

# KNOW LEDGE CARTO GRAPIES

Supporting growth and sharing of different ontologies for the construction of the pluriverse.



NUESTRO NORTE ES EL SUR

Luiza Braga Campos | 10658595 | 936477  
Master thesis  
Tutor: Marc Garcia i Fortuny  
POLITECNICO DI MILANO  
Scuola del Design | Product Service  
System Design  
A.Y 2020/ 2021

**THIS IS THE BEGGINING  
OF A CONVERSATION**



“você tem que aprender a ver o que você estão destruindo, talvez assim seja possível destruir menos.” *[You have to learn to see what you are destroying, maybe this way it will be possible to destroy less.]*

**Davi Kopenawa**

Writer, Xamã and Yanomami political leader.

# Index

<b>Abstract</b> .....	8
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	9
<b>Note - positioning</b> .....	10
<b>Introduction</b> .....	11
<b>1.METHOD</b> .....	16
<b>2.UNLEARNING</b> .....	19
2.1 - The northern, western, dominant ontology .....	20
2.2 - Colonization, Modernity, and globalization - Historical context .....	24
2.2.1 - Colonization .....	24
2.2.2 - Modernity .....	27
2.2.3 - Globalization .....	28
2.2.4 - Colonisation by Design .....	29
2.3 - Design and ontology .....	32
2.4 - Are participatory practices enough? .....	35
<b>3. RELEARNING</b> .....	39
3.1 - Design for Services .....	41
3.2 - Design for Social Innovation .....	42
3.3 - Transition Design .....	43
3.4 - Autonomous Design .....	47
3.4 - Decolonizing Design .....	48
3.4.1 - Design Sentipensante.....	50
<b>4. CASE STUDIES</b> .....	52
<b>5. FIELD RESERACH</b> .....	60
5.1 - Questionnaire .....	62
5.2 - Interviews .....	73
5.2.1 - Wellington Cançado .....	74
5.2.2 - Matheus Viana .....	78
5.2.3 - Lesley-Ann Noel .....	82
5.2.4 - Maria Cristina Ibarra .....	86
5.2.5 - Warren Miller .....	88
5.2.6 - Saskia Rysenbry .....	92
5.2.7 - Andrea Melenje .....	96
5.2.8 - Heike Winschiers-Theophilus .....	100
5.2.9 - Flávio Duarte .....	104
5.3 - Design opportunity .....	108
<b>6. PROJECT</b> .....	110
6.1 - Concept .....	112
6.2 - Similarars .....	118
6.3 - System map .....	122
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	124
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	126

# Abstract

The events of colonization, modernity and globalization shaped the world in unprecedented ways. With the environmental and social crisis worsening day by day there is an urgency to find different ways of living in the world. Designers are world makers. What we create dictates ways of living, consuming, interacting and seeing the world, and therefore hold great responsibility for the future that will be constructed not only for the human species, but for life in general on this planet.

In this research it will be studied how those events shaped the world, the forces and the power structures that maintain it, and the possibilities for Design to grow as a practice that supports existence, such as pluriversality. The focus here is on sense making, since problem solving will require a lifetime of practices, conversations and exchange. But despite its exploratory focus, the concept of a possible support for a collective growth and sharing of pluriversal knowledge will be presented.

**Keywords:** Colonization, Decolonizing Design, Pluriversality, Knowledge.

## Abstract in Italian

Gli eventi della colonizzazione, della modernità e della globalizzazione hanno modellato il mondo in modi senza precedenti. Con la crisi ambientale e sociale che peggiora di giorno in giorno, è urgente trovare modi diversi di vivere nel mondo.

I designer sono creatori del mondo. Ciò che creiamo detta i modi di vivere, consumare, interagire e vedere il mondo, e quindi abbiamo una grande responsabilità per il futuro che sarà costruito non solo per la specie umana, ma per la vita in generale su questo pianeta.

In questa ricerca si studierà come quegli eventi hanno plasmato il mondo, le forze e le strutture di potere che lo mantengono, e le possibilità per il Design di crescere come pratica che supporta l'esistenza, come la pluriversalità.

L'attenzione qui si concentra sulla creazione di senso, poiché la soluzione dei problemi richiederà una vita di pratiche, conversazioni e scambi. Ma nonostante il suo focus esplorativo, verrà presentato il concetto di un possibile supporto per una crescita collettiva e la condivisione della conoscenza pluriversale.

**Parole chiave:** Colonizzazione, Design Decolonizzante, Pluriversalità, Conoscenza.

# Acknowledges

This thesis is a much bigger mark of a beginning than of an end. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity of learning so much in the last couple of years, and excited for all the possibilities that are now opening.

There is so much I am thankful for.

First of all I would like to thank my tutor Marc Garcia Fortuny for all the joyful meetings, the patience and the open heart to the unconventional theme I chose to explore. Your support was essential.

A big thanks also to Liat Rogel, the person from whom I've learned the most in the last couple of years, not only about Design, but also about compassion, leadership and friendship. Thank you for being my family in Italy, I hope you know how much love I have for you.

To the friends that Politecnico gave me, thanks for making the heavy days lighter, the boring tasks fun, for being open and there for each other. Mariah, Anika, Angela, Beril, Brenda, Ale, Anna, Dreyfus, Thais, Guilherme and Flavia, I can't believe how lucky I was to have met you all on day one.

Thanks also to my friends in Brazil and all around the world, whom I love no matter the distance, and that love and support me back. You are many, and you know who you are, but Lucas, you are my right and my left arms, Lili, you are my heart.

Above all I am immensely grateful to my family. Sandra, Luiz, Marina, Vó Lelis, Vô Oridio (wherever you are) and all the Braga's, the Campos's and the Mitre's. Without your love and support none of this would ever be possible. Thanks for loving me for who I am, believing and supporting me, no matter which path I choose to follow.

This thesis was developed with the help of amazing people and I thank all of them for sharing their knowledge with me. A special thanks to Wellington Cançado, the best teacher I ever had, who always opened up worlds in front of my eyes, to Arturo Escobar, for putting in clear words a much needed view of the world, making me see I'm not alone in my thoughts and feelings, and to Flavio Duarte, who helped me digest it.

Lastly, I thank the originary peoples, you are the strength and the light of this world. I hope to learn and be worthy of becoming your ally.

**To all of you, my eternal love and gratitude.**

# Note - positioning

This thesis was written by a white, middle-class, cis, Brazilian woman, with white parents and white grandparents, with origins from Italy, Portugal, Lebanon, and native South Americans.

Even though I have mixed origins, except for the fact of being a woman, I have never suffered any kind of disadvantage or racism due to my appearance or social status.

The cultures I have had more contact with, are the European-originated ones. I studied in private catholic schools my whole life and entered a public university (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) that is still today majoritarian white due to the current selective system in Brazil. I lived 25 of my 28 years in my country of origin, and the other 3 years in Europe, that being Italy (studying at the Politecnico di Milano) and The Netherlands (studying at The Hague University of Applied Sciences).

While I am trying to question my pre-defined understanding of the world and its ways of living, as Mignolo says, the how and the what we think is indivisible from where we think, so this is the perspective I am writing from. Once my culture is indivisible from who I am, I acknowledge my (big) limitations on doing so, due to my context, culture, appearance, and privileges.

**“Soy América Latina  
Un pueblo sin piernas, pero que camina”**  
Calle 13

# Introduction

In the last decades, we started perceiving and understanding the finitude of earth's resources, and with this perception comes the understanding of the likely end of the way of living as we currently know. The current system in which we live is based on exploitation and consumption, and it is already clear, we cannot maintain a system based on endless consumption and growth in a scenery with finite resources.

The challenges that are faced now with the capitalist economy based on the technology of fossil fuels are unprecedented. Déborah Danowski and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2015) question: Is there a world to come?

In September of 2009, Nature magazine published a special number where diverse scientists coordinated by Johan Rockstrom, do Stockholm Resilience Center, identified nine biophysical processes of the Earth System and sought to establish limits for these processes, which, if exceeded, would lead to unbearable environmental changes for several species, including ours: climate change, ocean acidification, stratospheric ozone depletion, fresh water use, loss of biodiversity, interference with global cycles of nitrogen and phosphorus, change in land use, chemical pollution and rate of atmospheric aerosols (Ávila, 2019).

Beyond environmental issues, but intrinsically connected are the power structures and systems of oppression that also come as a result of the modern western dominated world. As Amitav Ghosh (2016) points out, the environmental crisis is certainly a crisis of culture, and therefore also civilizational. Social inequality, racism, patriarchy, and several other ways of oppression come as an inevitable result of a living system that needs people playing the roles of weaker and stronger in order to survive and prosper.

But even though it might seem that the system and the relationships that shape the world now might seem set in stone and ageless, those are the consequences of a historical process that needs to be understood at a deeper level prior to idealizing how to change it. We cannot define what kind of transformation we bring to the world without understanding how it was first transformed.

The system in which we live nowadays is shaped by the so-called “western way of thinking” (deeper explored in chapter one of this thesis), which was brutally forced over the most diverse cultures around the world during colonization and reinforced by globalization. This system in which we live now, spread all over the world, makes it look as if we are all living the same challenges and the same possibilities, but there is a huge difference between what is being lived by the explorer and the explored, the colonizer and de colonized, or else, the global north and the global south. As Fry points, “to fear the dangers of a long term future is a marker of privilege of the perspective of the North, of having time to contemplate life beyond the immediate concerns of survival” ( Fry, 2017, p.9).

Through IPCC reports, the difference of impact between different humans, and also between humans and non humans can be seen clearly. Thiago Ávila (2019) expands on the issue:

We can also see that the poorest people, in the poorest hemisphere, the poorest countries, and the poorest neighborhoods inside those countries are the most affected ones. It’s unfair to see that among humans, the ones who suffer most are in peripheries and the poverty belts in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, even though those are the least responsible for the emissions of greenhouse gasses. Even consuming less, those are the ones who become homeless during floods, without water in droughts, die with heat and cold waves and are economically obligated to eat lower quality food, suffer more with big disasters and have less capacity to adapt to changes in climate.

The inequality in the effects of the destruction of nature by humans, based on economic and oppression criteria, either in the racialized relationship between the poorest people of a country, but also in relation between the center of capitalism industrialized countries and periphery ones, consists in what is now called environmental racism. (Ávila, 2019)

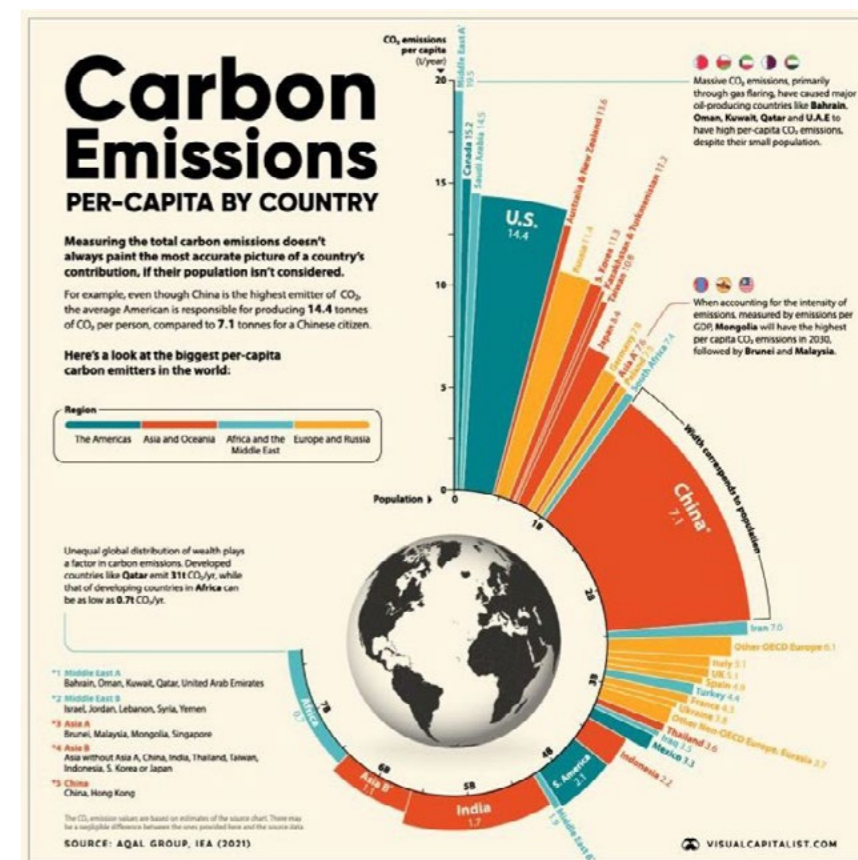


Fig. 01. Carbon emissions per-capita by country

As pointed out by Madina, “defuturing is indeed a universal condition, but the way we experience it is pluriversal.” To the majority of people and life on the planet, the capitalistic system already failed.

Midst centuries XVIII and XIX was the period of time where industries surged in the US and Europe. There was a huge increase in the offer of consumer goods combined with the fall of its costs, provoked by changes in the organization of production and technology, and as a

consequence, as never before in human history, people were able to buy so many things. (Cardoso, 2011). This is the context where the Design practice originates, trying to create more desire and better connect form and function, people and object.

Throughout the years, design has been transforming and growing as practice, adapting to the challenges of its time, and assuming the role of problem identifying, problem-solving, and sense-making. Acknowledging the environmental challenges of the current times, economies are moving to what is called a “service economy” (Meronni, Sangiorgi 2011) and the design practice followed this shift, developing to a point of acknowledgment and action over the complexity faced by today’s society, understanding that it “is no longer possible to garden without being aware of the ecosystem” (Clement, 2015). As a result, we now have what we call Service System Design, a practice that not only addresses the goals and obstacles of companies and governments but also tries to defy structural, environmental, and social issues all around the globe.

As indicated by Mazini,

The only sustainable way to get out of the current global financial and ecological crisis is to promote new economic models, new production systems and new ideas of wellbeing ” [...] “Sustainable solutions necessarily refer to the local (and the community to which this local mainly refers) and to the small (and the possibilities in terms of relationships, participation and democracy that the human scale make possible) (Manzini, 2009, p.1).

But even though the Design practice now acknowledges more systemic, complex and structural issues around the globe, its knowledge is, as well as modernity’s, conceived and developed in the western society and ontology, and spread around the globe. This fact, if unquestioned, currently opens space for forms of neo-colonization and maintenance of systems of exploration and oppression, that were installed during the colonialist and modern expansion, and that holds responsibility for much of the challenges that we are facing

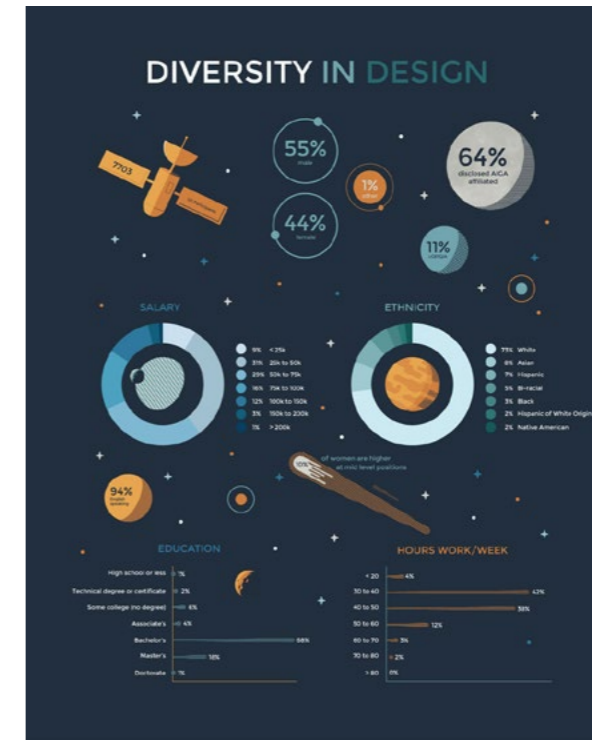


Fig. 02. Illustrated AIGA research about diversity in Design

nowadays, both socially and environmentally.

Several areas of knowledge, including Design, are starting to question if modern solutions can fully address modern issues. Decolonial and pluriversal discourses are gaining voice all over the world, and following this current, this thesis intends to first situate today’s design, and then to deepen on the question of designing for pluriversality, taking

into consideration factors like decoloniality, autonomy and transition strategies. It hopes to create a better understanding of how it would be possible to address the integrated challenges of today, while allowing different ontologies, cosmologies, and epistemologies to occupy their rightful place in the world.

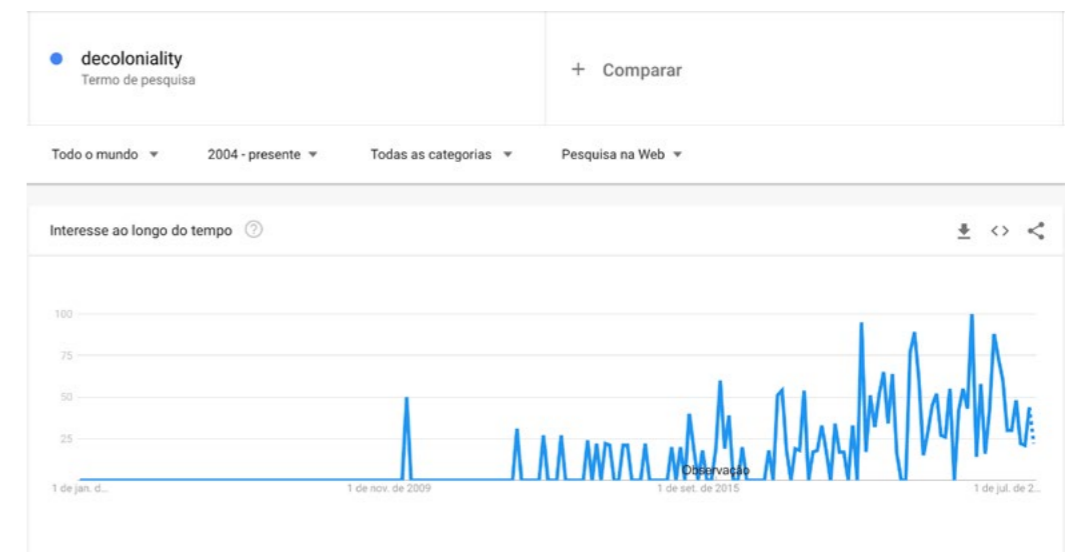
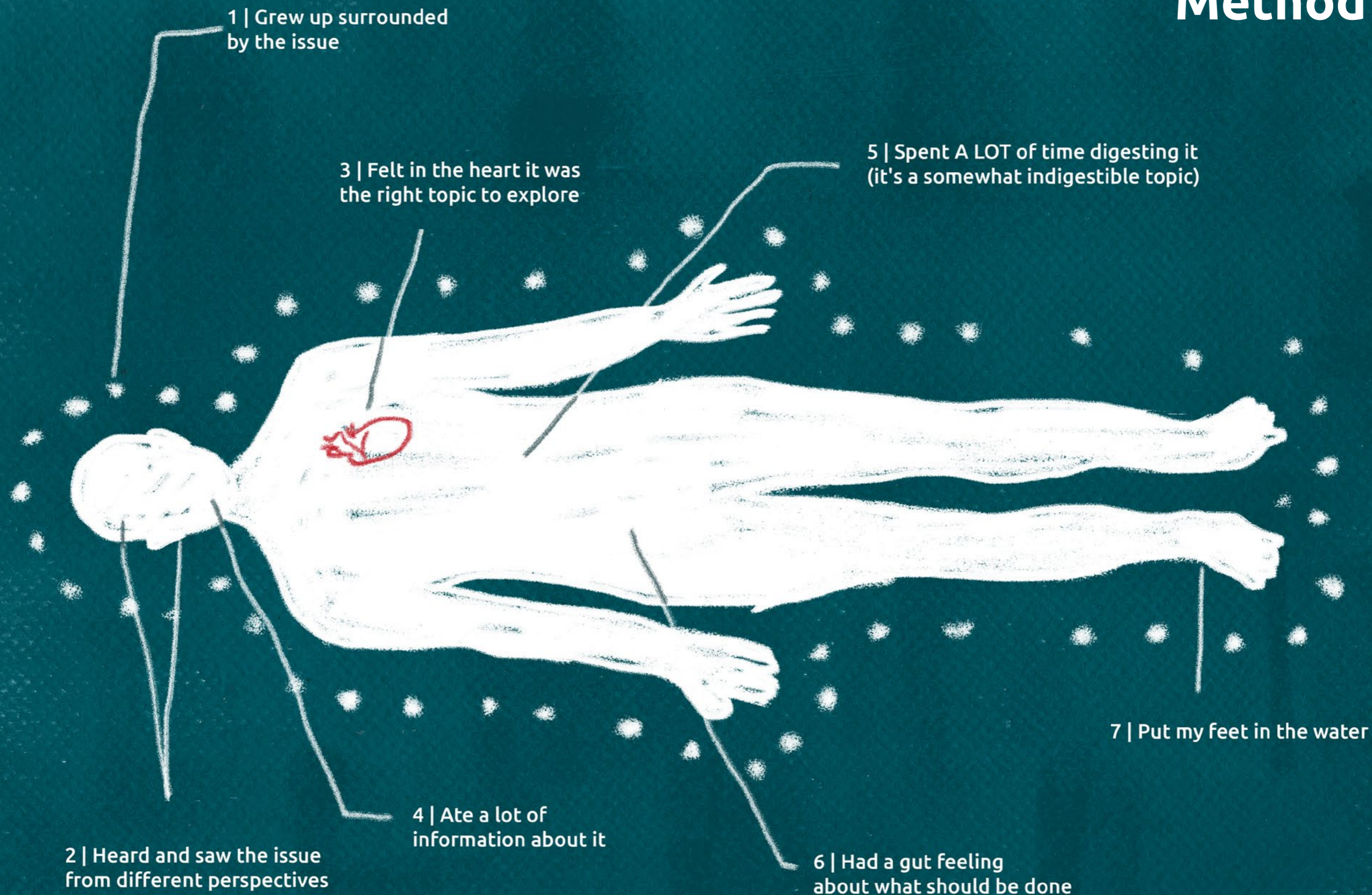


Fig. 03. Research on Google Trends about the ter “Decoloniality”



# Method



**UNLEARNING**

We encounter the deep question of design when we recognize that in designing tools we are designing ways of being (Terry Winograd as quoted in Escobar, 2018, p.105).

