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Cities and Their People: Dwelling in the Anthropic Time of N. K. Jemisin's New York

Abstract

The article starts with Martin Heidegger's 1951 essay "Bauen Wohnen Denken," recently rethought by Jeff Malpas in his book *Rethinking Dwelling* from today's perspective of urban and metropolitan dwelling. However, while defining dwelling relationally, the Australian philosopher still thinks about the human as a being-in-place in a traditional, human-centred way. Thus he overlooks how tightly humans are entangled with more-than-humans: with biological, geological, and technological entities and agencies. For this reason, the article tackles a further rethinking of dwelling beyond human sociality, or even queering it beyond binary thinking to better depict what it proposes to call urban subjectivity. Reading N. K. Jemisin's recent novel duology *The Great Cities*, the article argues that urban subjectivity is a distributed phenomenon, which both incorporates and elaborates on more-than-human elements. In so doing, urban subjects share a sociality not only with the animal and geological but also with technological forces and their territorial exorganic functions as an agency of anti-entropic locality (Bernard Stiegler's "anthropic life"). Thus, creatively approached technology as a pharmakonian form of organogenesis and Derridian *différance* may help us keep the entropic and neganthropic forces in balance, as pertinently demonstrated in Jemisin's duology.

Keywords: dwelling beyond human sociality, anthropic time, urban subjectivity, anti-entropic locality, N. K. Jemisin's *The Great Cities* series.

RETHINKING DWELLING[1]

In his recent *Rethinking Dwelling* (2021), Australian philosopher Jeff Malpas returns to Martin Heidegger's 1951 essay "Bauen Wohnen Denken," translated into English as "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1975), to reflect upon architecture as a mode of both thinking and making. There is a reason why I focus on Malpas's topological inquiry. The author not only offers a new reading of Heidegger's essay but also situates it in an in-depth comparison of foundational terms in English translation—and in almost all subsequent English-language discussions—with their original German equivalents, starting with the key-word "dwelling." Contrary to "wohnen," a common notion in everyday language used by Heidegger, "to dwell" is less widely employed, although it denotes remaining in a habitable or inhabited structure. Also, the English verb has quite a different etymology than "wohnen," and as a consequence, different connotations. Many of them are regarded as obsolete or archaic today, as Malpas demonstrates with reference to a comprehensive quotation from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Therefore, as he emphasizes, because the English translation features an unfamiliar notion, which sounds like a technical or even poetic term, it fails to repeat the basic Heideggerian philosophical gesture—the gesture of employing as the key-term a word that readers think they understand all too well, and to put this understanding in question. Moreover, there is no single English verb or noun which matches the German "wohnen." Nevertheless, fully-aware of the embeddedness of "dwelling" in the English-language literature, the author of *Rethinking Dwelling* offers "living" or "inhabiting" as a far better solution to translate Heidegger's key-notion to preserve the broadest range of meanings possible. It is with these two English words in mind that Malpas rethinks dwelling as the basic mode of relational situatedness, of attending and responding to place, by putting the spotlight on "the fundamental character of human being in the world and the structure of possibility by which it is shaped and conditioned" (35).

137

In Malpas's book the eponymous dwelling remains, therefore, a basic form of articulation of human presence in the world. As the author writes, "dwelling brings to the fore the way in which place and the human are implicated with one another" (6). In other words, following Heidegger's idea, Malpas conceives of architecture as "a mode of engagement with the world and with the happening of world, as that which occurs in and from out of place" (185). It is for this reason, as he emphasizes, that the human

and place should be comprehended and articulated in their relatedness through which they also participate in a larger landscape. In articulating the human mode of being-in-place, architecture allows the human to ask about their own being and the limits of that being, to grasp "one's own being-somewhere as a belonging-to and an apartness-from" (187). Significantly, Malpas reads Heidegger's essay from today's perspective of urban and metropolitan dwelling as well as the experience of mobility and displacement which make this mode of dwelling an ongoing task. For, contrary to many readers of Heidegger before him, Malpas deliberately does not associate the German philosopher's idea of being-in-place with the traditionally agricultural, settled way of life, which has become obsolete. Although dwelling seems almost impossible in the current condition, the notion still may be used to capture our increasingly problematic sense of being at home. As Malpas explains, dwelling "does not name *one* mode of being as opposed to *another*, but instead refers to *the* way human being, in an unqualified sense, is 'in' the world" (42, italics in the original). Therefore, the life of each human being is anchored in human history in dialogue with their eco-logical and social environment with which they bodily and topologically engage. That being so, it seems pertinent to ask how to dwell in the Anthropocene, the time when our species turns out to be entropically self-destructive and, as such, destroys life in general.

