

Speculative Architecture

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What is the problem of epiphylogenesis? We can define and understand the term, but what does it do and what does it demand of us? Indeed, one way of thinking about epiphylogenesis is through Bernard Stiegler's claim that some forms of technology generate or enable long circuits of desire, and that this needs to be recalled in a time of short circuits. Epiphylogenesis requires both that we pose problems differently, and that 'we' are, or should be, a problem to ourselves. Let me unpack this by beginning with what presents itself as a major problem: climate change, and the end of the world. What are we going to do? How can we change course? How do we save the world? The posing of the question in this way is only possible if there is a distinct 'we' who must then deliberate a course of action in relation to the world. Epiphylogenesis shifts the question towards the very possibility of this 'we'. How do formations of what comes to think of itself as 'the human' come into being, and what worlds and capacities do such formations make possible? For Stiegler the problem of climate change is ultimately the problem of who 'we' are, along with a constitutive tendency towards the failure to confront this question.

Epigenesis, in general, refers to the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Thinking of who 'we' are epigenetically already shifts the burden away from conceptions of liberalism, where we become who we are through deliberative relations with each other in a common milieu; every gesture, word, desire, image and artefact stores the past. To desire a brick veneer house with a picket fence

and finely mowed lawn is to maintain a norm of suburban security; to demand that schools teach a certain version of history is to conserve the terrain of social relations and aspirations of the present; to mark certain occasions with certain foods, to recognise gender through certain comportments, to be moved by Beethoven's Ninth Symphony but not Coltrane's 'A Love Supreme': all these possibilities emerge from stored memories. If epigenesis is the carrying over of the past into who 'we' are, epiphylogenesis makes this claim about the very formation and possibility of the 'we'. It is not only that there is something like the human species that may alter genetically depending on the behaviour of past generations. Rather, what Stiegler refers to as 'the human' is this external storage and carrying over of memory. There is a difference between epigenesis in its strict and technical sense; if your parents lived at a high altitude and became 'hypoxia tolerant', you can inherit that characteristic, even if you are not born at high altitude. For epigenetics there is something called the human species, as such, prior to its inheritance of acquired characteristics. Epiphylogenesis will argue that the human comes into being with the external storage of memories; the creation of figurines and fables opens the space of the present into a world of myth and imagined futures enriched by the past. Every reiteration creates a more complex space and time of desire. If my desires are made possible through a range of complex, inherited, constantly transformed and intensified objects then my world is made possible by intricate relations with others,

whose sense of who they are and who I am can reach a high degree of individuation.

In the twenty-first century with the massive archival range of objects, images, narratives, designs, games, institutions and histories available to be streamed, downloaded, purchased and held privately, each living body can mark out its range of possibility by reading, listening, viewing and wearing a highly specific ensemble of artefacts, each in communication with an inherited past, an anticipated future and presupposed 'we'. The very singularity of who I am, and my capacity to desire and have a world is made possible by an archive that is beyond the bounds of my own (and any other human's) body, or what Stiegler refers to as 'exosomatic'. This is the difference between epigenesis (or inherited acquired traits) and epiphylogenesis, where who 'we' are is located beyond the body, and includes the buildings, monuments, institutions, habits and rhythms of the world. For this reason my own being, like every other human, is rendered utterly fragile. The archive of stored memory in its very range and complexity may cease to open a space of desire or futurity. This is how Stiegler articulates the problem of the Neganthropocene. The external storage of memories is what enables the human to be formed across time, increasing with complexity and intensity in the range of what can be imagined. A 'we' is formed through the ongoing reading, dreaming and desiring made possible by the archive. It is the archive that works against entropy, against us merely living and desiring within the present.

