai-cheung wrote, “I can imagine that she told this 5-year-old boy that she did not want to be a factory girl, she wanted to be a fashion designer” (VV, p.156)<sup>7</sup>. Here we can see that Little Ring wanted to be different. It makes a high contrast with the previous depiction of the relation between women and the sewing machine, that is the sameness among the women who are sewing. Dung Kai-cheung quoted an advertisement in 19 Century,

---

<sup>7</sup> The translation has been modified. In the Chinese version, the narrator wrote in the first person perspective, while in English version it became the third person since p. 152. Therefore, in the Chinese version, Dung Kai-cheung wrote, “我可以想像” (I can imagine), while this sentence was deleted in English version. In the contrast, the English version asserted “I imagine” in other circumstances, for example, “I can imagine Ho Ah-chi, one afternoon, pulling out from the bottom of an old trunk...” (VV, p. 150), or “[n]ow I can only imagine what a warm and intimate experience it must have been...” (VV, p. 148).

Along every road pressed by the foot of civilised man this tireless ally of the world's great sisterhood is going upon its errand of helpfulness. Its cheering tune is understood no less by the sturdy German matron than by the slender Japanese maiden; it sings as intelligibly to the flaxen-haired Russian peasant girl as to the dark-eyed Mexican señorita [...] and thus, American machines, American brains, and American money are bringing the women of the whole world into one universal kinship and sisterhood (VV, pp. 146-147).

After the quotation, Dung Kai-cheung was amazed, "What a vision! In this surreal scenario, sitting at the countless Singer sewing machines were countless faceless women" (VV, p.147). Comparing this description with the description of Little Ring, it is obvious that the latter emphasises on the particularity of Little Ling. It also echoes with the concept of "the private use of objects". In the latter part of the story, Little Ring started building up her character with the help of the sewing machine: Little Ring sneaked into the room Dung's family for the sewing machine and,

Little Ring sat at the sewing machine, took a pair of scissors, cut the very short miniskirt even shorter, put it under the presser feet, stepped on the pedal and fed the miniskirt into the machine along the raw edge.

She was not very skilled with an armful of clothes, which she threw on the floor. It was as if she was struggling to tame a beast, wrestling, lunging, standing off, and sometimes getting bitten. (VV, p.157)

In the above passage, we can see that Little Ring is obviously struggling with the machine. Moreover, it is a very long struggle that Dung Kai-cheung packed almost a thousand word into a paragraph, which made a dense atmosphere. The description is not only a struggle between the machine and the girl. Given that the girl was tailor-making a skirt for

herself, that also means tailor-making her own appearance and style. It can also be regarded as a struggling for her subjectivity. On the one hand, human beings are Homo faber. They make use of tools. But it also implies that human beings need tools or machine to accomplish the task. Just like how the machine helps Little Ring sew her identity. As shown above, the process is not easy, “the girl experienced the humiliation and the pain of self-mutilation, and processed “the self-sewing of monsterness” (VV, p.137)<sup>8</sup>. Apart from the sewing machine, the camera, another machine and another chapter in VV, also led Dung Kai Cheung to write that, “I set out to learn to use a camera but ended up becoming its tool. My intention was distorted by its vehicle” (VV, p.432). It again shows the struggle between human beings and machine. Still, it is this difficulty that makes a distinction between Little Ring and the women depicted in the advertisement. To some degree, the sewing machine fabricated a history for women. It locked them at a particular position in the society, like, as a factory-lady. Alternatively, in the case of Ho Ar-chi, the mother of the narrator, due to a significant reduction in the size of the sewing machine, there evolved a small contracting system. Consequently, Ho Ar-chi was able to work at home. It is how an invention intervenes in humans’ lives. However, at the same time, based on the same material condition, that is, the same sewing machine, Little Ring made use of the machine in her way to sew her subjectivity. In short, the machine becomes the material condition for the construction of subjectivity.

### **The Struggle Between “Human-object” (人-物)**

The discussion of the struggle between the material condition and human beings can also be found in the Character World. In the Character World, there were many “characters”,

---

<sup>8</sup> The page number is marked according to the Chinese version because that paragraph was deleted in the English version.

which is “人物” in Chinese. Taking it literally, one will find that it is a combination of “human” (人) and “object” (物). Dung Kai-cheung constructed a world where some parts of the characters were substituted to be different kinds of objects. For example, there was a teacher whose right hand was a cane. In that world, there were several Character Laws. For example, “this is the second law for characters. A character is a character (人-物), neither a human nor a thing, neither a non-human nor a non-thing. In a character, the two cannot be separated.” (VV, p.86).

Nonetheless, my focus falls on the third law of the character, which is “characters each acquire a specific personality by virtue of their characteristics, and these characteristics act as constraints. This learning process is both necessary and painful, Learning itself is necessarily painful. At least, little can compare to the comfort of ignorance” (VV, pp.87-88). For example, in the story, there is a character named Yim-yim, whose hands were lipsticks. It is her characteristic. As a result, she was turned into a girl who loved making up. In other words, according to the law, the personality of a character is determined by his/her physical precondition. It tends to be an essentialistic thinking. It also echoes with the description of how the sewing machine conditioned female workers.

However, it does not mean that Dung Kai-cheung agrees with this thought. In the novel, another perspective was also proposed. There was another character named Not Apple (不是蘋果), which was related to a real Japanese female singer Shiina Ringo (椎名林檎) since Ringo means apple in Japanese. Under the same name, Dung Kai-cheung constructed several “Not Apple”s in different books. As I discussed in chapter 3, between those “Not Apple”s in different stories, there may be a certain degree of difference. Therefore, they should not be regarded as the same person. Instead, it will be more appropriate to treat them as different people with the same name. In VV, Not Apple was a friend of Vivi and, probably, one of the most important characters in the novel. As a character (人-物), her legs

were a pair of roller shoes. According to the Character Law, she probably becomes a roller skater. However, in the story, she brought Vivi to an underground live house. There were a lot of music players, whose characters were not supposed to be musicians. Not Apple told Vivi that

This is the underground world of Red Mushroom Street. We are all friends of art and music. We share the same beliefs. We don't want a fixed personality. We won't be deceived by the laws of characters. We believe we are free spirits who can shape our own personalities and do the things we like! (VV, p. 346).

Holding this belief, Not Apple learnt to play the guitar with her hands but not relied on her "characteristic". It showed that it is not necessary for characters to be defined by their characteristics, which contrasts with the Laws. However, it does not mean that Not Apple rejected her material condition. In the novel, characters were able to have surgery to change their characteristics in some extreme cases. Nevertheless, Not Apple did not do that. She kept her character but was not determined by it. How can it be? How can one make use of one's material condition but not being restricted by it?

One has to recognise that, the material condition itself does not imply any particular usage, or any meaning. Basing on the same material condition, one can perform differently. It is not the materiality constraining human beings but the set of laws. It is the Character Laws that constraining characters' development. The laws condition how characters behave externally. That is, those laws were not promulgated by any character in the world. The condition and the conditioned are situated at different planes. Therefore, the laws can be regarded as a set of transcendent laws.

How characters are related to this set of laws is similar to, in psychoanalysis, how desire is related to the Oedipus Complex. "[W]e relate [desire] to independent existences—

the father, the mother, the begetters—that do not yet comprise their elements as internal elements of desire” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 107). Moreover, the solution provided in the story echoes with how schizoanalysis works that

it’s anything you want it to be, so long as it works [...] it becomes a firm principle only if we have at our disposal *immanent criteria* capable of determining the legitimate uses, as opposed to the illegitimate ones that relate use instead to a hypothetical meaning and re-establish a kind of transcendence (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 109, original emphasis).

“It’s anything you want it to be”. Abolishing the transcendence, Not Apple can be anything she wants to be because, though being the conditioned, she and the condition are on the same plane, that is, immanent to each other. It sounds like an extreme liberalistic thought, “nothing is impossible”. However, the key is another half of the sentence, “so long as it works”. It implies that there are situations that it does not work. Given that the transcendence is abolished, the reason why those situations do not work should be immanent to the character. Consequently, I suggest that the obstacle is the material condition of the character. The material condition at once entails the cases that work and that do not work.

### **Actualizing the Virtual, instead of the Possible**

The materiality is conditions but not constraints. As Delanda (2002) explained, in Deleuze’s ontology, there is an essential ontological category named “virtuality”, which refers “to a real virtuality forming a vital component of the objective world” (p.21). In *The Actual and the Virtual*, Deleuze (1987) proposed that, “[p]urely actual objects do not exist. Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images” (p.148). The virtual, then, can be actualised through the specified process.

Back to the case of Not Apple, her actual hands are not purely actual. A cloud of virtual images is surrounding those hands. Furthermore, one of the images, which Not Apple has actualized, is a pair of hands playing the guitar. It shows the freedom of the character. It does not break the boundary laid by the set of laws. As Delanda (2002) pointed out, the virtual is not the same as the possible. He quoted Deleuze that, “[t]he possible and the virtual are [...] distinguished by the fact that one refers to the form of identity in the concept, whereas the other designates a pure multiplicity [...] which radically excludes the identical as a prior condition” (p.31). He further explained that the possible fundamentally does not alter the arrangement of singularities, which affect the trajectories of, for example, development. Though there may be some possible trajectories, a regularity can be observed among them, because they are still trapped in the basin of the singularities, the attractors (2002, p.27).

At this point, I have to clarify that “the possible” does not equal Dung Kai-cheung’s notion of “possible”. I suggest that the meaning of Dung Kai-cheung’s notion of “possible”, in fact, is closer to that of Deleuze’s notion of “virtual”. The importance to cite Delanda’s explanation of Deleuze, besides to provide a more accessible way to understand Deleuze’s concepts, is that he pushed Deleuze’s concept to concrete cases. In discussing the difference between “possible” and “virtual”, he raised the discussion of “parallel universe”,

When thinking about these parallel universes, both philosophers and physicists assume the existence of *fully formed individuals* populating the different possible worlds. This immediately raises a number of questions: Can the same individual exist, slightly altered, in other worlds? Can he or she maintain this identity across many worlds, after several slight alterations have accumulated? [...] It is here that essences, either general or particular, are introduced to define the identity of these individuals and to guarantee its preservation across worlds (Delanda, 2002, p. 30).