## 2.1 - THE NORTHERN WESTERN DOMINANT ONTOLOGY

Ontology is the part of metaphysics that deals with nature, reality, and the existence of beings. It deals with the being as a being, of what is inherent to all, a common nature among all the objects of study, or simply, what it means for something or someone to exist. While “ontic refers to what is; ontology refers to enquiry of what is, while ontological refers to the condition or behavior of what is” (Willis, 2006, p.81).

It is well known that the so-called Human species inhabits the world for thousands of years. Discoveries show that the Homo Sapiens originated in Africa, and after thousands of years of migration and adaptation, it is now the only animal species to inhabit the most diverse ecosystems of the planet, from deserts to the poles.

With centuries of adaptation to the diversity of weather, food, temperatures, light and other, cultures and knowledge, or as discussed, ontologies, developed and consolidated with a strong relationship to their geographies.

In Europe 14 and 15 hundred, one ontology was gaining particular strength and expanded through the navigations and arrivals of western Europeans all over the world during the XVI century. This northern western ontology is the one in which the post-modern society now lives.

Owing to the process of colonization and globalization, this “way of existing” was brutally forced over the most diverse cultures and consolidated in different geographies.

This planet, shared and co-inhabited by a plurality of peoples, each inhabiting different worlds, each orienting themselves within and towards their environments in different ways, and with different civilizational histories, is being undermined by a globalized system of power that threatens to flatten and eradicate ontological and epistemological difference, rewriting histories and advance visions of a future for a privileged few at the expense of their human and nonhuman others (Abdulla et al., 2019, p.1).

The Northern Western ontology has Dualism as one of its most important characteristics. Defended by the French philosopher René Descartes, it brings the idea of a separation between mind and body (subject and object), us and them (West and the rest, developed and non-developed, civilized and savages), the Christian idea of good and bad, and one of the most impactful ones to today’s environmental circumstances, the separation between nature and culture (Danowski, 2014).

These dualisms underlie an entire structure of institutions and practices through which the One World World idea is enacted, affecting at the same time a remoteness from the worlds that we inevitably weave with others and from the natural world, a feature that we will locate at the basis of not only the ecological crisis but also attempts to redress it, whether through relational practices of design or political action informed by the relational and communal logics of some social movements (Escobar , 2018, p.81).

In contrast with the culture of dualisms, the indigenous leader, philosopher and ambientalist Ailton Krenak (2019) states: I cannot perceive where there is something which is not nature. Everything is nature. The cosmos is nature. Everything that I can think of is nature. But those dualisms shape the modern world, and they do so together with structural points (beliefs) that are indicated by Escobar (2018) as the belief in science, on the individual, in reality and in the economy.

Further explained, the belief in the individual is what Escobar

(2018) considered to be “one of the most profound and damaging consequences of rationalistic tradition”(Escobar, 2018, p.83). The individual being was traced “linked to the history of needs, disciplinary practices, commoditization (the Marxist theory of labor and alienation), and a whole set of political technologies centered on the self” (Escobar, 2018, p.83). This individualism built under pretenses of free will and autonomy does not exist in other beliefs, such as the Buddhist tradition for example.

Escobar (2018) justifies the belief in the real by how the rationalistic tradition transcribes the experience of being in the world “into the belief in an objective reality or an outside world, prior to, and independent of, the multiplicity of interactions that produce it”(Escobar, 2018, p.85). As a consequence of the belief in the real, Escobar (2018) points to the belief of human mastery over nature, which is also a pillar of patriarchal culture. “Such a notion of the real also buttresses the idea of a single world that calls for one truth about it”(Escobar, 2018, p.86).

By the predominance of this belief, the western civilization implied and forced over other cultures the notion that what we live now in a single world, in one possible reality. “This imperialistic notion supposes the West’s ability to arrogate for itself the right to be “the world,” and to subject all other worlds to its rules, to diminish them to secondary status or to nonexistence, often figuratively and materially”(Escobar, 2018, p.86).

As a way of validating the belief in the real, comes the third subject pointed by Escobar (2018) : The belief in science. This belief acts as a foundation for claiming valid knowledge in modern societies, and therefore for also claiming monopoly over it, vanishing different epistemologies. The scientific practice already holds critiques around its status from a philosophical and feminist point of view, among others, and “some of this tendencies highlight the links between hegemonic scientific practices and violence and oppression in non-Western contexts”(Escobar, 2018, p.88).

Science has become the most central political technology

of authoritarianism, irrationality, and oppression of peoples and nature. As a reason of state, science operates as the most effective idiom of violent development and even standardizes the formats of dissent (Escobar, 2018, p.89).

Last of the four factors cited by Escobar (2018) is the Belief in Economy. Our future and our existence on the planet is being shaped and threatened by this belief, which since the eighteenth century has been considered a separate area of domain, holding thoughts and actions, linked to the self regulated market and validated by what we call science of economics. (Escobar 2018).

With the consolidation of “the economy” from the late eighteenth century on, we have in place a tightly interconnected set of crucial developments in the cultural history of the West, namely, the individual, objective reality, truthful science (rationality), and self-regulating markets. The ensemble of the individual, the real, science, and the economy (market) constitutes the default setting of much of socionatural life in late modernity; they are historical constructs, to be sure, but also beliefs to which we are deeply attached in our everyday existence because of the pervasive social structures, processes, and practices that hold them in place, without which we cannot function(Escobar, 2018, p.90).

In summary, the world in which we live nowadays, that we believe as the only possible way of living, with arguments validated by science, sustaining the idea of a possible individualism and self-regulating market, are constructions of a western ontology that maintains a patriarchal consumerist society, that valorizes individual success instead of collective well-being, oriented to futures and to materialism, at the cost of seeing ourselves separated from nature and others, mining the notions of co-existence and culminating on the lack of mutual respect. (Escobar 2018)

Both Escobar (2018) and Santos (2007) point out that this rationalistic and dualistic culture that we live in, impose the suppression and

exclusion of several other realities that exist in the world, or as said by Santos, practices of exclusion of worlds.

Santos defines 5 “monocultures” that work for the extinction of the diversity and cultures that live from different realities. Those 5 monocultures were tabled by Cristina Ibarra and Debora Andrade, as seen in the following image:

<b>Monoculture of knowledge and rigor</b>	This monoculture is based on the modern notion that the only rigorous knowledge is scientific knowledge; therefore, other knowledge has neither the validity nor the rigor of scientific knowledge.
<b>Monoculture of the dominant scale</b>	This monoculture reduces reality, because it takes only the global and the universal as relevant, while excluding the particular and the local.
<b>Monoculture of linear time</b>	This monoculture determines that history has only one direction and that developed countries are ahead
<b>Monoculture of productivism</b>	This monoculture follows the idea that economic growth and productivity measured in a production cycle determine the productivity of human labor or nature.
<b>Monoculture of the naturalization of differences</b>	In this monoculture, differences cause a hierarchical system, because they are taken as inequalities, and those who are inferior are by nature inferior

Fig. 04 - Monocultures presented by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007)  
Source: Prepared by Andrade, Ibarra (2021)

## 2.2 - COLONIZATION, MODERNITY, AND GLOBALIZATION - Historical context

**It follows that repositioning the way the world is viewed, and how ‘we’ are positioned within it, is an essential opening into gaining a disposition of change (Fry, 2017, p.10).**

### 2.2.1 - COLONIZATION

Colonialism started when navigations technologies developed in the 16th century. Europeans were able to reach more remote parts of the globe and sustain contact between those places. While colonialism is not a product of modernity, the European context in this period was one of transition from the middle ages, where many beliefs and paradigms were being questioned and ruptured.

The European colonial project consisted of a brief explanation, on moving large numbers of people across the ocean to inhabit other territories and maintain political and economic sovereignty over those. (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Even though those territories already had several tribes and consolidated civilizations inhabiting them, many events were named as discoveries, such as the discovery of America’s (name given after Amerigo Vesputio - merchant, navigator, and cartographer that worked for the Spanish Crown).

Since the first contact, the people originally from these lands were seen by the European navigators as less developed that needed salvation, which could be provided by them. We can see as an example the letter that Pero Vaz de Caminha sent to the Portuguese crown after the first encounter with the lands now named Brazil: “Although, the best you can do in this land, seems to me that is saving these people. And this is the best seed that you, Your Highness, can spread”. (Vaz, 1500)

Ailton Krenak (2019), indigenous leader, environmentalist, philosopher, poet, and writer says: The idea that the white Europeans could colonize the rest of the world was sustained by the premise that there was an enlightened humanity that needed to meet an obscured one, bringing it to its amazing light. The idea of bringing development implies, by definition, the dualist view of having an underdeveloped in contrast with the developed one.

For centuries, the colonialist actions and philosophy prevailed, since Europeans could count with a military force to sustain and help develop its business interest inside an established economic system. The colonies were then explored providing raw materials, cheap and slave labor (destroying indigenous living and belief systems and enslaving them), and a new market for the products that were manufactured in Europe with those extracted materials, helping increase the industrialization of European Nations (Dick Blackwell, 2003).

“Several generations lived under colonial rule. Their political systems were those of the colonizer. Their economic systems were organized to service the economic needs of the colonizer. The dominant culture was that of the colonizer even if some of their original cultural traditions had been kept alive. And all this time they had been imbued with the doctrine of the superiority of the colonizer: the superiority of his military force, of his political systems, of his culture, his science, his education, and his religion. In this discourse the colonizer embodied civilization, culture, history and humanity. The colonized embodied nature, the primitive, the sub human. At best, they were children to be nurtured and disciplined. At worst they were animals to be tamed, enslaved or slaughtered. The colonizer was always the subject, the colonized always the object”(Blackwell, 2003, p.451).

## 2.2.2 - MODERNITY

We cannot pinpoint one specific point of modernity’s birth, but as Tony Fry (2017) says, “modernity and colonialism are indivisible” (Fry, 2017, p7). The triumph of the modern era was radically dependent on the activities, and the market generated by colonial practices.

Beyond the notions of individual subjectivity, rationalization and the rise of scientific knowledge and the decline of the views of religion over the world and life, rapid urbanization, financial exchange and communication in constant growth, the creation of nation states were also strong characteristics of this period. (Encyclopedia Britannica).

One of the thoughts that structured modernity was what Kant defined as the release of one’s self as emancipation. He then presented the concept of a free man as a subject who is capable of deploying reason, but the idea that free men are capable of taking power is contradictory since on the one hand, they are oppressing those who are not “freed”. (Stanford Encyclopedia)

Another important point of modernity’s project was to have a universal view of the world, universal being defined by the Eurocentric view of such definition. As Fry points out, such a view of a universal history is then flawed, once history is a narrative and there is no position in which a universal narrative can be written (Fry, 2017, p.19).

Fry (2017) explains that through industrialization, the idea of enlightenment, and political philosophy, Europe was able to impose its will on the world. This events gave them the power to divide it into modern empires, with the justification of universalizing humanism and civilizational advancements.

From the birth of modernity until today, processes of endless destruction have affected everyone. There has been no place for diverse communities, cultures, or even oneself in difference.

One of the factors that influence this destruction, is what Nandy (2012)

Fig. 05. Image locating all the peoples, communities, and tribes that lived in South America before the arrival of Europeans. It is estimated that 8 to 40 million people lived on the continent. According to the counting made in Brazil in 2010, there were 195,7 millions of people living in the country, with indigenous people representing less than one million of them.



highlights saying that each culture has its own pecking order when it comes to the various dialogue topics. The dialogue of cultures with less assertive languages often gets overshadowed and cannibalized by a developed and assertive language of dialogue. "Under every dialogue of visions lies a hidden dialogue of unequals" (Escobar, 2018, p.100).

Modernity's effects on the environment and ethnocultural communities were massive and lasting. We cannot foresee the dimension of the damage caused by modernity, and many of these effects will only become apparent through time.

The universal, but differentially experienced, contemporary ontological condition of unsettlement, the inequity of the global economic order, and so many of the world's geopolitical problems are directly connected to this history. Claims that modernity brought universal progress are purely Eurocentric, and are blind to its ambiguities and contradictions. Modernity, as we shall see, did not merely unsettle the world and many of its peoples, but in many ways devastated it (Fry, 2017, p.6).

## 2.2.3 - GLOBALIZATION

**Globalization can be described as a mono-ontological occupation of the planet by the 'One-World world.' (Escobar, 2015, p.14)**

The term globalization is often used as a synonym for various phenomena covering a wide range of political, cultural, and economic trends. Most contemporary popular usage of the term refers to the pursuit of classical liberal policies in the world economy, the growing dominance of western economic and political life, and the notion that humanity is at the threshold of realizing one unified community. (Stanford encyclopedia).

Globalization though, is a politically contested phenomenon that has various nationalist and populist movements pushing back against it.

Globalism, which prefigured globalization in various aspects like having an international market and workforce, supply chains that are fed and work globally and a commodity culture, was an extension of what was already happening during the development of modernity. (Fry, 2017)

Even though globalization can be seen as an advancement through the connections, knowledge sharing and several activities around the most different parts of the globe, as modernity, its backdrop is filled with numerous ways of destruction and oppression .

As Fry (2017) points out, it is a figure of control and a guiding force that pushes the world toward a monocultural consumerist culture. It is also a force that negates national sovereignty and a way of privileging some autonomous regions, resulting in the abandonment of economically excluded populations and their technocentric uncaring.

## 2.2.4 - COLONIZATION BY DESIGN

To speak about Design and Colonization, it is necessary to first specify what Design is referring to. The use of the word Design in this section is then referring to the instrumentalist practice that originated at the Bauhaus, created to serve economic purposes, to "construct modernity in material form" (Attfield, 1997, p.268), based on the relationship between industrialization and innovation, and that branched into the several areas we know of today. "The complex entanglement of science, material, technology, capitalism and culture makes up the matrix of modern design." (Escobar 2018, p.30)

As previously said, the Design practice originated in Europe, starting with interventions in industrial production and its way of projecting and thinking, determining what a "good design" means, and then as well as industrialization, it spread around the world. With the spread of industries over the most diverse territories including Asia and South America, not only the design culture disseminated, but also

the most industrialized countries assumed the role of mentors of new behavioral and consumption models. That is: they function as true exporters of *modus operandi, faciendi and vivendi* to a large part of the planet. (Moraes, 2006 ).

Not only the market and new ways of consumption were being dictated in peripheral countries but also the products produced in the “periphery” countries were designed for other countries’ needs, cultural patterns and geographic context. The countries of the Global North, that are characterized for having more capital and technological development, establish methodologies that are taken as universal and timeless, but probably do not consider the geographic and socio political differences. This fact makes that the so-called peripheral countries, that is, the global south, are pressured to mold according to the scenario from the “central countries” in case they want to reach the idea of progress, which is also established by the countries of the Global North. (Ibarra, Andrade, 2021)

As Judy Attfield (1997) points out, despite the various breakthroughs that designers made in the field of technology and materials, they still dealt mainly with the prototype and the avant-garde. That meant turning its back to the place’s history, and extinguishing any vestiges of local traditions and vernacular expressions in order to achieve a conforming and homogeneous mass of consumers.

On a lesser material side, the nature of the Western Design culture is intimately related to problem solving, and this notion pre-defines that there is an universal truth in understanding the complexity of the world as a series of problems to be solved, while also assuming its position of center. Consequently the approach to other epistemologies and ontologies comes from this “center”, which then tries to collaborate with them. (Schultz et al. 2018)

Design has definitely unfolded into functions very diverse from its primary one, but its core culture and world view are still based on western values and perceptions of world and life itself.

Coloniality of design is a control and disciplining of our

perception and interpretation of the world, of other human and nonhuman beings and things according to certain legitimized principles. It is a set of specific ontological, epistemic and axiological notions imposed forcefully onto the whole world, including its peripheral and semiperipheral spaces in which alternative versions of life, social structures, environmental models or aesthetic principles have been invariably dismissed.(Madina, 2017, p.3)

This control over perception and interpretation is clearly identifiable when we pay attention to the dominance over knowledge and its diffusion. Eurocentric approaches to research tend to discriminate against knowledge and contributions from the global south where contributors from the global south don’t get the same roles in collaborative research as their colleagues from the global north. Also, their research is often misjudged and misread by reviewers, that due to the lack of understanding of the local epistemology and context, end up overshadowing those researches or leading to inaccurate information. Also, often local communities involved in research projects favors collaborations with foreigners over local researchers. (Smith et al., 2020)

Design has a long history of interpreting challenges, and speaking for the oppressed. Spivak (2010) questions in her work if the subaltern can speak, or actually, if the oppressor is able to listen. She defends that Western scholarship always misinterprets what was defined by them as the “third world”, and when those who are oppressed don’t have permission to speak for themselves and beyond be listened, be truly heard and get recognition by what is being said, they are deleted from their own place in the world. For Spivak, any attempt to gather information about the oppressed and to represent them is to hold some kind of power over them, and to Anibal Quijano (2000), coloniality of power is closely related to the coloniality of knowledge.

Participatory practices then come as a possible solution for what would be allowing the subaltern to speak, but as Madina (2017) defends, those practices that would presumably allow people to have freedom of choice and, independence and creativity over life



decisions, end up very often being usurped and becoming a tool of colonialism by Design distracting from the grim and falling rapidly into tendencies that continue to cause the destruction of the planet and the maintenance of their own oppression.

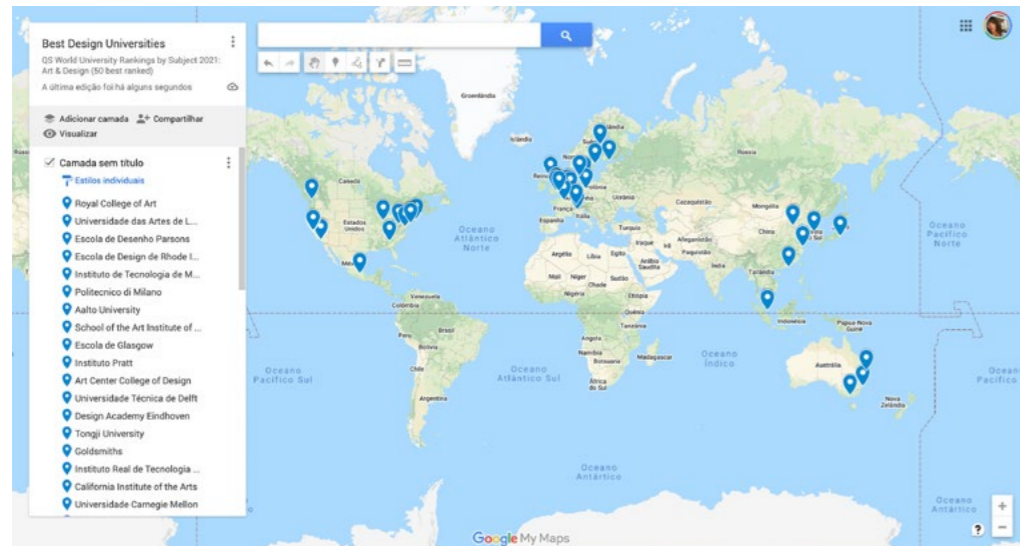


Fig. 06. Map created with the 50 best ranked Design Universities in the world, proving the direct connection of the intellectual dominance of the global north over the Global South.