This counter-entropic movement has undoubtedly contributed to climate change. Stored memories make possible, and require, all the fossil-fuel practices of global travel, the desire for a wide range of commodities, the fast-fashion and haute cuisines that generate waste, and the privileged urban spaces of art galleries, cinema, universities and museums. To say that humans are constitutively rich in world, as Heidegger did, poses the question of the relation between the ontic and the

ontological (again following Heidegger, but heading towards Stiegler).¹ Being rich-in-world is at once ontological rather than ontic, referring to the sense and temporal range one bears towards the present; one can see a chair, for example, not simply as something to sit on, but as a retro designed object capable of evoking the 1950s with a strong sense of pastiche and nostalgia. But that ontological possibility of seeing what is given in the present as opening out to a horizon of possibility has ontic conditions, and this is what Stiegler focuses on in his theorisation of both tertiary retention and long circuits. What are the material conditions that enable the experience of the 'now' to be opened – bifurcated – beyond itself?

Like Heidegger, Stiegler does not begin with 'the human' and then seek to determine its distinct qualities; nor does he operate with a nominalist account where 'humanity' is – as in many versions of post-humanism – a strategy for some humans to define what is normative and proper for the sake of dehumanising others. More importantly again, 'the human' is not a malleable category or family resemblance that might be more or less inclusive, and modified according to ongoing inquiry. To make this clear one might think of David Graeber's response to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro.² Responding to what he terms the ontological turn in anthropology, Graeber argues that granting every other being an integrity of world that is not translatable into one's own precludes any radical revision of what might count as human. For Graeber, Viveiros de Castro's radical perspectivism, where 'worlds' unfold in all their truth and multiplicity from the lives and relations of distinct beings, amounts to a passivism when it comes to taking up a critical relation to Western forms of knowledge. Genuinely revolutionary thought would revise a general concept of humanity according to the various ways in which different cultures theorise and explain the world. Graeber's objection to radical perspectivism would result in an exclusive disjunction: either there is some general entity called humanity that may be

discernible through family resemblances that are adjusted through anthropological encounters, or what refers to itself as human is but one composition of the world among others. For Viveiros de Castro, there is not one nature that is revealed through different cultural perspectives (mononaturalism), but as many natures as there are worlds; the world is not the sense made of nature, but what is as such.³ For Graeber there is one world, and one humanity, and seeking its revolutionary potential requires comparison. For Graeber and Viveiros de Castro, the problem of the human has to do either with species unity or multiplicity. Is there such a thing as the human as a natural kind or is 'the human' just one possibility of personhood among others?

Stiegler provides a different modality of this problem of 'the human', charting a path between a pure anti-foundationalism in the existential tradition and a naturalism; this is not just to say that it is our nature not to be determined by nature but rather than the ways in which humans denature has a nature all its own. One of the apparent oddities in Stiegler's corpus can be illuminated by setting his own work in contrast with the problem of humanism versus post-humanism. To use Deleuze and Guattari's language, what Stiegler offers is an inclusive disjunction.⁴ For Stiegler, there is no such natural kind as the human (with each modality of who 'we' are being bound up with specific archives), and yet there is a 'humanity' in general given through this absence of ground. Humans are that one animal or species at odds with their animality. The human is better thought of as the 'not-inhuman', which comes into being with the formation of archives or externally stored memories. This means that there is a formal process to the human in general, but it is just this formality that generates the human as ungrounded and therefore multiple-in-world. This is different from simply saying there is no natural kind or species that can be called human, and significantly different from the existential claim that subjectivity is nothingness, or the essence-free negation of what simply is. By using the phrase 'not inhuman' being and by

referring to negentropy and by insisting on tertiary retention and the exosomatic, Stiegler refuses the idea of subjectivity as pure transcendence, as a freedom or negation of what is. Instead it is only through an attachment or coupling with the things of this world that humans are formed. Not as the negations of natural being but as those beings who care for, and desire a future through a collectively experienced archive. The inhuman would amount to a collapse of this temporality, a failure to work against entropy. Negentropy occurs when the formation of an archive not only allows experience and memory to be sustained through time but allows those same stored memories to be rendered increasingly complex, with further relations of desire, anticipation, variation and mystification creating multiple relations among individuals.