For “possible”, the various individuals share the same essence, which remains unchanged in the process. However, for “virtual”, “the alternative offered by Deleuze is [...] to always account for the genesis of individuals via *a specific individuation process*” (Delanda, 2002, p. 31, emphasis added). Here again, we meet the word “process”. It is obvious that there is an inextricable link between the notion of “virtual” and the concept of “process”. In looking for the virtual, we have to shift our focus from “individual” to the process of “individuation”. The process is the key.

The reason why Dung Kai-cheung’s notion of “possible” is similar to Deleuze’s notion of “virtual” can primarily be found in the title of the novel: From the title, *the Genesis of Everything*, we can clearly figure out that the Dung Kai-cheung’s emphasis is on the individuation process, just as I explained in the case of the lathe. Nevertheless, the Genesis in his writing does not rely on a transcendent God. By contrast, his genesis, as I repeatedly claim, is immanence, the condition is on the same plane as the conditioned.

The body of Not Apple is at the same time the conditioned and the condition of herself, without a transcendent law. Just as I stated above, the material condition at once entails the cases that work and that do not work. While she turned herself into a guitar player, she is actualising the virtual “surrounds” her actual body, which was eliminated by the set of Laws. It is the way how Not Apple practice her freedom based on the material condition.

There are many ways to face the material condition and Not Apple’s way is not the only way. To illustrate this point, I would like to cite another example in the novel. In the novel, Not Apple was not the only one who violates the set of laws. There was a Palace of Red Mushroom, where characters engaged in the sex industry. In the original setting, sex was not an issue to characters. They do not have any sexual organs. In order to serve in the sex industry, many characters undertook a surgery to transform their body parts. Here we can see two ways to cope with the material condition. For Not Apple, it is a way towards the virtual

whereas, for the characters in the Palace, it is a way towards the possible. The difference is that, though those characters altered their body parts, they were still determined by those parts. Jade, the manager in the Palace claimed,

We can remodel ourselves. Look at this girl! Her name is Mina. Originally she had a wok for a hand. She seemed destined to become either a cook or a housewife until she joined us and remodelled herself as a sex worker. All the girls here are unafraid to take lives in their own hands and break free from the limitations they were born with (VV, p. 297).

He packaged it as a new challenge. However, the fact is that those girls, like Mei-Naa, lived under their control because they needed to pay the surgery fee. Mei-Naa transformed her body but she did not actualise the virtual. She was still under other's control. It is due to the relation between her and her body parts: In no small extent, she was determinedly determined by the body parts. Though she got rid of the fate of being a cook the wok-hand brought her, she immediately fell into the trap posed by the artificial sexual organ, to be a sex worker. Abolishing the set of laws, Jade becomes the new condition conditioning her. The point is not which job she does but is how the process goes: whether she can turn her body to be the condition and the conditioned at the same time, as Not Apple did, which has to be an antiproduction, "that is to say [the body without organs] intervenes within the process as such for the sole purpose of rejecting any attempt to impose on it any sort of triangulation implying that it was produced by parents" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2009, p. 15), while the role of the parents was taken up by the laws and Jade in the story.

### **Nature-Culture, the Environmental Ecology**

When the condition and the conditioned are situated on the same plane, the boundary between the two starts being blurred. The condition at first conditions the conditioned, then the conditioned will become the new condition for further production. Just like Spinoza proposed, as I quoted in the introduction, nature consists of 1) naturing nature, and 2) natured nature. The two cannot be separated in the sense that they are both the cause and result of each other. In the above discussion, I analysed the inter-determining relation between human beings or characters and objects. However, at the present stage, I still talk like they can be separated. Next, I would like to push my argument further that, nature and culture, the realm where human beings act and think, are reconfigured to be nature-culture in Dung Kai-cheung's novel.

As I have said, the lathe is productivity, and it produced a steel nut in the story. This steel nut is closely related to Vivi. At the very beginning of the book, Dung Kai-cheung writes, “[o]n [Vivi’s] chest rested a steel nut with a matte sheen, hexagonal, the size of a thumbnail” (VV, p. 15). The lathe produced Vivi’s steel nut on the one hand and Little Danny’s screw on the other hand. In the latter part of the novel, the steel nut and the screw “intercourse” with each other. It is tempting to decipher it as a sexual metaphor. And in the story, Vivi and Little Danny actually did so. I do not deny the relation between them. Yet, my question is, what kind of relationship is it? I propose that it is not necessary for these two pairings, the cap and the screw; and the man and the woman, to be in a hierarchical relationship. They should not be treated like the represented and the representing. Their relation can be an immanent one, which means “the coexistence of the condition and that which it conditions, expression and content, on the same plane” (Grossberg, 2016, p. 3).

Machine and human beings can be regarded as identical in Dung’s novel. In the same chapter, Dung Kai-cheung writes about Dung Sen’s, his father’s, doubt: Why does *Everything Explained in Pictures* not include living things and plants? “What about trees?”

Flowers and fruits? Birds? Lion, tigers and elephants? How are these things made? Don't they follow the same mechanical principles?" (VV, pp. 106-107). Dung Kai-cheung answers this question later: that is because his father has not read the Qing scholar Yan Fu's (嚴復) translation of *Evolution and Ethics* as his grandfather did. Therefore, his father did not know the evolution theory proposed by Darwin, and "knew nothing about the material basis of living organisms as explained in the Darwinian theory of evolution" (VV, p.107). In other words, inorganic objects and organic creatures are based on the material. The difference between the two is purely due to the difference in the process of production. The symmetry is broken in different ways and derives different entities. Screws and steel nuts, penis and vagina, these two pairs are two possibilities of reproduction.

The boundary between creatures and objects has been broken. Dung Kai-cheung, from the perspective of productivity, builds up a plane where creatures and objects are equal. What is more, the plane can be regarded as nature. In Dung's description, nature can be very mechanical. There is a scene in the novel that Dung Foo and Lung Kam-yuk, Dung's grandparents, went back to Lung's village and went to the mountain to see the Well of Immortal. Dung Kai-cheung starts describing nature,

In the hills the cicadas wrung out their tune, sucking sap from the pines or their suitable species and synchronizing their calls into a huge, undulating hum. The cicada calls evoked the scent of bronze, and the dragonflies shook their metallic blue bodies as they mated above the streams, the trees grew closer together; the shade became dense. As they walked through this natural factory of life, they came across the production line of species, bathed in the surge of electric and magnetic waves. They walked for a long time. There was a vivid resonance in the living machine (VV, p.43).

What I want to emphasise is how Dung Kai-cheung correlates the living creature and supposedly dead objects. As we can see, he describes cicadas by “the scent of bronze”, dragonflies by “metallic blue”. To summarise his observation, he even writes that it is a “natural factory of life”. In other words, nature is a factory. From the perspective of productivity, there is no boundary between nature and culture. They are both the process and the product of the production. It is due to the focus on productivity that Dung Kai-cheung can de-dichotomize [nature-culture] binary. The lathe, called “the mother of tools” by Dung Kai-cheung, produces the screw and the steel nut. So these two objects combine to be another tool, so on and so for. It produces and reproduces continually. Regarding the process, a screw and a steel nut, and a penis and a vagina, these two pairs are the same. Through the lathe, Dung Kai-cheung lays out the process of auto-production. However, it will be a mistake to take the process linearly. The key to this auto-production is not how it becomes as such. It is not a purely historical record, as said that there is no a History for Dung Kai-cheung. He is tracing back in search of every bifurcation, looking at those routes not taken, that is Feynman’s “all possible histories”.

### **“An Environment in the Process of Being Reinvented”**

It is remarkable that Dung Kai-cheung, though he claimed the novels as the trilogy of nature, spent obviously less time and space on describing Nature comparing with other notable pieces of nature-writing. In his trilogy, one can hardly find a Thoreau-like figure, which isolates oneself from the society, no matter temporal or permanent. The isolation from the society, so as to return to nature, can be said as a significant characteristic in romantic literature. As Dung Kai-cheung said, he did “not rehabilitate the nature writing for romanticism or environmentalism, but to push the urban civilisation upward, until its origin or margin” (Dung, 2011). Here evolves one of my research questions: How did Dung Kai-

cheung write a trilogy of nature without the rehabilitation of romantic or environmentalistic nature? Yet, it is not true that Dung Kai-cheung did not directly describe nature in the trilogy, just like the scene about “the factory of Nature” I quoted above.

So far, I have mainly focused on the first book in the trilogy, *the History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera*. At the same time, I did find consistent understanding of Nature in the rest of the trilogy. Just like in the third book, *on the Origin of Species: The Rebirth of Bui Bui - The Age of Apprenticeship*, Dung Kai-cheung wrote that there were five characters, Bui-bui, the main character, Chung, another version of Not Apple in OS, Jesus, a carpenter, Kok, a research student, Augusto, a clergyman. They went hiking in a winter afternoon, “the fog on the mountain became thicker and thicker. It seems to be no way out [...] Jesus suddenly stopped and raised his hand, like trying to touch the fog and gesturing in the air. We also stopped to watch at him”, and the rest guessed what he was doing. Later, Jesus answered,

what were we doing actually? Just sculpting the fog. Fluid and not stationary, changing and not fixed, accumulating and dispersing as it is. We, however, forced it to be the shape we wanted. For Dao, it may be the same! Don’t think there would be a moment we could attain the truth. That which can be fixed and grasped is not the truth (OS, p. 446).

From the above quote, one can easily find that, for Dung Kai-cheung, nature is not a fixed object from which we learn. Nature does not imply a fixed way to which we can refer when we think of the mechanism of society. However, this kind of thinking did pose a serious threat to human beings. It is exemplified by social Darwinism, which proposed that the ideal mechanism for society follows the natural law of “survival of the fittest”. In the

chapter eight of OS, Dung Kai-cheung also discussed this issue. Through the reading group in the novel, he compared the thoughts of Spencer and Huxley.

While nature and culture are de-dichotomised, there is a danger to apply so-called “natural law” on human society directly. From the above quote about the fluidity of nature, Dung Kai-cheung rejected not only the social Darwinism but also any fixed concept of nature. It means that, when we try to understand the environmental ecology, in which nature and culture merged, we should not impose any fixed framework on it, just as we should not oedipalize the desire. Otherwise, we can only see the natured nature but ignore how it becomes as such, ignore the naturing nature. The understanding of nature has to be renewed and thus the environment. What is meant by the word “environment”? Etymologically speaking, environment means “state of being environed”. For a being, what surrounds him/her is his/her environment. The environment is our perception of nature. The notion of naturing nature in fact reminds us of the activity of the environment. As Guattari (2014) proposed in *the Three Ecologies*, if there is an ethic for the environmental ecology, it pursues “an environment in the process of being reinvented” (p. 47).