However, by defining the main function of architecture as a necessary externalization, or extension, of a topological understanding of the human, Malpas markedly distinguishes the human from other modes of being which lack an equally high level of self-awareness and openness which the human has as its inherent feature. Hence, despite his critical rethinking of Heidegger's essay, Malpas still clings to the basic difference upon which human superiority and mastery over the world has been premised at least since the so-called "long 16th century." Precisely in the context of the Anthropocene as the era of humans' unquestionable dominance with increasingly visible catastrophic consequences, I posit that the Heideggerian conceptual apparatus needs to be more decidedly challenged and reshaped in a queering perspective to decentre humans and unthink their mastery. From this point of view the human and place should be understood not only as implicated with and related to each other but rather as constantly and dynamically defining each other, or even always attuning one to the other (and to many other more-than-human entities). Understandably, this is too ambitious a goal to attain in this article. Therefore, in what follows I take a closer look at the relationship between dwellers and their cities, understood as the highest form of human sociability, to demonstrate how the typical way of seeing their relationship could be reversed to assign the city more agency. To this aim, I offer a close

reading of the urban speculative duology *The Great Cities—The City We Became* (2020) and *The World We Make* (2022)—written by N. K. Jemisin, a well-known Brooklyn-based Black writer of science fiction. Significantly, in the author's note to the second instalment Jemisin calls the two novels "a fantastical paean to a real city" (355), today's New York in a speculative rendering. At stake in my argument is, therefore, not a city as a dwelling place of humans, but that which passes both between themselves and between them and the city, holding them together or forcing them apart. That is why I start with a definition of what could be called an urban subjectivity in the context of those contemporary exorganic processes of psychic, collective and technical individuation, which condition the form of life of humans as biological and noetic beings. This will allow me to reshape and queer the concept of dwelling in a posthumanist perspective of emergent human and more-than-human entanglements—biological, geological, and technological—within and through which we are living in the critical stage of the Anthropocene.

139

BEYOND HUMAN SOCIALITY

Jemisin's duology *The Great Cities* depicts a speculative version of today's world in which major cities have already become sentient through their human avatars, characterized as "amalgamated gods sprung whole from the fusion of belief with reality" (*The World We Make* 10). Both novels focus on an alternative vision of today's New York and its denizens. They are involved in a rather complicated process, full of existential dangers, of attuning to each other in order to achieve sentience as a possible heterogeneous entity while facing powerful decompositional forces of entropy. In this respect the duology differs considerably from the author's well-known SF trilogy *The Broken Earth*, even though both depict a similar condition of constant geo-ecological precarity. Particularly in *The City We Became* the events unfold to demonstrate the difference between new emergent lifeforms and nonlife of generalized entropic degradation, typical of late neoliberal capitalism. One of the main characters explains the phenomenon of a sentient city in all its complexity: "We who become cities are evolving, dynamic entities, constantly adjusting to the needs of our citizens, endlessly pushed and pulled by state politics and international economies" (*The World We Make* 10). In the finale of the second instalment the action even reaches a multiversal dimension, because the cities of our world and their dwellers that partake in a global actualization of entropic cosmos institute a new postanthropic era. However, as I have already pointed out, to reach this stage in the history of Earth and humans a slightly different approach to

the concept of dwelling is needed—one which extends far beyond simple, exclusively human sociality and proves operative in analyzing critical changes from an anthropic to a postanthropic city. Everyday urban life in Jemisin's exemplary New York undergoes these critical changes step by step. That is why in my reading I treat this fabulated city as a kind of speculative materialization of Elizabeth A. Povinelli's sociology of potentiality, defined in her *Economies of Abandonment* (2011). In this book the American anthropologist shows how to write about alternative social worlds from the point of view of today's social projects which offer possible embodied futures, such as the one in Jemisin's *The Great Cities*.

