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## Urban Ecosophy for a Post-Colonial Ecohumanism of the City

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### Abstract

*Ecosophy traces its etymological roots to the ancient Greek wisdom (sophia) of the household (oikos), and can be understood as a form of ethics to inhabit the earth. Reflecting on the current challenges of the city, like the relation to the nature, or the social and ethnic inequalities in the urban space and through the ecosophical gaze of Arne Næss and Félix Guattari allows us to address core issues of an urban ecosophy. Within Næss ecosophy of the “self-realization”, the paper is pointing the link with his ontology of the relation with Gandhi’s insight on non-violence and the importance of the “sense of place” with the understanding and identification to the local environment. Guattari’s ecosophy as the paper will show, leads also to the concepts of relation and of the “Tout-monde” from the post-colonial thinker, and friend of him, Edouard Glissant. Furthermore, Stiegler’s concept of neguanthropocene and considering cities as “complex exorganisms” echoes Guattari’s urban ecosophy with the emergence of the “data city” performing a new kind of colonialism with data in the urban space. Finally, the essay will demonstrate how the urban ecosophy, as a practical ecosophy, in correspondence with ecohumanism, is proposing a decentring of humanism by considering the ecology in the city. It makes then possible to reconcile a modernist philosophy of individual and collective emancipation and deployment of subjectivities in the city, the idea of universalism with a world citizenship, with an emerging philosophy of respect and ethic for the living.*

**Keywords:** Ecosophy; Ecohumanism; City; Urbanity; Næss; Guattari; Gandhi; Glissant; Stiegler

### Introduction

Ecosophy traces its etymological roots to the ancient Greek wisdom for (*sophia*) and of the household (*oikos*) and can be understood as a form of ethics to inhabit the earth. Arne Næss defined ecosophy also as a “philosophical world-view (system) which observes the diversity of nature as one, perceives humans as fragments of nature and which broadens the norms of natural justice to apply them to all nature”. Thus, for Næss an ecosophy can be understood as a form of ethics to inhabit the earth, as well as a philosophical worldview or a system inspired by our living conditions in the ecosphere: “By an ecosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium” (Næss, 1989, 36).

Félix Guattari took up this same notion of ecosophy in 1989 but without referring to Næss. For him, ecosophy was “the ethical-political articulation between the three ecological registers: the environment, social relations and human subjectivity” (Guattari, 2000, 28). To recompose a humanly habitable earth supposes a real program with different components: it is a question of reinventing the economic and productive purposes, the social, cultural, and mental

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practices as well as the urban arrangements: “the urban phenomenon is no longer just another problem. It is the problem number one, the problem at the crossroads of economic, social, ideological and cultural stakes/challenges” (Guattari, 1992, 106).

The particularity and complementarity of these two approaches have been highlighted by the literature. In terms of common points, the two ecosophies of Næss and Guattari do not build up a fixed theoretical concept, but rather, propose a framework of thoughts that contribute to action and promotes commitment based above all on self-discipline, determination and community organization (Levesque, 2016). However, compared to the approach of Næss favoring the identification centered on nature, and relativizing the positive contribution of the technique, the ecosophy of Guattari is not reduced to ecology. It integrates the technological evolution as an association between man, nature, technology and society (Antonioni, 2015). Reflecting on current challenges of the city, like the relation to the nature, the relation to the other with the worldwide social and ethnic inequalities, as well as the relation to the technique in the urban space, the paper will address these core issues through the ecosophical lens of Næss and Guattari.

Accordingly, three essential dimensions that comprise an ecosophy are therefore highlighted, and applied to the city: First, is the Næss’s concept of self-realization with the relational ontology in the light of Gandhi’s non-violence fight against colonialism and with the “sense of place” as an understanding of and identification to the local environment. Second, Guattari’s ecosophy also leads to the concept of relationship to others in the world within the notion of *Tout-monde* (“whole-world”), from the post-colonial thinker, and friend of his, Edouard Glissant, and with a specific variation in the urban context. Third, Stiegler’s “neguanthropocene” considers cities as « complex exorganisms », with the emergence of the « data city » performing a new kind of colonialism with data in the urban space echoes Guattari’s ecosophy about the technique and the machines in the city. Combining those three different perspectives allows for elaboration of what could be an urban ecosophy.

