Elsewise: Speculative Landscapes in the Climate Pluriverse

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Climate capitalism, technofixes, diffusion of responsibility: apocalyptic horsemen, etched into the foundations of hegemonic structures and inscribed in political dynamics. Often invisible, these forces permeate our everyday lives, our political decisions, our very existence. How we respond to the climate crisis–today and in the future–is therefore also a consequence of persistent habitats of political conduct in a perpetually unequal world. Or put differently: the 'climate subject', introduced in this book, is not a carefree fluttering butterfly that fulfills itself only through independent, reflective self-expression, as the humanist ideal suggests. Rather, it is also the result of its sociocultural and historical surroundings. The closer a subject resides on exploitable margins, the more likely it is not only to slip beyond the horizon, but also to bear the true costs of the crisis–often through creeping or acute violence (Parsons 2025). This is exactly where 'business as usual' pushes toward collapse–hidden in smog, toxic incineration fumes, and microplastics too small to see, it keeps grinding on.

By exploring more-than-human practices of repair, care, and collective response to climate-related crises in urban Southeast Asia–particularly in Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh–this contribution seeks to reconfigure dominant approaches to resilience. It does so through a series of ethnographically speculative vignettes: some closely grounded in fieldwork, others more freely imagined. I call these vignettes 'speculative' because they navigate the tightrope between ethnographic data and storytelling, aiming to create and reconfigure reality–across histories, presents, and possible futures–in order to illuminate what remains unseen and untold. This feminist approach writes not only against 'a realistic real,' but inhabits the "interstices of what presents itself as reality," as Isabelle Stengers puts it (Stengers 2018, quoted in Jensen and Thorsen 2018: 4). Speculative fabulations are to be understood in this way as a mode of attention, a practice of worlding that materialize an elsewise that goes beyond the otherness (Haraway 2016; Gramlich 2020). While 'otherwise' casts the other as a distinct counterpart, set apart from the one who observes, elsewise gestures toward a more porous sense of otherness–one that is not only different, but also elsewhere, or otherwise still. This view

provides possibilities to think in consequences, enabling ethnography to become an intervening and political endeavor (Eitel 2022a; Eitel et al. 2021).

The subject is always influenced by sociocultural conditions. The processes of subjectivation it undergoes–that is, the conditions under which it becomes a subject recognized as such by society–are dependent on historical, contemporary, and future factors, as well as on cultural and social ones. This list is, of course, not exhaustive. Subjectivations are thus produced not by individuals, but by conglomerates, networks, or assemblages that persist across extended times and spaces. One might recall Michel Foucault ([1981] 2017) here, who understands the subject not as self-evident, but as produced by force fields. Always embedded in forms of power/knowledge, the subject becomes habituated as a result of its environment, which is permeated by power structures. Subjectivation processes are socioculturally diverse and more-than-humanly situated, I argue in this contribution, and it not only considers humans as subjects, but also inquires into their manifold embeddings in–at times radically–different realities and how these affect the responses we give to climate change. From this perspective, subjectivations are more than processes determined solely by human interactions. Rather, the human is decentered and placed within a complex web of human and non-human actors and their interrelations (Braidotti 2013; 2019).

According to this logic, the conditions and obligating factors accompanying subjectivation processes are always more-than-human and diversely situated. They give rise to fluid and non-static subjects at different loci: "The posthuman nomadic subject is materialist and vitalist, embodied and embedded–it is firmly located *somewhere* (...)" emphasizes Braidotti (2013: 188; emphasis by author). This somewhere stems from what Braidotti defines as a "politics of location," underscoring that these conditions and factors–or, if one prefers: the extended environments of the subject–are never universal or neutral, but context-specific. Here, the locus is metaphysically lifted out of its geographic and terrestrial anchoring and becomes a site, or a landscape, as Anna L. Tsing (2019) would define it. A landscape that may be arranged vertically, horizontally, diagonally–entirely multi-layered. The politics of location then becomes a politics of landscapes, in which the subject is not extracted from its relations to its environments, but is seen as emerging from these landscapes.[1]

What follows turns toward landscapes that exist far from the desired materializations of hegemonic subjectivation. These intended materializations me-

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[1]   This also resonates with Alfred N. Whitehead's (1929) notion of the "superject"—a subject always entangled with its surroundings and sustained by the multiple relations in which it is embedded. It is at once subject and many superjects, a subject-superject that shifts according to its environment and in doing so brings forth new entities of itself, which in turn imply new relationships to its environment.