Povinelli's *Economies of Abandonment* is the middle part—beside *The Empire of Love* (2006) and *Geontologies* (2016)—of a trilogy that she entitled *Dwelling in Late Liberalism* in an online interview "On Biopolitics and the Anthropocene" (2014). The series develops an "anthropology of otherwise" by focusing critically on neoliberal discourses about alternative social worlds to demonstrate "a *collapse* of our understanding of being (entities) into our understanding of a particular kind of being, a life being" ("On Biopolitics and the Anthropocene," italics in the original). It is in this context that Povinelli also touches upon *Being and Time* to point to Heidegger's decisive turn away from the problem of life (Leben) to the problem of being (Dasein). Understood in this way, the problem of being determines, as I have already demonstrated, not only the Heideggerian concept of dwelling but also the way Malpas proposes to rethink it in his recent study. For despite emphasizing relationality and the in-placeness concept, despite being rethought, Malpas's approach remains centred more around a universal definition of human being than an embodied and locally determined sociality of human and more-than-human entities. Contrary to Malpas, in *Economies of Abandonment* Povinelli emphasizes her interest in a kind of being which needs to be understood "in a specific historical context, in specific agencements—arrangements of connecting concepts, materials, and forces that make a common compositional unity" (16). These specific historical contexts and *agencements* which need to be taken into consideration while rethinking and decentring human dwelling have clearly influenced her concept of a sociology of potentiality. It extends "far beyond simple human sociality" to "include humans and a host of other modes of existence being composed and decomposed" (*Economies of Abandonment* 7).

To demonstrate how important it is to recognize the role of geographical/geological materials in biographical possibilities, in all the works that make up *Dwelling in Late Liberalism* Povinelli draws mostly on one example of indigenous politics and sociality within the settler colony of northern Australia. Moreover, in *Economies of Abandonment* she does

so in "the wake of the legitimacy crisis of the postcolonial world and a new post-9/11 crisis" (79). By contrast, Jemisin wrote her series *The Great Cities* during the markedly different conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic and the health, economic and social crises that it brought about. Although those crises did not directly impact her New York and its people, her novel has captured the relationship between human bodies and geontological place which co-constitute each other. In so doing, the author intended to foreground the miraculous moment when new life emerges from within the unliveable architecture and urban landscape. Yet this does not mean that in focusing on possible futures, Jemisin marginalizes the legacies of colonialism and racism and the still dominant ontology of (white) Man as a self-identical, self-enclosed being who apparently masters the world and himself. As she claims, "to think about crisis is to think about how the infrastructure and environment of crisis are historically contingent" (Ivry 112). In particular, both novels demonstrate complex, complicated and localized relationships between New York boroughs and their avatars who are the catalysts of the city's survival or destruction in the long shadow of settler colonialism.

Although after becoming a sentient city New York is about to join a great number of already living and thinking cities—some as ancient as Paris, Istanbul, Tripoli, and Faiyum—its birth turns out to be unique in many ways. It is the first American city to reach this point. Also, even if the end of the first instalment shows the city eventually born, its fate will not be decided until the finale of the second when other living cities eventually side with New York against a common Enemy, savvy at multiversal manipulation. For Jemisin shows her speculated New York as a battleground where a fight is waged against cosmic forces of entropy. Those forces materialize as a Lovecraftian totally alien city of R'lyeh, created by the Ur, which threatens to annihilate and take the place of New York. It is not only Donna J. Haraway who has recently referred to this iconic American writer of weird fantasy and horror fiction from the early 20th century, best known for his creation of the Cthulhu Mythos. In her *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), Haraway defines the coming Chthulucene as an epoch of entangled "myriad temporalities and myriad spatialities and myriad intra-active entities-in-assamblages" (101). Through a different spelling she sets this new era in opposition to "Lovecraft's misogynist racial nightmare monster Cthulhu" (101) which undoubtedly symbolizes the current Anthropocene. In addition, Matt Ruff's novel *Lovecraft Country* (2016), published in the same year as Haraway's book, explores the long-hidden conjunction between Lovecraft's horror fiction and American racism in the era of Jim Crow laws in the 1950s. The novel was popularized by the eponymous HBO