Finally, the paper will demonstrate how these different perspectives underpin that ecosophy could proceed from an ecohumanism, which implies as Philip J. Reegal explained an “insight into the pattern of connectedness among individuals and between individuals and institutions and with the non-human environment” (Vasanthakumari, 2021, 2991). It will also raise the question of the contribution of the ecosophy to a post-colonial ecohumanism applied in an urban context. It is noted, that following the definition of Frantz Fanon, French West Indian political and post-colonial philosopher, post-colonial humanism is sourced in the political experience of the anti-colonial struggle and the rise of a new consciousness with the recognition of the Other (Nayar, 2011). Indeed, as a practical philosophy, urban ecosophy asks the conditions of habitability in our cities.

Moreover, in correspondence with ecohumanism, a decentering of humanism by considering the ecology in the city, in a broader sense las Guattari suggested with the three ecological registers, is proposed. The paper will demonstrate that even if urban ecosophy cannot be reduced to an ecohumanism of the city, this ecosophical perspective is offering a critical insight of ecohumanism towards a promising approach of hybridity linking different ecological dimensions and broadening the field of connectedness to include the subjectivities of individualities and communities.



## Næss's ecosophy with the self-realization in light of Gandhi's insights and the city

First, within Næss's ecosophy of self-realization, this chapter points to the link with his ontology of the relation with the insights of Gandhi. Considered a pioneer of Indian environmental thought, Næss also admired him for his ideas on non-violence and local community. Secondly, the importance of the «sense of place» is emphasized with the understanding and identification to the local environment, which is not, according to the Gandhian post-colonial perspective, necessarily urban related. Finally, the limits of Næss's ecohumanism discussed with Bookchin's social ecology are set out.

Næss's ecosophy does not impose a global explanatory system, but rather, suggests the development of one's own system, and with self-realization as the higher norm. This represents the fulfilment of our potentials, with the process of identification as a core. One major theory for Næss's self-realization is Spinoza's immanence philosophy, his *affectus*, the ability to affect and to be affected in turn (Deleuze, 1987, xvi), as well as his *conatus*, "to persevere in his being" (Næss, 2008, 247).

This allows us to broaden the spectrum of our relationships from the human community to a "mixed community", which also includes other living beings. As Næss states, "the experience of nature over time represents an expanded understanding of oneself. We identify ourselves with life. We see something of ourselves in nature, precisely because the self is no longer limited to something closed or rational. Man finds an identity through his experiences of nature and realizes himself in nature" (Næss, 1987).

Næss's environmental ethic is therefore linked to "love of a broader and deeper self" which allows one to identify with nature, and therefore to serve its interests. To defend nature, in this ecological conception of a deep and expanded self in close relationship with nature, is to defend a vital interest, and not just something external. Thus, it is for Næss an act of vital self-defence. For him, this capacity for identification is naturally accompanied by a practice of non-violence. Hence, another component in self-realization, according to Næss, is the influence of the metaphysical teaching of Gandhi, with his goal of "self-realization, the possibility of seeing God face to face, of achieving *moksha* (liberation)" (Næss, 2005, 28).

Næss's relational ontology also affirms the process inherent in Buddhism between identification, self-realization, and compassionate relationships with all living beings: "The Buddhist compassion extended to all beings implies "seeing oneself in all things," a process of identification" (Næss, 2008, 196). The capacity for compassion and identification also results from a social and political activity to progress on the path of freedom, exemplified by Gandhi, "who viewed Buddhism as a reformed form of Hinduism furnishes a good example" (Næss, 2008, 257).

Moreover, Næss identifies in the movement of civil disobedience a means to allow self-realization. This presupposes the recognition of the unity of the living, which is fundamental to attaining the Gandhian principle of non-violence. And the identification with the living world" is inspired by statements of the Bhagavad-Gita: "Those... with an impartial eye, seeing *Atman* (the Self) in all beings and all beings in *Atman*" (Næss 2008, 249). Thus, to the first or fundamental norm of ecosophy called "N0: Self-realization!" corresponds to the normative

statement of group ethics of Gandhi, formulated by Næss as “Seek to realize your Self completely” (Næss, 2000, 424).