diate concrete expressions of a particular socially sanctioned mode of being a subject–namely, as an environmentally conscious, responsible individual. These practices may appear, at first glance, to be morally or ecologically meaningful, yet they are simultaneously embedded in larger power structures that define what is considered 'good' or 'right' action. Instead, we turn our gaze to scenes that lie beyond those hegemonic processes of subjectivation and illuminate far-flung networks, companionship and collectiveness. This contribution, *first*, explores disaster ontologies that illuminate plural understandings of reality in relation to crises, as expressed through everyday encounters with floods, infrastructure failures, or urban improvisational practices. It becomes clear that crises are not defined universally, but experienced and addressed in situated ways – as dynamic relations between environment, technology, and social practice (Féaux de la Croix and Samalkov 2025; Barrios 2017; Faas 2016). *Second*, the part on subject formation in the ruins focuses on the conditions under which the climate subject – or more precisely, the shared climate subject–comes into being. Here, instead of individual autonomy, processes of collectivization, historical relations of violence, affective entanglements, and infrastructural embeddings take center stage. Subjectivation appears not as an isolated act, but as a relational, material practice–one that is always fragile, contradictory, and situated. *Third*, the section on the politics of possibility opens a window to speculative future scenarios in which non-human actors–such as water hyacinths–become co-shapers of urban ecologies. It is these quiet, often overlooked interventions that suggest new spaces of possibility and invite reflection on a different, non-anthropocentric becoming of the world. Together, these three sections map out landscapes of the elsewise: spaces in which climate change is understood not only as a technical or political problem, but as a collective experience and potential–one that takes shape through shared practices, relationships, and resistances.

Ultimately, however, these narratives also show how, in a changing world, a sense of collectiveness and companionship can emerge–not as a fixed we, but as a *shared elsewise* that is embedded in solidarity, respect, and reflexivity, and engaged in struggles with diverse relations of power and force. It sees itself as part of a different planetarism, refuses the maintenance and repair work of porous postcolonial and capitalist induced infrastructures and simultaneously reaches beyond the limits of the body, to where subject no longer means individual, but relation, movement, touch.

Disaster Ontologies in the Pluriverse

*The sky had been leaden grey for days when Typhoon Yagi
broke away from the Chinese mainland in 2024 and began moving
with ominous slowness toward the western coast of Vietnam.
In the streets of Ho Chi Minh City, a strange mix of calm
and quiet tension prevailed. The air was oppressive, the light pale.
And yet—life went on.
I met Thảo in a small café at the edge of the neighborhood,
where the trees were already bending under the first winds.
She stirred her iced coffee.
"Everyone is preparing for heavy rain,
and also plan around it to avoid travelling during
rain or flood," she said calmly, as if it were nothing new.
"Some neighborhoods are preparing for it by
cleaning their own sewage systems without
help from local government too."
I looked out onto the street, where two women
were pulling trash out of a clogged storm drain.
People here seemed firmly determined not to face
the approaching catastrophe passively.
Later, a few streets away, I came across an older street vendor
offering steaming noodles from a rickety food stall by the sidewalk.
I asked her whether she packed up her stand
and went home when the rains got heavy.
She just shook her head and laughed heartily. "Not at all!"
I blinked in surprise. "Not at all? Even if the water rises
and the floods take over the streets?"
"Then I just move my stall further up, to the edge of the sidewalk,"
she replied, as if it were the most natural thing in the world.
And as the typhoon crept ever closer, it dawned on me:
these people did not feel uncertain.
What was coming was not uncanny
– it was a question of everyday pragmatics.*

Imponderables are not crises everywhere and most importantly: their responses un-
fold differently. How imponderables are handled is deeply embedded in local logics
of life, care, and infrastructure. Disasters and crisis do not act out in empty space;
they encounter world-relations, historical lines of violence, lived routines. How we
name, experience, and anticipate disasters—all of it is already an expression of a spe-
cific ontology, a specific understanding of the world we live in. Crises are relational.