It explains why Dung Kai-cheung, claiming these three novels as a *Natural Histories Trilogy*, spent comparably little space to describe nature directly. Instead of doing that, he focused on the process and the production of nature. This is why Dung Kai-cheung does not write about nature. As a schizo-natural writer, he writes *naturally*. As such, we have to continue our journey following the multiple histories produced naturally by Dung Kai-cheung, that is the spatiotemporal ecology.

## Chapter 4 Spatiotemporal Ecology

One day during that summer when the days of sea-gazing seemed to have no beginning or end, Lin-sen and I were picking up shells along the ancient shore of Sha Tau Kok. By pure chance, her toe hit a hard object that turned out to be a pocket watch. [...] In any case, the fact is that this pocket watch was found by Lin-sen and me at some indefinite time before noon on this drizzly day, and we hesitated, wondering whether we should keep it or toss it back. We did not know that with this decision a possible world would be born, or destroyed (VV, pp. 309–310).

We have gone through the mental ecology, the social ecology and the environmental ecology. As I stated in the introduction, this journey basically follows Guattari's steps in *the Three Ecologies*. One may ask if this thesis is overwhelmed by theories. Can it find out the true meaning of the text, instead of making a case study of Deleuze and Guattari's theory? In the previous three chapters, I have put my effort to present the significance of *the Natural Histories Trilogy*. Next, in this chapter, I try to make a stronger stance that Dung Kai-cheung's work indeed pushes forward a greater framework enveloping the three ecologies, that is, the spatio-temporal ecology.

Before we start to unfold this fourth ecology, let me first clarify its relationship with Guattari's three ecology, or Deleuzian philosophy. Ecology, in Guattari's elaboration, emphasizes on the interaction between different elements, no matter it is a persona in a mental ecology, a person in a social ecology or a thing in an environmental ecology. However, we cannot assume that these elements interact in a Newtonian way, within a static time-space. As the title of the thesis suggested, this thesis aim at exploring the production of Nature. If we presuppose a static time-space, the latter inevitably becomes a transcendental condition of the production. It becomes something before and beyond nature and thus our

effort to explore how nature, as both naturing nature and natured nature, is shaping itself will go down the drain.

Obviously, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy relies heavily on the affirmation of difference. Indeed, when Guattari emphasized that an ecology should be in an endless differentiation, he has already pointed out the fourth ecology. It is an ecology that is made up with all the differentiation. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, Dung Kai-cheung's writing aims at actualizing the virtual and diversifying a history into plural histories. If Guattari's three ecologies aim at endless changes, the fourth ecology I discovered in Dung Kai-cheung's writing, the spatio-temporal ecology, can show us all the possible states at the same time. Therefore, the fourth ecology indeed is not utterly an innovation by Dung Kai-cheung himself solely. Still, Dung Kai-cheung's contribution is in providing us a way to further grasp the multiplicity of nature. To do so, Dung Kai-cheung drew heavily theoretical resource from quantum mechanics such as Richard Feynman, which, interestingly, seldom appears in Deleuze and Guattari's work.

The fundamental research question throughout this thesis remains unchanged: how can one write naturally? The word "naturally" is an adverb, a word to describe a verb. While a verb denotes an action, a writer must consider the tense, that is, the temporality of the statement. In short, to write naturally, one must foremost deal with the temporality of writing. To write naturally is to break down the natural-cultural dichotomy. Still, there apparently exists a gap between the two regarding temporality. On the one hand, there is a natural temporality; on the other side, there is an artificial temporality. In his work, Dung Kai-cheung is highly aware of this temporal contradiction. In this chapter, I will show how he tackled this problem and suggested a schizo-natural temporality, or to be precise a natural-cultural spatiotemporality.

### **From Natural vs. Cultural to Linear vs. Cyclical**

In the last chapter of OS, Ar-chi recorded her discussion on Said's *the Late Style* with the Alumnae. She mentioned, "at the beginning of his essay, Said distinguished natural time and historical time", then she further explained, "the former is biological and bodily time, the time of the growth and death of everything and the cycle of seasons; the latter is the time how human beings understand the former and the time of the creation of civilisation through this consciousness" (OS, p.699). She further recalled the previous discussion on Huxley's ideas of natural realm and social realm,

if the artificial world has to keep alert and work hard all the time to confront with the threat and invasion of natural world, it means that once human beings become loose and lazy, the natural world will invade and destruct the artificial world. In fact, Huxley used the famous example of gardening to explain the fragility and unsustainability of the human world. The order of the garden which gardener builds with effort will be swallowed by the wild force if it is slightly neglected. The civilisation disappears. Everything returns to the original state. In the macro-progression of evolution, so-called 'survival of the fittest' merely denotes living things' adaption to the environment. If the environment changes, the strongest animal will die as well. A species can dominate for a moment only. In long cosmic time, no species can occupy the dominant position forever. Human beings are not an exception. Therefore, the growth and death of a species, the beginning and the end of civilisation, are just interludes of the cycle of evolution (OS, p.456).

In this passage, we can see several things. In Huxley's work, according to the interpretation shown in the novel, there are two worlds, the artificial world and the natural world, which fabricate an artificial time and a natural time respectively. Then, natural time is

cyclical and artificial time is linear. This distinction is interesting, still, what I want to emphasise is that, in the description above, the artificial time is enveloped in the natural time. No one will object that human beings build their civilisation in nature, just as same as the etymological evidence given by the word "culture". In other words, culture may be different from nature but cannot detach from it. The two are inseparable while they are marching on different temporalities. Here we can see a contradiction, a tension between culture and nature. They are not synchronised. If writing is an artificial work, it does not create something aside nature. It confronts with nature within nature.

In OS, the reading group discussed twelve books. The discussion included many topics and temporality probably is one of the issues frequently mentioned. For example, when it comes to Bakhtin, Ah-Kok also compared Bakhtin and Goeth's concepts of time,

Bakhtin distinguished time as natural time and historical time. The former is the circulation of the sun and stars and the alternation of four seasons; the latter is the artificial creation through utensils, houses, cities, action and organisation. The speciality of Goethe is that he was able to see the relation of the two temporalities and merge them together. To Goethe, nothing is done, formalised and static. [...] The morphological research Goethe has done in biology is not static or splitting typology. It is a morphological study done on the part and the whole in the evolution of living things. In it, there are dimensions of time and space, and the two are merged (OS, p.361).

One may notice the mechanism how Dung Kai-cheung talked about time. Through the discussion about thinkers, he set up a dichotomy and investigated how those thinkers deal with the dilemma. In the most cases, thinkers would propose new understandings of time through combining the two. At the same time, Dung Kai-cheung carefully avoided being

dialectical. I have already explained how he objected to dialectics in chapter one and this will be further developed in the later part of this chapter.

The point I want to emphasise is that the real dichotomy of time Dung Kai-cheung wanted to tackle is not natural versus artificial; instead, to make a breakthrough, Dung Kai-cheung firstly shift the dichotomy between natural and cultural to another dichotomy between cyclical and linear. It is through this dilemma that Dung Kai-cheung tried to unfold his concept of space-time, the “multi-verse”, which I will further elaborate in the latter part of this chapter.

In the discussion about Arendt's *the Human Condition*, Ah-lik said, "I wanted to talk about the compatibility of comparing natural histories and human history. [...] Today, these concepts seemed to be normal. However, [the concept of process] did not exist until the 19th century. Since the Industrial Revolution, human beings could control nature in the greater degree and technology had advanced rapidly. Then, people started regarding the development of human society as a necessary process of advancement" (OS, p.288). This point should be familiar to many people. Still, he immediately connected this linear process to the theory of evolution and regarded it as the fuel of such a view, regardless of Darwin's intention. In other words, contrasting natural histories with human history may be misleading since both of them can be linear. Natural time in the theory of evolution is apparently different from that in four seasons; the former is linear loosely speaking while the latter is cyclical.

The same can be applied to human history as well. If the concept of process did not exist until the 19th century, it means that the human history before that was in another way around. In *the Human Condition*, Arendt made a distinction in temporality between immortal nature and Olympian gods, and mortal men. "Immortality means endurance in time" (Arendt, 1958, p.18). Those who are immortal include nature and gods, though they're in different forms of immortality. Nature is ever-recurring while gods are deathless. Animals belong to

nature as well. They live as a species. Therefore, the accumulation of the life and death of every single life becomes cyclical. "Men," however, "are 'the mortals,' the only mortal things in existence, because unlike animals they do not exist only as members of a species whose immortal life is guaranteed through procreation" (Arendt, 1958, pp. 18-19). In the later part, Arendt specified that humans have to fight with this mortality by their ability to produce. "The distinction between man and animal runs right through the human species itself: only the best, who constantly prove themselves to be the best and who 'prefer immortal fame to mortal things,' are really human", and in other words, it means that "the others, content with whatever pleasures nature will yield them, live and die like animals" (p.19). That is to say before one can prove oneself, one is as same as an animal in their experience of temporality. In short, some human beings fail to prove themselves, like animals, live an ever-recurring life regarding species living. They live and die, one by one. Indeed, the opponents may cite Marx and say that those who live like that disobey the species-being of the human. However, it can hardly be denied that people as such exist. As a matter of fact, those who propose a linear time unintentionally reveal in turn their phobia to looping. That the cyclical nature gives birth and destroys everything unavoidably leads to a sense of nothingness. And some human beings are afraid of this nothingness so they claim that time is linear. However, they, in turn, fall into another cyclical time because a phobia is precisely characterised by cyclical behaviour. Cyclical time, presented by natural phenomenon, repeatedly haunts upon them. Every time the two encounter, the same escape path is activated again and again. That's why their cyclo-phobia brings them back to a cyclical time.

The fact is that both natural time and artificial time can be cyclical and linear. It sounds to be naive to believe either cyclical natural time and linear artificial time. If we take Ah-lik's argument seriously, we can quickly come to a conclusion that the linear process,

which emerged in the 19th century, is a discursive concept and the "authentic" form of time can solely be found in ever-recurring nature. And the next step would propose everyone goes back a cyclical natural time. Although Ah-lik might not really mean so, this claim makes a fatal mistake as same as that Thoreau made, which we have discussed in chapter two. It praises the merit of nature and teaches human beings to be "natural". "So you see? It's how nature works. Just do it." The mechanism of nature becomes a transcendent principle to the living of human beings. It is merely representationalism in an innovative form. It is not dichotomising nature and culture but is overruling culture by nature. It is good to learn from nature. However, this kind of thinking is right in a wrong way. It is unwise to blindly oppose natural time and artificial time.