## 2.3 - DESIGN AND ONTOLOGY

**Understood not merely in relation to its applied and technological facets, but rather as a powerful ontological tool capable of transforming the social and cultural reality, and modeling human experience, subjectivity and life style, and environment and social events, design is clearly one of the spheres in which ontology, epistemology and axiology intersect in a dynamic and creative way. (Tlostanova, 2017, p.1)**

Ontological design brings a radical transformation on the understanding of what Design is as a practice. Tony Fry defines ontological Design at its most general being, as “a way of understanding the dynamic designing relations between the world,

things and human beings. As such, it is significant to all disciplines, as well as having a very particular significance for/to the global South” (Fry, 2017, p.26).

Ezio Manzini (2015), as well as Tony Fry, defend that everybody designs. Not only people but also cities, associations, and institutions deal with projecting and problem solving on a daily basis. Anne Marie Willis (2006) supports this idea by saying that design is much more prevalent than designers, philosophers, theorists, and others are able to recognize. She also supports the idea that “designing is fundamental to being human — we design, that is to say, we deliberate, plan and scheme in ways which prefigure our actions and makings” (Willis, 2006, p.80).

Although designing is innate to the human being, and people manage complexity on their daily lives, everything we create is also a product of an environment, subject to interpretation, which means that not only people design but also things design, leading to the conclusion that design is a “subject decentered practice”(Willis, 2006, p.81).

But the designing action is a two way street: what we design, design us, or in other words, “design designs”(Willis, 2006, p.95). As an example:

We are born into and come to be human in language; (ii) we appropriate it, modify it, perhaps put words together in ways that they have not been combined before, encounter new situations which require new words; (iii) thus in appropriating language we also change it, and language-as-changed in turn acts back on us as language users.(Willis, 2006, p.84)

Thus, the design practice is being done daily in the context of the world we were born in, which influences but does not determine our design. Our design shapes the world, and the newly shaped world shapes the way we see and live in this very world, and by doing this, we walk forward, in a circular and spiral movement.

Is to change oneself and the unfolding universe as well. In other words, we are not radically separate from what we commonly conceive of as external reality, but rather such reality comes into being moment by moment through our participation in the world (Escobar, 2018, p.88).

According to Willis, ontological designing as a condition inhabits three areas:

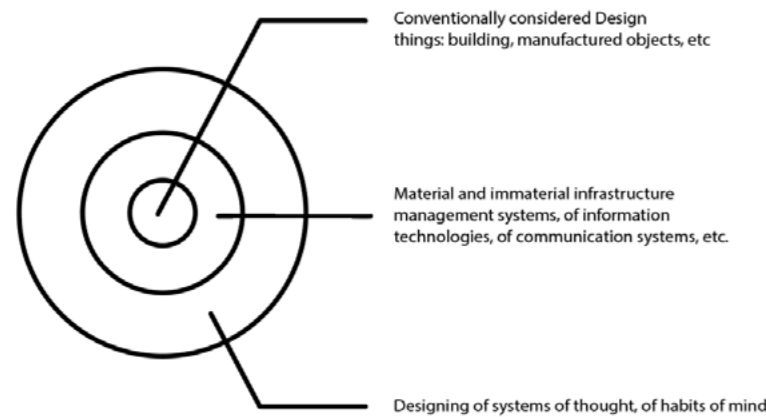


Fig. 07 - Areas of ontological Design

Those levels are deeply interconnected, and even though some of those and the relation between them are often disregarded, by acting in one of them, all of them are affected.

We can see that, not different from this idea, design is also shaped by the world in which we are immersed. As Madina explains:

the modern/colonial design is a perfect and pure manifestation of modernity's objectifying principle of perception and interpretation of the world, of other human and nonhuman beings, of manmade objects and knowledge., perception, and interpretation of other individuals, being humans or non-humans, man-made objects, and knowledge (Tlostanova, 2017, p.2).

The design practice still has “too many residual and unexamined

Cartesian dualisms (mind/body, mental/physical, self/world)”(Willis, 2006, p.92). Those dualisms are problematic because of how they “are treated culturally, particularly the hierarchies established between the two parts of each binary, and the social, ecological, and political consequences of such hierarchies.” (Escobar, 2018, p.94).

The environmental and social crises that are being faced in postmodernity are also consequences of the centuries in which the world was shaped inside this ontology, to which design is immersed and plays a very important role at. Therefore, it is urgent that we acknowledge this fact (the influence of this ontology over our design), and the relationship between what we are designing and the creation of new ontologies as Design shifts its practice from the area of material and digital production into consciously acting over the area of designing systems and services.

To continue designing exclusively in the ontology of dualisms, extractivism, and consumption is considered by Madina (2017) a negative or futureless ontology, also explained by Tony Fry's concept of defuturing, ‘a condition of mind and action that materially erodes (un-measurably) planetary finite time, thus gathering and designating the negation of “the being of time,” which is equally the taking away of our future’ (Fry 2011, 21 as quoted in Tlostanova, 2017, p.2)

It is important though, to highlight that what is necessary and being defended, is not the extinction of the Cartesian rationality and dualist ontology and all the notions that are connected to it, rather for the “weakening of its dominance and a displacement of its centrality in the design of the world and our lives.” (Escobar, 2018, p.98)

As much as Ontological Design can serve for defuturing, as it is serving right now, it can also serve as a tool for the resurgence of decoloniality and of a pluriverse.

## 2.4- ARE PARTICIPATORY PRACTICES ENOUGH?

It could be argued that Participatory practices could be a great solution for the issues of colonization by design, since it seems to give voice and control to the oppressed and overheard, questions power structures through bottom-up engagements and explores the solution through the participant's experiences (Charlotte et al. 2020). But even though they might be a great beginning, some authors argue that those practices are still not enough for the decolonization of design.

Madina (2017) defends that in participatory Design practices it is very easy to fall into patterns where the solution created gives only an impression of having real freedom and choice, while actually distracting the attention from tendencies that maintain the status quo of oppression and exploration. She defends that is extremely important to include the other not inside predefined boundaries and restrictions, appropriating of their cultures and lifestyles as decorative elements, but to change the whole logic that anyone can be made into another; (Tlostanova, 2017) in other words, that the designer can fully understand and for a while be transformed as the one he is designing for.

Escobar (2018) points out that participatory design is still working over a cartesian logic, that believes on the idea that the world is separated between individuals and things, and those beliefs still have great influence over design actions. He also points out that the idea of the individual is losing its momentum since we are more and more immersed in systems that are more horizontal, with distributed power, and expertise, but the rationalistic tradition ends up translating this experience into an objective reality, instead of the multiplicity of interactions that produce it.

Lesley-Ann Noel (2020) questions the ideas of diversity, equity and inclusion, since it gives the notion that oppressed peoples need permission to be included in another person's world. She defends that what we should do instead is to create a design education, research and practice that are firstly anti-racist, and then plural, pluriversal and anti-hegemonic. This idea relates to what Anoushka Khandwala says, that is not a matter of who sits on the table, but who sets this table in the first place (Khandwala, 2019).

The position of observer often taken by the designer in PD practices is questioned by Tony Fry, who argues that it "is not a passive relation between sight and cognition, but it's normally an act of fabrication from an unexamined point of view (habitus)." (Fry, 2017, p.16)

Therefore, crucial for participatory design practices that intend not to cope with existing power and oppression structures would be to introduce the debate over the decolonizing of knowledge and research approaches.

Through some experiences that tried to face this issue, researchers in africa (Charlotte et al. 2020) discovered that adopting indigenous practices and philosophies (such as Ubuntu - I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am) in PD addresses the situatedness of the researcher, then tackling power relations within design practices , and discovered that storytelling can create a space for mutual understanding, taking the designer out of the place of observer/facilitator, and fully engaging them, sharing their own experiences as part of the design process.

Design as an ontological practice, we argue, needs to go beyond just enabling multiple voices and engaging participants through mutual learning processes. To shape decolonized PD practices calls for us to pay deeper attention to co-creating and engaging in ongoing meaning making processes, diverse epistemologies, and situated cultural change. (Charlotte et al., 2020, p.104)

Decoloniality means "to listen" to the ones who have not been heard; and so PD must support the participants' takeover of content, form, and duration. (Charlotte et al. 2020)

The authors of Decolonizing Design Practices, point that "the full potential lies in PD integrated with other approaches with a deeper attention and understanding of the cultural realities and ontological entanglements of everyday practices when working with non-Western as well as minority communities and stakeholders". (Charlotte et al. 2021, p.2)

**RELEARNING**

“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”  
 - Arundhati Roy at the World Social Forum, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

By wishing and listening to the urgent need of constructing a non oppressive society with a different relationship with the environment, it is also clear that to do so, Design and Designers will have to reimagine themselves. While it holds a big responsibility for the current global situation (e.g., waste), Design also has an enormous potential to play a key role in the transition to what Manzini (2015) calls the new continent.

Escobar introduces the idea of designing for the Pluriverse. In order to explain the pluriverse, he uses the definition from the Zapatistas “Un mundo donde quepan muchos mundos” , translated by Escobar to “A world where many worlds fit” (Escobar, 2018, p.16). Madina (2017) further explains that this concept:

entails a coexistence, correlation and interaction of many intersecting nonabstract universal and countless options grounded in the geopolitics and corpopolitics of knowledge, being and perception, reinstating the experiential nature of knowledge and the origin of any theory in the human life-world. These options communicate with each other instead of promoting one abstract universal good for all (Tlostanova, 2017, p.4).

The idea of relationality, which is the “profound awareness of the fundamental interdependence of everything that exists” (Escobar - sitology) is a key concept for the construction of livable worlds, through the essential cultivation of ways of knowing and acting, both ontologically and politically (Escobar - sitology).

Designers can contribute on a scope that goes from existing paradigms until radically new ones that are based in equity and quality of life, challenging the status quo and providing new directions.

This spectrum is represented in the following image from the Transition Design course of the Carnegie Mellon University:

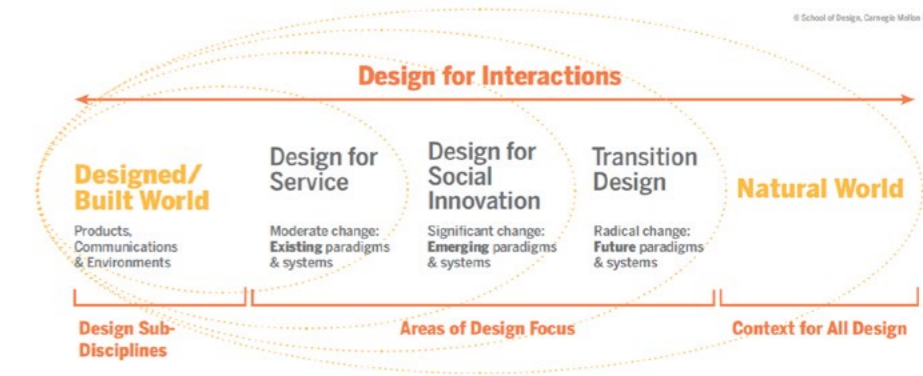


Fig. 08 - Designing along a continuum

### 3.1 - DESIGN FOR SERVICES

In recent decades, the northern economies have shifted to a service economy, which is highly dependent on the services industry. The increasing recognition of the contribution of creativity and design to innovation made the role of the service designer acknowledged by various initiatives and studies that aim to deepen the understanding of the various facets of innovation. (Meroni, Sangiorgi 2011)

Amongst the studies related to service innovation, the role of the services industry has been highlighted as a support for developing a knowledge-based economy and are often associated with the shift from an exploratory society to a more sustainable one.(Meroni, Sangiorgi 2011)

Services have been seen as an alternative to the traditional manufacturing model of consumption. The concept of the PSS was developed to address the concerns of the balance between competitiveness and environmental issues. PSS is a strategy that combines the various elements of a product and a service in order to provide a complete and satisfying customer experience. Although it is believed that PSS can reduce a company’s environmental impact, it is not yet clear if it is a win-win strategy. Despite this, PSS has been able to show that it can help address the concerns of both the environment and the consumers. This concept has also helped to show that it can also be used to address other changes in consumption habits.(Meroni, Sangiorgi 2011)

Although Design for Services can create more sustainable and less exploratory services and systems, it still usually means to “design within existing socioeconomic and political paradigmes” (Irwin et al., 2015, p.8), and therefore, it does not promote new ways of thinking and living, but acts inside the scope of the northern ontology, finding modern solutions to modern problems (Irwin et al., 2015).

## 3.2 - DESIGN FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

Design Social innovation talks about how design can relate to social change, and how it often challenges existing socioeconomic and political paradigms (Irwin et al., 2015). It is introduced by Manzini (2015) that starts his book “Design when everybody designs” with 4 main propositions:

- 1- The world in which we live requires us to constantly redesign our daily lives, which places design in a role of support for individual and collective life projects.
- 2- Design can help foster a culture of cosmopolitan localism (Manzini 2009), as it can help link the local and global communities through resilient infrastructures.
- 3- Design can also help people make changes in their everyday lives through collaborations. Designers then can help create conditions for collaborative social change.
- 4- For this to happen it is necessary that an international conversation about Design takes place, transforming the cultural background for expert and non expert designers.

By understanding that societies can find solutions that better fit their needs while challenging the status quo and creating new economies and ways of collaboration that can be (and usually are) more effective than existing solutions, expert Designers then work as collaborators and agents of change.

Manzini distinguishes between the diffused and expert design, and introduces the idea that Design should act both in problem solving and sense making, pointing how we are lacking work around the

latter, and how when communities collaborate they are able to “create new meaning and unprecedented opportunities” (Manzini, 2015, p.77)

In Manzini’s words, design for social innovation is “everything that expert design can do to activate, sustain and orient processes of social change towards sustainability” (Manzini, 2015, p.62), and since it counts with a dialogue that include diverse ontologies and different worlds, it is pointed by Escobar (2018) as genuinely pluriversal.

## 3.3 - TRANSITION DESIGN

Transition discourses have their starting point at the notion that the social and ecological crisis that we are living are impossible to separate from the model of society from the One World World (or the northern-western dominant ontology) and hence, on the awareness of the need to transition as a society to futures more committed with sustainability.

The Great Transition Initiative (2014) points to three possible scenarios. The first one points to “conventional worlds”, which is the continuity of the world we have today, dominated by corporations and globalization. The second one is “barbarization”, which predicts a systemic crisis and regression and the third and last one is about “great transitions”, where new values and institutions rise towards more sustainable ways of living.

Discourses of transition are emerging from the most diverse sites, religions, social movements, and scholars among others, and from this context comes Transition Design: an emergent discipline that means designing “within radically new socio-economic and political paradigms” (Irwin et al., 2015, p.8). It is a conceptual framework that aims to create a design-led transition to more sustainable ways of living, focused on the idea of a place-based lifestyles that addresses the needs of local communities while also being compatible and aware of the global environment. (Irwin et al. 2015)

Transition Design defends the idea that Design is a key component of the process of addressing the various and complex problems, using its interdisciplinarity to understand social, economic, political and environmental systems as interconnected, and addressing the problems concerning those at all levels, in ways that will improve quality of life. It views everyday life as a powerful transformative space where designers can explore. (Irwin et al. 2015)

Irwin (et al. 2015) in the paper for the School of Design from Carnegie Mellon University defines transition designers as ones who are aware of time, and design thinking also about the future, drawing “on knowledge and wisdom from the past to conceive solutions in the present with future generations in mind” (Irwin et al., 2015, p.1). They understand how societal and technological transitions happened through history, and get inspired by the wisdom of indigenous cultures that have lived in a sustainable and local way for generations.

Transition design is defined by the Irwin et al. as a new area for Design education, practice and research, that challenges existing design paradigms and will require its integration with science, philosophy, psychology, social science, anthropology and the humanities in its more holistic approach, taking into account: Living systems theory (connected to relationality), futuring, indigenous wisdom, cosmopolitan localism, everyday life discourse, post normal science, needs from everyday life, social psychology research, social practice theory, alternative economics, different worldviews, goethan science and phenomenology. (Irwin et al., 2015)

It “proposes that more compelling future-oriented visions are needed to inform and inspire projects in the present and that the tools and methods of design can add in the development of these visions.” (Irwin et al. 2015, p.5)

Transition Design proposes the development of future visions that are dynamic and grassroots based, that emerge from local conditions vs. a one-size-fits-all process, and that remain open-ended and speculative. This type of visioning is a circular, iterative and error-friendly process

used to envision radically new ideas for the future that serve to inform even small, modest solutions in the present. Visions of sustainable futures can provide means through which contemporary lifestyles and design interventions can be assessed and critiqued against a desired future state and can inform small design decisions in the present (Irwin et al. 2015, p.5).

Theories of change are also super important, since a “transformational societal change will depend upon our ability to change our ideas about change itself—how it manifests and how it can be catalyzed and directed.” (Irwin et al. 2015, p.5) This also reflects in a significant change of the Designer itself and its posture and mentality, since their positioning often goes unnoticed while exerting a great influence on the definition of the problem and its solution. Therefore, TD requires the Designers to self-reflect on their own value system, and how it affects the Design process. It also affirms that a more holistic view of the world, requiring a more collaborative and responsible posture will provide best conceived solutions. (Irwin et al., 2015)

Instead of focusing on pre-planned solutions, transition designers seek to find emergent possibilities within problem contexts; they see a single solution is a single step of the process; its way of thinking is deeply informed by the local culture and ecosystems of the region. (Irwin et al., 2015) As an example, even though transition movements have been happening both in the global north and the global south they acquire different characteristics in both hemispheres. As Escobar (2018) points, the North is describing them as “being postgrowth, postmaterialist, posteconomic, postcapitalist, and posthuman” while for the South “it is expressed in terms of being postdevelopment, nonliberal, postcapitalist/noncapitalist, biocentric, and postextractivist” (Escobar, 2018, p.140)

Designers that aspire to contribute to transitions, according to (Irwin et al., 2015) will develop their work in three broad areas: the development of powerful narratives, the application and connection of grassroots efforts, and the creation of place-based innovative solutions together

with transdisciplinary temas, with the awareness of transition visions.

According to Escobar (2018), this is the framework for design for transitions:

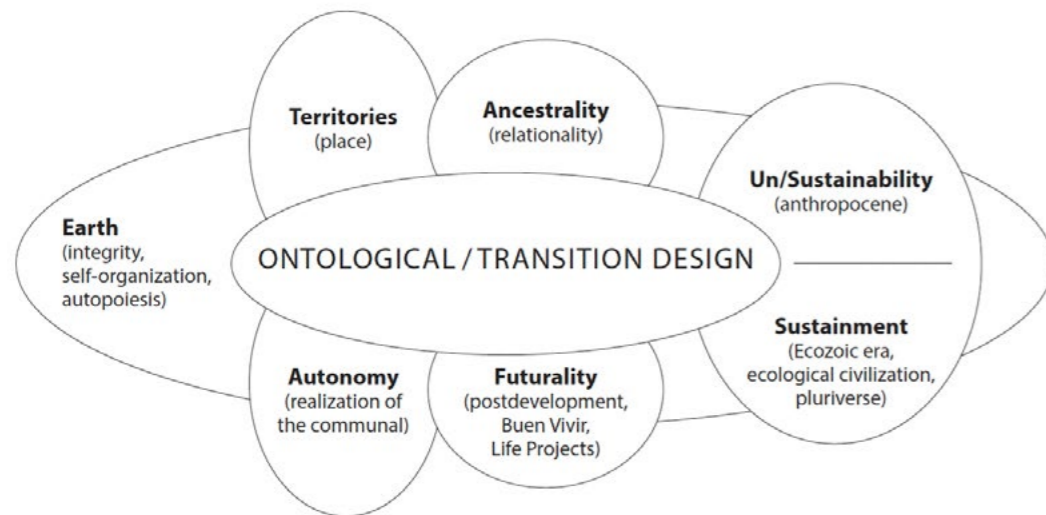


Fig. 09 - Autonomy, Transition, Sustainment. A framework for autonomous design and design for transitions

There can be seen the possibility of transition from the current scenario into scenarios of the maintenance of the anthropocene with Un/Sustainability, or to the concept of Sustainment, that Tony Fry describes as:

Sustainment (The Sustainment) is not 'sustainability,' with its propensity to sustain the unsustainable, as 'business as usual,' for the globalizing 'North.' As such, it cannot be reduced to just the solution to environmental/climatic problems. Rather, Sustainment is a vital intellectual, political and pragmatic project of discovery marking a vital turn of 'humanity.' It acknowledges that in order 'to be sustained' another kind of earthly habitation and understanding is required. Such an understanding recognizes that not only a dramatic reduction in damage

to environments and ecologies be made, but equally and indivisibly it is vital to address global equity (because uneven global 'development' together with both excess and poverty defuture beings and being), peace (because conflict defutures beings and being) and social ecologies (repairing the breakdown of 'community' as it defutures beings and being is essential, as is redressing gender, class and ethnic injustice).The Sustainment cannot be evoked as if it already exists with agency. Rather, it is a mode of understanding that drives a desire to make it a project in time (where time is understood as a medium, a recognition of a 'state of emergency' to respond to, and as that which stretches out before us) (Fry, 2017, p. 15).