As the fictive figure Thảo makes clear in the speculative vignette at the beginning of this chapter: crises are first approached pragmatically. For example, by helping each other clear out blocked drains that would otherwise prevent rainwater from flowing away. The first priority is to remain calm. This composure is part of every-day life, just as 'disruptions' or even crises are part of daily routines. Quyên, a young women in her thirties, tells me that she spent her entire childhood responsible for clearing floodwater from her parents' house. With a bucket and a mop, she says, she feels like she spent her entire youth keeping the ground-floor living room dry. Crises are generally part of the everyday. Sometimes the sewage system fails, at other times the electricity cuts out, or the street in front of the house becomes impassable due to flooding or indefinitely delayed construction work. Even when people gesticu-late and discuss new situations with intensity, the approach remains pragmatic. If it can't be done one way, then it'll be done another.

This interplay between–in this case–flooding, local conditions, and people has taken shape over decades and can be aptly described as a practical disaster ontology, which shapes what is even understood as 'crisis' and how one deals with it–that is, how responses are formed. Especially within the research fields of interdisci-plinary disaster studies and the anthropology of resilience, ethnographic studies have shown that both the definition of crises and the reactions or anticipatory stances toward them are relational and diverse (Eitel 2023, Voorst 2016; Bollig 2014; Hastrup 2009). In other words, what constitutes a crisis or a planetary disaster – as climate change promises to become–evokes different experiential contexts, rules, and normative practices by which people orient themselves. In Vietnam, as in many countries in Southeast Asia and the Global South, crises are not unusual precisely because they are everyday. At the very least, this is a point at which we can confi-dently let go of the Eurocentric perspective that stability and functionality frame the status quo–and this not only with regard to the example from Vietnam, but also in light of current political and economic developments in the northern hemisphere, where once-buried concepts such as trade war, despotism, and autonomy–albeit now tied to different understandings–are resurfacing.

The ideal of technological innovation, of the ever-new and ever-faster, is also reaching its limits in the Global North. While in Germany this results in panicked po-litical alignments–as seen during the 2021 Ahrtal floods, where the disaster quickly became a battleground for political blame and bureaucratic dysfunction–citizens in Vietnam, as my research in Ho Chi Minh City illustrates, respond with far more complementary disaster ontologies.

The frequent non-functioning of infrastructure–or their outright absence–re-quires constant repair work and improvisation, which are neither random nor arbi-trary but point to a reservoir of experience and knowledge that people have built up over time (Simone 2004). This includes the continual repair of essential infrastruc-ture, particularly in the areas of sewage and flood protection. In doing so, people

do not merely adapt to an environment in dynamic flux–the storm drain clogged with garbage, preventing water from draining, prompts individuals to take matters into their own hands through cleaning activities. More than that, this rebuilding, self-creating, and repairing produces knowledge that flows directly back into their living environments. It benefits not only the individual but also a collective, such as neighborhoods, colleagues, or those that exist beyond human and non-humans, such as animals. Shaped by communist economic and social systems–such as collective farming–or by Confucian philosophy, Thảo always finds herself embedded in a web of relationships that comes with responsibilities (Luong 2003).

Thus, repair and improvisation are not (only) for personal benefit, but necessary to maintain the environment of these companionship with other. Steven J. Jackson (2014: 221) identifies this way of being-in-the-world as "broken world thinking." He argues that societies do not function solely through innovation but through continuous maintenance and repair. This becomes particularly relevant in infrastructural contexts–like the example of the clogged storm drain, which provokes a collaborative action (cleaning). In short: cleaning the drains in this case benefits not only all those who are in some way entangled in the nexus of flooding–waste–neighborhood, but the act of repair is also part of collective knowledge forms. Or put differently: the ability to adapt, to respond to new or changing conditions, and to channel them into an order expresses the 'liveliness' of such communities.

But what this example also illustrates is that the practices of repair and maintenance have little to do with a world presumed to be broken–a world conceived from the assumption that progress and innovation always imply a sequential movement from a worse to a better state, a "modern infrastructural ideal" (Graham and Marvin 2001: 35; 2007), a technofix. No: here, people do not understand their world as broken and do not need to learn to cope with the collapse of infrastructures, or with systems that are spectacular but functionally deficient. From this perspective, the world does not need to be repaired, because it already functions (though from an ethnocentric viewpoint, it may appear deficient) in the way it always has. The repairs to materials, systems, and infrastructures serve instead as support for this world. Supportive–and thus enhancing. Enhancing world thinking can be understood as a cue for how to deal with climate change and its various consequences. Repairs do not only take place after a disaster – like a typhoon or the daily floods that cities contend with–but beforehand and continuously.