Being not-inhuman is the effect of stored memories that enable thinking to be oriented not simply to what is actually present but to the thoughts, desires and traumas of others. Who 'we' are as human is both the effect of the ongoing external storage of memories – everything from the number system and calculus that is stored in the technical history of computation to the buildings and cityscapes that orient the way we move, and the way we give our day time and space. This not-being inhuman co-evolves with technologies that have their own forces and tendencies, such that there is both a formal generality to the human – the only natural kind whose exosomatic memories have a distinct evolutionary history – and a disunity that follows from the volatility and fragility of the archive. If, in the twenty-first century, Stiegler speaks of a single general condition of the loss of the human this is not because he assumes a human unity but, on the contrary, because late industrial global capitalism is homogenising the possibilities of thinking and desiring, thereby leading to disindividuation. If I can be distinct and individuated by way of the archives that compose my being, then it follows that one can fall back into disindividuation when all that is viewed, read, heard and desired is produced from

an industrial conglomerate oriented to capturing attention. What Stiegler refers to as the 'proletarianisation of the senses' occurs when a single industry takes hold of the production of images: rather than a complexity and multiplicity that would require a negotiation of what and who I am and care for, there is but one archive or a homogenised 'noosphere' – a term I will discuss below.⁵ For now what is worth drawing attention to is the way in which Stiegler's formal account of the human differs from other forms of anti-foundationalism.

From Kant onwards, through to liberalism and deconstruction, it is because there is no given moral law, no nature that generates how one ought to decide, that ethics is ungrounded, detached from any authority of what counts as properly human. If individualism yields a purely formal ethics of anti-foundationalism, with each subject relating to others as autonomous persons with the right to determine their own political being, this leaves out of play both the coming into being of the individual (individuation) and the potential for decisions which, though undecidable, are not indeterminate. It is the attention to the pre-decisional terrain of individuation (and what Stiegler refers to as noesis or noetic faculties) that allows Stiegler to pose a general problem of the human, while also being radically anti-foundational.⁶ Theories of individuation insist that prior to that moment of autonomy and being able to care for oneself there is a pre-individual investment in a collectively formed archive. I am a distinct being because of all that I have read, listened to, viewed, touched, tasted and oriented myself towards; thus, the more I encounter the more distinct my being, and the more I am with others who have also read, viewed, touched, listened and moved the more complex are my desires and potentials for dreaming. If anti-foundationalism from Kant to Derrida insists on the ungrounding of the decision because of the absence of any moral law or natural determination, Derrida will add to this absence of ground the rogue forces of the archive.⁷ Decisions are not fully one's own but are always made possible by the conditions

of grammatisation (such as language). For Stiegler this archival condition is made more complex and historical by way of a theory of tertiary retention, whereby the time and space that we live (schematism) is given through technical objects that have an evolutionary trajectory that not only allows human existence to maintain itself over time with increasing complexity, but also allows the conditions through which humans desire and decide to become industrialised, homogenised, and so expansive and entrenched that all possibility of bifurcation is reduced.

Only if the means through which time and space become matters of care can there be a new epoch, one which would be the negentropic. Here, Stiegler draws upon and transforms two terms from Edmund Husserl's phenomenology: *epoché* and noesis. Husserl had marked out a distinction between the object intended in thought – such as a number – which he referred to as the noema, and then the thought itself, which was the noesis. The key point for Husserl was that what is thought is an affective complex. It is not that I think of something and then have certain attitudes and emotions, but that what is thought is given as remembered, feared, desired, anxiety-shrouded or joy-laden.⁸ Stiegler does not make much of the noesis-noema distinction which was crucial for Husserl, who wanted to distinguish between idealities like number and then the psychic process that grasps those objects of thought. There are two reasons for this.

