When Design Goes South From decoloniality, through declassification to Dessobons.

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'WHEN DESIGN GOES SOUTH: FROM DECOLONIALITY, THROUGH DECLASSIFICATION TO *DESSOBONS*'

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The word 'design' did not exist in the languages of the ancestors of those who today are named First Nations, Indigenous Peoples, or Native Americans (assigning them the name that the Europeans gave to 'their' land). Neither Chinese, Arabic, or Hindi, or many widely spoken languages of the world have traces of this term or of its European roots.[1] But from their beginnings, all the peoples prefigured artefacts and made sense of them according to their own customs and traditions. In the practices of all those worlds there are living designs of the south, designs otherwise (which cannot be equated with more of the same), designs with other names, ongoing activities that were on Earth well before the baptism of the present-day design assumed as universal (Western, indeed) that characterises a series of professions and disciplines with a family resemblance. On that assumption I introduce here some loose ideas about alternatives to design that I call *Dessobons*.

In this text I will jump between languages, cultures, and geographies to speak design with other names, waiting for you to follow me on this journey within an exercise of declassification of the field of design, seeking to reinstate logical pluralism, loaded with contradiction, at the very heart of its classification, as imposition of order never exempt from violence (García, 2008: 8, 15). This is a speculation on the presence of other ways of doing things, sometimes equivalent, sometimes incomparable to design, beyond the borders of their discipline and culture, wherever they may be, in a way whose practicality, even distant, tries to approach to those knowledges that we cannot know but accept that move us internally (Kovach apud Lutz, 2018).

Beyond Western-Anglo-Eurocentric design

These reflections come from several years of conversations and actions located in, or related to, the School of Product design at the Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Bogota, Colombia, where, since 2012, and together with my colleague

Professor Fernando Alvarez, we tried to characterise local expressions of designs excluded, denied, or ignored by the dominant Western canon. In principle, both due to our location on the map and because of the cultural cringe that entails assuming ourselves being behind or outside where real important things of the field happen, we called it Design of the South. Over the years, the search for similar thoughts and approaches would lead us, along with the evolution of ideas, to establish long relationships with the authors included in this volume, mainly Arturo Escobar and Tony Fry.

Modern design (the only one) monopolises the relationships with tomorrow under the idea of 'project.' Future can only be reached through project, which ends up capturing every possibility of existence Because of the project, every current situation is abhorrent, and any present, defective, in need of development (Samanamud, 2018). As an anticipation and assembly of things, the invasive monoculture of a single species (Design spp.) spreads, 'projecting' over all the Earth, like a disease, the unique Wester world which denies all others. Because for the West there are no other worlds, only unfinished fragments of itself. But in the lands of prefiguration, many plants distinct from design grow, and in the other worlds, which do exist, many things are relationally brought into life by the others of design, by designs with other names.

So, it is healthy to circumscribe design to the Western world to which it belongs. Overcome the colonial subjection it propagates, which operates as a unique and Eurocentric activity that comes from the Greco-Latin categorical rationality of modern logic, spread globally through imperial languages, especially English (Mignolo 2008: 250), replacing, usurping, subjugating, distorting, supplanting, or ignoring in its wake, other prefigurative practices, classified as popular, backward, rudimentary, or superstitious, the diversity of which disappears, often, uniformed by the equally Western idea of crafts.

The above with an inherent racial ingredient: design carries everywhere a white and capitalist Eurocentrism in the materialisation of artefacts, and the materiality designed from the capitalist industrial culture is proclaimed as the apex of the artificial expressions of the species. While editing this chapter, Adam Nocek drew my attention to the potential of racial cleansing that underlies Euromodern design via eugenics. Case in point: the great designers of the American Streamline Movement of the 1930s who became interested in eugenics and manifested different degrees of racism. (Cogdell, 2004: xii).