This transition (or ontological) Design is supported by 4 main areas: Autonomy, futurity, Ancestrality and Territories.

- By Territories, we understand by now that the knowledge of the people is directly connected to their land - "I am where I think" (Mignolo 211, 80)
- By Ancestrality, we go back to the concept of relationality, the interconnectedness of everything, that the understanding of the past is crucial to boarding up the possibilities of imagining different possible futures.
- By Futurity, we see the visions of possible futures, like the northern philosophies of post developments and southern philosophies like Buen Vivir.
- By Autonomy, comes the realization of the communal, and the idea that communities know what is best for them (further explained in the next session).

### 3.4 - AUTONOMOUS DESIGN

The idea of Autonomous Design is introduced by Escobar, who defines it as "a design praxis with communities that has the goal of contributing to their realization as the kinds of entities they are" (Escobar, 2018, p.184). For doing so he points a few presuppositions from which we should start:



Every community practices the design of itself  
People are practitioners of their own knowledge  
What the community designs in the first instance is an  
inquiring or learning system about itself  
Every design process involves a statement of problems  
and possibilities  
This exercise might take the form of building a model  
of the system that generates the problem of communal  
concern.” (Escobar, 2018, p.184)

In a broader explanation, Escobar (2018) affirms that every community is bound by its own design, and therefore all the activities of design has to start from the premise that people can decide for themselves and should be able to practice what they know. This idea is extremely important both for the concept of autonomy and for Autonomous Design . The community’s design process is an inquiry or learning system that investigates its own reality, therefore, “as designers, we may become co-researchers with the community” (Escobar, 2018, p.184).

Escobar also gives hints on how this may be possible, explaining that each design process presents multiple challenges and several possibilities that will make it possible for the designer, together with the group, to agree on a course of action. The result should be a multiplicity of scenarios that have potential paths to transform the existing practices or create new ones, including “a series of tasks, organizational practices, and criteria by which to assess the performance of the inquiry and design task” (Escobar 2018, p.185).

### 3.4 - DECOLONIZING DESIGN

Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2016) questions the notion of postcolonialism, since it might give the idea that the colonial activities ended after the historical colonization. It is a misconception because there are several other ways in which colonialism stands. Racism, Xenophobia, Patriarchy and other forms of oppression, domination and occupation are examples of where you can still see colonialism at work (Santos, 2016).

The events of colonization shaped the world and our minds in such a way that makes it questionable if there is a design practice that can be considered decolonial. As Fry points, “you cannot completely delink from the historicity of who, what and where you are, but a condition of induced criticality can make such placement present” (Fry, 2017, p.12). This is why instead of trying to find ways to make a true decolonial Design, the discussion goes around a process of decolonization and its goals.

Contrary to Transition Design, “Decolonizing Design is not a new or additional discipline, but a political project that includes theorization and mediums of action, that takes Design as such.” (Schultz et al. 2018, p.82)

Rolando Vazquez (2017), describes the task of decolonizing design in three main paths: the first one is to understand “modernity’s way of worlding the world”, the second “to understand coloniality’s way of un-worlding the world” and then “to think decolonial as a form of radical hope for an ethical life with earth” (Vazquez, 2017, p.78)

As well as Vazquez, Madina Tlostanova (2017) also affirms that in order to decolonize design we need to problematize what is the basis with our relation to the world, questioning practices that are instrumentalist and essentialist, and that have been taking as neutral so far.

Vazquez also points that “there is no possibility of an ethical life, of intercultural justice without a radical questioning of modernity’s monopoly over the real and coloniality’s erasure of relational worlds”(Vazquez, 2017, p.88).

By doing this radical questioning we often turn to the past, to native knowledge and to different world views and ways to relate to nature that lived and strived before the oppressions of colonization.“It is radical because it takes its root in the voices, the modes of being in the world, the worlds of meaning that have been denied the right to exist, that have been erased.” (Vazquez, 2017, p.88)

Decolonizing Design then, is not about improving what is already there, but “learning to differentiate between designs that facilitate the productivist drive towards devaluing and appropriating human and non-human natures, and designs that facilitate a process of delinking and redirection into other modes of being/becoming.” (Schultz et al., 2018, p.82)

Therefore, to decolonize design is to look both to the past and to the future. Is to understand and undress the status quo of modernity and globalization while also acknowledging the existence of different cosmologies and world views, that live (and lived) in much more relational philosophies and practices, and that were suppressed and destroyed by colonial actions and the coloniality of knowledge. It acknowledges that since Design is shaping the future world (or hopefully worlds), it needs to take accountability for the creation of less oppressive and destructive systems. To decolonize Design means to diagnose the present, value and get inspired by the past, and broaden up the possibilities for the future.

This way, the decolonizing design discourse has an intrinsic relationship with the idea of transition and pluriversality, since it takes into consideration the territory, and the idea that people who belong to that territory have the widest knowledge about it; autonomy, knowing that this local knowledge should give them freedom to decide what is best for them; Ancestrality, that acknowledges that the past holds incredible value and many of the answers to the future; and futurity, since it plays an important role of broadening up the horizons and bringing different ideas of possible futures.

### 3.4.1 - DESIGN SENTIPENSANTE

It has been discussed previously that the dualisms that shape our world and our minds nowadays are also products of the modern western cartesian way of thinking. Those dualisms consist in the separation between culture (us) and nature, me and you, mind and body, and there is usually a hierarchy between those two parts of the dualism; for example, culture and reason are more valued than nature, emotion and body (Ibarra, 2020). To Escobar (2016), as previously

discussed, this hierarchy has many social, political and ecological consequences, and has a very important role in the placement of eurocentrism.

Design sentipensante (thinking-feeling design) is a concept presented by Escobar (2018) which would mean the weakening of the hierarchies between the two parts of a dualism, to practice design beyond rationality, also valuing the experiences and emotions of the body, the non humans and the objects; substituting the hierarchical relationship by a complementary one. According to Ibarra (2020) this concept is more closely related to 4 main dichotomies: mind/body, subject/object, reason/emotion and nature/culture. She proposes some characteristics to define what a design sentipensante would mean:

- Allow yourself to be affected by the world and become involved in the fights of the groups who you work with. Let yourself be affected by the situation.
- Identify with the groups that you get in contact with to contribute to the achievement of the goals of change established by those groups
- Establish an effective dialogue with the groups you work with.
- To give new meaning to the methodology and tools used, adjusting to the necessities of the groups you are working with.
- To have a learning attitude and respect for the life experience of the groups you work with.
- Take an ethical stance that balances the ideal with the possible.
- Perceive nature as something that is alive and of which we are a part. This means that one does not create a relationship of control over nature. Instead, a relationship of complementarity is created. (Ibarra, 2020)

Also according to Ibarra (2020), Design Sentipensante has a strong decolonial factor, since it critically evaluates the methods and methodologies coming from the global north and considers ways and methods originated in a horizontal way in those territories together with humans and non humans. “It is a verb that suggests an action”(2020), continuous transformation.

# CASE STUDIES



# Rede de sementes do Xingu | Relearning

Rede de sementes do Xingu (Xingu Seed Network) is an association of diverse groups of **native seed collectors**, which aims at Bem Viver by restoring the forests of the Cerrado and the Amazon.



Fig. 10 - Participants of Rede de Sementes do Xingu

Over 560 collectors of diverse origins, cultures, and languages, located in different territories of the Xingu, Araguaia, and Teles Pires river in Mato Grosso (BR), for what is now almost 15 years, collect seeds, to reforest areas of the Amazon forest and the Brazilian Cerrado, to stimulate autonomy and generate income for the communities.

About 60% of the workforce of the network is made up of indigenous women. The other 40% is made of family farmers and citizens from big cities of the state of Mato Grosso. They also count with collaborations from NGO's, governmental institutions and companies.

The network brings together diverse forces to recover the native forests of springs and river banks in the Xingu River basin region, planting native vegetation in an economical and efficient way, with the aim of restoring the quality and availability of water throughout the region.

Together they total 25 collection groups, interconnected but with

complete autonomy, spread over three Indigenous Territories, 21 municipalities, and 16 family farming settlements. Of this workforce, 65% - that is, the majority - are women.

Throughout its history, the Xingu Seed Network has collected more than 220 different seed species, generating an income of more than R\$5.3 million, which is passed on directly to the collecting communities. Together, the Network's groups have commercialized more than 294 tons of muvuca (what they call the mixture of native seeds), which have been sown directly into the soil, growing about 25 million trees on 7,400 hectares of previously degraded areas - areas that are now forests!



Fig. 11 - "Muvuca" - The different seeds collected by the project

# AGRA | Unlearning

AGRA - Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa - claims to be a “farmer-centered, African-led, and partnerships-driven institution that is transforming Africa’s smallholder farming from a solitary struggle to survive to businesses that thrive.” It had the goal of increasing incomes and improving food security for 30 million smallholder farm households in 11 African countries by 2021.



Fig. 12 - Agra's Logo

The project that received large investments from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation had “the goal of bringing high-yield agricultural practices to 30 million smallholder farming households. With the adoption of commercial seeds and inorganic fertilizer, AGRA set out to double crop productivity and incomes while halving food insecurity by 2020” (Wise, 2020, p.1).

According to the Community Alliance for Global Justice, the project fails in 4 main areas: Political, Social, Environmental and Ethical.

Fails politically because it “uses influence to monopolize discussions of development and agriculture, promotes solutions decided upon undemocratically by people whose authority has not been conferred by the populace and whose frame of reference is the Global North, and frames the problem as African production, rather than global distribution”. (CAGJ, 2008)

Fails socially because it “privileges large-scale farmers/landholders, encourages the purchase of inputs from foreign companies, leading

to indebtedness, intensifies reliance on a volatile global economy, does not address structural and social inequalities, has the potential to exacerbate women’s poverty in integrated cash economies” (CAGJ, 2008).

Environmentally because it “encourages higher intensity of cultivation and monocropping, which decreases biodiversity and undermines indigenous crops, its potential for GE crops to be introduced and contaminate surrounding crops, and is uncritical of the first Green Revolution and does not acknowledge that its principles were introduced in some countries in Africa, and failed”(CAGJ, 2008).

Ethically because it privileges/asserts Western knowledge systems, limits self-determination among farmers in Africa, receives funding from foundations whose wealth is rooted in the maintenance of unequal global distribution, promotes a racist model of development in which African producers are targets of Western conceptions of linear “progress”, devalues the systems and knowledge of local peoples and precludes reciprocity and mutuality in exchanging ideas”(CAGJ, 2008).

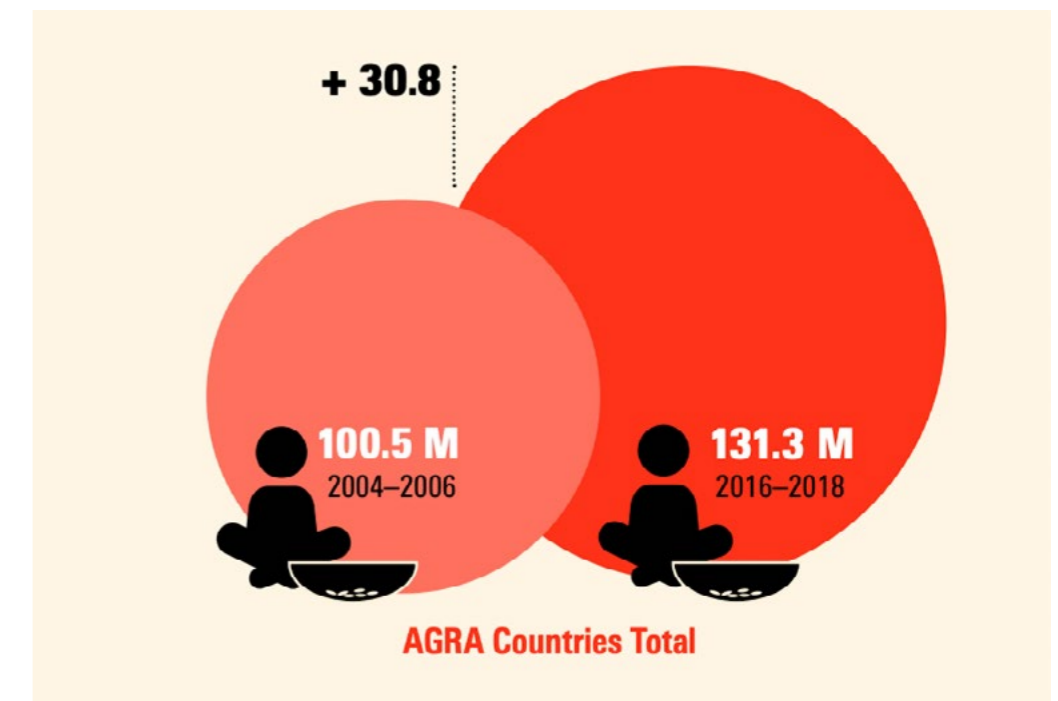


Fig. 13 - Image representing the increase in hunger in AGRA countries in the end of the project.

# Quilombo x Quebrada | Relearning

Quilombos are communities founded by enslaved Africans that escaped the farms and their “owners”. Quebrada is a slang used in Brazil to represent the Favelas.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a big problem of hunger inside the favelas, and there the project Quilombo x Quebrada was born.

The project allowed the food from quilombola farms to be redirected to the Favelas and reached people in a situation of food insecurity, as was the case of residents of the Jardim São Remo, in the west zone of São Paulo.

Through the food, the countryside and the city were connected and both spaces benefited from the action.



Fig. 14 - Food from the Quilombo arriving in the Favela's

# Critical Alphabet | Relearning

A Deck of cards to introduce design professionals and students to critical theory and help them reflect on their processes.

“The alphabet was designed as a tool for reflection. So the user would reflect on the prompt question to see how to respond to it in their work. Some people do this as a daily activity. The reflection exercise can be done individually or as a group e.g. with other colleagues, or in a class with a teacher and students” (Noel, 2022).



Fig. 15 - Critical Alphabet set of cards

**FIELD  
RESERACH**



# Questionnaire

To better understand how this subject was being perceived by my colleagues, the following questions were sent to them:

- Nationality
- Country of residence
- Gender
  - Cis woman | Trans woman | Cis man | Trans man | Non binary | Do not wish to tell | Other
- Sexuality
  - Gay/lesbian | Bisexual | Heterosexual | Queer | Asexual | Do not wish to tell | Other
- Ethnicity
- Are you a design student, teacher or professional?
  - Student | Teacher | Professional
- How do you feel when you hear the term pluriversality? What does it mean for you?
- How do you feel when you hear the term decoloniality? What does it mean for you?
- If we define decoloniality - or the process of decolonization - as a process of supporting and learning from knowledges other than the European and North American ones, and Pluriversality as “a world where many worlds fit” (ESCOBAR, Arturo), would you think those concepts relate to Design? How?
- Have you ever felt any barriers in relation to the validation of your research because of your color/ethnicity? If yes and you wish to explain please fill the space “others”. Yes | No | Other
- Have you ever felt any barriers in relation to the validation of your research because of your gender/ sexuality? If yes and you wish to explain please fill the space “others”.
- Who are your biggest influences in Design?
- What are your research channels?



- What is your research process like?
- How do you think that local knowledge is valued or devalued inside your university?
- Have you ever used “non-scientific” knowledge in your work?
- How do you approach the political and social aspects of design in your practice?
- How do you think that Design differs in your location?

## Remarks

This questionnaire was created for a qualitative research. It does not hope to prove any information, but to provide insights on how the subject is being perceived by different nationalities.

It was answered by 40 people with the following nationalities: Mexico, Colombia, Italy, Brazil, France, Ireland, Germany, Iran, Philippines, Romania, Spain, USA, Austria, Estonia, Netherlands, Portugal. I attribute this fact to sharing it mainly with the network I created when living in Brazil, Netherlands and Italy.



# Highlights and insights

## **When asked about the meaning of the world Pluriversality:**

Many have never heard of the term, but there is a general understanding that the world means something broad, related to acceptance, tolerance, respect and inclusion.

“To see the world from a perspective that is not white, western, upper-class. Accept and value ideas, concepts, stories, creations, perception of the world that comes from many peoples.”

“I think of the contrast with universality, which could refer to a single dimension applied in various spheres, while pluriversality would be more inclusive and flexible, considering more possibilities rather than a single one.”

## **When asked about the meaning of the world Decoloniality:**

As well as in the previous question, many are unaware of the term, but there is a bigger recognition of the word and understanding that it relates to the impacts of colonization and valorization local knowledges.

“The awakening of the colonized reason detaching itself from the colonial root. Justice, new narratives, self-discovery, reconquest.”

“Deconstruct the limitation, broaden the knowledge.”

“I feel like “finally!”, it was about time western thoughts of superiority were interrogated..”

## **When asked about the relationship between those words and Design:**

The notion that pluriversal and colonial thoughts should be approached in Design is almost unanimous.

“Absolutely, design is exploration, discovery and inspiration so we must constantly discover new ways of thinking and seeing the world.”

“I believe they relate to everything. Since design aims to develop product and service solutions for people’s lives, the creation of these solutions and their application goes through the experience of those who produce and use them. Design can perpetuate this single, colonial vision by excluding or imposing something on certain users, or it can learn from a decolonial practice by listening, researching, and connecting with plural life experiences.”

“We are simultaneously facing the 4th industrial revolution and 6th mass extinction. And this is by design. It is quite obvious by now that a lot of the shortcomings stem from the problematic western thought: the superiority of the white male, the separation from nature, etc. So, it is essential for designers to develop a more complex view of the world and the networks that animate it, so that they can include these relationships in their practice..”

“For years I have been ignoring my own country’s architecture, because it was not marked as modern, civilized and beautiful..”

But there are a few opinions that differ:

Yes, because I believe that the quality of the design is very much tied to where the content comes from, i.e. developed countries (Europe/United States) have higher quality in design (or other areas) than developing countries (such as those in Latin America).

## **When asked about barriers that have been faced due to Nationality, Ethnicity, Gender or Sexuality:**

Woman and Latins have reported facing difficulty in relation to the validation of their work, while Europeans reported mainly difficulties with gender

“More than some acts that are purely racist, what really disturbs me is the feeling of pity some people show towards ethnic minorities.”

“I have been made fun of talking and being vocal. I have been told (in Europe). It is funny for a woman to “talk”.”

“Being a woman, and working in a feminine area like fashion, I believe that men’s work is more valued and glamorized. In the kitchen we have the same example, men are chefs and women cooks, men are art directors and women seamstresses.”

**When asked about biggest influences on Design:**

Most of the names cited were from European professionals, but many have also recognized the influence the university over what they perceive as good and beautiful. Another frequently cited influence is the one from colleagues and friends.

“The principles of Good Design by Dieter Rams”

“I think the design schools I went to have a lot of influence on my way of thinking. As far as I know, in all of them the teaching model was well grounded on the bauhaus. But it was interesting, in the case of graphic design, to see how the Canadian school encouraged Swiss and minimalist design aesthetics, while the Brazilian school brought me the vernacular design vision. I think I take both approaches with me.”

**When asked about research channels:**

The answers were quite broad, englobing: Internet, articles, books, magazines, newsletters, social media, blogs, company networks, youtube, podcasts, exhibitions, and also mentions to less conventional channels like to social circles, experiences and talks with friends.

**When asked about research processes:**

Many shared the same process:

“It starts with a question or topic, continues with desk research and case studies, then I make a concept map and try to identify areas of work or possible innovation”.

But some showed less structured methods:

“Intuition”.

“Cahotic”

“When there is time - and direction - in the projects to do this I try to do it as thoroughly as possible. But I’m realizing that it’s research that is often focused on European or American culture.”

“I love to talk about my projects to friends (designers and not) to hear some insightful different perspectives. It really helps me.”