Nevertheless, it is valuable to start the discussion through a dichotomy, which enables us to explore the contradiction within temporality and thus may drive us to a deeper understanding. However, as shown as above, it may be problematic to seek the contradiction between natural time and cultural time. If both natural time and cultural time can be cyclical or linear, perhaps the real contradiction lies between the latter pair. It comes to a situation that the time, as a matter of fact, can run cyclically and linearly, no matter how you categorise it.

Still, Dung Kai-cheung did not agree with either stance. In the following part, I will further elaborate how Dung Kai-cheung objected to both ideas at the same time, mainly because both of them can be a closed system. A linear time points a definite end while a cyclical time implies a system closed upon itself. Both of them obviously contradicted with the aim of schizo-natural writing, that is, the natural-cultural productivity.

### **Virginia's Heartbeat**

So far, one may feel that Dung Kai-cheung is a theorist camouflaging as a novelist. As one can see, the book list proposed in OS is rather intricate and almost half of the novel

was contributed to the discussion about those thinkers, including Goethe, Bakhtin, Arendt, Heidegger, Pessoa, Kenzaburō Ōe and so on. Still, he did write stories.

The second volume of the trilogy, *the Histories of Time*, is a triphonic novel. One of the three channels was titled as Virginia's heartbeat. The story background was in a post-apocalyptic future, A.D. 2097 (HT, p.83). There is a teenage girl, Virginia, living in a library. She was in a librarian. Her time renewed every year. At the beginning of each year, her mind and memory restarted. The story began at the moment a male time traveller, named Fa, arrived at the library and encountered with Virginia. The story had 12 chapters, each of which was titled by a Latin vocabulary related to time. For example, infinitum, temporis punctum, and dies.

"There is no character in this book. You become its theme. You become the body of time. In your body, the history of time can be reappeared. All forms of time can be actualised" (HT I, p. 48). This quotation pointed out the mechanism how Dung Kai-cheung wrote this story. Virginia "becomes the body of time". However, ironically, Virginia's body and memory renew every year. Therefore, she is 17 years old every year while at the same time she cannot memorise things over a year. It can be shown in this quote: "You remembered it slowly. You were reading this book while that person showed up. It happened yesterday. Maybe a year ago as well. Yesterday or a year ago make, it makes no difference to you. [...] Maybe you have found this book many times. Yet, every time is like the first time." (HT I, p. 48). In other words, she cannot accumulate her experience, and thus she cannot experience the marching of time as well. Virginia, I suggest, is not the sole body of time. The temporal implication of Fa should be neglected. Fa travelled in time linearly, though fundamentally did not change the arrow of time. He accumulated all things he experienced, to the extent that it is too much to him. How should we understand their encounter? what is the aim of Dung Kai-cheung to write this story? We have to read carefully.

## Virginia's synthesis of time

Let us examine Virginia's repetitive time first.

Why did Virginia experience time in a repetitive way? It is not merely a setting.

Within the story, we can find the complete mechanism of how she experienced time. The reason why she can keep her youth is hidden in her heart, "the clock within her body" (HT I, p.51). The clock is not merely a clock but also is her heart. That is why this story is titled as Virginia's heartbeat.

"I'm a clock. She believed as such at the moment. [...] She did not know the time. That is something we would talk about in the future. Now, she only knew that there is a thing reciprocating in the left of her chest. For the time being, she could not think of the word 'escapement', but she felt strongly the movement of contracting and relaxing alternatively" (HT I, p.45). In the first chapter of the story, *Initium*, which means the initiation, Dung Kai-cheung described how time comes into being initially. Virginia was able to believe something but she could neither know the metric time nor remember words. That is to say, it was the moment that she had consciousness but no concept, including the concept of time.

As I have said, we cannot presuppose the existence of time. Therefore, the character setting as such revealed the Dung Kai-cheung's first question concerning the production of nature: how did time emerge?

In the above quote, there are a few words that have already answered this question: "Reciprocating" and "contracting and relaxing alternatively". Through the repetition of the contraction and relaxation, one can count time. To elaborate the causal relation between repetition and time, I found that Deleuze may be the philosopher who gave the best explanation. In his book *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (1994) illustrated the concept of "repetition for itself" and stated clearly that, "[contraction] forms a synthesis of time" (p.70).

“Hume,” Deleuze (1994) cited, “takes as an example the repetition of cases of the type AB, AB, AB, A.... Each case or objective sequence AB is independent of the others. The repetition [...] changes nothing in the object or the state of affairs AB [...] a change is produced in the mind which contemplates: a difference, something new *in* the mind” (p. 70). Is not it the Virginia’s case? The reciprocation did not change the alternation of contraction and relaxation. Still, Virginia became conscious of the time. Her ability of imagination entailed her a contractile power that she can contract the reciprocation to synthesise a present.

Each present with its immediate past and future can then be contracted to be a larger present. As Dung Kai-cheung wrote, "eternal return, it is unnecessary to wait too long. You may say, a century as a Kalpa, a decade as a Kalpa, a year as a Kalpa, a day as a Kalpa, an instant as a Kalpa. In a word, it can imply an infinite long, or infinite short time" (HT I, p.173).

That both Dung Kai-cheung and Deleuze used the heart beating to illustrate the synthesis of time is not a coincidence. It is the biological origin of the time. Through the repetition of the heartbeat, one contracts a present before the invention of any device to measure time. However, in Dung Kai-cheung's writing, the heartbeat is often substituted by the tick-tock of a machine. In Virginia's heartbeat, it is a clock. In VV, Vivi has a music box inside her heart as well. Through this substitution, Dung Kai-cheung can further blur the boundary between the organic and inorganic. The combination of organic and mechanic should be familiar to us at this point because it is exactly the core meaning of “the Production of Nature”, which I have quoted in the very beginning of this thesis. This move further emphasised the material condition of experiencing the time as well. Virginia's heartbeat, in turn, becomes the material condition of the way Virginia experienced time. "How did you measure time?" Fa asked Virginia, and her answer is her heartbeat (HT I, p.120). Therefore,

due to the heartbeat, Virginia is able to count time. And the reciprocating heartbeat at the same time determined the way she experience time.

The condition implies what is possible and, in turn, what is impossible. In Virginia's case, it is impossible for her to possess memory. Since the present is a product of contraction, a present, with its respective past and future, can be contracted to be a larger present. That is to say, there are presents, in different states of contraction, rather than a present. As I have already mentioned, Dung Kai-cheung mentioned that "You may say, a century as a Kalpa, a decade as a Kalpa, a year as a Kalpa, a day as a Kalpa, an instant as a Kalpa. In a word, it can imply an infinite long, or infinite short time." It depends on how far the present is contracted. Virginia lives in an ever-present. For her, there can barely be a past other than that which she can think of in a larger present. Consequently, there is no memory, no reflection. For those fifty years before she encountered with Fa, she maintained this cyclical time consistently.

So far, we basically grasp the feature of Virginia's synthesis of time. Basing her material condition, she experiences time in a way that there can only be an everlasting, repeating present. We can see more in the close reading of the chapter *Dies*.

The title of the chapter *Dies* has sharply pointed out the theme of this chapter: the Time of God. Dies means day in Latin and leads to the word deity, which means God. "Virginia spent fifty years, almost 18200 days here alone and repeated the same pattern of life and work day by day, which, in effect, feels like the mythic eternal torture. Luckily, her memory did not last for more than a year, and her heart is a mechanical clock. Short memory permitted everyday life to be refreshed. And the ordered habit permitted one to grasp and kill time" (HT I, p.261). Throughout the whole chapter, Dung Kai-cheung marks several moments: Lauds, Prime, Tierce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. These terms come from Canonical hours, which marked the time of praying in Christianity. Following each hour,

there is a description of the daily routine: "Vespers. 5pm. Dinner. The work yet to finish has to be stopped. Books yet to finish has to be closed as well" (HT I, p.268). "Compline. 7pm. Taking a shower" (HT, p. 269). The daily routine listed out activities has to be accomplished each day, most of which are either the management of the library or meals. Apart from these two activities, there is nothing else.

That Virginia's maintained her daily routine firmly is closely related to the contraction mentioned above. In this sense, the repetitive life Virginia lived originated from the contraction as well. And thus, she cannot grasp the pure past because "the present alone exists. [...] synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present" (Deleuze, 1994, p.76). The past she experienced, if she could remember, is just a former present, rather than a pure past. In the library, there were many things his father left. However, she could not organise the past, that is to say, what happened. In a chapter titled as *Memoria*, which obviously means memory, Dung Kai-cheung wrote, "you [Virginia] put down the diary, and was thinking something. You had read father's diary many times. Each time, it felt like reading a novel or a story of other people. You felt nothing. You cannot connect those things and yourself" (HT II, p.323). In the same chapter, Fa, as an observer, described Virginia's situation that

I had believed that things were attached to emotion and memory. However, those old objects her father left her, old books, old clocks and watches, old camera, old typewriter, notes and diaries of her father, even the photos of her ancestors, these remarkable tips could do nothing to remind her sleeping consciousness. She treated all these things like how a collector, an archaeologist, a historian treat objects and material, full of passion and wonder but keeping a distance (HT II, p.321).

What Virginia has done can be collection only but never recollection. It is the reason why she cannot truly grasp the time. What is the difference? Why do I say Virginia can discover the former present but the pure past? What is the difference between collection and recollection?

We have to understand the true meaning of the *past* first. The past is that which one recollect. Through understanding the past, we can further know why Virginia cannot recollect. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze tried to correct a common mistake when it comes to the contemplation of the past: "At first sight, it is as if the past were trapped between two presents: the one which it has been and the one in relation to which it is past" (DR, p.80). However, this way dooms to be futile because it wrongly presupposed that the past and the present are two different things. The reason why a past becomes a past cannot be the appearance of a new present. As we have seen above, present can always be contracted in large or small extent: "a century as a Kalpa, a decade as a Kalpa, a year as a Kalpa, a day as a Kalpa, an instant as a Kalpa. In a word, it can imply an infinite long, or infinite short time." How can this Kalpa pass? If we treat the past and the present as two separate things, a past can never be constituted since the present cannot pass. Therefore, we may need to reconceptualize the relationship between the past and the present.