And while advocating for principles such as improving humanity's genetics does not necessarily make people racists, supporters of eugenics often validate racial hierarchies with their own race at the top (ibid.). Thus, when designers, as scientists do, seek to create and produce unique species from variant forms (Jones, 2006: 8–9), they become obsessed with sanitising and making efficient certain 'ideal' types to achieve 'civilized utopia,' and adopt over the products an approach similar to that of eugenicists with the organisms subject to modification: all massive (re)production must be regulated and any defect or parasite element that threatens to slow down the desired evolutionary process, eliminated (Cogdell, 2004: 4).

Here we should be kept in mind that behind the totalitarianisms that arrived with modernity of the 20th century, there was the eugenic promise, tremendously seductive, for any political and cultural ideology to design and control entire human populations (Turda, 2010: 12). Therefore, both the world designed by the West and the design that designed it, are not only assumed to be unique, but they also carry out refinement and development protocols with brutal impacts on everything that they deem dispensable because they are also violently forces of a unifying world. Conversely, anywhere the artificialities that shape the worlds of the poor, the peasants, the mestizos or the mulattos, the indigenous peoples or the blacks, are left behind, like handicrafts, when they are considered slower than the industrial drive, or as kludge, jugaad, or gambiarra when they resist it.

As a racialised activity,[2] design supports a 'worlding' built out of four elements (Quijano, 2000): (1) the coloniality of power with race as the basis of the classificatory mode of domination; (2) capitalism, as the axis of planetary social exploitation; (3) the state as a universal way of regulating collective authority, with the construction of the nation-state as a hegemonic variant; and (4) Eurocentrism as the dominant characteristic par excellence to subjugate all subjectivity/intersubjectivity, particularly as a way of producing knowledge. Because of Eurocentrism (etymological, linguistic, ontological, epistemological), design reveals itself as monological. It is monoculture in double sense: first, as a practice of cultivating, harvesting and producing artefacts under similar premises and with identical processes in each land, space and place; and second, as a prefigurative code forced by the prevailing western culture affecting various and different places.

Naturalised by the commodification of normality the racialised consumerist design born of the Western-Eurocentric monoculture becomes a thought 'that thinks for and even instead of people' (Klemperer apud Pascale 2019: 904). Even if it is accepted that the word design can describe all the prefigurative practices of the species, we, as stated by Dilnot (2015: 118): 'never yet had design—only its weak, subaltern industrial-capitalist, version.'

But design, a key instrument in the spreading of the euro Modernism and axe of the development strategies that have flooded the globe with inequality, does not have to be a forced route for all peoples on earth. The time has come to start thinking on the arrival of the alternatives to design, rather than thinking about an alternative design. The decolonial turn in design walks in that direction. Such alternatives to design have existed for a long time for the people whose realities they are part of, the civilisational change lies in their arrival into the daily lives of the Euromodernised masses whose longings and aspirations were functionally designed by and at the service of industry (as capitalism) and of the project (as development).

This in the face of the urgent need to undo the hierarchies established by racial ranking and respond to the inequities that these enable, and to repair the imposition of a uniform humanity onto divergent peoples whose worlds (and what constitute them) were made equivalent to each other (and so equalled) according to their proximity from nature (also an imposed homogeneous condition relation), (de la Cadena, 2019: 482).

Then, if by conscious and unconscious routes, the Anthropocene was designed, as a planetary temporal present where the added impacts of our species exceed the terrestrial capacity to resist them, threatening us along with many others species and the entire Earth (Fry, 2019b: 4, 22), perhaps it is through the others of design that we could get out of this toxic period and enter into that curative and careful time that Bernard Stiegler (2018: 45) calls *Neganthropocene*, and even open ourselves to what Marisol de la Cadena calls the *Anthropo-not-seen* to name those existents that are within a historically devised hegemonic condition of impossibility: they simply cannot be, therefore they are not-seen, not-heard, not-felt, not-known (de la Cadena, 2019: 483). This could be related to what Ahmed Ansari points out about the emergence of decolonial approaches to design everywhere where worlds and realities have materialised, emptying them of indigenous knowledges replaced by the results of the Anglo–Eurocentric project which, at the planetary level, forces all designers outside the Anglo or European context to apply the gospel of Western design (Ansari, 2019: 17–18).