**When asked about their Design processes:**

There were mainly two lines of projecting described in the answers. A very linear and rationalistic process:

“Rational and logical process of problem solving, in which creativity is mainly concentrated in the concept phase. Generally: analysis of a given sector, of the target user and research of related problems, writing of the brief, generation of multiple concepts, choice of concept and development”.

“Research; explore solutions; test; analyze; improve; test; finalize/ retrieve new solutions.”

“I use hybrid approaches that utilize double diamond, systemic methodology, agile methodologies, participatory design/co-design.”

“Research, analysis, building, research, user testing, rebuilding, refinement, release checking for keywords, looking for inspiration, putting things together and making an strategic plan, going into the details.”

Versus more fluid and less structured dynamics:

“Very fluid and spontaneous.”

“Iterative, intuitive, non-linear and absolutely open to feedback from my colleagues and people close to me.”.

“I think it’s very iterative and not very linear. I think I approach it very much in how things happen and why I believe certain things should connect. And I like to think about as many variables as possible.”

“Although the theory in school taught me “understand/idealize/construct/test/iterate”, I follow the method to make more sense in the work environment but I honestly believe that in 100% of my process the “understand” and “iterate” are present until the end. Because learning is continuous and the context in which we live changes fast”.

**When asked about valorization of local knowledge inside the university:**

Here opinions really diverged depending on nationality. Italians feel like the local knowledge is extremely important for the success of their design, and also feel like there is a recognition of the cultural patrimony inside the university.

International students living in Italy feel like their knowledge and their design is always taken as inferior than the Italian one.

“Italian design culture is strong, and therefore it weighs, and sometimes it weighs too much.”

“I think Polimi is absolutely focused on Italian design, I think it's a very closed reality and I don't like that.”

“At the Politecnico they especially validate the knowledge of Italian students. The rest of us are “less” because we did not come from a country with a “rich” design history.”

Brazilians had a similar positioning:

“I believe that the knowledge of students coming from Latin American/Indian/African universities is seen as inferior to students coming from universities in developed countries.”

And recognize some barriers that Universities in Brazil face in order to reach this more cared view over the local:

“I believe that local knowledge is valued, but public universities in Brazil are still a very unplural environment, so this knowledge often has no space to circulate.”

“In my experience in the human sciences faculty, I could even see a discourse that supposedly valued traditional knowledge and practices (including disciplines on them). But in practice I think there were many barriers for the holders of this knowledge to actually enter academia (lack of access to higher education, low pay for researchers, the predominance of a white academic body and curriculum, and other factors that end up perpetuating professionals, students, and a not very diverse teaching).”

Even though the practice might show itself more connected to local knowledge, the theory is still very connected to western knowledge

“What do you mean by local knowledge? Being in a double degree program, I see the influence of the local context on both universities (Politecnico, Milan and Tongji University, Shanghai). We study local contexts and research local issues, but I think the knowledge is the same (Tongji essentially imported Politecnico's knowledge)”.

“It seemed more valued in the “practical” departments, the ones working directly with physical materials.”

And some who feel completely neglected

“My culture has never been talked about or mentioned at my university.”

“Local knowledge is valued depending on the locality and this definitely relates to how much design needs decolonization”.

**When asked about the use of non scientific knowledge:**

A huge majority of people claimed to use it widely for their projects, highlighting the special relationship Design has with this kind of knowledge.

**When asked about their approach to social and political issues at their work:**

The majority claims to be always connected to the social issues, by putting the user in the center and trying to analyze the issue though a wider lens. On the political side tho, many find it difficult

to either see the political implications of their projects, or to not be stuck in this part of the process.

Many also consider it hard to keep those in mind during the whole process, once timing, funds and desired outcomes might not leave space for a deeper reflection.

Some also acknowledge the difficulty of solving social and political issues that they don't relate to.

"Unfortunately I think my practice perpetuates rather than transforms the status quo. But diversity in work teams and compensation that is conducive to that diversity is something I've been striving for."

It's good to talk about it, because in theory I know how important it is, and in practice I end up getting a bit stuck in the task and don't go any further.

"Social I try to bring with me when thinking about the people I'm recruiting for interviews for example. I need to pay attention to whether I'm looking for people with a diversity of backgrounds or just those that are going to validate my hypothesis, if they are really in the same communication channels that I'm using to look for them. That I can bring the opinion of users that go beyond that pre-defined audience by the stakeholders, because it is one of the ways to avoid that certain users are never served. Sometimes I also think about the consequence of my work, but I confess that I don't know how to measure it yet, because I only learn with cases where the impact has already happened (Example consequences of uber and ifood). I think as a designer, this is very much in how we shape our thinking and communicate about who we are working for."

"On personal experience, an issue I'm facing right now is the difficulty of understanding socio-political aspects when I do not live nor engage much with the specific target people."

#### **When asked about the specifics of Design in their localities:**

"I believe that the influence of place is something innate to design; it is impossible to detach oneself from the place where one is designing."

"In Mexico, design is usually defined as aesthetics and not as everything it can be, such as education, solution, method, etc."

"Italian design has all its own characteristics that depend on its territory, its history, the people who have worked there."

"If I compare the graphics of Lebanon (my country of origin) with those of Italy (the country where I was born and raised) the differences are mainly in the human representation, in Middle Eastern graphics the writing is much more significant because of the cultural significance it has."

"Concerning Brazil, I believe that we have a more comprehensive view because it is a multicultural country. (Although we are very influenced by the European vision)"

"The performance of design is much more projected to the future and there is not so much historical vision, it seems that it is much more "oh let's avoid this now so it won't get worse in the future". While in Brazil, for example, the discussion is much more about solving the social problems of now rescuing the reasons for the past, which I sincerely think is much more realistic. But I believe that this happens due to the history of each country."

"I think that it differs in many ways, in the production of signs and images, in the textual behavior, that is, in the expressions that are characteristic of Belo Horizonte, in the way of building a narrative, historical and cultural baggage, in the context about how the city divides socially, in the strategies of occupying some places and not others."

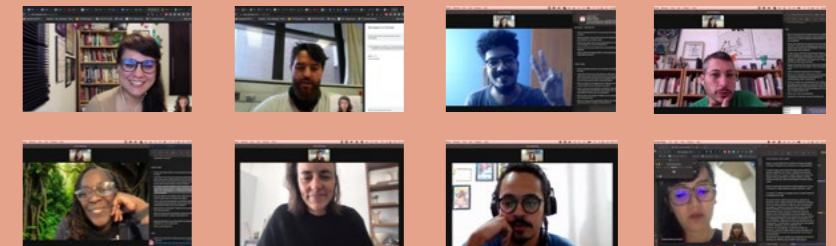
# Interviews

“In Austria, it’s taken for granted that decisions are taken quickly in order to test them. I also work with a team in Poland who approach design differently — with a bigger focus on thinking things through first and waiting on the hierarchical processes for approval to make decisions.”

“As a double degree student, I can make a comparison between Italian design, or Politecnico di Milano, and Chinese design, or Tongji University of Shanghai. I think Italian design has more “heart and soul”, places more attention to the human aspects, while Chinese design is more practical, function-oriented, optimization-oriented.”

“The German background of good engineering and cultural focus on functionality affects how Design is viewed (more functional and practicable than in other countries -> „form follows function“)”

“In Estonia the focus is mainly of service and digital design. Thus, good design often means seamless, efficient, clean - good old human-centered design. I feel like the change towards posthuman design is more visible in neighbouring disciplines like fashion design and architecture.”



In the last session the theory was explored, but it remains a bit blurred how Designers can, and are taking agency to bring pluriversal thoughts into practice.

I interviewed 9 professionals involved with indigenous knowledge, anti-racist, anti-hegemonic and anti-patriarchal practices. They are designers, architects, and geologists from diverse places in the global south, like Namibia, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil and Colombia.

The interviews were semi-structured. After reading several materials produced by the interviewees, specific questions were prepared to each, but always allowing a natural flow of conversation, adding questions that were made relevant through the discussion.



## Wellington Cançado

Wellington Cançado is an architect and professor at the School of Architecture and Design, UFMG, where he also works as a researcher in the Cosmopolis group (CNPq). He researches the relations between Amerindian cosmopolitics, urban metamorphosis and the impasses of modern design in the Anthropocene. He is one of the editors of *Piseagrama*, a publishing platform dedicated to thinking about other possible worlds in alliance with urban, LGBTQIA+, Afro and indigenous collectives. He co-organized, among others, the books *Excavating the Future* (2014), *Urbe Urge* (2018), *Seres-rios* (2021) and *Inhabiting the Anthropocene* (2022).



We started our conversation questioning the differences of strategies from the Global North and the Global South to cope with the (almost dystopian) future. Wellington says there is a multiplicity of cosmological views that exist in the south and don't exist in the north. "In Brazil we have Indigenous people, Quilombolas, Ribeirinhos... There is a cosmological multiplicity of ways of being and existing in the world that makes a huge difference. For those living and existing modes, the idea of a life based on growth and (the global) economy never made sense".

"The debate of Degrowth has been happening in the North for decades but while it was not being taken seriously a few years ago, the climate change added pressure to it and placed this question in evidence, but it is still inside a colonial point of view. There is a limitation in dealing with this multiplicity of ways of living because they are not close (geographically and theoretically) to the north, as possibilities or as a fight. Those who feel the impact of growth and development are and have always been those peoples (indigenous, quilombolas, etc). This incapacity of seeing different ways of living come from an ethnocentric point of view."

He says that in order to learn from those knowledges we have to rethink Design and take it from the place where it "does for" and starts "doing with". We are always creating abstract entities, like the user, the client, which we produce for.

To do with requires a proximity and encounter that is initially not open, but it's happening. Some call it confluence, some call it alliance, and they are the only way of not falling into hierarchical relations, that assumes who is designer, who is client.

We can see several examples of those hierarchical relations through Designers that go to indigenous people, to the favelas for example with the intention of training them with economic, projectual and technical skills that they supposedly don't have, for entering the market. We don't see projects where Designers went to communities to form Designers, and not artisans. There is always an assumption that this actions of Design over the communities is positive, always "for the community" to "make the community better".

“A lot is about thinking those alliances to see what we can do together. It’s not easy, but it is possible, and there is a lot of opening to it. No one knows yet what will come from it, but it’s something that doesn’t exist already.”

I asked why he thinks this will of contact between both worlds exist, and he answered that “it is because is inevitable. Our world invaded theirs in such a way that made it impossible for them to ignore. The contact has already happened, and it is always violent.”

Wellington then talks about a very important text written by Antonio Bispo, a Brazilian Quilombola that describes himself as a translator of his world to our world, and vice versa:



He then talks about his classes, and how the organizations and rules of the university are not in accordance with the urgency that the theme requires. He gave classes to post graduation courses and discovered the students never had contact with subjects like cosmopolitics, decoloniality, anthropocene, which is a diagnosis of how anachronic the Design courses are, “always going around the same subjects, while the world is on fire. There is though an interest from the students, they are very open and interested in the subject, but there is also a paralysis, because they think they are powerless and incapable of creating any change”.

“If we stay closed inside the Design universe, with the modern way of thinking and the European point of view we fall into Degrowth, very limited alternatives that are stuck to the same logic of thinking that are self-referential.

When we get in contact with those cultures there are other vocabularies, other paradigms, and with them several other options. But we were always told to look at those cultures as sub developed, archaic, delayed.

There is then this idea that to decolonize means to go back to live as an indigenous person, but this disconsiders completely what being an indigenous person today means. We have to deconstruct this thinking or we keep on falling to essentialisms.

Design need a metamorphosis, in front of the contacts, the crossings, it needs a permeability. When Design opens itself to other ways of knowing it suffer a metamorphosis, opening itself to a less ethnocentric, modern way. It will be a different Design, or Designs.

The debates around this necessary change always falls into a place where it is questioned to be utopy or revolution. The imaginary of transformation is connected with a rupture, and that is such a heavy load that is very connected to the feeling of being powerless, while the debate about transition is a discourse that does not require this rupture, and therefore is much more reachable, and Design could be its engine.”



## Matheus Viana

Onça Preta was the name chosen by designer Matheus de Souza Viana to sign his projects. Graduated in design at UFMG, Matheus has drawn attention by aligning graphic design and reflections on combating racism. Currently, the designer has an international award from “Communication Arts”, two awards from BDA - Brasil Design Award (Gold and Silver), and three medals of distinction from Behance in the categories InDesign, Editorial and Brand.



Matheus starts by explaining that while deciding what to do as his graduation project he felt a big push from the teachers towards innovation, towards unprecedented things, and finds this very symptomatic since there is a clear lack of interest in talking about past, decoloniality, diasporas, etc, by those who occupy places of power inside the university. He claims that those are topics of interest from “the other”, and therefore it is natural that subjects like Decoloniality only comes from a person from a colonized country, and black culture and racism comes from black people. “It comes from people that suffered the effects in their own skin, and therefore were forced to think more critically about the subject.”

“My design process rescues references of what I live. It ends up being a very personal project, speaking about intimate things, but in a place where this intimacy reaches and touches other people. This also makes your work unique because it brings what your life experience”.

There is a lot of visual prejudice with those subjects too. To make works that talk about black culture, it is very common to use a tribal aesthetics, and this drags with it hidden meanings of archaic, old, poorly elaborated. In contrast with this come movements like Afrofuturismo, which question stereotypes of black people, creating a new narrative, to enable new futures and new possibilities.

The works I see today are aesthetically very under the digital and elegant parameters, this creates a movement that denies the popular visuals, and creates a place that is usually elitist, white. I then try to work with visual impact.

People are not worried about social aspects because it doesn't affect them as much. I then try to bring this discomfort as a way to activate people.





Fig. 16 - Tshirt created by Matheus that has a target and the word “próximo” which means “next one”. It brings a very clear and impactful idea of the message he wants to pass.



Fig. 17 - Poster created using the Afrofuturistic aesthetics, and built to also cause impact. According to him it is hard to ignore a A1 black paper over a white wall, and those impacts have great value into starting reflections and discussions, specially with those who do not experience the same challenges than a black person.



# Lesley-Ann Noel

Lesley-Ann Noel is an Assistant Professor in the Dept. of Design Studies at North Carolina State University. She has a BA in Industrial Design from the Universidade Federal do Paraná, in Curitiba, Brazil. She has a Master's in Business Administration from the University of the West Indies in Trinidad and Tobago. She earned her Ph.D. in Design from North Carolina State University in 2018.

Lesley-Ann practices design through emancipatory, critical, and anti-hegemonic lenses, focusing on equity, social justice, and the experiences of people who are often excluded from design research. Her research also highlights the work of designers outside of Europe and North America as an act of decolonizing design. She also attempts to promote greater critical awareness among designers and design students by introducing critical theory concepts and vocabulary into the design studio e.g. through The Designer's Critical Alphabet.

Lesley-Ann's research interests are emancipatory research centered around the perspectives of those who would traditionally be excluded from research, community-led research, design-based learning, and design thinking. She practices primarily in the area of social innovation, education, futures workshops and public health. She is co-Chair of the Pluriversal Design Special Interest Group of the Design Research Society.



Lesley-Ann is working in bringing pluriversal thoughts and emancipatory practices into the Design University. She brings several conversations and critical points of discussion to her classes and directs her students to go further on the understanding of their responsibility as Designers.

During her interview Lesley-Ann explained that in the beginning of her career she gave classes of Design Thinking and Design for Social Innovation in Universities of the United States, but was very bothered by the Paternalistic and White supremacist point of view that is very common on Design disciplines, and its what is shown to Designers as the normal practice. She then started pushing the students to go further, framing the question in different ways, and as a response she claims that the students understood the collaborators on a deeper level.

During one semester she developed a podcast called "Hello from the Pluriverse" with her students. For this podcast the students had to interview Designers from diverse places in the global south to understand how Design is being done differently in a world different from their world. Taking the students out of their worlds and trying to make them understand that their world is not the only world is a constant effort in her classes.

When asked about the differences in teaching and collaborating in the Global North and Global South, she brings up the "Critical Alphabet", saying that this might have been a project that she wouldn't do if only working in the Global South, since in her point of view, it is almost like trying to convince the dominant voice about the rest of the world, about the minorities.



Fig. 18 - Critical Alphabet set of cards

She says that the work she makes in the US is much more educational than in places such as Trinidad and Tobago, where it is way more about collaboration. She does so because in places like the US it is much less common for people inside her university to have contact with diversity, with people of color, poor, etc.

“When I work with people from the US the colonizer instinct always ends up entering the practice”.

She then always requires her students to position themselves in the beginning, claiming that her students that are minorities shouldn't be the only ones having to think about their place in the world.



Fig. 19 - Positionality map by Lesley-Ann Noel

She tries to always put an emphasis on the story of the person they are working for. The story told by them.

“WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE TELLING THEIR OWN STORIES”.

Some of her classes curriculums:

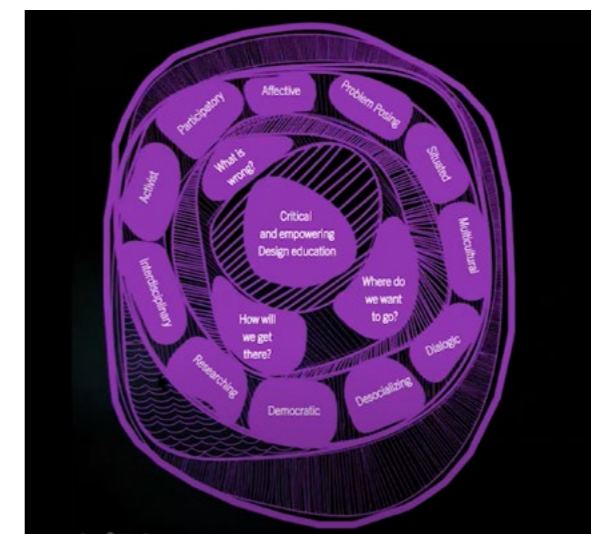


Fig. 20 - Design classes curriculums by Lesley-Ann



## Cris Ibarra

Colombian, PhD in Design from the School of Industrial Design - ESDI/UERJ (2018). Master in Design, Innovation and Sustainability from the State University of Minas Gerais - UEMG (2014). Industrial Designer by Universidad del Norte (Colombia) (2009). Adjunct professor at the Center for Arts and Communication/Department of Design at the Federal University of Pernambuco (Recife). Presenter and creator of the Podcast Sentipensante, a program about Design(s) and Latin America.

Between 2017 and 2018, with support from CAPES, she held a Sandwich PhD and worked as a visiting researcher at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen (Denmark), specifically at the Codesign Research Centre (CODE) under the guidance of Professor Thomas Binder. In May 2018, she was invited by the project Knowing from the inside: Anthropology, Art Architecture and Design, coordinated by Professor Tim Ingold to present her doctoral research. At the end of that same year, she defended the first thesis in the field of Design Anthropology in Brazil. She was a researcher at the Design and Anthropology Lab - LaDA at ESDI/ UERJ (2015-2019).



During the Interview Cris Ibarra spoke about the necessity of accepting that design is a process. One that doesn't end with the end of the project, but one that becomes more clear and modifies as things happen and the body encounters those experiences. She highlights the importance of letting yourself be affected by the process, because this is very likely to broaden your understanding of the issue you are trying to solve.

She explains that her Design process nowadays is much more open, and that she often has to let go of what she wants as a Designer, in a constant process of self reflection. She doesn't think that the Academy is open yet to this way of thinking and discourses.

“O DESIGN SE FAZ AO FAZER DESIGN, E O QUE É DESENHADO DESENHA O NOSSO DESIGN”

“DESIGN IS MADE (AND MAKES ITSELF) IN THE ACT OF DESIGNING, AND WHAT IS DESIGNED DESIGNS OUR DESIGN”

Through her experience abroad in Denmark she learned a lot about participatory practices, but when tried to apply them in Brazil she understood that “the challenges of the south are different”. She explains that the goals of both hemispheres seem to reach the same place, but they departure from two very different ones. While the North thinks about exploring less, the south departures from preservation, and there is a difference in that.

Cris also strates that one big difference between Europe and South America is the interaction between the University and society. She attributes this difference amongst other reasons to social inequality. Since in Europe the University doesn't play a role that is as elitist as in countries like Brazil and Colombia, there is more space for interaction. “As a consequence the policy makers are also more accessibe, those who hold the power are more accessible”.



## Warren Miller

Warren is a geologist who has experience in the field of structural geology, geochronology, geoengineering, scientific writing, report writing, geographical information systems (GIS) and map design. He has spent the past 10 years working in the field, making geological observations, constructing detailed and regional maps, writing publications for recognised scientific journals and working on various geoengineering projects in Africa. He has also worked in various multidisciplinary positions, as well as solitary and dangerous outdoor environments. He enjoys people and seeing them thrive, and his goal is to develop strong and professional skills that will one day allow him to produce moving transdisciplinary maps of Africa.