Objecting to the separation between the present and the past, Deleuze pointed out that the pure past should be in the present tense that, "[w]e cannot say that it was. It no longer exists, it does not exist, but it insists, it consists, it *is*. It insists with the former present, it consists of the new or present present. [...] In this sense, it forms a pure, general, *a priori* element of all time" (DR, p.82). In other words, when a present presents, it is constituted as a past as well. The present contracted to the largest extent is at the same time the past in a whole.

It is this pure past that Virginia cannot understand. Each time when her clock resets, the pure past ruptures. As such, for Virginia, how can one recollect something if there is a rupture in the pure past? In a rainy day, you recollect that you have been with another person because both your present present, which is passing, and your former present, *the* rainy day is grounded by the pure past through which the two presents are "telescope[d] together" (DR, p.85).

Then, our focus should be shifted from Virginia to Fa. One may notice that I spent relatively fewer paragraph on Fa. This is because Fa's understanding of time, comparing with Virginia, is closer to our conventional understanding. It can be even said that Fa is posited as the entrance for us to grasp the situation inside the library and Virginia. However, Fa's experience of time is exactly as same as ordinary people since Fa said, "I remembered everything, everything that was too much and too heavy, but I lost instants. What I possessed was just a heap of unpieceable fragments. Fragments were not instants because instants were complete" (HT I, p. 116). Fa, as a time traveller, can he reconstitute the past? Unfortunately, it is another dead end as well. He can memorise. However, he cannot grasp any complete instant, which prohibits him from successful recollection. It is said that he can travel through time. Nevertheless, throughout the whole story, he did not travel to else-when. In other words, he can only represent the past instead of being present at other presents. Those fragments he collected are just the former presents partially represented in the present present due to the resemblance. Neither can Virginia nor Fa recollect. While Virginia, though facing a lot of archives, recollected nothing, Fa, bearing "a heavy travelling bag of memory", did not succeed as well (HT, p.119). "Fa vainly tried to reorganise those fragments of the contradictory, fractal and overlapping times as a meaningful sentence" (HT I, p.120).

The direct combination of these two temporalities may not be a wise move. Combining both of them does not directly lead to a perfect temporality. Indeed, a single

overwhelming temporality is never what Dung Kai-cheung aimed at. In the contrast, at the end of the story, Dung Kai-cheung revealed to us the true consequence of their encounter — the end of time. “We have to end time. Certainly, we cannot foresee what will happen if time is ended” (HT II, p. 418). The end of time unambiguously pointed to death. Virginia asked Fa, “if time really comes to an end, there will be no more tomorrow. I am afraid that once time is ended I will die”. Then Fa replied, “I will revive you”. However, Virginia rejected to this idea that “No, you should not wander in spatio-temporality anymore. Even if you find me in any year within these fifty years, the result remains the same”. Finally, Fa answered, “then I will be towards death with you. I stop wandering and you stop recurring. Never will we leave each other at the end point” (HT II, p.419). I have explained how death can be affirmative in Heideggerian sense in chapter one.

However, here we can see another way for death to be affirmative: the rebirth. Only when one embraces death, one can be reborn. It is at this point, death, that two of three voices of HT, *the Light of Nga Chi* and *Virginia's Heartbeat* resonated. In *the Light of Nga Chi*, the Dictator and his wife Nga Chi finally are able to communicate with each other but soon after that they committed suicide together. It is the reason why in the above ending Fa and Virginia, as the corresponding pair of the Dictator and Nga Chi, chose to die together. However, the Dictator asserted, “my surrender is to teach you how to fight” (p. 416). Who are “you”? The newcomers. In this above case, it is one of the author-narrator Virginia Anderson<sup>9</sup>. Virginia Anderson objected to the Dictator’s ending and rewrote her own. Her ending, instead of the Dictator’s silence, is full of vitality. Virginia and Fa got away from the library to search for the origin. When Virginia finally arrived at the destination, “[the place you belonged to] was not at elsewhere, not behind the mountain, not at the other end of the

---

<sup>9</sup> As I analysed in chapter one, there are two author-characters in *Virginia's Heartbeat*, the Dictator and Virginia Anderson. See the section “Literary operation to write naturally”.

tunnel. It is the end of the spine, inside your body” (HT II, p.424). In this case, the other voice of HT, *Yanyan and Baby Universes*, resonated with *Virginia’s Heartbeat*. “As if something enter through the head, goes down along the spine to the depth inside the lower abdomen, forms a tiny core, which then inflates” (HT II, p.426). The description “the end of the spine, inside your body” actually implies the uterus, where multiple lives are born. Dung Kai-cheung further connected this image of a crowded rink, “You are a rink. Inside yourself, you can find back the self, and the others as well. [...] Here, you become all the others. The self and the others merge. It is the sum over all possible lives” (HT II, p.424).

The sum over all possible lives, it is how schizo-natural temporalities function and point to the memory of the future. Did not this image of multiple voices hide already in the quote I stated at the very beginning of this thesis? “In the hills the cicadas wrung out their tune, sucking sap from the pines or their suitable species and *synchronizing* their calls into a huge, undulating hum” (VV, p.43, emphasis added). The synchronisation formed a huge, undulating hum, that is, a resonated multiplicity.

### **The memory of the future**

The memory of the future seems to be a weird combination of words. To understand it, we have to understand clearly how to recollect something, which Virginia and Fa failed. This is a crucial questions in *the Natural Histories Trilogy* because histories, basically, are what people recollect. Therefore, the manner in which people recollect and memories are formed are the ground of histories. Regarding the question of memory, one cannot evade Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time*. Coincidentally, he impacted both Deleuze and Dung Kai-cheung in an invaluable way. *In Search of Lost Time* was the research subject of Dung Kai-cheung’s master thesis. At the same time, for Deleuze, one can find that he wrote a book on Proust, titled *Proust and Signs* (1972). In fact, in *Difference and Repetition* (1994),

Deleuze did not hide his appreciation toward Proust. When he tried to answer the question "how can we penetrate [the entire past which is conserved in-itself] without reducing it to the former present that it was, or to the present in relation to which it is past?", His answer is clear, Proust's reminiscence (DR, p.85). Deleuze furthermore talked about Proust and the Combray that was never lived, which may not be the focus so far. I hope that my focus sharply falls on Dung Kai-cheung and his schizo-natural writing. Dung Kai-cheung, attracted by Proust, still has a disagreement with Proust. In *Memoria*, the two writers argued with each other about a memory of future,

I did not only hope for reconstructing the memory of the past but also imagine to create a memory of the future. How could it be a memory if it is in the future? I hope to remember the future as a possibility. [...] Still, that is a non-existent memory, an utterly fictional thing. Is the memory of the past, however, not as such? It is meaningless to say so. Yes, so I think, on the contrary, in the realm of the body of memory, there is nothing that does not exist in reality, no matter it happened in the past or the future. The state of memory in itself is real to the highest degree. Its realness even does not rely on anything outside of it. Then you obviously did not believe in Proust's way because he at least has faith in the outside sensational stimuli. No, I was just more thoroughly than him, but I did not believe that only the involuntary memory was real. I believe in the conscious creation of the memory.

Memory is not an unexpected outbreak of the subconsciousness (HT II, p.320).

Here, we can see Dung Kai-cheung raised memory to an unbelievably high position. Memory is not only a memory of the past but also the memory of the future, of that which has not existed yet. The difference between Deleuze and Dung Kai-cheung is that Dung Kai-cheung extended the discussion of time and memory to be a problem of politics. Dung Kai-

cheung also highlighted the importance of others and tried hard to avoid the problem of dictatorship,

memory was not a self-affair. We did not remember our things but also our relationship with others. And the memories of different individuals may compete with or repel each other. To affirm one's memory might need to suppress the memory of another person. Wasn't it dominated by the will of a single person? If the memory of the future could not include others, it would become a closed system (HT II, p.320).

Proust reminisced a Combray never-lived but did not fabricate a spatiotemporal ecology. "[B]eyond the lover and beyond the mother," Deleuze pointed an end at "coexistent with the one and contemporary with the other". However, it is Dung Kai-cheung who further pursued to be coexistent and contemporary with *the others*. And at the same time, he strived himself to combat with any form of dictatorship. He is highly aware of this danger, "our generation grew up with watches that were regulated by a quartz crystal with a precise frequency of 32768 Hz and an accumulated error of less than one minute per year. Our minds were assembled in an orderly manner to ensure quantity and conformity" (VV, p.314).

To get rid of this danger, Dung Kai-cheung proposed that, "memory can be a will" (HT II, p.320), that is to say, a will to memorise. What is meant by a will? What is meant by the ability to be a will? In the context of Nietzsche's philosophy, Deleuze explained, "[t]he will (will to power) is the differential element of force" (Nietzsche, p.7) because a will has to be in relation with another will. As such, can we understand a will to memorise in a plural form? That is to say, the will is the differential element of memory. When the memory is understood with respect to the pure past, the will to memory is closely related to the difference between different pure pasts. But in Dung Kai-cheung's sense, it has nothing to do with obedience or domination, as it is in the case of power. Rather, "I asked for the help from

the memories of others". It is in this sense that he wrote the family history in the first book of the trilogy. He asked for the help from the memories of his ancestors and wrote a story as such.

The mechanism of the pure past, in Dung Kai-cheung's writing, stretches to the future. "In the memory of the future, everyone would remember one's self-experience and at the same time the experience of all the others. That is a lake of memories of human beings" (HT II, p.320). A lake of memories of human being, isn't it a wonderful illustration of the ecology of spatiotemporal ecology? Similar images can be found across the trilogy, such as a room of clocks. A multiplicity of times, of histories. It is the reason why Dung Kai-cheung preferred mechanical clocks rather than quartz watches. "Each watch is a world. No two watches tell the same time. Even a caesium clock that is accurate to one second over 361,000 years is imperfect. We can think of a clock shop as the universe and the individual clocks as the stars in its sky. All follow the same principle. But some are faster while others are slower. Some stop while others begin" (VV, 310). While quartz clocks, aiming at accuracy, tied a whole generation together and pointed at the Sameness, mechanical watches repeat the same principle differently, with different rates and speed and thus become stars. Time is immanent to a mechanical watch.

When all those stars run on different speed, the pure past of the universe does not only expand but also multiplies. Consequently, the future of one star become memorable at the present of another star. Instead of asking how one can memorise a future, the memory of the future is the necessary condition for one to write about the universe, the clock room or the lake of the memory of human beings. Apart from the hills Dung Foo and Lung Kam-yuk walked into, the most significant image must be the rink, in which every spinning skater is a star. In another part of HT, *the light of Ar-Chi*, the nurse who took care of the Dictator drew a picture in style like Bosh's *The Garden of Earthly Delights*. This image repeated severely

time in the second book. It is a large painting that many groups of characters joined together at the rink. Each group is a tiny universe.