In some way, decolonisation of design brings *deanthropization*: the 'Other-beings' (lacking a better term than 'non-humans'), are slowly being considered within design by initiatives questioning anthropocentrism. For instance, Martín Ávila and Henrik Ernstson in Realms of Exposure: On Design, Material Agency and Political Ecologies in Córdoba (2019), show how man-made cities have been indirectly transformed into prosperous habitats for animals that we fear and with whom we would not want to share spaces (snakes, spiders, scorpions, rats), but whose adaptive and expansive qualities to build habitats invite us necessary to design trajectories of cohabitation, reciprocally beneficial with them.

Notwithstanding, decolonial struggles will be unsuccessful if the same name 'design' is always maintained. Mixing it with prefixes and suffixes or accompanying it with adjectives only generates modulations that, far from modifying its scope, legitimise its inertia before a massive audience that listens and reads it as the same thing. It is useless to keep the same signifier and filling it with many signifieds, it all comes down to new songs for the same singer.

What comes from cultures where prefiguration is called and practiced in another way emerges in the termination of the term design. Comes through other words, not concepts, because 'concepts' are Western creations (introduced by the Platonic Socrates) through which Western thought appropriates all other knowledge (Estermann, 2013: 16, n. 4). To this insidious Modern use of concepts as cognitive colonisation devices I propose to call: *concepnization* (conceptual colonisation), and I think of a necessary *deconcepnization* (deconceptual + decolonisation) as a way towards 'territories free of design' in diverse communal environments around the planet (Escobar, 2018: 213). The West must stop wanting to design everything and try to understand the ways of others.

A world where many worlds fit according to the famous Zapatista aphorism will not be generated with a single word (design) that swallows many words, nor with a definition or generalisation that eliminates any variation, nor with a language that destroys many languages. It would do well, the dominant academy,

especially the English-speaking one, to recall the previous and parallel existence of many of the words introduced there uniformed as 'concepts' and turned into prisoners of its logic.

When the word from the languages of others is translated into English, it is baptised in the hegemonic world, where its baptism is taken as birth. The 'new' word is born when is pronounced in English denying its life within its own linguistic world. The kidnapped word is handled as if English made it exist, which is not only a great mistake but also a great injustice.

In this regard, Mario Blaser points out the mistake of assuming a single reality about which there are many perspectives, since the conflict between cultures often reveals itself as overlapping of realities (Blaser 2015: min. 24:30–24:45). Likewise, it would be wrong to assume just one design with many perspectives over it. That is the colonisers' curse: their impossibility to understand that through their assessment of the assessment of the subalterns, they only reinforce their own world as the only one. But the co-presence of divergent worlds in the guise of the same is usually obvious to the subalterns, who are much more aware of misunderstandings and asymmetries (Blaser 2018).

Disciplinary authority fails to see that the vast majority of everyday human objects were prefigured and crafted without the help of professional university-graduated designers, and that there is much more design and materialisation in what is technically not recognised as design in what it is identified as such.

Teotdawki/Tootdawii

We are in *Teotdawki/Tootdawii* times. The End Of The Design As We Know It (Teotdawki) goes with The Opening Of The Design As We Ignore it (*Tootdawii*).

Teotdawki is an extrapolation of the Teotwawki: a term coined by members of American survivalist groups in the 1990s, as acronym of the phrase 'The End Of The World As We Know It' turned into a proper noun about which the Spanish arts and culture scholar José Manuel Bueso Fernández (2019) reflects on its role linked to an End of the World Policy and a still hypothetical discipline of Apocalyptology devoted to studying Capitalism's multiple links with catastrophic End of the World events.

While studying Teotwawki as possible legitimate subject of knowledge, he found a grammatical duality applicable to the present plight of design (ibid., 51–52). The phrase 'the end of the design as we know it,' has two readings following Bueso Fernández strategy, in reading 1 the pronoun 'it' in the phrase is taken to refer to the antecedent noun 'design.' This way, the design we know ends and no longer operates, as happens in the works of Tony Fry and Arturo Escobar, but concerning reading 2, what if we think of the End (of-the-Design) as the phrase's noun to which the pronoun 'it' alludes?