Næss evokes the notion of biospheric egalitarianism by quoting Gandhi who highlighted the relationship that exists between self-realization and non-violence (Næss, 2008, 91). This notion, with the principle of equivalence of all ecological beings and with its global egalitarian dimension, would thus approach an ecobumanism. It deviates from an anthropocentric vision, and even if it does not claim a direct postcolonial approach, there is a recognition of the inseparability of current crises of ecological mismanagement from historical legacies of imperialistic exploitation and authoritarian abuse. (Huggan, 2004). Indeed, when condemning the colonialist legacy of the West with its devastating damage to natural environments, the ecological fight is also embodied in a struggle for the emancipation of colonized peoples, like the non-violence movement initiated by Gandhi (Audier, 2020, 616). Næss himself claims the need to fight “ecological colonialism” (Næss, 1999, 207) advocating a reduction in the population of the rich countries which cause the most ecological damage to the planet.

This leads us to a second main characteristic of Næss’s self-realization. To develop each person’s potential for fulfilment has for him, a complementary objective which is the local autonomy, through decentralization and differentiation: “The nearer has priority over the more remote - in space, time, cultural, species” (Næss, 1999, vol.7, 67). He insists on the need to strengthen “local green communities” as a place of accomplishment of this local autonomy (Næss, 1999, 72). However, the urban dimension does not appear explicitly in this community approach, which is more akin to the bio-regionalist current and departs from a purely structured vision around cities and their outskirts.

If ecosophy is the wisdom of the household, or the wisdom to inhabit or to dwell on the earth, which is also in connection with the Heidegger Dasein as “being in the world”, then ecosophical sensitivity joins the ancient wisdom making the place the source of inspiration, the *genius loci*. Christian Norberg-Schulz, a Norwegian thinker, of Austrian origin, renewed this concept with a vernacular and sensitive approach of the spirit of the place, as the driving force to architectural creation and the production of living habitats (Norberg-Schulz, 1984).

However, the ecosophy of Næss is defined primarily in relation to nature, and makes very little reference to the urban fact, except in a negative way, like for example, when he is pointing to Gandhi’s social philosophy *Sarvodaya*, “to the best for all” which emphasized the importance of decentralized industrial life and the extensive self-sufficiency in India’s 500,000 villages... Centralization and urbanization were for him, evils.” (Næss, 1989, 101). The Gandhian ideal and Næss’s approach of ecosophy emphasize the decentralization and life in harmony with nature as an alternative to the urban industrial civilization, as a result of the colonialism (Krejčík, 2019). Furthermore, Næss highlights the abandonment of belonging to places, such as a loss of links, particularly in urban areas due to centralization, increased mobility, and dependence on foreign goods and technologies (Næss, 2008, 45). As a counterpoint, he opposes the sense of place, embodied in the example of his chalet in the mountain of west Norway, Tvergastein, which gives its name to its nearby ecosophy, the Ecosophy T for Tvergastein (Næss, 1989, 4).

Murray Bookchin, founder of the concept of social ecology, and considered as one of the pioneers of ecological humanism (Morris, 2012), was very critical of Næss’s vision of biospheric egalitarianism and to the idea of self-realization, because for him, to achieve a



humanity aware of its potentials is above all a social problem that requires fundamental, institutional, and cultural changes. Moreover, in contrast to Næss's critique of urban civilization, Bookchin also emphasizes the importance of urban life, and viewing the urban environment as a humanized cultural landscape (Bookchin, 2020).

Compared to the self-realization of Næss, the ecosophy of Guattari's ecosophy highlights more a work on oneself, an analytical or "schizoanalytic work" according to his terms, which implies the "being in the world" in its relationship to others, to the social and to its environment. In the extension, the relational ontology, and the concept of "tout-monde" ("whole-world"), from his friend Edouard Glissant, a post-colonialist thinker, and related to the work of Deleuze and Guattari on the "rhizome", will renew the model of identity. From then on, urban ecosophy can be enriched by a post-colonial approach, as well as the process of identity or subjectivation, as proposed by Guattari, which questions the humanist and ecological dimension of the city.