Within this web, however, care becomes a central practice–but not one that is distributed equally. As Quyên recounts, the burden of care within these various forms of companionship is often unevenly distributed, weighing more heavily on certain bodies than others. Over the years, she was the only one regularly taking responsibility for maintaining the house clean after floodings and high tides–a task that involved not only physical labor but also emotional strain. The accumulated weight of this solitary effort, marked by exhaustion and a deep sense of aban-

donment, has left lasting imprints on her. These accounts reveal that practices of solidarity and collective action are not free from conflict. On the contrary, they are frequently marked by violence and social toxicity. It reminds us that collectivity itself can both nurture and wound, depending on how care, responsibility, and power circulate within it. Resilience, then, always seems to be built upon power asymmetries as well as recurring practices of adaptation. It underscores the value of diverse disaster ontologies in times of climate change and intersecting crises (Eitel 2023). The importance of recognizing plural ways of being–that is, the multiple understandings of reality in relation to disasters and the ways they are navigated–has also been highlighted by anthropologist Arturo Escobar (2018). He argues that acknowledging plural ontologies not only offers alternative ways of perceiving the world and reality but also opens up new spaces for action: to respond locally and responsibly within the context of global emergencies.

Holding On in the Ruins

Sophea kneels in the dust beside a wasted TV casing. Around her:
the broken shells of old appliances, shattered plastic,
and tangled cords–the sharp-edged ruins of consumption.
Sometimes they cut her–literally.
Last week, a rice cooker's jagged rim split her hand.
"The world cuts back," she said dryly, binding the wound
with a scrap of cloth, before she continues
collecting valuable parts from leftovers.
But the edges are more than physical. They are the metaphors
of a culture that discards–goods, people, futures.
And yet, Sophea stays. Not to fix the world,
but to hold it together, piece by salvaged piece.
Sophea sorted copper from plastic, a boy from
the neighborhood arrived with a plate of leftovers.
"My mom said it's too much rice," he muttered.
They sat in the shade, sharing what was never meant to be shared.
The sharpness of the ruins didn't only wound–
it also outlined new forms. New solidarities.
New "we's" not defined by purchase, but by presence.
Here, in the ruins, a different kind of life flickers.
Not built on ownership, but on endurance.
Not progress, but presence.
And in this presence, sharp as it is, something else begins.

In light of pluriversal disaster ontologies the question arises of how it is not subject formation, but processes of companionship and collectiveness that shape entities in all their embeddedness. How, for instance, are social groups or collectives solidified–through specific discourses, narratives, or policies? Which collectives are invoked when we speak of 'the victims of climate change'? Who is being subjectivized here? Such formulations homogenize what is heterogeneous, dynamic, and relational. They lend certain groups of actors a presumed unity, historical innocence, or moral authority–and in doing so, obscure the unequal distribution of responsibility, agency, and visibility.

The (climate) subject emerges at the intersection of modes of governance, discourses, affects, and material realities. Technologies of the subject, as described by Aihwa Ong (2006), exemplify this: in the context of neoliberal governmentality, subjects are produced who self-regulate, self-optimize, self-responsibilize–under the banner of efficiency, market logic, and flexibility. Crucially, neoliberalism operates and is deployed differently in post-capitalist, extractivist industrial worlds where exploitation and colonial histories are part of the national repertoire, than it is in other regions. Neoliberalism with a lowercase "n," as Ong (2006: 3) defines it, is "a new mode of political optimization" applied in the Chinese context. Here, technologies of subjectivation, unlike in the West, do not primarily position individuals as entrepreneurial self-managers but are orchestrated by an active state that purposefully steers economic and social processes. While neoliberal mechanisms in Western contexts often go hand in hand with the withdrawal of the state and the promotion of individual market responsibility, a paradoxical development appears in China: the state actively intervenes in economic and social processes in order to selectively establish market principles–without relinquishing political control. Neoliberalism in China is thus understood as a codeword for America's presumptuous grasp for power–one that forces other markets into liberalization and privatization, subjugating and enslaving them. It is a mode of neoliberalism, which rescues capitalist structures in times of crisis, for example, by mobilizing subjects as entrepreneurial actors. This recalls Anna L. Tsing's concept of salvage accumulation (2015; 2007: 63), which identifies the unpaid exploitation of wage-dependent matsutake mushroom pickers. These laborers–similar to the many waste collectors around the world–contribute through their repair and recycling labor to the maintenance of the capitalist system, without directly benefiting from it themselves. In Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh, this salvage capitalism is linked to tropes of freedom and autonomy, which persist through solidarity with peers, 'rescuing' transnational value chains and their capitalist remains by feeding waste products back into them (Eitel 2022b).