In his original work, Bueso Fernández suggests that we find it difficult to think once the world ends, or without a world, while we are very familiar with the idea of the 'end of the world' through a whole panoply of apocalypse of all

kinds (in movies, comics, video games, literature, etc.) (ibid., 52). But in design, it would be different, we have thought a lot about how Western design (the only one) ends and dissolves, but we are far from thinking about the 'end of design' (without its old categories) and from imagining such an ending outside our tradition, as happens in other human groups, where there exist more or less comparable but different dynamics than what design (ours, the only, indeed, Western one) does and generates: these are designs with other names.

If we think of *Teotdawki*, on the one hand, we could move from imagining a world where design ends, to thinking more about its end, about what happens out of its boundaries. The end of design as we know it (being 'it' the design), implies abandoning the well-trodden path of design tradition, to start living without it, and, these crises intensified by the Covid-19 pandemic, are the occasion to start acting as if design at the service of business as usual (almost the whole) doesn't exist. But, a second, *Teotdawki* scenario (being 'it' the end of design), compels us to think how much we know about where design ends, and to look for ways to give meaning to things and bring them into being, out of it.

Whatever be the reading of the phrase we choose, *Teotdawki* (The end of the design as we know it), involves also a *Tootdawii* (the opening of the design as we ignore it). And this *Tootdawii* phrase (the opening of the design as we ignore it), can also be read in two ways: (1). When 'it' means 'design,' and (2). When 'it' means 'the opening' (of design). From reading 1, we go after certain designs about which we ignore everything. From reading 2 we begin by acknowledging our ignorance of how to open ourselves to these *designs-other.*

Here we need border thinking (and feeling) as Cetshwayo Zindabazezwe Mabhena (2019) says to overcome at once fundamentalisms of both worlds—the hegemonic and the peripheral ones. Abandoning the dangerous belief that the world is only ours and that we deserve power and freedom where others do not. Leaving aside any idea of a special prerogative of power, knowledge, privilege, and freedom. Border thinking to live in any territory without epistemically dwelling in it as fundamentalism.

Through border thinking we can appreciate that if 'the human' is a concept constructed in/by the West that conceals the plurality of 'our' species (Fry and Nocek this volume), then 'the design,' created also in/by the West, conceals the variety of prefigurative practices of 'our' species, and the south, understood as all that the powers of modernity placed geographically below, epistemologically behind, or ontologically outside the developed world and their interests, is full of its others.

The south and designs of the souths

By 2012 in/from Colombia, we began to wonder about what the design was concealing, and we called it design of the south (Gutiérrez, 2016; Álvarez and Gutiérrez, 2017). The design of the south is interested in what the dominant world has devalued, or denied, but also in how each south (there are many) was

designed as such. Likewise, it also asks itself about what within the map of design was placed on a secondary plane. But it especially cares about what was left off the map.

We were inspired by authors in various fields of knowledge (sociology, arts, anthropology, etc., but then hardly anyone within design domain) whose works and thoughts shared a sensitivity and interest in ideas about the South which, from the geographical to the mental, concern what the world above, the North is unwilling or unable to understand.

Among them, Estermann finds the south as where Western ethnocentrism can be overcome by the irruption of the other (different face, language, and way of life) in the dominant narcissism and solipsism (2008: 10); or Santos who conceives an epistemology of the south that encompasses the cognitive prac-tices of classes, peoples and social groups historically victimised, exploited and oppressed by the detrimental action of global colonialism and capitalism (2009: 12); and Papastergiadis (2010: 143) who presents the south as a diffused hemi-spheric term naming places sharing experiences of colonisation, migration, and cultural hybridism, and beyond geography as an ambivalent oscillation between a call for antipodean revolt and the painful manifestation of the cultural cringe (2010: 143).

Thus we started to *Sulear* (going south, southing) using the Portuguese verb proposed by the Brazilian thinker Marcio D'Olne Campos (2019: 10), and it was soon evident that it was necessary to pluralise the term since there were many designs and many souths, and we began to speak of designs of the souths, as the designs of the majority world.