These all images revealed the combination of the two meanings of the word "will" in Dung Kai-cheung's schizo-natural writing. As a modal verb, the word "will" points to a future and simultaneously develops a possibility enveloped at present. As a noun, it means a subjective action to turn undetermined into the determined. Their combination necessitates any possibility with one's determination, to be precise, the determination of a writer. In Dung Kai-cheung's writing, we can see a vision in which it becomes the same thing to say that "one will be" and "one will to be". Almost at the end of the story, Virginia, not the one inside the library but one of the writers of the story, read the diary of her father. "The act of creation represents the supreme Will of the human species for overcoming its fate as temporal and physical existence in a universe that both engenders life and curbs it, which in the end, also destroys it or simply lets it die. In a sense, creative acts are not made for the creative individual itself. A writer writes for others, for the whole of humanity" (HT II, p.385).

### **Schizo-natural temporalities**

The meaning of being a schizo is to form a multiplicity. Then, each term derived connects with each other to be an ecology. Guattari has already proposed three ecologies: mental ecology, social ecology and environmental ecology. In *the Natural Histories Trilogy*, as I elaborated in previous chapters, we can see all these three ecologies. And following the investigation of the temporalities in HT, I would like to point out the most considerable contribution Dung Kai-cheung made in the trilogy: basing on Guattari's three ecologies, he constructed the fourth ecology, the spatio-temporal ecology.

To Dung Kai-cheung, there are always multiple histories. "Historia in Greek means 'to study, to investigate'. You mean how Herodotus adopted it. [...] Apart from the narration of events like wars and replacements of dynasties, Herodotus included geography,

anthropology, the science of animals and plants, and even myths and legends, which are, according to the standard of posterior historiography, exaggerated and inaccurate things. [...] History, back to the classical age, meant natural histories which include everything. [...] Therefore, Herodotus' histories are in the plural form" (HT II, p.245). The inclusiveness of the natural histories accounts for his attempt to merge knowledge from different discipline into his novel, such as quantum mechanics. In *Prologue, or Afterword, of Time*, he cited Feynman's theory of sum over histories,

a photon arrives at the destination through all possible routes. [...] it is not a necessary and absolutely predictable route. It is merely the most possible route under the specific condition. The calculus of probabilities Feynman invented is called as the *sum over histories*. [...]. In real time, we can experience a single history only. Only in imaginary time can we observe all possible histories (Dung, p. 116-124).

The sum over histories, it is precisely the name of the universe, the clock room and the lake. To clarify, Dung Kai-cheung's natural histories are different from those discursively multiplied histories. The plurality of history proposed by postmodernism is based on the dissolution of the grand narrative, which gave birth to multiple versions of discourse. The plurality of histories, for Dung Kai-cheung, comes from the multiple possibilities of the genesis of a thing, which may not involve human beings. That a photon arrives at the destination through all possible route has nothing to do with any human being.

So far, I have insisted on Dung Kai-cheung's emphasis on the production of nature. And according to the above quote, we know that the genesis has multiple possible developments, only one of which can be actualised. Then, the world we know, as a matter of fact, is the one and the only actualised possible world. Other possibilities disappeared in the

history. In other words, the history of civilisation, on which Dung Kai-cheung reflected, is the process of the disappearance of possibilities.

However, Dung Kai-cheung did not aim to rebuild another reductive linear history of civilisation. He kept tracing after an inclusive and intra-/inter-crossing natural histories. He put forward the importance of the imaginary world forward severe times. In the first book, he proposed an "imaginative mode of the workshop of words". In the second book, the Dictator wanted to open a baby universe for Yan-yan. The reason behind is that only through the imaginative worlds, we can review those possibilities cut off by the history of civilisation.

If we want to find out an "authentic history," we will be lost in distinguishing true or false. Though the claim that "everything is socially constructed so everybody can be right" is problematic, no one can deny that this search for authenticity may lead to a breakdown of the world. However, we should not consequently delete all difference to unify every individual. It will drive us into a fascist world.

Here we arrive at the core of schizo-natural writing: human beings are trapped between commonality and difference. We can know both of them are crucial still contradictory. The solution we can unearth in Dung Kai-cheung's writing is to assemble a natural histories through imaginative worlds and, as such, arrive at a differential commonality. The multiple imaginative worlds crush upon the reality to shaken the exclusive temporality of the civilisation. As a result, he, with his workshop, invented a kind of nature writing based on "fictional".

Dung Kai-cheung is a writer of spatiotemporal ecology because he constructed multiple worlds. "In Chinese, the word "世界" (world) originated from Buddhism. "世" means time and "界" means space. Combining them, it becomes a world" (Dung, 2011, p.229). His writing faces to worlds:

Isn't a novel construction of the world? It, however, is not an imaginative world in a loose sense but a world constructed by imagination. Characters inhabit the novel world and, through their words and actions, conversely forge the real world of authors and readers. As such we can live in a common world, talk to each other, concern with each other, and even love each other. [...] when your worlds converge, my heart keeps expanding as well. Just as Fernando Pessoa, through one of his heteronyms Álvaro de Campos, said, "And my heart is a little larger than the entire universe" (Dung, 2011, p.212).

## Conclusion: To write a word; to love a world.

Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building (Heidegger, 1975, p. 215).

How should we conclude the journey so far?

In the exploration of schizo-natural writing, I have stated in the introduction that it aims at the de-dichotomisation of the nature-culture binary through showing the productivity of nature. And as a matter of fact, under such a marching of de-dichotomisation, this thesis can no longer be independent of the text, that is, *the Natural Histories Trilogy*. The two are correlated. In Deleuze and Guattari's term, a thesis has been plugged into the text to form an assemblage. The components of this thesis are affected, and their functions have changed, as we can see in this conclusion.

A conclusion, under the influence of Dung Kai-cheung's schizo-natural writing, may no longer be an end. What is the difference between them? After reading these four chapters, especially the spatiotemporal ecology, one may feel the notion of "the end" uncomfortable. Once an end is attained, the whole process is claimed as completed. However, schizo-natural writing, which emphasises the productivity, may not be compatible with a circumstance as such. Especially, Dung Kai-cheung's *Natural Histories Trilogy*, as a matter of fact, has not ended.

Completion implies a stillness. Etymologically speaking, completion means primarily "to fill up". We can imagine a situation: a system is substantially filled and wants nothing from any place other than itself. Within the system, there, perhaps, is a circulation. However, a constant flow does not change the fact that the system as a whole remains unchanged. After you witness one of the cycles, you can predict the next one because newness can hardly emerge.

On the other hand, for the word "conclusion," what I mean is an action of enclosure subject to change. For our common understanding, undeniably, the word "conclusion" has a close relation to completion. However, if we trace back the etymological origin of "conclusion," we will find a difference between the two. "Conclusion" originated from the Latin word *concludere*, "to shut up, *enclose*". While being filled up is substantially a steady state, being enclosed can imply an establishment of a boundary. A boundary is the surface of its system, which is the very first requirement for the system to interact with others. Some people may think that a system enclosed by a boundary rejects interaction. However, it is not the case. The actual situation is that only when a system has a boundary, it can become a subject to exchange. A cell, for example, exchanges material, including nutrients, toxins, oxygen, etc., through its membrane. Conversely, if it does not have a membrane, neither inside nor outside exists. It is questionable, you could say, if a cell exists under such circumstance.

The meaning "conclusion" implies the critical insight schizo-natural writing offers us. It is a mistake to think that writing naturally means the cancellation of artificial boundaries. We can see that some thinkings like romanticism and environmentalism may reject any form of boundary. For most cases, they propose to demolish artificial boundaries so all of us can return to Nature. Yet, boundaries, contrastingly, play a crucial role in schizo-natural writing. Productivity in itself implies a difference. We can hardly say if production is under process if nothing change. However, without boundaries, without isolation and interaction, how can newness be possible to emerge? The theory of evolution may be the best to exemplify the case: two communities, being the same species, will differentiate gradually according to their respective environment in the evolution. Finally, they may even become two different species, which is the foundation of an ecology. But before that, there should be a boundary to mark a distinction between the two different environments, even though it probably cannot be

located.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, boundaries can hardly be located firmly because they keep shifting due to the difference in the forces of two sides, which, in turn, shows the permeability of boundaries. For this above case, spatial boundaries imply a spatial difference. Similar examples can be found concerning temporal boundaries and temporal difference as well. In other words, for schizo-natural writing which pursues the productivity, the existence of boundaries is its necessary condition. Under such circumstance, this conclusion, as I planned, will show the boundaries established and crossed to draw the contour of this thesis.

To conclude this thesis, why don't we review boundaries in the previous chapters?

In the first chapter, I dug deep into the mental ecology. One of the most significant features of Dung Kai-cheung's writing is his multiple selves. The multiplicity of selves formed a mental ecology. Under the influence made by Fernando Pessoa, a Portuguese poet, Dung Kai-cheung, in contrast to the ordinary understanding, regarded the stability of a single self as a problem. He did not only write in pseudonym but also created different characteristics for each name. Some of them contradicted with each other. As such, Dung Kai-cheung wrote about "himselves". As a consequence, the distinction between the selves of an author and his characters blurred to the extent that we need to rethink the author-character relation in Dung Kai-cheung's schizo-natural writing. It is not merely a reverse. I proposed that authors and their characters are born at the same time. Moreover, characters in fact function like partial-objects elaborated by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*. Characters interact with each other in the mental ecology and form a product called as an author. Next, I stated the close relation between the above schizophrenic writing and the concept of nature in Pessoa's sensationalism, according to Dung Kai-cheung's elaboration. A mind, as same as

---

<sup>10</sup> For those who are interested in the detail of the evolutionary mechanism can see Delanda (2002) *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, pp. 50-55.

Nature, is characterised by its functional Emptiness, an everlasting state of changing. As such, I explained the mechanism of schizo-natural writing, or creation, concerning mentality. Then, I investigated Edward Said's influence on Dung Kai-cheung's view of creation and of death. Said's notion of the late style emphasised on the differentiation, which functions like naturing nature. Consequently, Dung Kai-cheung assembled a writing machine mentally running in a natural way.