In the ruins of capitalism, collectives emerge that become accomplices – not against something, but for a future we. The waste collector Sophea, for instance, works in these sharp-edged ruins to secure a livelihood for herself and her family. So that her children may have a better life. So that things might get better. She

doesn't speak of competition with other waste pickers; instead, there's a shared understanding that everyone is in the same (miserable) situation–regarding poverty, societal status. 'Incidentally,' the waste collectors, through their solidaristically intertwined networks, also keep the city clean and drastically reduce harmful climate emissions–such as those produced by the burning of synthetic waste–by collecting, purchasing, and transferring these materials to recycling and reuse facilities (Eitel 2022b). In this sense, the practices of the waste pickers in Phnom Penh can be understood as a form of salvage solidarity–a solidaristic complicity that not only sustains the continuity of transnational value chains but also performs daily care work amidst systemic neglect. It is a practice that is neither purely subaltern nor oppositional, but relational, improvised, and carried by a shared hope that something might improve.

Because the causes and effects of climate change are never clearly identifiable as such–depending on which nexus, in which configuration, is being examined, the definition of what climate change is and what its effects are will narrow or widen. For example, the fine particulate known as black carbon is both a driver of air pollution and absorbs solar radiation, thus warming the atmosphere. In fact, black carbon has an impact on the climate 20 to 1500 times greater than CO_2, though it settles more quickly. When Bangkok declared a state of emergency in early 2025 due to excessive air pollution, it was not only state measures that offered protection, but also collective, informal networks: the distribution of masks, shared data, mutual aid.

These constellations show: the climate subject is not a fixed figure; nor is it endlessly open to potential connections. It is mobile, relational, always in the making–an effect of collectivization processes, not of autonomy. Rosi Braidotti's concept of "nomadic subjectivity" is useful here: a subject not defined by separation, but by convergence–by connectedness with other knowledge forms, other life forms, other entities (Braidotti 2019; 2011). Through care, through affect, through what is shared–even amidst destruction. In the light of pluriversal disaster ontologies, one might say: the climate subject is not made–it is brought forth collectively. In ruins, in residual waste, in fine dust, in the hands of those who have no lobby–but who have one another.

But these companionships are not exclusively human. They are also formed through non-human actors, who, in interaction with material, affective, and ecological dynamics, enable–or disrupt–new forms of living together. It is plants, infrastructures, weather patterns, and waterways that co-act in these processes–not as background noise, but as active agents in the becoming of the world. In the dense, fleeting texture of urban spaces, they appear as co-creators, inscribing themselves into collective politics, disturbing existing orders, challenging us to adopt new modes of engagement. One such example is the water hyacinth in Ho Chi Minh City–long misjudged, but never passive. What does it mean to think of a plant not only as an object of ecological control, but as an agent of collective transformation?

Politics of Possibility: Speculating the We in Crisis

> *At first, it was barely noticeable–a denser layer*
> *on the water, a subtle shift in the currents.*
> *The water hyacinths, long misjudged as an invasive nuisance,*
> *began to take shape. Not chaotically, but with intention.*
> *They grew where wastewater entered,*
> *where the water was warmest, dirtiest.*
> *"They're cleaning," said a farmer.*
> *"They're blocking," said a technician.*
> *"They're responding," thought an ecologist.*
> *Because the hyacinths seemed to be doing more*
> *than merely drifting. They spread like membranes*
> *over the canals, gathering, filtering, slowing.*
> *They disrupted the flow–in both senses of the word.*
> *And they stayed. Not as passive plants, but as a response.*
> *To heat. To waste. To time.*
> *It was not the human who was the agent of change here.*
> *It was nature itself.*
> *Speculative, alive, defiant.*

The climate collective, as sketched in my example from Vietnam, is bound to disaster ontologies–guiding constructs of social foundations that imply a more-than-individual and foreground processes of collectivization over processes of subjectivation. These elsewise worlds that emerge here are based on a reality that points toward an otherwise possible way of being–and with it, of acting–in the climate crisis. Technologies of the subject are adapted and deployed elsewise in order to shape the subject–or the collective–and at the same time: they can only persist because people, through their embeddedness in these processes, both sustain the system and identify new spaces of (sur)vivability. Reciprocal capture–as Isabelle Stengers calls it–is a mutual enclosing of different sociocultural systems or environments that are interdependent and, through this mutual "capturing," transform each other. "Whenever there is a reciprocal capture, value is created" (Stengers 2010: 36). Reciprocal capture of salvaging–a mutual saving–that, in the case of informal (recycling and collecting) economies, gives rise to new forms of capitalism. These go beyond what Ong (2006: 9) describes as "mutually constitutive relationships that are not reducible to one or another" by shifting the focus to the effects of those relationships. What counts and what "'could count' for that practice," Stengers asks (2010: 37).