### **Guattari's ecosophy with the concept of relation from Glissant and its contribution to ecohumanism**

In this section, it is demonstrated how the Guattari's ecosophy leads also to the concept of *tout-monde* ("whole-world") of Edouard Glissant (1928-2011), a post-colonial thinker, Martinican poet and novelist, and close friend to Guattari, with a new way of thinking about relations across humankind, and in an urban context. Furthermore, the eco-humanist perspective of Glissant is stressed.

But first, related to Næss's ecosophy, and as an extension of his identification of the individual "self" with a large "self" that expands our relationships to the different entities that make up our living environments, Malcom Ferdinand calls for a symmetrical commitment to also recognize our relationship to the (post)colonial economic, social and political relations of the world (Ferdinand, 2019). The identification of the self with the ecological environment is the subject of criticism because it can also correspond to a hegemonic vision of the West that dominates nature, and which contributes to a homogenization of humans and their particular stories all over the world (Audier, 2020, 193).

The concept of "capitalocene" (Argounés, 2020) points to this model of extraction and production of global wealth, based on the colonialist and imperialist heritage of the unbridled exploitation of the earth's resources. It perpetuates environmental damage and inequality globally. Through the notion of "integrated global capitalism" ("CMI: Capitalisme Mondial Intégré"), Guattari denounces a colonization and economic guardianship of the Western world over the "Third World" (Guattari, 2000, 31). He appeals to the reconstruction of the Southern countries in the form of sociability that have been destroyed by capitalism, colonialism and imperialism (Guattari, 1992, 108).

To the CMI and the critique of the neocolonialist capitalist world, and echoing the "Chaosmosis" (Guattari, 1995) corresponds, the notion of "chaos-world" proposed by Edouard Glissant to designate the misdeeds of globalization. For him, the chaos of liberal capitalism is to dismantle the world without being able to organize it or repair its disasters (Glissant, 1997).

With his notion of *tout-monde* he proposes to think creolization as a cultural and social practice of diversity resulting from the phenomenon of the globalization of cultures, which allows the creation and production of real, free, and independent subjectivities. He distinguishes, on the one hand, the place, which is particular to us, where we live, where we were born, from the place, which is common to us, that is to say the whole-world, and on the other hand, the link which interconnects them. Moreover, to approach the relational reality of this globality, he invites the imagination to conceive the being as a being in relation (Glissant, 1990).

The analogy of the rhizome developed in “Thousand Plateaus” (Deleuze et al., 1987, 7) allows him to think identity no longer as rootedness, with the figure of the tree, but in relation to the image of the rhizome as alliance principle for his “poetics of Relation, according to which all identity extends in a relationship to the Other” (Glissant, 1990, 23). The rhizome theory supports the idea of creolization which deconstructs the old colonialist world to claim a reconstruction in diversity and a dialogue of cultures. With creolization, figured as a process of building multiple identities and independent subjectivities, Glissant claims an intermixing of cultures that produces the unexpected, “interference, harmonies and disharmonies between cultures to lead to the archipelization of the entire world” (Glissant, 1997, 194).

“Nothing is true, everything is alive”: the relational ontology that Glissant is proposing, and which involves living bodies is part of Guattari’s plural approach to ecology articulated in several registers: environmental, social and mental. This joins the idea of an ecosophy that supposes new relationships and modes of subjectivation or wisdom, not only interhuman relationships, but also, relationships with the environment, techniques (“machinic phylums”) and lived spaces (“existential territories”) (Guattari, 1995, 28). It is also a question of recognizing here that Guattari’s ecosophy, and especially with its mental register, is also rooted in Bateson’s “steps to an ecology of mind” (Bateson, 1972). Especially the fact that the ecology of the mind is not confined to the psychological domain of everyone, but organizes itself into systems of minds, which no longer coincide only with that of the participants taken individually (Guattari, 2000, 54).

What counts for Guattari and Glissant is to be able to produce new forms of subjectivity. If Guattari’s ecosophy qualifies the subjectivity produced by the colonialist capitalist world as “bankrupt” (Guattari, 1995, 3), he nevertheless invokes a possibility of reconstruction for what he calls the Third World: “The future of the Third World rests primarily on its capacity to recapture its own processes of subjectivation in the context of a social fabric in the process of desertification” (Guattari, 1995, 134).