series which premièred in August 2020. In a sense, both Haraway and Ruff paved the way for Jemisin who equated the Lovecraftian R'lyeh with inimical cosmic forces of entropy. Already Jemisin's earlier novels "decisively reject the Lovecraftian dehumanization of nonnormative subjectivities" (80), as Moritz Ingwersen rightly noticed. However, in Jemisin's duology even the characters themselves identify the racist and misogynist writer with the currently operating global powers of destruction. No wonder that a representative of the city of R'lyeh, named the Woman in White, calls cities "an endemic problem of life" and explains: "Lovecraft was right. . . . There's something different about cities, and about the people in cities" (*The City We Became* 341). That is why—and contrary to the way Haraway differentiates Cthulhu and the diverse chthonic, tentacular powers on which her Chthulucene will be premised—in Jemisin's duology the Lovecraftian enemy of the living cities takes on the features of natural earthly forces, depicted according to New York's specific geographic locality. Moreover, it threatens the city with a flood, an increasingly real danger in the time of global warming.

Nevertheless, in today's critical phase of the Anthropocene the author of *The Great Cities* series not only materializes cosmic entropy as natural forces causing various calamities. She also highlights the contexts of globalization and algorithmic governmentality, typical of informational capitalism, which effectively change the place of dwelling into an automated, "dead" city. In a similar manner Bernard Stiegler—the late French philosopher and Jacques Derrida's student—considers life and survival on our planet after the thermodynamic question and characterizes the way in which in the mid-1990s the Anthropocene crossed a significant threshold when global digital networks were created. Importantly, in his articles gathered in the volume *The Neganthropocene* (2018) Stiegler not only equates the recent and critical phase of the Anthropocene with a state of emergency which affects the entire biosphere, threatening every form of life. He also emphasizes the capacity of the living to temporarily and locally defer entropy through "bifurcation emerging from *différance*, whether vital or noetic" (200, italics in the original). In the next section I return to his concept of anthropic life that can no longer be thought on the basis of biology alone. It forms a new anthropotechnological configuration in which technology has transformed from a destructive into a constructive power. However, before that I focus on what Stiegler identifies as a crucial new element to which Heidegger paid hardly any attention, although it had been brought to light by Schrödinger in the early 1940s, namely negentropic function of locality. Both Schrödinger's quantum theory and the vital function of locality recur in Jemisin's duology as important factors that make it possible to fight against entropy.

There is a reason why the author of *The Great Cities* series made her New York special by assigning not only one avatar to embody the entire city, as in the case of other metropolises. Also, each of New York's boroughs has its own representative, even though it significantly complicates their tasks. In Jemisin's duology each avatar has to attune itself to their respective borough and to the others so that a dynamic, heterogeneous life-being (as Povinelli calls it) can emerge. Thus, in the first instalment the author fabulates the avatars' quest to get together and then to find Neek, who embodies the whole city and awaits their consolidation in a deep coma after his first encounter with the inimical power. As the title *The City We Became* emphasizes, the way the events unfold allows Jemisin to demonstrate the differences between the districts, their respective pasts and current materialities which have to interpenetrate with the biographies and individualities of their avatars in order to make New York alive. Neek is a poor, hungry and homeless Black boy, a self-taught street artist whose ancestors' bones repose under Wall Street. The avatar of Brooklyn, a serious, level-headed Black mother of a teenage girl, sits on the city council and earns her living by renting out vacation property in one of the brownstones belonging to her family. By contrast, Bronca, a Lenni-Lenape Indian lesbian who once fought against the police at Stonewall, is about to become a grandmother. She embodies the Bronx and runs a publicly funded Bronx Art Centre which desperately tries to remain independent from private donors who want to change its cultural policy of representing the full range of this borough's diversity. Contrary to them, the avatar of Staten Island is a young white woman of Irish origin, brought up by her racist, misogynistic, homophobic father, a macho policeman. That is why, despite the palpable pull of the city, she is afraid of taking a ferry across New York Bay and until the last moment sides with the Woman in White representing the inimical city of R'lyeh. Her hesitancy as to which side of the global conflict to join not only complicates the action, but also permits the Woman in White, an embodiment of entropic forces, to lay out her reasons for fighting against all forms of difference characteristic of all living entities.