First, Stiegler is less interested in establishing truth per se (though this is important), than he is concerned with a history of truth in a 'post-truth' era. Like Husserl, he negotiates between the material conditions of truth's emergence and articulation and the ongoing relation to that truth once it has been constituted. Where Husserl sees a single history that becomes threatened in the twentieth century, Stiegler has a more intensely historical focus on the technologies that allow truth to appear. The sophistication, complexity and evolution of these technologies amount both to the forms of our inner

life, and the capacity for those forms to take on an entropic tendency whereby we no longer care for what we think. If Husserl insisted that we can think numerically or logically (noesis) because of the ideal objects of truth (noema), Stiegler's proposed history of truth attends far more to the different modalities and temporalities that compose inner life (noesis), focusing on the collective and desiring investments that make truth possible. The problem with truth is that the means through which it is produced and available in late capitalism or smart capitalism become increasingly developed in scales beyond our range of comprehension and care. The problem of noesis increasingly becomes one of proletarianisation; the technologies that allow us to think (and have an intense inner life) are produced by industries of information and data management that we cannot grasp. For Stiegler, it is the historical formation of industries at different scales – from nanotechnology to satellite networks – that precludes any possibility of what Husserl thought phenomenology could achieve: that any subject might once again reconstitute, through reason, the genesis of truth. For Stiegler, such an effort can only be collective and requires taking up a relation to the means through which we think, the faculties through which the world is given, desired, anticipated and known. What is crucial here is Stiegler's insistence on tertiary retention. The time of inner life that requires the carrying over of the past into the present, and the anticipation of the future from the present, is made possible through collectively formed and lived objects. The monuments, archives, spaces and instruments through which we think and dream produces us as exosomatic and negentropic beings: capable of sustaining time and desire beyond the life of any individual body. But that very possibility of storing memory, of delaying the dissolution of knowledge, of allowing desire to orient itself to temporalities beyond the time of the organism and of creating a noosphere is not simply negentropic; it is accompanied with risk. One might, for example, be oriented beyond one's immediate

milieu to something like planetary life in general, to something like humanity beyond the forms it already takes, and to care enough about what has been learned, desired, imagined and suffered to think of ways of preserving the archive. One might also, however, be so attached to the commodified objects that appear to make life worth living that one does no more than accumulate forms of the present. What is important, for Stiegler, is not simply how we make sense of the world (the forms of knowledge) nor is it saving the world (working against entropy in a simple sense); it is, rather, a new requirement in an age where the very means for working against entropy take on such complex forms that taking care becomes no longer possible. Some new way of thinking about noesis is required; what might it mean to have a collective politics oriented to taking command of the ways we think?

Second, in addition to tying inner life and time to historically distinct technologies that render a grasp of how we think and know increasingly difficult, Stiegler takes up the question of epoch. One might think the unique problems of the twenty-first century to be the intertwined perils of climate catastrophe and totalitarianism. To say that these are epochal problems is to shift the question away from what 'we' ought to do towards the formation of a 'we' as such; this is an epochal question both because it amounts to creating a form of knowing and thinking that can take up a relation of care towards the complexity of the whole, and because it requires an acutely historical sense. Husserl's *epoché* was a methodological move that suspended all questions of the being of a thing in order to question its mode of appearing. It turns out that what appears, according to Husserl, are phenomena that unfold through time, appearing as real through the retention of the past and the anticipation of the future. Time is not some background within which things appear; life – in its unfolding, retention and anticipation – is time. The *epoché* for Husserl is an attention to this irreducible temporality; it is a realisation that the supposedly static or timeless object is ultimately temporal. What

appears is time. The *epoché* suspends or puts out of play the 'natural attitude' that posits a world of things that happen to appear through time, and attends to time itself in its appearing. More specifically, one takes up a relation to time.

What might it be to take up a relation to the technologies of one's time, the technologies that compose time? By insisting on tertiary retention – the clocks, musical instruments, smart devices, monuments, and moving images – that compose the experience of time, Stiegler marks out the human both as a mode of time made possible by things outside one's own body, and as a capacity to care about that composition. When Stiegler talks about epoch and humans being doubly epochal he refers not only to taking up a relation to what appears – such as Husserl's argument that there can only be an appearing world of things because of the flow of time of transcendental subjectivity – but also to taking up a relation to those technologies that produce the inner experience of time. When Husserl imagined the flow of time by way of listening to a melody, he had already implicitly acknowledged tertiary retention in the composition of consciousness; consciousness is intentional, or always consciousness of. The flow of inner time is given through the attachment to objects that compose and orient images. Inner life, or the noetic, is made possible by what Stiegler refers to as the exosomatic. The history of who 'we' are and our capacity to take up a relation to the formation of that 'we' requires attending to the increasingly complex, industrial and multiscale production of the noosphere. What happens when the spiritual matter of inner life is not something we can grasp? This is Stiegler's question for the Neganthropocene: the stuff of dreams, the rhythms, forms, figures and desires that forge human beings as counter-entropic are what enable a life lived now to imagine and form a future beyond the time of the body. Spirit is made possible by the matters of stored memory; we desire, dream and think according to complex and increasingly ungraspable archives.