Warren was born in South Africa, is currently finishing his PHD in geology and works in a project called Africa Live Corridors (ACC), that hopes to “forge a new future for the people of Africa by the people of Africa” (Toteu et al., 2010, p.692).

The project firstly intended to address questions of the Supercontinent of Gondwana, understanding the relationship that still exists not only geologically but also socially and environmentally since this supercontinent represents the formation of the Global South.



After some consideration, the organizers of the project decided to close their focus in the African continent.

Africa is indeed the continent with the deepest and richest geological, biological and cultural heritage. And it is certainly the continent suffering the greatest ills with regard to the concerns of the Millennium Development Goals. If we are to fashion a new future for life on Earth, we can do no better than begin at home—we can do no better than begin, literally and figuratively, in Africa. (Toteu et al., 2010, p.695)

Warren explains how less than 3% of the research made about the African continent is made by people from Africa, so the idea for this project is to have an autobiography of the continent, told not only

by its people - even though engaging Africans in scientific research is also one goal of the project- but also by its fauna, flora, geology, landscape, etc. He states though, that this idea is still very hard to be comprehended.

The landscape holds 4 billion years of history, and Warren explains how the past of exploration (of both people and resources) at the continent changes this continent. The years of slavery reallocated a lot of people, and by reallocating the people, you change the place.

The project focuses its efforts in 20 Heritage Corridors that hold over 400 heritage nodes. A story that goes much beyond borders, and takes into consideration music, spirituality, language diversity, architecture, religion and impacts of colonization, amongst others.

It encompasses the geological, biological and anthropological/cultural history of Africa's 54 nations – a (hi-) story without borders. The wealth of scientific and biographical knowledge archived in this network of Corridors tells the story of continental drift, mega-geohazards, climate variability and change, and the origin and extinction of biodiversity; and includes our human roots, culture and spirituality, our impact on the Earth and our potential to influence its future. In telling this story of Africa, new research avenues will be discovered and new learning methodologies will be experienced and developed and shared (Toteu et al., 2010, p.692).

Warren's activities are related to making maps and to predict the soil's conditions in a few decades. This prediction works so that, together with the community, there can be discussions of what can be done about it. He says that people are extremely invested in their lands.

He talks about a board game that was created in the beginning of the project, named 'Imizila' that discussed ideas and ideals of Africa Alive Corridors to develop Earth Alive strategies. This game was played by several scholars together with politicians and leaders

in the most diverse areas. He tells that several of the scholars that played the game ended up engaging on a scientific career.

On this matter, he thinks that the barriers for those who want to engage with science are many, but one of the most influential ones is the lack of questioning and formal request that studies about a place engage with researchers from that same place, and therefore the outcome is what we've spoken before: an extremely low representation of local knowledge on scientific research about the continent.

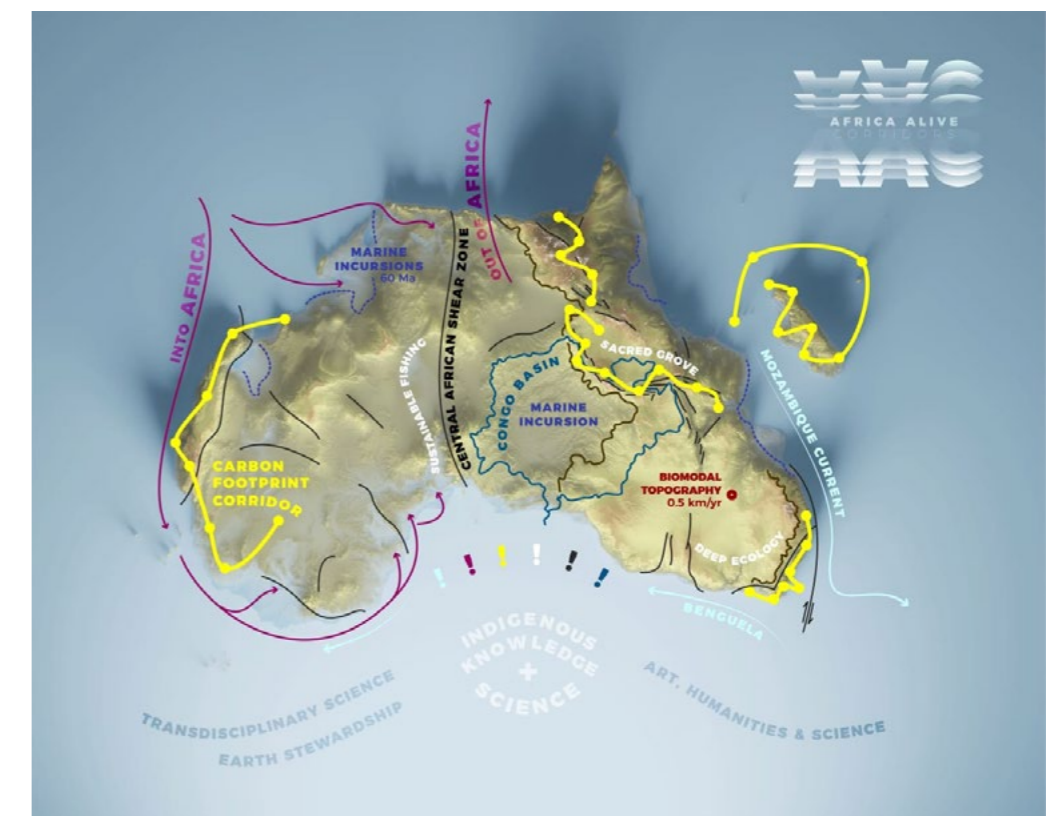


Fig. 21 - One of the project maps, made and granted by Warren



## Saskia Rysenbry

Saskia Rysenbry is a social designer from New Zealand and strategist with a background in sustainability, gender equity and community activism.

She is co-founder of the Sathyam Project, Circology and Hey Low and is currently at global sustainability non-profit Forum for the Future, helping to equip current and emerging systems change leaders.

Sathyam Project transforms the lives of girls and women in India by creating profitable social enterprises.

Circology is a material research and circular design studio turning companies' waste into innovative products and open-sourcing the process so that others can do the same.

Hey Low is a digital agency dedicated to creating a greener and less energy-intensive internet. Data consumption is having a huge affect on climate change.



Saskia is a Designer acting in very diverse projects. Beyond her work with Precious Plastic, Hey Low, Forum for the Future and Cicology she is now developing a map called The Design we need, where she intends to gather all the principles we need to accelerate transition, e.g. collaboration, self organization, multidisciplinary.

She claims that what we learn in mainstream Design schools are principles that separate man from nature, industrial productivity, mindset hierarchy and control, patriarchy and infinite growth, and those are the principles we are designing for. She cites Victor Papanek: "There are professions more harmful than Design, but only very few of them". This causes her a big discomfort because Designers never had those intentions, they just wanted to be the people bringing ideas into the world.

Her project then starts by mapping the current designs we have like product, fashion, graphic, and linking to more holistic approaches like, transition, systems thinking, permaculture etc. This way she hopes to help Designers foresee what kind of more holistic approaches relate to their practices, and then transition from a model exploitation and oppression towards fairer and more pluriversal ones.

"WE ARE WORLD MAKERS. I'M TRYING TO HELP DESIGNERS SEE THE RESPONSIBILITY THEY HAVE"

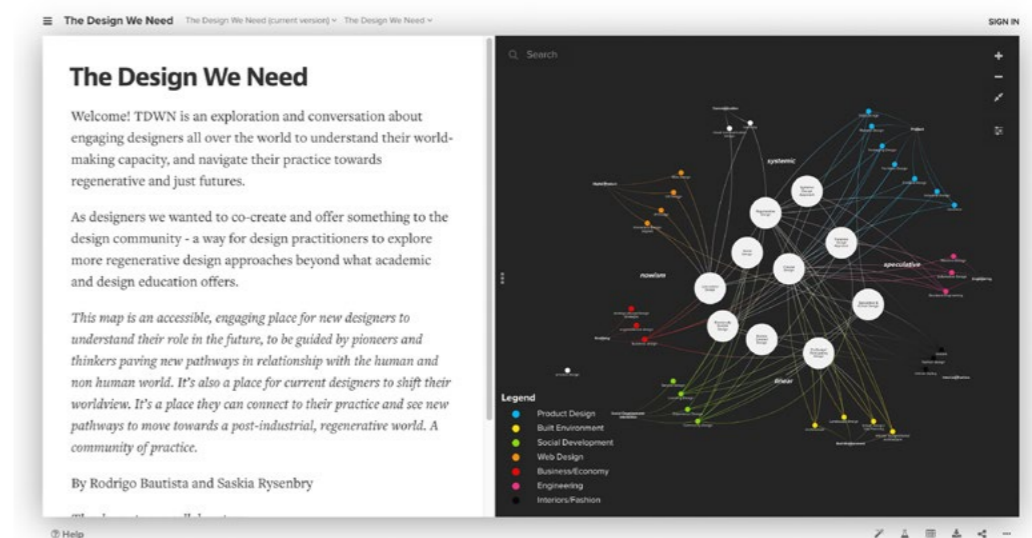


Fig. 22 - "The Design We Need" map by Saskia Rysenbry

She sketched her idea of how Design should be and what we should be learning in Design schools:



Fig. 22 - Sketch by Saskia Rysenbry of how she thinks Design should be acting now

She now works with Forum for the Future, a non profit organization that helps organizations to solve complex problems focused on sustainability, and contributes to a project from the organization called The School of System Change where they run programs for people “mid-career” working with sustainability, policy making, working with refugees, etc.

She claims that we have a very short term cause and effect view, and

the tools that we have now are insufficient for the necessary change. We are mitigating the effects.

To help people understand the world is a huge undertaking.

Saskia also spoke about her project in India, and how much as she matures as a Design professional she understands that she has to Step back and listen. When she first started the project over 11 years ago she struggled since she arrived with lots of assumptions and every problem she was trying to solve didn’t come from the perspective on how you solve problems there.

“We’ve gotta understand our own structure and how we frame the world and we gotta try as hard as we can to listen, and not to try and sketch and make narratives of it right away, because this way we are reducing our ability to see a different perspective.”

“It’s about giving the people the power to say what they think should be done right. Through the years I learned to wait to see where I’m needed, and sometimes wait for the invitation.”

“As an example, in the beginning we dealt with lots of woman under domestic violence, and I arrived with the big fat assumption that what they needed was independence, because in my position, if it was me this is what I would want, but the feeling of independence is actually so threatening for them, that those women would have so much resistance to the idea in the first place.”

“I don’t like the term inclusion, because it says: we have this powerful table and we welcome you to come to it, rather than forcing us to think how do we destructure this table that holds all the power. I think there needs to be more indigenous, female, non binary people making decisions in the global north and thinking how do we invite people from the global north to understand life down there. I don’t wanna assume we need only more diversity, we also need to understand how to decenter the power. Thinking collaboration.”





## Andrea Melenje

Colombian, Graphic designer, Master in Visual Culture, with doctoral studies in Anthropology.

She is currently a professor at the Department of Design at the University of Cauca and is part of the Design and Development research group at the same university. Her academic reflection focuses on understanding the relationships between design and social innovation through the study of creative community practices that emerged from the meeting between designers and communities in Cauca.



Andrea is now working together with Arturo Escobar in the project that is thinking Transition Design in the “Valle geografico del rio Cauca” and developing her PHD thesis with the Cauca communities, the Nasa people, bringing the theoretical perspective of ontologic design and design for the communal as possibilities to think Design.

“We are thinking of this project with a political proposition, a vital bet. We are walking together with collectives of other places, people that work with ecology, law, feminist associations, indigenous, black. We are all united and working together trying to figure out how to design transition there.

This place is a place that was taken by the sugar can monoculture, and this brought death. Not only from the people that lived on and for this place, but also to the soil, where there is nothing else, and many rivers were redirected.

We are trying to think there not one but many Designs through this collective work. Therefore we are not thinking Design as this material production of humanity, but how we design the everyday, how we design our world, the world we want to live at.

I always had questions during my graduation, wondering why we were learning Design that way if our problems were different, not those ones. The students were working with communities but this work was not taken seriously by the university. Then we started to think we needed to take those works seriously, and to work with communities that are recovering territories, recovering indigenous languages, etc. This brought me to work with anthropology and creative practices.

How to understand the creative processes that emerge in these situations of struggle in these territories where the latent fight takes place and how the creation of the graphic representation is constructed through creative relationality and the implications also of the ontological design and the design for the transitions in this relationship. This has to do with opening Design to other possibilities. We have to displace Design from this modern ontology, and place it in several different ontologies.

“WE NEED TO STOP THINKING DESIGN AS A MATERIAL PRODUCTION, AND THINK ABOUT IT AS A MULTIPLICITY OF RELATIONSHIPS”

“ITS NOT ABOUT DEFINING DESIGN. DESIGN CAN BE MANY THINGS, DEPENDING ON THE PLACE IT IS BEING DONE”

“DESIGN IS SO IMPORTANT, THAT IT SHOUDLN’T BE ONLY IN THE HANDS OF DESIGNERS”

The Design and creation of the everyday cannot be valued in those categories that we placed Design, they can’t be even understood in those categories.

What I’m doing with my students is to understand that every project has its methodology, that there is no methodology that fits all. This way they still produce materialities but they produce it together with the communities, in a real co-creation, so we make sure we are not producing just things, but producing the world and ways of living.

It is tough because the university is still very much into the modern thinking, and then it is difficult to teach relationality for those who were taught to think about the other as a user, and nature as a resource. The explanation I give is not the explanation they expect, and this is why we also need to change the university.

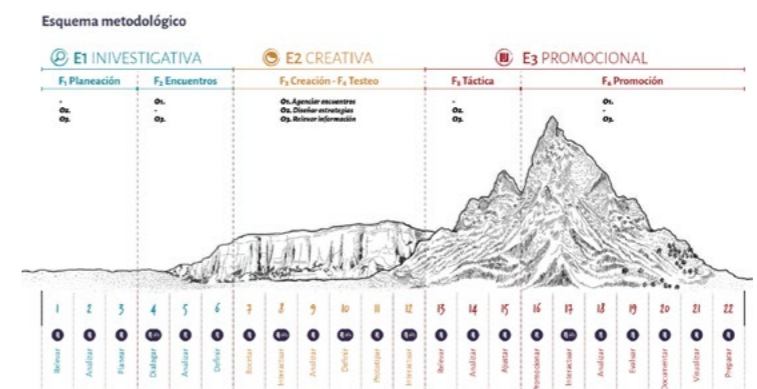
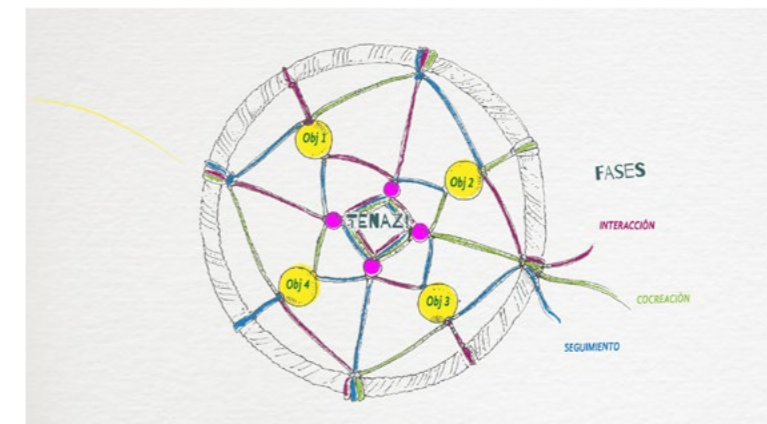
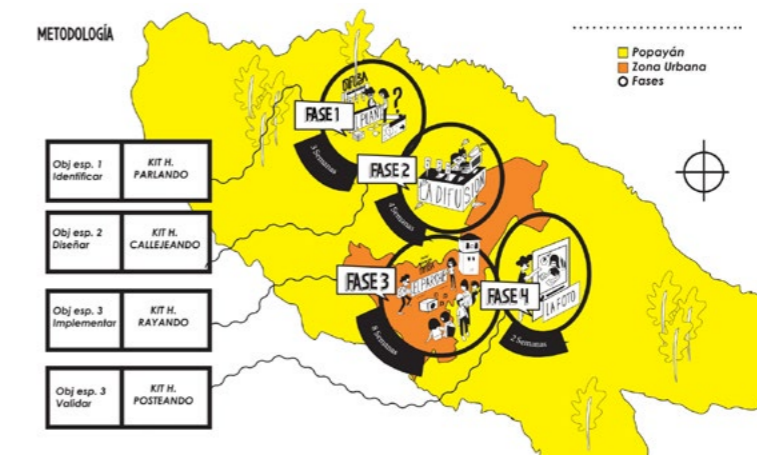


Fig. 23 - Images of the methodologic processes drawn by Andrea’s students for their projects



## Heike Winschiers- Theophilus

Professor in the Faculty of Computing and Informatics at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. She has lived and lectured in Namibia since 1994. Her research focuses on co-designing technologies with indigenous and marginalised communities. In 2008 she established a niche area research cluster aiming for the implementation of an Indigenous Knowledge Management System. She leads this research group consisting of staff members, PhD, Master and Honours students, external international research collaborators, in partnership with local indigenous knowledge holders. The projects have been supported by local and international grants. In 2011 she co-chaired the inaugural Indigenous Knowledge Technology Conference, in Windhoek, initiating a worldwide dialogue on the tensions in digital representation of Indigenous Knowledge. In 2014 she co-chaired the 13th Participatory Design conference in Windhoek, Namibia hosted in Africa for the first time. She introduced local design challenges as a novel element to the conference whereby international participants collaborated with local citizens in deriving practical solutions. Concerned with socio-economic challenges in the country, such as the high youth unemployment rate, gender-based violence, reading cultures and general living conditions in the informal settlement, she has established a number of research-based community outreach projects contributing to societal transformation.



Heike uses community based codesign with indigenous knowledge. She's been working in Namibia for a very long time where there is the Ubuntu Concept, that says we are all interrelated. She claims that the main issue in Participatory Design is that the designers, experters, academics or researchers see themselves as facilitators, while whoever is part of the Design process influences it in one way or another.

"We stopped saying that we are just facilitators, we are influenced by the process and so are they.

We work in Technology Design and because they haven't been exposed that much to technology, they have fresh ideas. This for me is a very exciting part of working with the communities. They have no idea that underlined blue is a hyperlink, but we have become so brainwashed that we can't even imagine differently anymore.

The interesting thing is that while they try to put something on technology they can question their own culture. Is this important to keep for the next generation? Is this not? How can I actively change it? Those are the processes we co-design together.

The role of technology in construction of the pluriverse, is that in our case it has always been a conversational probe, because when building technology you have very clear boundaries, and then you really have to question what is important and what is not, and if necessary try to break those boundaries, and this makes us go beyond and start to question hardwares. "

She then talks about the ideas around Decolonization. "There is a big difference there between working with youth and the elders on this matter, because the elders are aware of their histories and traditions, but sometimes the youth is already too westernized, and therefore they first need to become aware of their traditions. The problem is that they usually do this by reading books written by westerns, and then it becomes really awkward. This is why I like more the idea of Pluriversality.

You are from Brazil and you are talking to me in English, you speak at least two languages. You know that when you have your Portuguese speaking head on you see things differently from you English speaking one. The way you express yourself, your personality changes. So to me, decolonization would mean to evaluate the local context, seeing what is worth letting go and what is not, to not discredit everything that was built by people from the place, they did beautiful things too, even if under colonial forces. It is part of the people.”

“MAYBE DECOLONIZATION JUST MEANS NO LONGER FOLLOWING WITHOUT QUESTIONING”

The communities we work with we keep, because they know us, and then we have a much deeper connection with them, and since they’ve been working with us for 10 years they are much more literate with technology, and then we also bring them when we work with other communities, creating a transfer from community to community.”

When questioned about the differences working with the Global North and South, she first brings up the difference between how elders are treated. While in the South the elders are always seen with a lot of respect, the ones who hold the knowledge and have great stories to tell, in the north they are useless, have to be entertained, a weight to society. The approach to the participantes is always different, maybe a helper syndrome.

Working with the elders is super interesting, not only because they are eager to work with technology, but also because they have many different ideas of what it could be, and contrary to the empty futures imagined by the youth, they create a thousand possibilities for it. You need a lot of tools to take the youth out of the box, to make them be imaginative, while the elders are outside the box.”