However, Jemisin is far from identifying locality with being in place and originally of that place. Like Malpas, who—as I have already pointed out—reads Heidegger's essay in the context of today's experience of mobility and displacement, she emphasizes that modern cities are built to incorporate newness. Therefore, the avatars of Manhattan and Queens are clearly not rooted in boroughs by which they have been chosen as their respective embodiments. A dark brown Tamil girl, Padmini Prakash, is not even a US citizen, and came to New York on a temporary student visa. Nevertheless, Queens, where many like Padmini dwell, likewise

hating that place, has chosen her as its avatar. Also, Manny, a good-looking but definitely non-white American, has never been to New York before. However, he is granted the possibility of choosing whether he wants to become Manhattan's avatar or not. No wonder that it is him who happily finds out: "The city needs newcomers! He belongs here as much as anyone born and bred to its streets, because anyone who wants to be of New York can be!" (*The City We Became* 47). Jemisin introduces Manny as somebody suffering from a total memory loss at Penn Station, although memory loss is not part of the normal process of becoming an avatar. In this way Manny's example shows the inexplicable compulsions and phantom sensations the city keeps feeding him and the other avatars in order to make them function as its vectors, giving them strength which they have to figure out how to use and weaponize.

Clearly, in *The Great Cities* the urban mode of dwelling is presented as a complex, performative and ever-present task of mutual obligations between people and places that demonstrates in what ways potentiality emerges from actuality. In the same manner Povinelli, in *Economies of Abandonment*, depicts her beyond-human sociology of potentiality. No wonder that Jemisin fabulates New York's avatars as no longer fully human. Rather, they are composite entities—human and more-than-human agencies which I approach in what follows as a kind of urban subjectivity, conceptualized as a form of anthropic life that is no longer thinkable on the basis of biology only, as Stiegler would have it. This is why the title of the present article reverses the common order of belonging—cities and their people instead of people and their cities—to demonstrate an alter(ed) model of subjectivity which I focus on in my reading of Jemisin's duology.

URBAN SUBJECTIVITY

The Great Cities series starts with a prologue, in which Neek sprays a hole on a rooftop in Chinatown; a hole "like a throat that doesn't start with a mouth or end in lungs; a thing that breathes and swallows endlessly, never filling" (*The City We Become* 4). All he knows at this very moment is that he needs to open up this throat. After finishing his graffiti, Neek suddenly hears the painted throat sigh behind him, and feels how "a big, heavy gust of moist air tickles the hairs on my skin" (4). Yet, when he turns back, everything he sees is just a painted hole. Nevertheless, this is how the city of New York is born out of a feedback loop, due to the mediation of graffiti as an incarnation of today's urban art, which provides a site and mode of sensibility for engaging with the temporal and material conditions of the anthropic city. The mediation also entails a peculiar re-centering of

Neek's awareness when he learns that the city has its own will and knows how to get what it wants. The re-centering reveals multiple origins of his subjectivity as both interior and prior to the emergence of identity which is always in excess of itself. From this moment onwards Neek starts to feel himself not as a self-centred, discreet and bounded entity anymore. Rather, he becomes an ever-emerging and ever-shifting configuration of other, more-than-human urban modes of existence here and now. This experience is shared by all other avatars. Thus, at this juncture I would like to draw on Kathryn Yusoff's concept of distributed geologic subjectivity as a new conceptualization of ecological arrangements, capable of dismantling the boundaries between a living entity and its (supposedly non-living) environment. This concept should help me identify a more contemporary materialization of the more-than-human urban subjectivity of today's metropolitan city dwellers which Jemisin's novels constitute and speculatively fabulate.

145

In her article "Geologic Subjects: Nonhuman Origins, Geomorphic Aesthetics and the Art of Becoming *In*human" (2014), Yusoff, a British expert on inhuman geography, examines the conceptual and corporeal genealogy of what she calls geologic subjectivity, pertinent to geological politics of the Anthropocene. Significantly, she does it within the framework of an experiment in the geologic imagination through an inquiry into symbolic images. Trying to understand "what it is to be a subject in the context of a broader field of ecological life; and the role of aesthetics as a site of ontological differentiation for subjectivity within this ecology" (384), Yusoff focuses on two instances of prehistoric rock art: the "Birdman" from Lascaux in Southern France, and the *Gwion Gwion* figures from Kimberly in Western Australia. Importantly, both her examples show composite entities with human and animal features. However, she reads those artefacts not as typical artworks, made to be presented in an art gallery and interpreted by critics. She treats them as images that stimulate cosmic energies, opening "a space of experience that holds relations of nonhuman force between phenomena to blur boundaries and cross inhuman timescales" (384). Clearly, she focuses on the interrelation of nonhuman and inhuman forces involved in the prehistoric process of becoming human to reveal them as a forgotten surplus in our identity formation. In so doing, she investigates the archaic origins and model of this identity to think beyond the subsequent anthropocentric image of Man and its humanistic normative arrangements. With the aim of doing something corresponding to Yusoff's speculative questioning of cave art, Jemisin arguably undertakes a slightly different thought experiment. As I will demonstrate, she looks for another kind of a forgotten surplus. What is important is that as in Yusoff's examples of prehistoric rock art so in