At first glance Stiegler's work appears to profoundly Eurocentric (in his ongoing reference to the tradition that runs from Plato to Heidegger), and possibly even uncritically humanist, in his anxiety that 'we' are threatened with non-being. There is a growing body of philosophy, theory, fiction and cinema that has contested the notion that the humanity being threatened ought to be saved; there is also a counter-archive that focuses on the destructive force of collective memory. To cite one example, one might think of Black speculative fiction, with its intense focus on archives and living in the wake of archives, and its even more intense desire to end the world for the sake of the future. I will explore this further below, but for now one can at least recall Aimé Césaire's idea that 'the only thing in the world that's worth beginning: [is] The End of the World, no less'.⁹ Where Stiegler charts a tradition from Plato to Valéry that is focused on the loss of spirit, one might read a counter-tradition that sees the European attachment to spirit as possible only through the social death of Black lives. Afro-pessimism's attention to the objectification of Blackness being constitutive of white interiority, along with Indigenous thinkers' refusals of the fetishisation of 'the human' are manifestly at odds with the preliminary mourning that accompanies the loss of who 'we' are.¹⁰ Where Stiegler is focused intensely on the proletarianisation of the senses – where the interior life that composes who we are is no longer capable of being reflected upon – he has little to say about slavery and colonisation other than to refer to industrialisation as a progressive enslavement of 'us all': 'technological mutation is today pursued digitally, but also biotechnologically, and, if nothing happens in the short term, then European democracies will soon be definitively enslaved, and the entire world disorientated [*déboussolé*].'¹¹ There is a smooth transition from European democracies to the entire world's enslavement. Little is said about the dependence of that spirit on slavery as an entirely different temporality and spatiality of technics.

Stiegler does talk about the Greek theorisation of *otium*, as that which is enabled by a division between those who are subjected to maintaining subsistence versus those who are free to think. He also talks about the ways in which the *demos* to some extent does away with this split, such that even the enslaved and workers may take part in the life of the mind.¹² What happens as history heads to supposed democracy, especially in the USA, is the loss of *otium*; everything becomes subject to production and industrialisation. Taking epiphylogenesis seriously requires thinking about the inner life of the present, the 'we' of the present as made possible by technologies that store time. An individual's daily orientation, as a private person with a space of their own and the very rhythm and desire of their day, is an archival event: from the phone that maps time, plays music, communicates, and conveys the state of the world, to the running shoes and vehicles that enable bodies to orient themselves in space. Here Stiegler objects to the Marxist/Hegelian dialectic of work. First, Stiegler insists on the translation of *Knecht* as 'servant', and not 'slave' (*Sklave*) and does so because the servant bears a relation not simply to work but to the future world that is being desired.¹³ Second, this means that the best way to understand the transformative power of work is neither through the concepts of slavery nor the proletariat but through a worker who understands fully and relates to the technologies that form and sustain the world. That concept of work and labour is quite distinct from slavery and general proletarianisation where the mechanisms and technologies of production are utterly alien and ungraspable. Third, this is why Stiegler will frequently talk about slavery and enslavement in the same breath. The tendency throughout Western thought to think of slavery as a cognitive malaise is manifestly a failure or repression to deal with the actuality of slavery. When Stiegler distinguishes between work as that which bears a reflective relationship to the technologies of memory (and of who 'we' are) versus slavery where epiphylogenesis is short-circuited, he connects

the inner life of the human, the very genesis of the human, with modalities of labour and a relationship to labour. His claim for a general enslavement due to twenty-first century industrialisation of the noosphere draws upon the pharmacological predicament of humans as epiphylogenetic beings: if who 'we' are is made possible by external technologies and stored memories then it follows that 'we' lose any reflective relation to the possibility to work on, or transform, the stored and potentially dynamic desires that compose our being:

Contrary to what Marx would have us believe in *Capital*, it is not proletarianization that is the bearer of a transformation but, as he had envisaged in the *Grundrisse*, the end of employment, combined now with the organological mutation to which digital tertiary retention has given rise – and this transformation is a therapeutics, as care taken of a *pharmakon* that is always becoming more efficient because it is transindividuated by *objectified* knowledge, firstly as mechanical tertiary retention, then as analogical tertiary retention, and now as digital tertiary retention.

The end of employment can and must lead to the de-proletarianization of work, and in this sense its 'reinvention', inspired both by the organization of work in free software communities and by the intermittence scheme, in a society where employment is becoming a relic of an outmoded epoch, and where *neganthropic knowledge* becomes the *source of value* at once as life-knowledge, work-knowledge and conceptual knowledge.¹⁴

I would suggest that Stiegler's question of epochal doubling, of how we might take up a relation to the ungraspable technologies that compose who 'we' are has been posed fruitfully and differently by writers for whom the pharmacological nature of the archive bears a different dynamic of toxicity and interiority. When Frantz Fanon poses the question of interiority, inheritance and not owning or commanding the images that compose one's being, he does so not only with a sense of the long

circuits of desire that are constitutive of the discipline of psychoanalysis, but also with a sense of the space and movement that renders and objectifies his being. The multiple legacies of Fanon's thought and work on the aftermath of slavery and colonisation have also worked with the archives – especially the spatial archives – that make up the being of 'humanity' today, doing so with a sense of the radical unmaking of Blackness in the formation of 'the human'.¹⁵ This is not to say that one can supplement, critique or illuminate Stiegler's problem of proletarianisation by way of adding the perspective of those whom the West literally enslaved, but rather to say that literal enslavement and its epiphylogenetic heritage pose both the problem of the toxicity of spirit and – more positively – the possibility of cutting into and opening desire's short circuits. One of the ways in which this has been achieved has been through what I would refer to as speculative architecture, where fictional worlds are composed that allow one to think of the world and the 'we' of the present as not one's own. The world, in the sense that it is used when one speaks about the 'end of the world', is a *pharmakon*; the stored memories and collectively composed times and spaces that frame what we desire make any imagined future possible, but the world can also – as Stiegler argues – become enslaving. If 'saving the world' amounts, as it so often does, to saving actuality then this will be destructive of the planet and of the very potentiality for humanity to compose itself differently; 'we' will be nothing more than a maintenance of the technological status quo. In that respect, imagining the end of the world would be a fruitful and radical rupture with an archive and schematism that is enslaving.

Much work has been done on the daily wake, aftermath and ongoing presence of racial capitalism and slavery, ranging from Frank Wilderson's claim that humanity is constituted through an anti-blackness produced by slavery to the productive demand for wake work that would seek to take up a relation to the anti-Blackness that remains unsaid but woven

into the space and time of living in the world.¹⁶ What I refer to as speculative architecture takes the next step of producing what – borrowing from Stiegler – might be thought of as epochal redoubling. What might it be to imagine this world and its archive as utterly toxic, as producing a 'we' and world that ossifies one's being? What might it be to think of the archive and the composition of space and time as so disabling that only the end of the world might open a future? What might adding the concept of epiphylogenesis do to this question?

For, if we are lucky, we live in the knowledge that the wake has positioned us as no-citizen. If we are lucky, the knowledge of this positioning avails us particular ways of *re/seeing*, *re/inhabiting*, and *re/imagining* the world.¹⁷

Work has already been completed on epigenesis and racial trauma, and even without that explicit theorisation it would not take too much reflection to acknowledge that decades of poor nutrition, poisoned water, unequal education, historical erasure, police violence, carceral capitalism and voter suppression have effects that last for generations and transform bodies at the deepest level. What Stiegler's theory of epiphylogenesis adds to this mix is two-fold: there is no 'we' prior to the ongoing exosomatic storage of memory, and that very complexity and externality of memory also creates the possibility of becoming disaffected, proletarianised, or enslaved to who 'we' are.