Then, our attention shifted to the social ecology. I suggested a set of schizo-natural ethics in the trilogy. I found that Dung Kai-cheung's writing is always crowded, which may not be conventional in nature writing. While most of the nature writing propose isolation from the society, *the Natural Histories Trilogy* grasped the inseparability between nature and culture. Under such circumstance, it showed the importance of fiction, generally regarded as an artificial product, in the schizo-natural writing. However, the inseparability may lead to two different understandings, which I categorised as Spencer's Social Darwinism and Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*, with reference to Dung Kai-cheung's writing. Those two ways of thinking assembled nature and culture differently, and Dung Kai-cheung did not state explicitly which side he took. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, I re-situate the dilemma as a struggle between coding: ethics is an issue of coding, according to which people live with others. Deleuze and Guattari stated unequivocally that, society is "a socius of inscription where the essential thing is to mark and to be marked" (AO, p.142). What we should seek for is not either imposition of artificial coding on nature nor the reverse. Instead, with evidence from the trilogy, I suggested a mutual becoming as the solution. The two captured codes from each other. Thus, there are two principles of schizo-natural ethics: transgression and inclusiveness, through which we can rebuild the world once lost.

Next, we turned to the environmental ecology. In VV, Dung Kai-cheung structuralised half of the novel through 12 objects. Starting with the lathe in the novel, I

objected to view those objects as representations of a specific historical context. In that case, contextualisation, in fact, becomes a reduction of objects. It reduced them to be a mere symbol. In contrast, I read the novel in detail and suggested that what Dung Kai-cheung is genuinely searching for is to release the productivity of daily objects. To understand the function of objects in the novel, I borrowed the concept of "symmetry breaking" from Delanda to describe the process of actualisation of those objects. To actualise is to cut off the possibility of what a thing can be, while Dung Kai-cheung indeed aimed at the actualisation of those which were not actualised. As such, the productivity of objects connected with the productivity of natural histories. Dung Kai Cheung does not only want to challenge the discursively constructed history but also to produce other histories, "[writing] is a process, that is, a passage of Life that traverses both the livable and the lived" (Deleuze, 1998, p. 1). That is why in the trilogy, instead of an overwhelming macro-historical background, the agency of objects, that is how objects affect people and are affected by people was emphasised. In the ceaseless mutation of the relation between human beings and objects, an environmental ecology emerges in the novel. I further explained this point through the part of the story concerning sewing machine and female social status. However, the materiality conditions but not constraints. I distinguished the virtual from the possible and specified that the virtual extends beyond the possibility. It is where Dung Kai-cheung targeted. As such, one can clearly see an environmental ecology everlastingly mutating.

After investigating the mental, social and environmental ecology, it comes to the final one in this thesis, the spatiotemporal ecology. In that chapter, I firstly posed a question: if the artificial time is different from the natural time, how can one write naturally? And what is meant by writing naturally concerning spatiotemporality? Soon after that, according to the content of the novel, I reframed the question. The nature-culture dichotomy may be a false dichotomy since the true one should be a linear-cyclical one. Time is a mystery not because it

exists in a natural form and cultural form. The reason is that it runs linearly and cyclically simultaneously. However, both of temporal structures can become a closed system as well. That is to say, the marching of time completes itself rather than concludes itself. To explore an open form of temporality, I analysed *Virginia's Heartbeat* in detail. Borrowing concepts of different syntheses of time Deleuze elaborated in *Difference and Repetition*, I traced back the construction of memory in the story. Then, I highlighted the notion of "the memories of the future" Dung Kai-cheung proposed and rephrased his words into "the will to memory". For the future and the memories are in plural form, Dung Kai-cheung has drawn a diagram of multi-verses, in contrast to uni-verse. Through his writing machine, he constructed a spatiotemporal ecology, running in schizo-natural temporality. That is the reasons why natural histories should be in plural form. It can be said that for Dung Kai-cheung, to write is to build worlds.

After all these four chapters, I have built the boundaries of *the Natural Histories Trilogy*, which targeted at further exchanges, instead of an inevitable end. The way to ensure exchanges is, as I called, "schizo-natural", which emphasised the productivity, the difference. This notion is what I dug out through the partial-subject of Dung Kai-cheung. However, for the title being "toward a schizo-natural writing," we should not ignore the word "writing" as well. Why should one write? What is the meaning of writing, especially for nature?

### **Writing Nature**

Delanda (2002) once mentioned that the critical feature of Deleuzian philosophy is the replacement of essence by singularities. Singularities, as he defined, "influence behaviour by acting as attractors for the trajectories [...] singularities are said to represent the inherent or intrinsic long-term tendencies of a system, the states which the system will spontaneously tend to adopt in the long run as long as it is not constrained by other forces" (p.7). If this

thesis as a system, then the most powerful singularity must be "writing". To finish the trilogy, Dung Kai-cheung has to write. To study the trilogy, I have to write.

Nevertheless, it is common to understand writing as something artificial. Undeniably, being able to write is a distinct skill for human beings to a large extent. Especially after the linguistic turn, writing has almost wholly grouped in the realm of the artificial. Since Saussure split a word into two parts: a signifier and a signified, words are detached from the world. Language becomes a system isolated from the reality, or becomes reality itself. In this context, writing (nature) is an impossible task.

However, if we can re-situate writing, problems can probably be solved. In European mainstream languages, it may be reasonable to say that a word is related to its meaning arbitrarily. Still, it is not the only case. Apart from Saussure, another linguist has proposed another view on the linguistic system as well. In Charles Sanders Peirce's linguistic system, there are three types of signs, categorised by its relation with the reality: 1) icons, functioning according to the principle of similarity, 2) indices, functioning according to the principle of difference, and 3) symbols, functioning according to the principle of correlation. Referring to the above theory, Kohn (2013) did a magnificent job to provincialise human language as merely one of the millions of types of sign system (p. 39). As such, not only can he examine how forests think, but also reconnect language with the reality. "Signs don't come from mind. Rather, it is the other way around", he added (p.34). He made use of his fieldwork experience, the language of Runa in the Upper Amazon, to elaborate the case. Still, Chinese characters may be a better candidate to exemplify it. In Chinese, there are six methods to create words and the first one is hieroglyphics. Hieroglyphic imitates natural things to make a word. And, in Peirce's case, a hieroglyphic word indeed is an icon, functioning according to the principle of similarity. In other words, for the ancient Chinese, to write is to repeat nature. It is in this sense that I propose the term "writing naturally".

Writing is ontological. Human beings refine nature to write, just like the etymological origin of the word "culture" implied, but should be distinguished from copying nature. In this condition, schizo-natural writing becomes possible while writing as such is not possible.

### **Why schizo-natural?**

It is a long tradition for human beings to inquire questions about nature. Those questions can be ontological inquiries or ethical inquiries, or both. The ways to ask are as diverse as the ways to answer. The urge to question about nature may have come to its highest point in our contemporary world. It is well-known that the eco-system has undergone dramatic changes in recent centuries. Though it is still arguable when Anthropocene started or whether we should call it Anthropocene or Capitalocene, it is undeniably that civilisation has become a tremendous force reshaping what we know as the Earth. What should we do to nature? How should we understand nature? These traditional ways of asking needs a refreshing answer. This juncture is exactly where the schizo-natural writing aims to engage.

Conventional nature writing, as I have mentioned mainly in chapter 2, the social ecology, has its limitation in the contemporary world. Its inclination towards realism makes a great conflict with creative writing. Moreover, as I have stated in the introduction, a realistic approach can capture only the natured nature but not the naturing nature. The schizo-natural writing, under this circumstance, adopt an inverse approach to highlight the fictionality of natural production. I termed this kind of writing by the word "schizo-natural", combining the schizo and the natural, not because the schizo and the natural are the same. They are not the same. However, they shared the same mechanism with respect to their productivity. Before we can go toward a schizo-natural writing, the schizo and the natural, without a hyphen, seems to be two distinct realms. On one hand, it is a particular state of human mind. On the other hand, it is nature. This separation symbolised the fatal mistake of the nature culture

dichotomy. One of the reasons why the schizo-natural writing is proposed in this thesis is that their connection emphasised the inseparability between the two. This inseparability is based on the mechanism to release productivity (in an fictional mode) share by both of them. And to write is one of the critical ways to actualise this productivity. If it is a common practice for romanticism or environmentalism, both of which are strongly opposed by Dung Kai-cheung, to embrace nature through blaming civilisation, the importance for schizo-natural writing to highlight fictionality is to embrace nature and civilisation at the same time. It is not a problem for human beings to invent, to craft or to create anything. In the contrast, the greatest problem we have due to the creativity is that we are not creative enough when it comes to nature. The way for us to understand nature is confined. Schizo-natural writing is a way to write so as to release the productivity of nature.

### **Writing wor(l)ds**

Civilisation has its problems. However, it does not mean that we have to deny the contribution of human beings. We should not underestimate culture. It is the reason why if one does not understand language ontologically, one cannot understand why Dung Kai-cheung writes. Though the trilogy was titled as *natural histories* and this thesis highlighted the problems of nature writing, human affairs never escape from the scope of the schizo-natural writing. The novel flies like a boomerang that it departed from the realm of culture, accelerated toward nature, and finally, bringing the material it gained, went back to culture. It gave us momentum to review what happened in the world.

“I propose to dig out the literary meaning of the natural histories [...] to push the urban civilisation upward, until its origin or margin. [I want to] reveal the existential conditions of human being in the contemporary world” (Dung, 2011, p.343). Dung Kai-cheung's ultimate concern, that which is behind the history of civilisation in the urban mode,

is the worldlessness of the modern people. He quoted Arendt and said, "modern people [...] lost the sense of belonging of cohabiting on the Earth" (2011, p.231) because, on the one hand, the advancement of technology has provided human beings with a possibility to escape from the Earth; on the other hand, the mental bonding between human beings has broken. Worldlessness can be a certain type of view of the world. However, Dung Kai-cheung pointed out the crisis behind, "A world constructed by the worldlessness, no matter what is a world lacking communality. In other words, it is a paralysed, fragmented world without possibility. Probably, it is so-called nothingness" (2011, p. 231).