146

Jemisin's speculated New York a similar space of experience opens up. In the prologue to *The City We Became* it literally opens up like the big throat that Neek has sprayed on the rooftop as if it were a wall of a contemporary cave. It also generates enough energy to awaken both the city of New York and its avatars which increasingly become aware of their inhuman—or more-than-human—condition; of their going beyond the anthropocentric image of Man.

Moreover, the manner in which Yusoff reads the two examples of cave art also allows her to move beyond the boundary-work of hybridity to argue for the consideration of a queer ecology which decentres the traditionally defined human (Man). Therefore, a more-than-human subject emerges here not as a discreet, self-contained entity but rather as a dynamic constellation and dynamic assemblage of inhuman time, nonhuman forces, and geologic materialities. Hence, the geologic subject is inherently performative. For, as Yusoff explains in her article, "it is the gathering up of these communities into an entity that is discontinuous with itself because it contains nonlocal elements" (398). Significantly, urban subjects in Jemisin's novels have similar queer genealogies and cofounding origins. However, this case of a forgotten surplus of subjectivity needs a closer examination. By showing that identity is always in excess of itself, and that this excess is not only of social nature, Yusoff focuses mainly on biological and geophysical forces. Yet, as Jemisin aptly demonstrates, in today's cities other forces are also at play—the forces of (digital) technology. Despite Heidegger's fear of the power of modern technology, which in his view threatens the groundedness of human being, those forces carry out the formation of subjectivity of city dwellers, too. They also take part in the urban sociality as an event of non/inhuman kinship, as Yusoff would have it. For this reason, the concept of dwelling urgently needs a similar queering reconceptualization in contrast with Malpas's more human-centred rethinking of Heidegger's idea.

Highlighting the specific relationality between New York's boroughs and their avatars, I have already demonstrated that the avatars function as their respective borough's vectors. In this way the city gives their avatars the power which they have to figure out how to use and weaponize. Therefore, it is crucial to explain in a more detailed way how the avatars use that power. Depending on their individual abilities and competences they also need what Jemisin calls a talisman, an artefact, or a construct to more precisely channel the city's power. Once again, Manny's example comes in handy. During a walk in Inwood Hill Park and knowing close to nothing about what kind of enemy he has to confront and how to do it effectively, Manny encounters the Woman in White. First, he learns experientially that a specific site of the first real estate swindle of the soon-to-be New

York, located in the park Shorakkopoch, has become an object of power beyond the reach of the enemy. Second, quickly recalling that this city is built on the concept of land ownership, he comes up with an idea to use his credit cards to secure symbolically, albeit only temporarily, more land under his feet free of the influence of the entropic forces. Obviously, a construct is not necessarily an object, such as Manny's credit cards. It could also be an idea, a mathematical formula or even an imaginary vision of an underground station at rush hour. However, I refer to the scene in which Manny uses the right combination of things/ideas summoning the city's power, because I want to argue that to adequately identify a surplus in question it is useful to refer to Jacques Derrida's concept of supplement. One more reason to do so is the fact that in the already-mentioned volume *The Neganthropocene* Stiegler has rethought the Derridian concept as organogenesis and neganthropological *différance* within the framework of thermodynamics. As Peter Lemmens and Yuk Hui explain: "Neganthropy as a thermodynamic concept very briefly refers to the order as well as potentiality in a system or process, whilst entropy means disorder and loss of potentiality" (2017). Jemisin also unfolds the events in her duology within the thermodynamic framework.