2020 saw the intensification of demands for the destruction of the space of colonialism and enslavement; not only were confederate statues in the US targeted for removal, there was also a supposedly unthinking or reactive movement aimed at putatively 'innocent' statues. In June 2020 the Associated Press reported the destruction of the statue of Hans Christian Heg, an abolitionist. Rather than think of this destruction as a mindless event of violence, it would be better to take seriously the motivating sense of the toxicity of the space of statuary, of the

forms of political life composed of great men, and – more broadly – the forms of polity and world built on a reverence for a past of sacred inscription. In N.K. Jemisin's *Broken Earth Trilogy* several thematic and figural strands converge to produce a speculative architecture that would contest the unthinking reverence for a stone-set law.¹⁸ First, Jemisin builds a world where 'seasons' interrupting life and fruition last for several human lifetimes, creating a long time in which one's sense of history includes the coming into being and falling away of worlds. Second, in these waves of time there is an ongoing relation to 'stonelore': a fragmented archive of wisdom that is both enigmatic and oppressive, with the lore producing a hierarchical cosmology and caste system. Third, those who have been marked out as the wretched of the earth ('roggas') are those who can intuit and command the forces that stabilise and destabilise the world. Jemisin charts a narrative where the central character – across three volumes – discovers that the archive upon which the world was built has not only worked to occlude and maintain the violence that sustains the whole, but also represses the affront the planet feels for the wound and theft of its equilibrium. The three volumes narrate the gradual awareness that the lore upon which the order of the world is based is fraudulent and destructive, that the only way to exist for those who sense the force of the earth is to end the world, and that the bodies who sense the force and possibility of the earth are precisely those who have been enslaved. Jemisin's sense of enslavement is in tune with Stiegler's conception of epiphylogenesis, at the same time as it offers a necessary and positive sense of what it might mean to relate to the enslavement of the world with an epochal imaginary. Those who can 'sess' the vibrations of the earth are either killed or enslaved; without their power there is no world, even if that same world is composed of a sense of the border between the civility of the 'stills' (those who work within the world) and the 'roggas' (those whose power to 'sess' and harness the forces of the earth are what make possible the entire moral

order). What Jemisin achieves in her composition of this earth that is multi-layered geologically and historically is a space in which moving and being, and one's sense of who one is, carries the inscription of centuries. Her work generates a profound sense of the epiphylogenetic. What the space of her composed world brings to the fore is that there can be a 'we' and an archive that bears the seeds of its own demise, but that those who can sess the force of this potentiality may well embrace this end.

Here, her work might be aligned with the spatial imaginary of writers like Octavia Butler before her, and the more recent work of Rivers Solomon. In *Dawn* Butler imagines the destruction of the earth, followed by the rescue of some humans who are held in a spaceship that is literally alive (composed of growing, edible and responsive matter); this separation from the earth allows the rescued humans to take up a relationship to 'the human' and to do so with a profound ambivalence.¹⁹ In Rivers Solomon's *The Unkindness of Ghosts* there is also an imagined spaceship that is the refuge of those fleeing a depleted earth; here, those who maintain and work the ship are able to take up a critical and hostile relationship to the order of the world.²⁰ By giving the wretched of the earth a space apart from the earth, these authors create a space between the imperative to save the world (by clinging to actuality) and an epiphylogenetic spatial imaginary. To create a space where who one is requires ending the world amounts to a recognition that the space and time of the present is toxic, and that there is a 'we' to come that is out of this world.

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996).
2. David Graeber, 'Radical alterity is just another way of saying "reality": A reply to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro', *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 5, no. 2 (2015): 1–41.
3. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, 'Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 4, no. 3 (1998): 469–88.
4. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 2008), 77–78.
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