“I THINK PLURIVERSALITY CAN ONLY BE REACHED IF PEOPLE ARE TOGETHER. ONE PERSON ONLY BRINGS ONE VIEW”



## Flavio Duarte

Master's student in Design at UEMG, in the research line: Culture, Management and Processes (2019 - currently) researches the connections between Design and Coloniality, focusing on how Design can become an emancipatory and decolonial tool. Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from FUMEC University (2017). Studied one year of his program in Mexico - Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (2016) doing subjects related to Fine Arts. Specialized in Illustration, focuses his studies on ways to transform this area into a tool for social transformation, through graphic humor in social networks and independent publications. Currently works as a Graphic Designer and Illustrator. Studied 3 years of Architecture working with sustainable construction (2012).



Flavio's research is focused on Design and Decoloniality. He first heard about the subject on the area of International Relations, but then tried to understand the crossing paths of the subject with Design. On his research he tried to understand the formation of design as a material production from humanity, and then decoloniality with a historical basis, specially focused on Brazil, investigating inside universities in Brazil what are the biggest references in Design courses. He focused his research in education since this is where the Designers are being formed.

During his research he discovered that there are 22 universities in Brasil that are recognized as able to have the Design course by CAPES. He analyzed the curriculum of those courses.

As a conclusion he managed to prove that the majority of Brazil's theoretical reference comes from European authors, and those who are not Europeans have parts of their academic experience in Europe.

“Everything Brazil consumes is produced in one very small place in the world, with a theoretical basis from this place, and therefore it is quite hard to get out of this patterns. I wanted to be wrong about my assumptions, but through my research they were confirmed.”

He also points that several books about Brazilian culture are commonly written by European authors.

As another part of his research he interviewed the course coordinators, and identified that there are intentions and ideas about including diversity, but when talking about practical ways of doing it they lack on response.

When asked about how this knowledge influenced his own process of Design, he said that after understanding the subject there is an immediate will to add it to your work and create a revolution, without maybe seeing that there are many people who are already developing nice work around the theme, but that sometimes “don't pass through Academy's filters”. You can't find them in articles but you find them in the streets. My will then transformed into bringing this kind of initiatives into the Academy, trying to make it more accessible.

“I had big issues with understanding the academy, or accepting this place as a place of validation of knowledge. “

He states that since his research is a project that has very few theoretical basis, some requirements of the Academy transform how he has to write arguments, usually transporting them into a much more inaccessible place.

“If this process changed my design is to understand that there is value in the daily materiality of doing things.

The academy requires me to prove in every article that we have a colonial past, and this is crazy. I feel like we keep on swimming against the river, and in the end I don't even know who is going to read it, while maybe if I was doing something material I might have been inspiring and reaching more people. But I don't want to discredit the academy because it is a very valid way of knowing, arguing, and connecting to other people.”

Then I asked him about how those rules prejudicate the Academy itself, and he replied restating what was already said: “It makes the content very inaccessible, there is a fixation in norms that makes it impersonal. This is connected to the rational tradition. We have a long walk to prove to people that there is no way to separate reason and emotion.”

“We have to understand if its correct or just european, beautiful or just european, justified or just explained by european methods.”

“Academia with the barriers that it creates, wants to transform diversity into universality, with the pretense of making it correct, when actually it is just making it whiter. Those barriers created by the academy harm the academy itself when they block diversity and pluriversality.

It's hard to find a place where they give voice to think kind of thinking and knowledge. It is growing now, but we have to pay attention not to transform this discourse in what the sustainability discourse became for example. Understand that this discourse does not have a person of reference.”

“Its a daily effort to see who you cite, who you include in your work.”

“I keep thinking why the Brazilian Design is based on Bauhaus and not in movements like “Movimento Antropofágico”, in absorbing what is good and moving forward. We see some examples of this like “Tropicalismo”, which is a sensational movement. Its not to not have any reference from Europe or delete everything that came from there, and what was developed here after, but to “eat” what comes from there, take the good parts, digest and transform into something more, more autonomous.”

**Until the lion has his or her own  
storyteller, the hunter will always  
have the best part of the story.**

West African proverb

## **Framing and defining Design opportunity**

**Sentipensantes are concerned with the collective construction of knowledge, with the transformation of society, with the recovery of invisible voices and with the union between the academy and the extra-academic (Ibarra, 2020).**

We are only now starting to learn and see value in all the knowledge that was oppressed and almost vanished during the last centuries, but this knowledge is still quite hard to access, since those who hold it are not occupying the same spaces as us. Through the interviews I was able to see that even those who are engaged in their active search still face difficulties in being aware of initiatives, materials and events around the subject.

The exchange of this knowledge and information is crucial for the growth and strengthening of the Pluriverse, and therefore, for the creation of new Designs.

\*Part of the answer will have to involve the creation of transition lexicons and media and communicative strategies through which relationality and pluriversality can resonate in wider circles. Conventional media are no doubt the most effective means by which the liberal world vision of the individual, markets, development, growth, consumption, and so forth is reproduced in daily life; they are indeed one of the OWW's most insidious design strategies, in charge of the cultural-political work of keeping capitalism, anthropocentrism, and increasingly untenable forms of rationalism in place. New media are thus key to the creation of different possibilities for making worlds otherwise [...] the key to constructing livable worlds, both ontologically and politically, lies in the cultivation of ways of knowing and acting based on a profound awareness of the fundamental interdependence of everything that exists, or relationality.

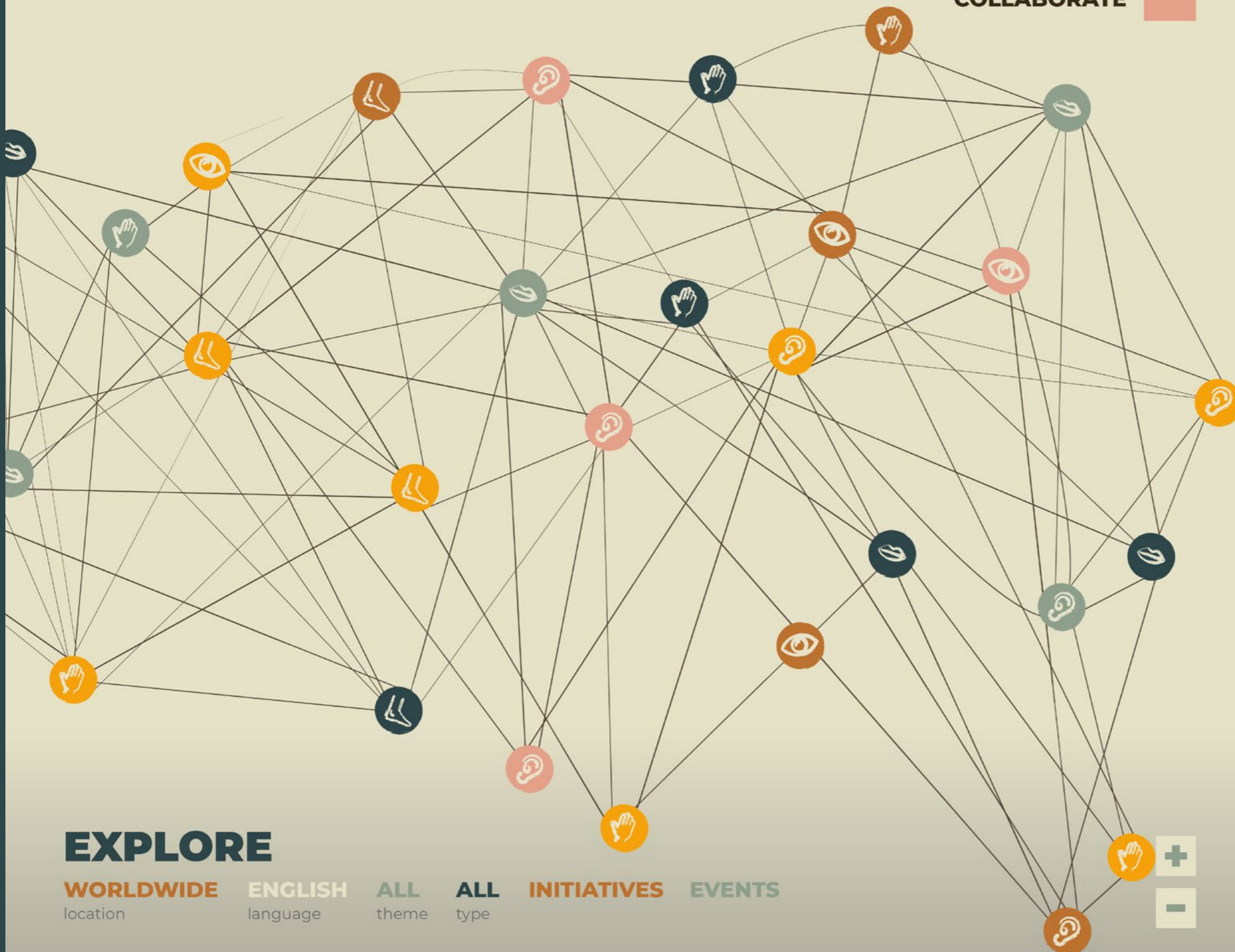
\*This text is part of a document written and shared with me by Arturo Escobar. It is not a public document and should not be used for future reference.

**PROJECT**





COLLABORATE

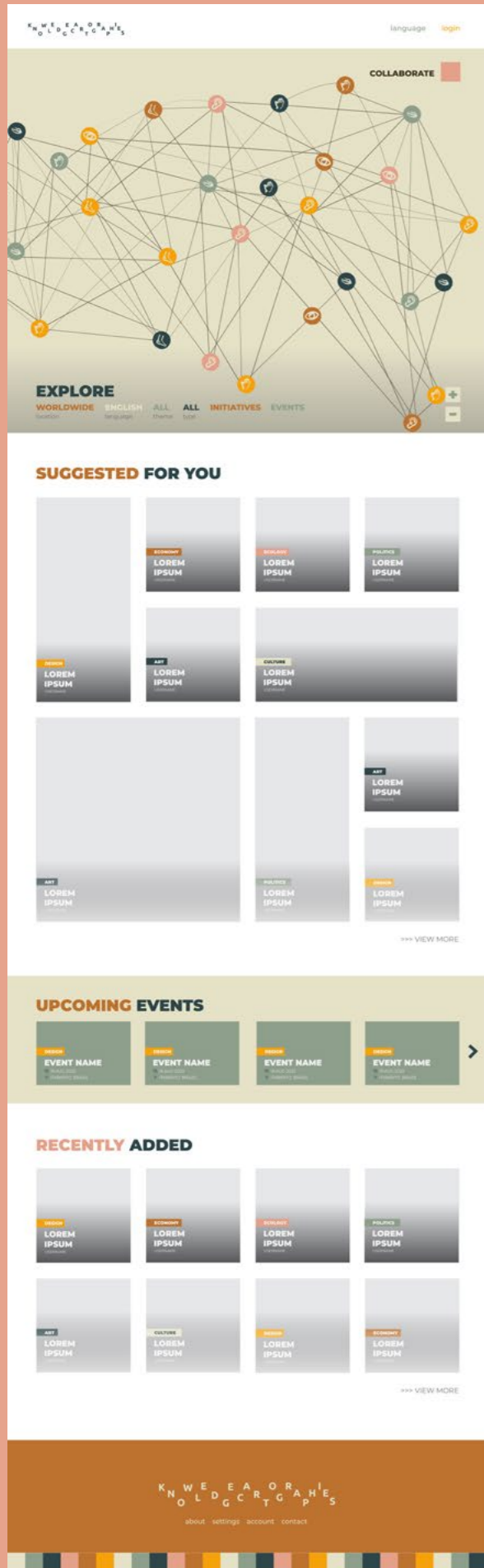


## EXPLORE

**WORLDWIDE** **ENGLISH** **ALL** **ALL** **INITIATIVES** **EVENTS**  
location language theme type



**KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES** is a collaborative platform for sharing and connecting different media, initiatives and events to foster growth and strengthening of pluriversal thoughts and practices.



Anyone can collaborate. Just drop a file over the map and this will create a knot. When uploading you will be asked to indicate keywords that relate to the content you are contributing with. The map will create connections (that can be further commented and explained) to other contributions, and therefore, also between contributors.

You can filter the map depending on your interests, and by doing so, you create different maps, different knowledge cartographies.

The platform will learn from your interaction and suggest content that might be of your interest. It will also share upcoming events and highlight the most recent additions.



When exploring by location, this will redirect you for the page of the territory, which is completely customizable by the contributors, both the content and the visuals.



KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES language login

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878 • 19 AUG 2022

**Brazil FAVELA COMMUNITY**  
 INITIATIVES EVENTS

>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum irure dolore in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse mollisae consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum dolor dolere at.

**DISCUSSION**

USER787878 • 19 AUG 2022

>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam nonummy nibh euismod tincidunt ut laoreet dolore magna aliquam erat volutpat. Ut wisi enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exerci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem vel eum irure dolore in hendrerit in vulputate velit esse mollisae consequat, vel illum dolore eu feugiat nulla facilisis at vero eros et accumsan et justo odio dignissim qui blandit praesent luptatum dolor dolere at.

**THE CONTRIBUTOR LINKED THIS CONTENT TO:**

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

[more comments...](#) [more linked content](#)

KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES  
 about settings account contact

Every contibution has a specific page of the contet, with a place for discussion and indications of related content.

KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES username

**NEW COLLABORATION**

title

description

tags

Language Location Theme Type

- Bahamas
- Bangladesh
- Beirut Lebanon
- Belo Horizonte, Brazil**
- Bermuda
- Brazil

Belo Horizonte, Brazil Community

x Initiative x Brazil Events

upload search file add new tags

**SUBMIT**

KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES  
 about settings account contact

While adding new colaborations you add tags that create possible connections to your content, and you have the control of acceptinf them or refusing.

KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES username

**PROFILE**  
**USERNAME**  
 ITABIRITO, BRAZIL

Nationality: Brazilian  
 Gender: Male  
 Security: Non-binary

www.username.com

**COLLABORATIONS**

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

**QUILOMBO X QUEBRADA**  
 USER787878

[see all collaborations](#)

KNOWLEDGE CARTOGRAPHIES  
 about settings account contact

On your profile you will be required to position yourself. People will be able to see your contributions and get in contact.

# Similar / Technology

The technology to make this platform possible already exists. Here are some of the websites that already use them:

## Kumu

“Kumu makes it easy to organize complex data into relationship maps that are beautiful to look at and a pleasure to use.”

Kumu makes it possible to map people, systems and concepts, and allows a creation of connection that can be further explored and explained. It can be used for stakeholder mapping, systems mapping, Social network mapping, Community asset mapping and Concept mapping.

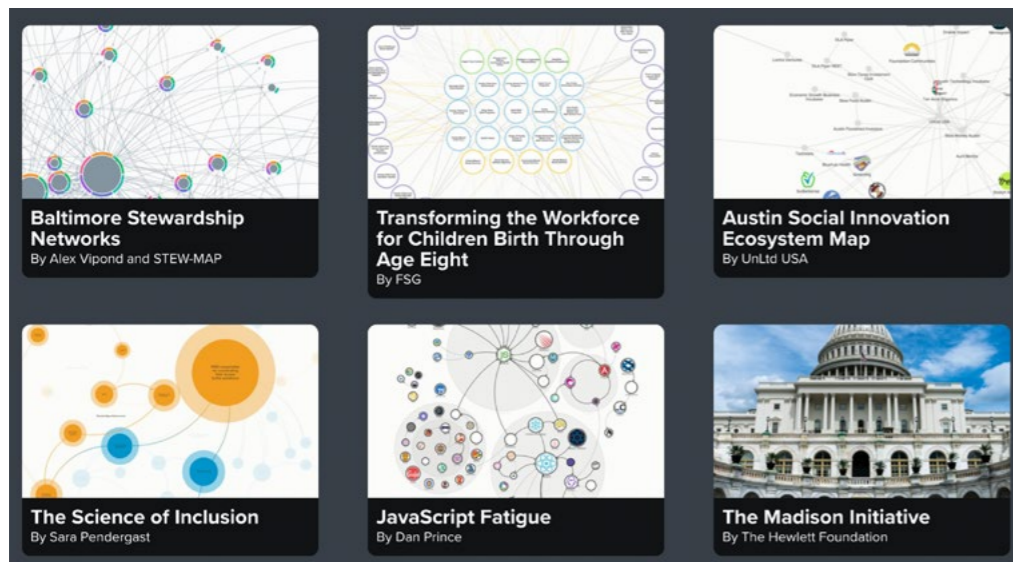


Fig. 24 - Examples of KUMU Maps

## Semplice

Semplice is a modular wordpress template that allows customization of fonts, images, grid and layout, giving complete freedom for the user to create a page in its own parameters through a very intuitive interface.

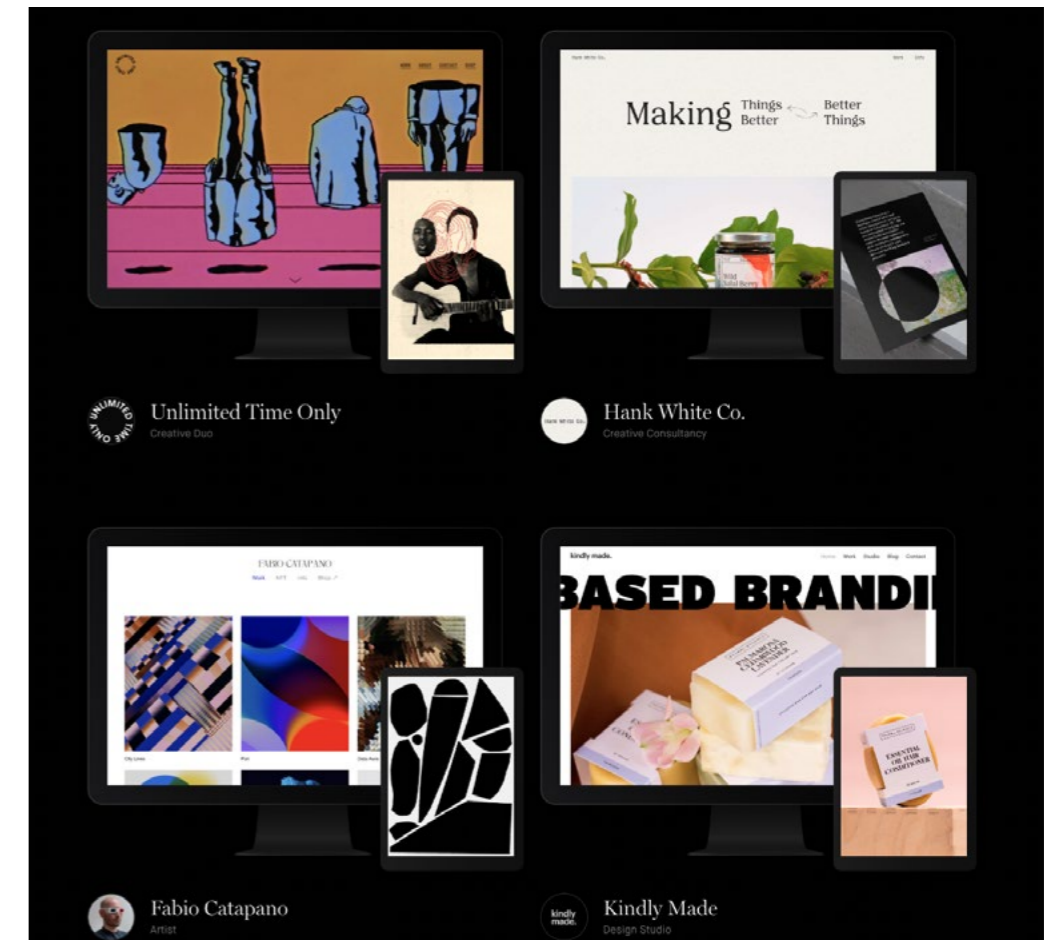


Fig. 25 - Examples of websites built with Semplice

## Discord

Discord is a voice, video and text communication service used by over a hundred million people to hang out and talk with their friends and communities.