    If we no longer understand collectives as anthropocentric assemblages of human subjects, but instead as emergent configurations of human and non-human actors, then plants too come into view–not as silent backdrop, but as active co-shapers

of ecological orders. Adopting non-human perspectives that decenter the Anthropos and bring other species into focus can help reveal political-ecological entanglements.

Water hyacinths, which flourish particularly during the rainy season (May–October) in the megacity of Ho Chi Minh City, both clog sewage canals–contributing, for example, to the city's flooding–and purify the water in which they float. Through their persistency, fish die due to missing sunlight, and mosquitos delivering dengue are increasing. Water hyacinths (*bèo tây* or *lục bình*) are part of a contested urban space: by intervening in socio-technical infrastructures, they alter how the city is perceived, how flood risks are negotiated, and what is understood as 'nature.' They disrupt the urban metabolism–and in doing so, are an active part of a world-in-the-making that is not–and never was–centered on the human. They generate orders, they draw boundaries, they shape ways of living together and apart. And they do so not in the abstract, but in practice–in water, in everyday life, in the flow of things. As symbols of love, desire, and destiny, water hyacinths speak through songs and literature. For example, in "Lục Bình Trên Sông[2]" ("Water Hyacinths on the River"), Nhật Kim Anh sings about her lost love that has, quite literally, drifted away.

Their underlying ontology is likewise practical–not something tied to metaphysical states of being, but brought forth through everyday practice (Jensen 2021; Blaser and Jensen 2021). They intervene not just visibly in the urban space, but in (disaster) ontologies–by, for instance, complicating the cleaning of storm drains, or by echoing the ethos of enhancing repair thinking. Water hyacinths have long been used as ingredients in soups or as animal feed. Basket weaving with their stalks has also become a popular activity, as the finished products are increasingly sold on tourist-trafficked markets and local online platforms alike.

Still, their growing presence in the city remains controversial. One article even claims that the water hyacinths are 'strangling' (*bức tử*) the Saigon River; another source refers to their never-ending story–how they populate bodies of water ceaselessly–as a trait that makes them resilient to external interventions, such as the city's numerous anti-flooding projects (Mai 2019).

> They remain resilient, clinging to the river of life, even when the waves bruise and batter them. The human condition may be small, but its vitality is never drained. On the contrary, adversity only deepens and intensifies that life force over time. (Nguyễn 2023)

In 2021, the city issued an emergency plan addressing the issue, seeking to confront the plant with new technological innovations that go beyond the mere collection of organic waste.

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2   "Lục Bình Trên Sông", (https://www.nhaccuatui.com/song/yxTaCRBR5TC6).

This clearly illustrates how ecological challenges posed by invasive plant species become embedded in urban governance and infrastructural strategies (Minh 2021). The deployment of new technologies to 'clean up nature' is not merely an environmental initiative, but also an attempt to gain technical control over dynamic socio-ecological processes–whose origins often lie beyond the specific site being targeted. As the name suggests, the water hyacinth is a "western floating plant" –*tây* (western), distinguishing it from native aquatic vegetation like *bèo cái* or *bèo ong*. The plant was introduced during the period of French colonial rule.

The pluriverse offers us an understanding of many different worlds; it reveals that their realities are–and can become–radically different; it opens new possibilities for shared futures. Or, in the words of sociologist and philosopher Martin Savransky (2021:1): "Pluralizing the present, these other stories, these other worlds in this world, precipitate a pragmatics of collective imagination against ongoing desolation." Speculative narration brings worlds into being–those that are, and those that are still coming into being–entangled and interwoven, and radically different in their realities. They are neither parallel universes nor freestanding units, but "the wager on the possibility of rendering ourselves capable of thinking, against all odds, for other times to come, for worlds to be elsewise composed. To think, while we still can, in the hold of an improbable but insistent perhaps." (Savransky 2021: 2)

In light of pluriversal disaster ontologies, it can be said that it is not the subject that acts autonomously, but rather collective processes–as mobile, context-specific, and relational networks – that bring entities (including the climate subject) into being. These processes are shaped by their specific material-symbolic embeddings, by historical relations of violence, but also by present-day possibilities for action and forms of resistance. The climate subject is thus not predetermined, but shaped situationally in and through these collective processes–as a fluid, plural, and power-saturated figure.