Furthermore, the Italian philosopher Franco “Bifo” Berardi, founder of the free Radio Alice in 1976 in Bologna, who escaped as a political refugee in France, and after being imprisoned was hosted by his close friend Guattari (Dosse, 2009, 343) is linking the technical and aesthetic dimensions of Guattari’s ecosophy. He defines it as “an environmental consciousness adequate to the technological complexity of hypermodernity, ... based on the acknowledgment of the crucial role of aesthetics in the prospect of ecology” (Berardi, 2012, 145). And if we consider more particularly the urban perspective, for Glissant, cities as places of the “whole-world” also have their particularity, some with root-identities and others with relationship-identities. There are also poetics of the city, a mentality of the city that can replace the poetics of the earth and of rooting in the earth (Glissant et al., 2018, 30). This poetics of the city highlight another dimension of an urban ecosophy, that related to a narrative proposal likely to re-enchant the discourse on the city. But with the pursuit of segregation and duality,





especially in the cities of the Global South, the Anthropocene (Charbonnier, 2020) has also produced a spatial divide between colonizers and indigenous people, with a lack of access to basic urban services and dwelling in the informal settlements for the latter: “the “socio-economic precarity and urban segregation are colonial, and the history of white supremacy is still visible in post-colonies cities” (Ihnji, 2021, 81).

The urban remains the space of the experience of otherness through the presence, encounter, or confrontation with the foreigner or the other. In a post-colonial vision, alterity or otherness in the city can be considered a distinct foreign entity that needs to be mastered, or on the contrary be absorbed into an extension of the self, with the idea of cultural assimilation (Audier, 2020, 159). Glissant’s relational ontology is precious for us to think about this relation to the other in a balanced way. In his perspective, the reinforcement of subjectivity, and the construction of a post-colonial narrative presupposes this thought of the relationship where it is possible to “change by exchanging with the Other and still not lose or distort myself” (Glissant, 2006).

Ultimately, the relational and “Whole-World” ontology proposed by Edouard Glissant extends the gestalt ontology of Næss by adding the cultural and human difference (Ferdinand, 2019). Moreover, by thinking the world as a commonplace entity, where human and ecological solidarity unfolds, Glissant’s relational ontology would correspond to a form of ecohumanism inscribed in a post-colonial historical perspective. However, this post-colonial thought of difference joins the idea of a humanism with the human rights, placed not as a formal and absolute principle, but as a relational principle aimed at a cosmopolitanism based on the sharing of fundamental values and respect for the diversity of cultures (Lasowski, 2021, 60).

In addition to the relational approach and the globality proposed by Glissant in the extension of the ecosophy of Guattari, it is now appropriate to study other forms of (post)-colonialism likely to shape our contemporary cities, namely colonialism through data. From Guattari’s megamachine, to Stiegler’s complex exorganism, we will investigate how the contemporary data city transforms our relationships with the city, and our urban subjectivities.

### **The city as a “megamachine” or as “complex exorganism” confronted to data colonialism**

Stiegler’s concept of *neguantropocene* and considering cities as « complex exorganisms » echoes Guattari’s urban ecosophy, with the idea of the city as the megamachine. Related to these concepts, also occurs the emergence of the « data city », which is performing a new kind of colonialism with data, or “data colonialism” in the urban space; challenging the possible urbanity or ecohumanism in the city, as this section shows.

Guattari never criticized technologies themselves, but rather, tried to identify their potentials for communication and for a more democratic expression which could, in a “post-media era”, reinforce singular subjectivities through “interactive use of machines of information, communication, intelligence, art and culture” (Guattari, 2013b, 429). The technological or “machinic arrangement” perspective has since been widely developed in our “post-media era”, thus confirming the vision formulated by Guattari more than thirty years ago. The machine, according to him, cannot be reduced to an object or a technique limited to a materiality, for it also includes a dimension of “the order of a protosubjectivity”, because between the machine and its interface there is a relationship to the self and to an alterity, what Guattari

calls “function of consistency”. In addition, the machines are part of a continuum of technological development with filiations and generations. For him, these “machinic phylums” are agents that produce being (Guattari, 1995, 59). He rejects the idea, formulated by Heidegger, that “the machine is something that diverts us from being”. Moreover, the city is not really mentioned in Heidegger, whereas for Guattari, the contemporary urban condition is defined by a set of urban subsets that he calls archipelagos of cities, connected, and crossed by computer technologies. Due to the relocation and immaterialization of urban life, subjectivity unfolds in several layers, in several places.