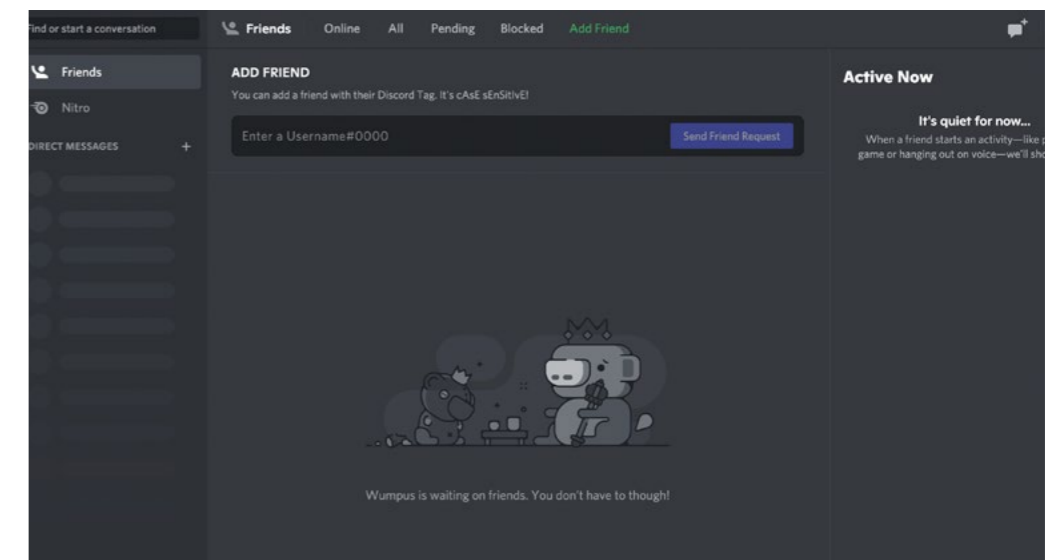


Fig. 25 - Discord platform

# Academia.edu

Academia is one of the many websites for academic research. It gives you suggestions based on your latest exploration, both of articles and academics. Beyond the website, they send you daily suggestions of content by email.

As many of those platforms, they have financial contracts with universities which allow the students enrolled to have free access to the content. You can pay for a premium account, or pay by article.

# Open access

“Open access is a broad international movement that seeks to grant free and open online access to academic information, such as publications and data. A publication is defined ‘open access’ when there are no financial, legal or technical barriers to accessing it - that is to say when anyone can read, download, copy, distribute, print, search for and search within the information, or use it in education or in any other way within the legal agreements. “ (openaccess.nl)

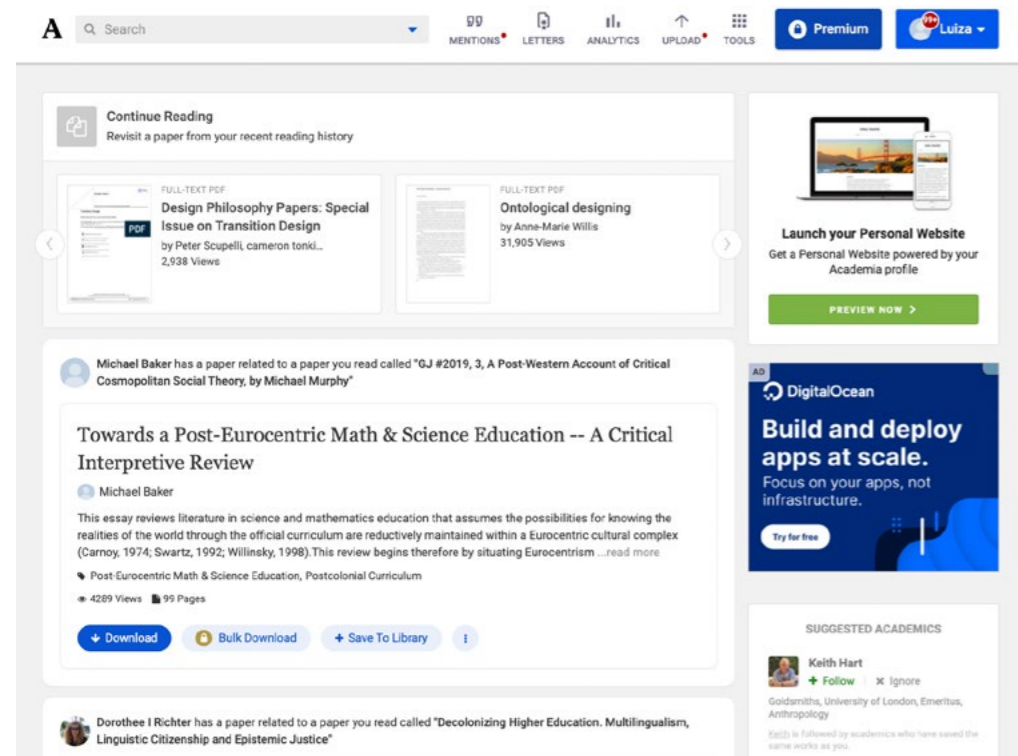
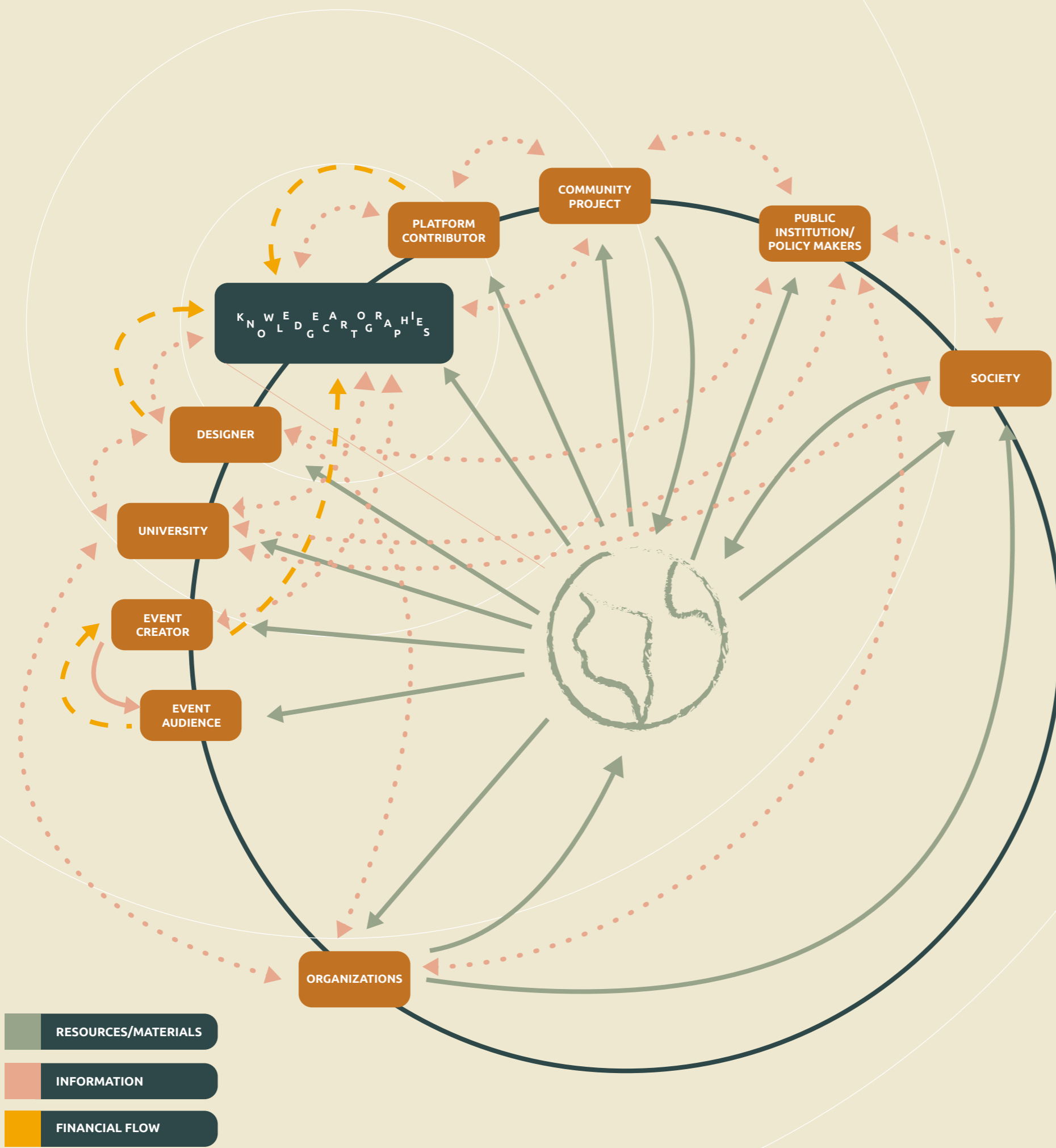


Fig. 26 - Academia platform



In this System Map the earth is at the center. Everything that is produced is only produced because of resources extracted from her, and has direct effects on her.

**Knowledge cartographies** exchange knowledge and information with several actors of the system, usually doing so through Designers, platform contributors and community projects.

The financial flow comes from voluntary contributions from users, and from those who want to advertise their events.

# CONCLUSION

**All this is to say that designers need to learn that the true importance of design lies in the fact that it has become one of those fundamental practices upon which the existence of our species rests. For this recognition to happen, there cannot be any avoidance of confronting 'our' being as anthropocentric, and while this disposition may not be transcended, it can be taken responsibility for. (Fry, 2017, p.30)**

We live in a world of extreme complexity, with social and environmental crisis worsening by the day, and the repercussions of those differ depending on your wealth, color, gender and position on the globe.

Those crises did not only arise due to a natural succession of events, but also as a consequence of systems created and imposed over the most diverse cultures and places all over the globe. Modernity, Colonialism, Globalization, Capitalism, and concepts of infinite development and growth are interdependent, and walk side by side with destruction and oppression.

It's in this context of modernity, industrialization and capitalist growth that Design appears as a formal practice. Even though it acquired different shapes and levels of materiality, going all the way from Industrial to Service System, it hasn't yet detached from its rationalistic methodologies and economic vocation.

Design is all around us. From daily objects to cities and systems of living, and therefore holds a big share of responsibility for shaping the world in which we now live, the good and the bad parts of it. This means that designers hold great responsibility both with the past and with the future.

To shape the future though, it is important to understand where we are coming from, how the world in which we live nowadays was constructed, how modernity "worlded the world" (Vazquez, 2017, p.78). It's important to acknowledge the several different ways of living in the world and a multiplicity of knowledges and realities that were vanished in colonialist process of "unworlding the world" (Vazquez, 2017, p.78), so only then we can understand and respect our differences and people's autonomy in building or rebuilding their own worlds, with their own beliefs and relationships, between each other and between them and nature.

By Design's interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary nature, and also by considering that "everybody designs", we can start finding ways in which Design practices can help transition to a more relational and pluriversal world. For doing so, design will have to reinvent itself, rethink its anthropocentric focus, reimagine its role while reinventing the communal and equipping communities for their own transitions. Same goes for the Designer, that needs to become much more aware of its positionality and bias, which often goes unnoticed, but have a great impact on the result.

Rethinking Design is urgent, and as pointed out by Fry (2017) the future of us as a species (and many other species) inhabiting the earth might rely on it. Hopefully not one Design will come from this process, but a pluriversality of Designs.

To fight for this, is to fight for the right to exist.

# Bibliography

Abdulla, D., Ansari, A., Canlı, E., Keshavarz, M., Kiem, M., Oliveira, P., Prado, L., & Schultz, T. (2019). A Manifesto for Decolonising Design. *Journal of Futures Studies*.

Andrade, D., & Ibarra, M. C. (2021). Approaches in Design Beyond Rationalism weaving paths for the pluriverse .

Attfield, J. (n.d.). Design as a practice of modernity: A case for the study of the coffee table in the mid-century domestic interior.

Blackwell, D. (2003). Colonialism and globalization: A group-analytic perspective. *Group Analysis*, 36(4), 445–463. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0533316403364002>

Bonsiepe, G. (2012). *Design: Como prática de Projeto*. Blucher.

Cardoso, R. (2011). *Design para um Mundo Complexo*. Cosac Naify.

Charlotte Smith, R., Winschiers-Theophilus, H., Loi, D., de Paula, R., Kambunga, A., Samuel, M., & Zaman, T. (2021). Decolonizing design practices: Towards pluriversality. Extended Abstracts of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3411763.3441334>

Charlotte Smith, R., Winschiers-Theophilus, H., Paula Kambunga, A., & Krishnamurthy, S. (2020). Decolonizing participatory design: Memory making in Namibia. *Proceedings of the 16th Participatory Design Conference 2020 - Participation(s) Otherwise - Volume 1*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3385010.3385021>

Clément Gilles. (2015). *The Planetary Garden: And other writings*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Danowski, D., & de Castro, E. V. (2014). *Há mundo por vir? Ensaio sobre os medos e os fins. Cultura e Barbárie e Instituto Socioambiental*.

de Caminha, P. V. (1500). *A Carta de Pero Vaz de Caminha*.

Escobar, A. (2015). Transiciones: A space for research and design for transitions to the Pluriverse. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 13(1), 13–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14487136.2015.1085690>

Escobar, A. (2018). *Designs for the pluriverse: Radical interdependence, autonomy, and the making of worlds*. Duke University Press.

Fry, & Kalantidou. (2014). *Design in the Borderlands*. Routledge.

Fry, T. (2011). *Design as politics*. Berg.

Fry, T. (2017). Design for/by “The global south.” *Design Philosophy Papers*, 15(1), 3–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14487136.2017.1303242>

Fry, T. (2017). Design for/by “The global south.” *Design Philosophy Papers*, 15(1), 3–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14487136.2017.1303242>

Ghosh, A. (2017). *The great derangement: Climate change and the unthinkable*. The University of Chicago Press.

Haraway, D. J. (2016). *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the chthulucene*. Duke University Press.

Ibarra, M. C. (2020). Aproximaciones a un diseño participativo sentipensante: correspondencias con un colectivo de residentes en Rio de Janeiro.

Ibarra, M. C. (2020). For a Sentipensante (Thinking–feeling) Design: approaches to Latin American perspectives for practicing and experimenting design.

Illich, I. D. (1973). *Tools for conviviality*. Marion Boyars.

Irwin, T. (2015). Transition design: A proposal for a new area of design practice, study, and research. *Design and Culture*, 7(2), 229–246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2015.1051829>

Krenak, A., & de, C. E. B. V. (2019). *Ideias para adiar O fim do Mundo*. Companhia das Letras.

Manzini, E. (2007). Design Research for Sustainable Social Innovation. *Design Research Now*, 233–245. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7643-8472-2\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7643-8472-2_14)

Manzini, E. (2009). Small, local, open and connected: Design for social innovation and sustainability.

Manzini, E., & Coad, R. (2015). *Design, when everybody designs: An introduction to design for Social Innovation*. MIT Press.

Meroni, A., & Sangiorgi, D. (2011). *Design for services*. Gower Publishing Limited.

Mignolo, W. D. (2010). Coloniality at large: The Western Hemisphere and the colonial horizon of modernity. *Teaching and Studying the Americas*, 49–74. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230114432\\_4](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230114432_4)

Mignolo, W. D. (2011). The darker side of Western Modernity. <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394501>

Mkindi, et a. (2020). *False promises: The Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)*.

Moraes, D. D. (2006). *Análise do design brasileiro: Entre Mimese E MESTIÇAGEM*. Editora Edgard Blücher.

Nandy, A. (2012). *Theories of oppression and another dialogue of cultures*. Ambedkar University.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005>



Santos, B. de S. (2007). Renovar a teoria crítica e reinventar a emancipação social. Ed. São Paulo: Boitempo.

Santos, B. de S. (2016). Epistemologies of the South and the future.

Schultz, T., Abdulla, D., Ansari, A., Canlı, E., Keshavarz, M., Kiem, M., Martins, L. P., & J.S. Vieira de Oliveira, P. (2018). What is at stake with decolonizing design? A roundtable. *Design and Culture*, 10(1), 81–101. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17547075.2018.1434368>

Spivak, G. C. (2010). Can the subaltern speak? reflections on the history of an idea. Columbia University Press.

Tlostanova, M. (2017). On decolonizing design. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 15(1), 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14487136.2017.1301017>

Toteu, S. F., Malcolm Anderson, J., & de Wit, M. (2010). ‘africa alive corridors’: Forging a new future for the people of Africa by the people of Africa. *Journal of African Earth Sciences*, 58(4), 692–715. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jafrearsci.2010.08.011>

Vazquez, R. (2017). Precedence, Earth and the anthropocene: Decolonizing design. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 15(1), 77–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14487136.2017.1303130>

Willis, A.-M. (2006). Ontological designing. *Design Philosophy Papers*, 4(2), 69–92. <https://doi.org/10.2752/144871306x13966268131514>

Winograd, T., & Flores, F. (1986). *Understanding Computers and Cognition: A New Foundation for Design*. Addison-Wesley.

Wise, T. (2020). Failing Africa’s Farmers: An Impact Assessment of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa.

## websites

Kohn, Margaret and Kavita Reddy, “Colonialism”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/colonialism/>.

Brook, Andrew and Julian Wuerth, “Kant’s View of the Mind and Consciousness of Self”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/kant-mind/>.

Sharon L. Snyder, (2016) *Modernity*, *Enciclopedia Britannica* URL = <https://www.britannica.com/topic/modernity>

Scheuerman, William, “Globalization”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/globalization/>.

Noel, Lesley-Ann (2020) My manifesto towards changing the conversation around race, equity and bias in design. URL= <https://medium.com/future-of-design-in-higher-education/9-steps-towards-changing-the-conversation-around-race-equity-and-bias-in-design-304242194116>

Noel, Lesley-Ann(2022); Critical Alphabet, URL = <https://criticalalphabet.com/about/>

Escobar A., Osterweil M. and Sharma K., *Designing Relationally: Making & Restor(y)ing Life* URL= <https://www.designdarktimes.net/home/designing-in-dark-times/designing-relationally-making-restor-y-ing-life>

AGRA . Growing Africa’s Agriculture URL = <https://agra.org/>

Four Categories of Problems with AGRA, *Community Alliance for Global Justice*, (2008) URL = <https://cagj.org/2008/06/agra-watch-blog-post/>

Khandwala Anoushka (2019), *What Does It Mean to Decolonize Design? Dismantling design history 101*, URL = <https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/what-does-it-mean-to-decolonize-design/>

What is open access? URL= <https://www.openaccess.nl/en/what-is-open-access>

## Videos

Avila, Thiago (24, december 2019) *Como nós vamos transformar o mundo?* Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aIT\\_9g\\_6vU&ab\\_channel=BemVivendo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0aIT_9g_6vU&ab_channel=BemVivendo)

Great Transition Initiative (30, january 2014) *Great Transition Ideas*, Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9yGP\\_I9pOM&t=81s&ab\\_channel=GreatTransitionInitiative](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b9yGP_I9pOM&t=81s&ab_channel=GreatTransitionInitiative)

## List of Figures

FIGURE 01 - AQAL Group IEA (2021), Carbon emissions per capita by country 13

FIGURE 02 - AIGA Diversity in Design 15

FIGURE 03 - Google trends search on the word Decoloniality 15

FIGURE 04 - Monocultures presented by Boaventura de Sousa Santos (2007) 24  
Source: Prepared by Andrade, Ibarra (2021)

FIGURE 05 - Image locating all the peoples, communities, and tribes that lived in South America before the arrival of Europeans. Taken from documentary “Guerras no Brasil” 26

FIGURE 06 - Map created with the 50 best ranked Design Universities in the world. 32

FIGURE 07 - Ontological Design representation	34
FIGURE 08 - Autonomy, Transition, Sustainment, a framework for Autonomous Design, and Design for Transitions (Escobar, 2018)	46
FIGURE 09 - Participants of Rede de Sementes do Xingu	54
FIGURE 10 - Muvuca, mix of seeds	55
FIGURE 11 - Agra's logo	56
FIGURE 12 - The increase in hunger in AGRA countries	57
FIGURE 13 - Food from the Quilombos arriving in the favelas	58
FIGURE 14 - Critical alphabet set of cards	59
FIGURE 15 - Matheus Viana work	80
FIGURE 16 - Matheus Viana work	81
FIGURE 17 - Critical alphabet set of cards	83
FIGURE 18 - Positionality map	84
FIGURE 19 - Design Curriculums by Lesley-Ann Noel	85
FIGURE 20 - Africa Live Corridors map made by Warren Miller	91
FIGURE 21 - The Design We Need Map by Saskia Rysenbry	93
FIGURE 22 - Design framework by Saskia Rysenbry	94
FIGURE 23 - Methodological processes by Andrea's students	99
FIGURE 24 - Kumu's maps	118
FIGURE 25 - Semplice's websites	119
FIGURE 26 - Discord's platform	119
Figure 27 - Academia's platform	120

**“It matters what thoughts think  
thoughts. It matters what knowledges  
know knowledges. It matters what  
relations relate relations. It matters  
what worlds world worlds”**

Donna J. Haraway