Under such circumstance, unlike those who claim to be posthuman, Dung Kai-cheung proposed that human beings are the key to solve the problem because of their ability to love. It may be a cliché that we have to love each other. However, Dung Kai-cheung meant more through the notion of love. What is meant by love? We may review the answer given by Ar-Chi in OS,

I thought that the origin of human beings was love! Let me assume as such: In the ancient time, the simians, though having a certain degree of intelligence or sense of community or sense of time, did not know how to love. A simian as such is just a species but not a human. [...] But one day, a female simian and a male simian, aside from the need to survive and breed, felt like attached to each other. And this feeling was even stronger than all other factors to the extent that they would sacrifice themselves for the counterpart (OS, p.504)

In HT, there is another similar description of love as well, "[I]t is a self-willed obligation that is not forced on one from the outside by others. In this sense, it is a sacrifice. It originates in and radiates from the inside, to embrace the whole of the outside. It is love in its purest form" (HT, p.386). In short, love is an action that a person stands outside oneself to

enter into a different other. Deleuze and Guattari pointed out that the schizo is at the same time Homo natura and Homo historia (AO, p.21). In Dung Kai-cheung's writing, I found a missing piece in the puzzle: Homo amāre. It can be said that Nancy (1990), like Dung Kai-cheung, found a promising way through the notion of love, “[f]or Bataille, community was first and finally the community of lovers” (p.36). Love, for Nancy, can be found in a singular subject, "being engulfed alone in its own ecstasy". Ecstasy, etymologically speaking, originated from Greek *ekstasis*, ‘standing outside oneself’. That is to say, to love is to stand outside oneself. It is at this point Dung Kai-cheung and Nancy converge. Dung Kai-cheung further connected it with writing. As such, it is justified to say that, one writes is the same act of loving the worlds.

With respect to the study of Hong Kong literature, this research discovered its territory beyond city writing and outlined a significant turn in Dung Kai-cheung’s writing. Nevertheless, this research, I believe, pushed one of the most important series of works in Dung Kai-cheung’s repertoire to the stage of world literature. It is not simply because *VV*, the first book of the trilogy, has been translated into English. Indeed, the publication of the *Natural Histories Trilogy* has marked Dung Kai-cheung’s change of concern from urbanic civilisation to its foundation, nature. Through this change, his writing is a response no longer to Hong Kong merely but also to the condition of human in the contemporary world. It is in this sense that Dung Kai-cheung has truly engaged in the world literature and the circle of world literature can ignore his works no more.

Dung Kai-cheung engaged in the world literature, interestingly however, as a minor writer. Just like the situation of Kafka as a writer in German literature, Hong Kong writers have long showed up as minor writers with respect to Chinese literature. In fact, there are numerous similarities between Kafka in German literature and Hong Kong writers in Chinese literature, no matter in terms of linguistic features or political struggle. Scholars in Hong

Kong has always been eager to draw theoretical resources worldwide to reflect on local issues. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, one of Deleuze and Guattari's famous books, certainly is of no exception. In 1987, one year after the book *Kafka* being translated into English, Lo (1990) has already borrowed this concept to rethink the situation of Hong Kong Literature. He did a comprehensive study and pointed out that, first of all, a minor literature is not written in a minor language, but rather is constructed within a major language. As Deleuze and Guattari said, "[w]e might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p. 18).

Is it not exactly the situation of Cantonese, a language within Chinese? Moreover, the mix of English and Chinese even further deterritorialized the grand Chinese. As Lo (1990) said, "[Hong Kong writer] is always criticized for being incapable of writing 'pure and original Chinese'" (p.17). However, he immediately added that, "the works of local writers may blur language borders and dismantle the hierarchy of language system" (p.17). It ultimately leads to the displacement of persons, identities and the moment of exile in language. This feature can be seen mostly in the second book of the trilogy, in which Dung Kai-cheung wrote Cantonese directly in the novel.

The strongest reason to support the statement that Dung Kai-cheung is a minor writer is in the political sense. Minor literature is not a specific type of literature. It is an eternal revolutionary action against the whole, or what D&G called the Oedipal. This state of movement can be found simultaneously in the schizo-natural writing I suggested. I guess it is at this point that the two can be connected.

In fact, the book *Kafka* is one of my favourite books of Deleuze and Guattari, even more than *Anti-Oedipus*. And since it is a book about literature, I once considered to build up my thesis around this book. However, *Anti-Oedipus* was more inspiring concerning the

problem of Nature. It directly talked about nature. That's why I focused more on Anti-Oedipus. But there is no doubt that Dung Kai-cheung is a minor writer. Indeed, schizo-natural writing in many respects cannot be detached from Deleuze and Guattari's *Minor Literature*. It is in this sense that schizo-natural writing, just like minor literature, has to be an eternal revolutionary action against the whole, which, as a matter of fact, can be understood as a micro-fascism upon nature in terms of nature writing.

Under this condition, *the Natural Histories Trilogy* can never end, not because the second half of OS, *the Age of Actual War*, came to an immature end. In contrast, its end can be regarded as a characteristic of schizo-natural writing. Dung Kai-cheung revealed in an interview that, "I used to write with a complete structure, a unified system and order" ("Returned for Twenty Years, Literature in Hong Kong 3: Struggling between Fox and Hedgehog - Dung Kai-cheung," 2017), such as *the Natural Histories Trilogy*. However, a system and an order unified as such just contradicted with the schizo-natural writing. As a result, the incompleteness of the *Age of Actual War* and even of *the Natural Histories Trilogy*, in a contrary way, match with the schizo-natural writing, with the purpose of writing naturally. As I have said, the schizo-natural writing cannot be completed and that is its productivity.

Still, writing naturally is an endless action for one more reason, that is to say, for an endless construction of worlds. Dung Kai-cheung condensed multiple words into one trilogy, and the energy carried by the trilogy impacts on readers. Those readers, with their different reading experience, impact in a broader aspect or even construct a new plane. The transmission of energy fabricates new form of communality further and further. Therefore, it can never be completed but in a state of eternal movement, just like how Dung Foo and Lung Kam-yuk experienced when they walked in the hills:

In the hills the cicadas wrung out their tune, sucking sap from the pines or their suitable species and synchronizing their calls into a huge, undulating hum. The cicada calls evoked the scent of bronze, and the dragonflies shook their metallic blue bodies as they mated above the streams, the trees grew closer together; the shade became dense. As they walked through this natural factory of life, they came across the production line of species, bathed in the surge of electric and magnetic waves. They walked for a long time. There was a vivid resonance in the living machine (VV, p.43).

## References

- Bewell, A. (2017). *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chau, M. (2011). To Journey Along Time for Beings and Their Objects: An Inquisition of Object/Family History Writing in Dong Qizhang's *Tiangong Kaiwu*, Xuxu Ruzhen. *Bulletin of the Department of Chinese Literature*, (16), 231–268.
- Delanda, M. (2002). *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Deleuze, G. (1988a). *Bergsonism*. Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1988b). *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and Repetition*. London: Athlone Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1998). *Essays Critical and Clinical*. London: Verso.
- Deleuze, G. (2015). *Logic of Sense*. London: UK: Bloomsbury Revelations.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1986). *Kafka : toward a minor literature*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2009). *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (2013). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia II*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Deleuze, G., & Parnet, C. (1987). The Actual and the Virtual. In *Dialogues*. London, UK: Athlone Press.
- Dung, K. C. (2007). *The Histories of Time: The Light of Nga Chi I*. Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Co.
- Dung, K. C. (2007). *The Histories of Time: The Light of Nga Chi II*. Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Co.

- Dung, K. C. (2007). A Prologue, or Epilogue, of Time. In K. C. Lo (Ed.), *Time: the Collection of Essays from the Hong Kong Baptist University International Writers' Workshop* (pp. 116–124). Hong Kong: Infolink Publishing.
- Dung, K. C. (2010). *On the Origin of Species: The Rebirth of Bui Bui - The Age of Apprenticeship*. Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Co.
- Dung, K.C. (2011). *Write in the World; Write for the World*. Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Co.
- Dung, K. C. (2011). From Opening to Everything - the Birth of a City. In *the 8th Hong Kong Literature Festival: Record of the Seminars*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Public Library.
- Dung, K. C. (2013). *P.E. Period: Semester 2 (Theatre Edition)*. Taipei: Linking Publishing.
- Dung, K. C. (2018). *The History of the Adventures of Vivi and Vera* (Yau, W. P. Trans.). Hong Kong: East Slope Publishing Limited.
- Gersdorf, C., & Mayer, S. (2006). *Nature in literary and cultural studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism*. Amsterdam;New York, NY; Rodopi.
- Grossberg, L. (2016). Cultural Studies and Deleuze – Guattari , Part 1. *Cultural Studies*, 28(1), 1–28.
- Guattari, F. (2014). *The Three Ecologies*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Hee, W. S. (2013). Fetishism, commodity fetishism and the quest for knowledge: focusing on the work of nature, the work of man. *The Study of Chinese Language and Literature* 《汉语言文学研究》, (2), 97–115.
- Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated.
- Kauffman, L. (1986). *Discourses of desire : Gender, genre, and epistolary fictions*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Latour, B. (1991). *We Have Never Been Modern*. Cambridge, MA: Havard Univerisity Press.

- Lo, K. [羅貴祥]. (1990). *Crossing boundaries : a study of modern Hong Kong fiction from the fifties to the eighties*. (Thesis). University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong SAR. Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.5353/th\\_b3120935](http://dx.doi.org/10.5353/th_b3120935)
- Lopez, D. S. (1988). *The Heart Sūtra explained : Indian and Tibetan commentaries*. State University of New York Press.
- Moretti, F. (1987). *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso.
- Nancy, J. (1990). *The Inoperative Community*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Nadler, S. (2008). "Whatever is, is in God": Substance and Things in Spinoza's Metaphysics. In Huenemann, C. (Eds.), *Interpreting Spinoza : Critical essays* (pp. 53-70). Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Pessoa, F. (2003). *The Book of Disquiet*. (R. Zenith, Ed.). New York: Penguin Books.
- Said, E. W. (2006). *On late style*. Bloomsbury.
- Pessoa, F. (2006). *A Little Larger Than the Entire Universe: selected poems*. (R. Zenith, Ed.). New York: Penguin Books.
- Thoreau, H. D. (1989). *The Walden*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Westling, L. (2006). Literature, the environment, and the question of the posthuman. In C. Gersdorf & S. Mayer (Eds.), *Nature in Literary and Cultural Studies: Transatlantic Conversations on Ecocriticism* (pp. 25–47). Amsterdam; New York, NY; Rodopi.
- Young, E. B., Genosko, G., & Watson, J. (2013). *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Academic qualification of the thesis author, Mr. CHEUNG Ho Sum:

- Received the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Humanities from Hong Kong Baptist University, September 2016

June 2019