The unknown that reveals itself in the pluriverse is not the alien–it is the not-yet, the becoming-possible. It demands not only recognition, but co-creation. In this sense, crisis is not failure, but a threshold moment: a site of refiguration, where political imaginations can reorient themselves. Where repair is not conceived as restoration of the old, but as the enabling of something else. The water hyacinth, the storm drain network, the typhoon, the repairing collective: all stand as exemplars of world-relational practices, in which new cosmopolitical orders begin to shimmer into view – not as grand designs, but in the concreteness of everyday life, in improvisation, in carrying on, in listening. These practices operate beyond state-sanctioned resilience programs, beyond techno-utopian smart-city fantasies. Their agency does not lie in scalability, but in situatedness. And they speculate–quietly, yet insistently–on a future that is neither universal nor plannable, but must be brought

forth together. Perhaps, as Stengers and Savransky might suggest, it is precisely this improbable but insistent perhaps that points the way toward an elsewise tomorrow.

> *In this world, thought a cultural anthropologist later,*
> *crisis is not a disruption. It is the moment when*
> *the cosmos responds. In rhizomes, rhythms, and resonances.*
> *In mangroves that build while everything else falls apart.*
> *In water hyacinths that float in order to organize.*
> *Nature, once seen as a passive victim,*
> *reveals itself as an intelligent fabric.*
> *Not destroyed, but becoming. Not silent, but full of voice.*
> *And perhaps, she thought further, it was time to listen.*

Thinking in the Elsewise

Amidst a world permeated by multiple crises–ecological, epistemic, infrastructural–what is needed are new concepts of the political. Concepts that do not only address humans as agents, but that make visible the relational networks through which something like agency, resistance, or care can even come into being.

Ultimately, these narratives show how, in a changing world, shared climate subjects begin to emerge–as situated-practical constellations between humans, plants, infrastructures, memories, and hopes. 'Shared' here means several things at once: shared in the sense of collectively carried, jointly brought forth–but also divided, fragmented, traversed by difference and inequality. It points to connections as much as to ruptures. What emerges here is not the autonomous *I*, but a climate collectiveness in the making: relational, reparative, resistant. A form of subject-being that can only be thought in and through being-with–in the midst of a world that was never only human. Shared elsewises are enacted by many.

This contribution is an attempt not only to describe crisis, but to unveil it elsewise. To locate it elsewise. And perhaps: to feel it elsewise. The speculative landscape proposed here means more than a shift in perspective. It is a double undertaking: on the one hand, an effort to disrupt dominant narratives of climate change through theoretical displacements–along the lines of posthuman critique of the subject, plural disaster ontologies, and more-than-human materiality. On the other hand, it is also an attunement to those lived, situated, improvised more-than-human practices that are already now imagining, making, and living different futures. These landscapes are speculative because they evolve in unknowable, contingent ways, and they are themselves conjured through speculative modes of storytelling and ethnographic fabulation. They are not imagined instead of the real, but in order to deepen,

stretch, and intervene in it–making visible that which is emergent, fragile, and not yet fully formed.

In this light, crisis does not appear as a temporary state of emergency, but as a productive in-between–a moment in which spaces of possibility begin to shimmer, if we are willing to listen differently.

The elsewise is not a utopian vanishing point.
It is a thinking in relations.
A practicing in the plural.
A politics of attentiveness.
In the city of the future,
there are no centers anymore–only relationships.
People live with water hyacinths, fungi, cats, and microbes–
not metaphorically, but practically.
Plants are no longer seen as 'invasive,' but as sensors
and signal-bearers. When they spread, everyone listens.
Children learn with plants, not about them.
At certain times, the streets belong only to the animals.
Light dims, data whispers. Once a week: co-maintenance.
Not a show, but a quiet exchange between species.
What have you noticed? What do you need?
No one asks whether the world is different anymore.
It is.
And being elsewise has become entirely normal.

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