Thus, alongside technological machines, one should also consider the functioning of the city as a “megamachine”, according to the term of Lewis Mumford (Mumford, 1973) producing individual and collective subjectivity, through collective equipment for education, health, social control, culture, and mass media (Guattari, 1995, 4). Unlike Guattari, Mumford could be considered as a pioneer of ecobumanism by combining in what he calls “organic humanism” these distinct domains of the natural physical environment, the organic world, and human society, thus considering the city as a biological organism (Cohen, 2019, 57).

By describing the city as an urban machine functioning as a kind of proto-computer, Guattari is also highlighting the risk, during the age of generalized control, of totalitarian and hegemonic modelisation (Guattari, 2013b, 374). This leads us to today’s critique of the datafication of cities from the standpoint of surveillances practices, as Deleuze warned about in “the postscripts of the societies of control” (Deleuze, 2018). Stiegler himself refers to the control society that he calls hyper-industrial, and to counteract the loss of the link between politics and aesthetics, he calls for a rediscovering process of individuation that is both psychic and collective (Dosse, 2009, 612).

With the digitization of our cities, and the advent of smart cities, with the extension of the control society described by Deleuze and Guattari, it is the risk of a surveillance society and the exercise of disciplinary power that is pointed out, because the multitude of data collected in a city exceeds the processing capacities of human understanding, and the regulatory function, of guardianship of this data, is no longer exercised by a human but by a machine.

To the metaphor of the city considered as a megamachine by Guattari, corresponds Stiegler’s neganthropocene vision defining cities as “complex exorganisms”. The negentropy is the property of a system that fights entropy. In contrast to the entropy of the Anthropocene, Stiegler’s neganthropocene (Stiegler, 2018b) is a futuristic era in which thinking means taking care as a distinctive trait of all life. Furthermore, Stiegler distinguishes the simple “exorganismes”, like the human beings considered as a process of production of bodies with an unceasing accumulation of knowledge and technical skills, called exosomatic (Lotka, 1945), from the complex exomatic bodies, like cities. (Stiegler, 2018a, 214). More concretely, this would mean reintroducing cyclical processes of “noetic unfolding”, a method of direct knowledge and subjectively understanding, into our use of digital technologies, and in our living practices (Alombert, 2017).

With the technological advances of the 21st century, the idea of a data-driven urban development has become more common, with metaphors like “data is the new oil. We must run our cities like start-ups” (Dalton, 2022, 7) being used. For Guattari, beyond the critique of the global capitalism system, the “age of planetary computerization” (Guattari, 2013a, 11), is another way to describe a kind of global data colonialism, and especially in our globalized





cities. Stiegler, citing the work of Naomi Klein on data extractivism, which consists of extracting noetic resources by destroying them, points to the danger for cities, proletarianized urban territorial complex ex-organisms, of being deprived of their capacity for social appropriation or collective individuation, and exhausted by this destructive exploitation, which can be described as neo-colonialist (Stiegler, 2018a, 171). This is also the thesis developed by Fitzpatrick and McGarrigle who, based on Stiegler's work on the smart city, explore data-driven colonialism in the data city. This is first a historical phenomenon with scientific cartography from the 18th century to map colonial territories, and which continues today as an extension of these modes of colonization by data, with new modes of data extraction in cities (Fitzpatrick, 2020).

To counter the critics of the smart city, with the colonization of everyday urban life by information and data technologies, Stiegler is proposing alternative initiatives. One of these is the project called the "real smart city", with an experiment in Plaine commune, a suburb north of Paris, which is aiming to create a "contributive learning territory". Through this platform of knowledge, the inhabitants get an active role in the design and improvement of their local environment (Stiegler, 2020, 27). This reconnects with Guattari's ecosophy, by proposing projects of digital urbanity to complement the digital city, with the capability of empowerment of the citizens in order to contribute to the production of new subjectivities in the urban space. Actually, there is a common understanding between Stiegler's thought about the process of de-subjectivization of the individuals caused by the hyper-acceleration of media and Guattari's ecosophy, stressing the aspiration for individual and collective reappropriation of the production of subjectivity into a post-media era (Featherstone, 2016) characterized by the reappropriation and resingularisation of the use of media with "access to data-banks, video libraries, interactivity between participants, etc." (Guattari, 1995, 5).