147

In his *Neganthropocene*, Stiegler emphasizes that to draw the most viable consequences from today's critical phase of the Anthropocene "a new geopolitics of exosomatization" (125) needs to be elaborated. For—as he emphasizes, in contrast to Heidegger—psychic and collective individuation have always been already inseparable from technic(al) individuation. Hence what we call evolution, since the birth of life has also been an evolution of the exosomatic itself in which our exosomatic organs have continually played the role of pharmaka, depending on the way humans put them to use. To demonstrate that, Stiegler comes back to the paleo-history of the Derridian supplement. In so doing, he recalls what Georges Bataille, while looking at the paintings of Lascaux, called the birth of art in the caves of the Upper Paleolithic, from which the noesis as such stems. At this juncture Stiegler meets Yusoff, despite all the differences in their respective theories and terminologies. This convergence allows me to think jointly about her concept of geologic subjectivity and his notion of supplement in order to find a forgotten surplus upon which a concept of urban subjectivity in Jemisin's duology may be premised.

Regardless of whether it has been inspired by Stiegler's ideas or not, Jemisin's *The Great Cities* can be effectively read as an attempt at imagining and implementing the new geopolitics, the new stage of Derridian *différance* which has remained to be worked out since Stiegler intuited it. As the French philosopher himself emphasizes, for Heidegger to think carefully is to think the ontological difference of being and being. Contrary to that,

Stiegler writes the word "care-fully" with a hyphen to highlight the sense of taking thoughtful care not only about a subject but also the process of thinking as such. As he explains in *The Neganthropocene*, "[f]or us, coming *after* Derrida, this means to think care-fully about *différance*, and to make it, and to do so in supplement(s)" (249, italics in the original). What is important in the context of this article is that Stiegler counts cities among those supplements: that is, as exorganic processes of psychic, collective and technical individuation which condition the form of life of noetic beings. As he argues, each city is "the social concretion of a society individualizing itself exorganically" (121). This institutes a kind of soul (a sense of place). This soul, according to Stiegler, is founded on diversely symbolized history as well as forms of learning a territory capable of thinking and territorializing—thinking care-fully and making negentropy of noetic bifurcation. This is also the main task of New York's avatars in *The Great Cities*. They not only have to fight against the ancient enemy of living cities and life as such. They also have to fight against the city's legacies of racism and bigotry for a better future in which life is changeable and constantly bifurcating to create lively new formations of dwelling that de-center humans.

CITIES AND THEIR PEOPLE (A TEMPORARY CONCLUSION)

This article began with the Heideggerian concept of dwelling, recently rethought by Malpas. He proposes not only an insightful analysis of Heidegger's 1951 essay "Bauen Wohnen Denken" in the English translation, which noticeably influenced almost all subsequent English-language discussion. He also reads the essay from today's perspective of urban and metropolitan dwelling as well as the experience of mobility and displacement. However, it is my contention that while defining dwelling relationally, he still thinks about the human as a being-in-place in a traditional, human-centred way. For this reason he overlooks how tightly humans, even as today's cities dwellers, are entangled and enmeshed with more-than-humans: that is, biological, geological, and technological entities and agencies. That is why the concept of dwelling needs to be further modified beyond human sociality, or even queered beyond binary thinking. In order to depict what I call urban subjectivity, already in the title of my article I reverse the common understanding of the relationship and belonging between dwellers and their cities. For cities—once built and thought of as a human-centred second nature—have increasingly become a condition of our constant geo-climatological precarity.

Reading Jemisin's *The Great Cities*, I have therefore tried to outline urban subjectivity as a distributed phenomenon which both incorporates and elaborates on more-than-human elements. In so doing, urban subjects share a sociality not only with animal and geological forces, as demonstrated by Yusoff in her "Geologic subjects." They also share this sociality with technological forces and their territorial exorganic functions as an agency of anti-entropic locality in ways which Bernard Stiegler elaborates in *The Neganthropocene*. Thus, despite Heidegger's warning against the dominance of modern technology as a life-threatening power, technology—when properly understood as a pharmakon—does not need to implicitly be our enemy, even though today it takes the form of a mighty global closed-system of informational capitalism and algorithmic governmentality. Creatively approached, technology as a form of organogenesis and *différance* might also help us to keep the entropic and neganthropic forces in balance. Jemisin's duology not only demonstrates this, but also challenges us to rethink, queer and de-center the Heideggerian concept of dwelling, going a step further than Malpas.

149

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150

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