Furthermore, Stiegler uses the notion of *pharmakon* to characterize the ambivalence of any technical object that is both remedy and poison. With this perspective, Stiegler substitutes for the question of humanism, which resonates as an essence of man, the question of the *pharmakon* of the technical form of life, or of the human. With this curative function of caring, the data city, in the ecosophical sense, far from being only an instrument of alienation, can also be at the service of individual or collective emancipation and empowerment. Beyond the risks of homogenization of lifestyles, liquidation of singularities and psychopower (Stiegler, 1994), the question is also how to recognize the benevolent potential of machines or robots that are programmed to monitor humans and to facilitate their daily tasks and pretend to work for their good or their well-being. Ultimately, these contemporary technologies present in the city induce different transformations of our subjectivities, in terms of the content of our thoughts, our cognitive functions and our individualities (Pierre Cassou-Noguès, 2022).

At the same time, the new digital information and communication technologies in a positive scenario of their use can contribute to rebuilding local democracy and urban development by focusing on shared knowledge and collective intelligence. Stiegler speaks of digital urbanity using automation at the service of urban deliberations. Indeed, to design "real smart cities" and to reverse the inurbanity of the automatic city, there is a need to conceive a territorial reticulation capable of reconstructing a territorial dynamic (Stiegler, 2018b, 119). As a result, a positive local animation will be produced as well as a sense of belonging to a place, reconnecting us this time with the sense of place in Næss's ecosophy.

## **Contribution of the urban ecosophy to a postcolonial ecohumanism of the city**

In this final section, to what extent urban ecosophy stems from principles of ecohumanism is analyzed. According to Patterson, humanism principles should be the guiding decision regarding the environment, like for example, empathy for other humans and other non-human animals or the consideration of the sense of responsibility toward the future generations (Patterson, 2008).

As we have seen from Næss's nature or anti-urban notion, with the non-violence of the self-realization, through the critique of the neo-colonialism with Guattari's ecosophy considering the city as a mega-machine and reinforced with the relation to the "whole-world" of Glissant, until Stiegler's idea of cities as complex exorganisms with a positive contribution to a digital urbanity, all those three approaches are asking ecohumanism principles in a post-colonial urban context from different perspectives. Whilst Næss never called himself an ecohumanist, ecohumanism, by balancing human principles with ecological ones, would allow ecosophy with the self-realization to overcome this dilemma of self-identification with nature as an extension of the self, or dissolution in it, and by restoring the conflictual political dimension of the recognition of the otherness.

Guattari's ecosophy, criticizes the subject/object division and implicitly humanism. As such, it can be qualified as posthumanism (Beaulieu, 2021), defined as "an awareness of the life-enabling co-agency of the more-than-human world in cultural evolution and creativity" (Zapf, 2022). Insofar as this ecosophy assumes techno-cybernetic productions without an airtight break between man and technology, it corresponds more to a post-humanism or experimental humanism, where a community of destiny is imposed between humans and non-humans owing to "a catastrophic planetary upheaval" (Montebello, 2016, 10).

Stiegler fits into this post-humanist filiation, with the idea that humans have co-evolved with technics, and thus, humans and technics co-constitute one another until the acknowledgement both of re-inventiveness and of the diversity of urban posthuman agency in digitally mediated cities. Stiegler's work also suggests that attention should be given to the precise and diverse configurations of the posthuman that are emerging as cities become saturated with software and screens (Rose, 2017). In addition, as we have seen with Mumford, ecohumanism, compared to ecosophy, also recognizes ecology as an essential human value as well as human progress, with the idea that human survival depends on a preserved ecological environment.

It could be first argued that ecosophy considers ecology as a humanism insofar as protecting nature and therefore the environment is to protect eventually the human species and ensure the conditions for its survival, and to restore the livability and habitability of the earth, and particularly in cities where more than half of the world's population live. Eventually, urban ecosophical approaches correspond to a post-colonial ecohumanist vision, insofar as they criticize anthropocentrism and a form of individualistic intellectualism, a legacy of modernity and the thought of man's omnipotence over nature, and colonial conquest. Redefining the place of the human being within the living world is at the heart of the thought of ecohumanism, for as Edgar Morin says: "Getting out of anthropocentrism results in the passage from humanism, which isolates the human being from his environment, to ecohumanism, which integrates the individual into society and the human species in the living" (Morin, 2015).



Following the quote of Gilbert Simondon, French philosopher of the technology with the theory of individuation, that “each era must discover its humanism by directing it towards the main danger of alienation” (Simondon, 1958), we can argue that ecohumanism, through the critical lens of the urban ecosophy, is proposing to emancipate the urban era from the digital colonialism, as well as from the unbridled consumption of natural resources for our urban way of life. Finally, from an ecohumanist perspective affected by the otherness, solidarity, and relationships, urban ecosophy highlights key notions or values, like those of alliance or reliance, of resonance or benevolence:

Alliance of man with the earth is to bring together the trajectories and co-rhythms of humanity with the biosphere. This is a question of rethinking the human relationship in new forms of partnerships, of alliances with non-human living beings to promote sustainable uses of territories.

Reliance pertains to the mutual collaboration between different entities or groups, with the specific idea of ecohumanism of a community of planetary destiny; to be able to reconnect with a united cosmopolitan universalism, as suggested by Glissant. At the urban level, this is a question of rethinking the interactions between the city and its immediate environment. This also holds at the social level, recreating links of interdependence with the various local social actors to reinvent a form of sociability by the deployment of the territorial collective intelligence, as Stiegler argues that we should.

Resonance refers to the ability to reverberate across the universe, and to allow ideas to be more deeply understood by others. In the self-realization of Næss, or the *tout-monde* from Glissant, the two inner and outer processes echo each other. Naess’s interest in Gandhi’s pacifist and introspective thought makes it possible to think of an “ecohumanism (which) would then not be only ideological or conceptual, but embodied in experience, at the meeting point between Western and Eastern traditions” (Curnier, 2017).

Benevolence. With the colonialism of the city by data, Stiegler’s lens is questioning the capacity of benevolence of the technologies that are available to humans in the so called « smart cities ». The benevolence of ecosophy is also advocated by Guattari, who appeals to an ecosophy “to create new systems of valorization, a new taste for life, a new gentleness between the sexes, generations, ethnic groups, races” (Guattari, 1995, 92).

## Conclusion

The ecosophical aim of Arne Næss is to offer a shift off-centre from an anthropocentric to a global approach, with the recognition of the intrinsic value of nature. Ecosophy also poses the existential question of being in the world, of inhabiting it, whether in its component of personal fulfilment or self-realization, according to Næss, or in the processes of the production of subjectivities for Guattari. Applied to the urban context, ecosophy as wisdom of the Earth aims to preserve the conditions of habitability in a determined territory, that of the cities in which most of the inhabitants of Earth are concentrated. Furthermore, the urban ecosophy observed in a post-colonial historical perspective through the lenses of Gandhi, Glissant and Stiegler allows for conceiving the ontological relation to the nature, to the others or the world, as well as to the machines and the data in the city.

As we have seen, ecosophy’s approach is particularly relevant in an urban hybrid context linking the different ecological dimensions and aiming to achieve a broader self-realization

and connectedness in the process of individual and collective subjectivation for the citizens. This process is not separate but more intrinsically connected with the living and technical local environment of the city. This leads us to the post-colonial ecohumanist program working for human flourishing and for greater benevolence with shared values on a global scale like equality, environmental justice and human rights. Ultimately, the urban ecosophy, as a practical ecosophy, in correspondence with ecohumanism, is proposing a decentering of humanism by considering the ecology in the city. It then becomes possible to reconcile a modernist philosophy of individual and collective empowerment and deployment of subjectivities in the city, the idea of universalism with a world citizenship, with an emerging philosophy of respect and ethic for the living.

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