Our search led us to designations useful to break the beaten path of Western (and only) design, such as the 'Majority World' coined by the Bangladeshi pho-tojournalist Shahidul Alam in the early 1990s, instead of 'Global South' and of 'Third World,' highlighting that those out of modern normality are the great majority of peoples. This conception challenges the West's rhetoric of democracy to show communities in terms of what they have, rather than what they lack (Alam, 2008).

Although the global South can be imagined as an event of materialisation of certain experiences and the production of autonomous thoughts about them (Obarrio, 2020), the design of the South would come from any south but the global South, an idea as uncomfortable as that of the global North, due to the totalising, generalising and undoubtedly modern condition they entail.

Unlike approaches such as the Dainotto (2017) who sees in the Global South potential to solve contemporary problems, even if it is turned into a mass produc-tion source of innovative educational products, I share the concerns of Camila Amorim Jardim (2017) who warns about the need to decolonise and provincial-ise the narrative of a Global South finding it as an instrument of globalisation by other means: equalisation, denial of difference, and forced assimilation. The metaphor of the global south packs all the souths of the world into the deceptive figure of a single entity that hatches stereotypes (Jardim 2017: 3). In fact, there

is no single narrative of the Global South neither a single design of the south. To confront the global north is preferable to think of a bunch of south(s), or of a pluriversal south that entangles many different but related souths.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos notes that the epistemologies of the South conceive a post-abyssal knowledge (outside the abysmal line with which Western separates the world of its construction from all others whose existence ignores) arising from artisan practices, thanks to which it specifically achieves the objectives for which it was made (2018: 150). So, to the artisan ('*mitakuye oyasinian*,' '*uywañaian*,' '*sumakkawsayia*n,'[3] etc.) who raises and creates with their 'material friends' unique pieces with soul-spirit there are not standardised models. Each repetition is a creation that introduces difference in an encounter with the being of processes, utensils, and materials, in changing conditions, and with a significant margin of freedom, mystery, and unpredictability (Santos, 2018: 35).

In like manner, re-existences emerge. Identified in Colombian territory by Adolfo Albán Achinte (2013: 455 fn. 204) are devices created by communities to configure their daily lives and question the sense of reality imposed by the force of hegemonic language and culture. Born from painful experiences during the century-old dynamic of denial, destruction and modification of otherness, the re-existences are nourished by the diverse expressions of the bio-cultural memory of our species as a cultivated and bred variety of life experiences rooted in particular territories (Toledo and Barrera-Bassols, 2008).

The paths of the south lead to many cultural and cognitive realities, whereas living and enacting conceptions the 'others of the design' are emplaced. Beyond vocabulary, as guiding principles within their own meaningful worlds, we residents of Western or Westernised societies, could glimpse the acting of other prefigurative practices whose novelty for us is proportional to the ignorance we have on them.

We are before the necessary re-emergence of all that has been previously abandoned or not considered. But it should be avoided that these conceptions that we have just respectfully begun to understand could become marketable fashion in the educational 'university-bazaar' (Dainotto, 2017: 41–42).

Prefigurative practices aplenty

What is inside a unifying name is always smaller than what is left out of it. Let us think of peoples bonded to their lands outsiders to dominant world: Indigenous, Natives, Aboriginal Peoples or First Nations, no denomination captures its enormous variety, because as noted by Thomas King (2012: xiii): 'there has never been a good collective noun because there was never a collective to begin with.' There are only groups that in their own languages call themselves and their practices with words of their own.

Mixed with knowledges and wisdoms of the South, there are several relational conceptions of the indigenous peoples of the planet, which are increasingly employed in processes to re-exist against the dynamics of global capitalisms.

Appreciate them allows us to try to answer how have we come to design what we design? Because if design designs us, then the designs–others will design us otherwise.

Here I think about '*mitakuye oyasined*,' '*uywañed*,' '*sumakkawsayed*,' '*ubuntued*,' '*bimaadiziwined*,' or '*gambiarred*'[4] realities enacted upon through active communal practices outside the western oikumene and the known and designed world there where the monsters come from and where they live, creatures of which many Euromodernised people speak but that almost none of them has seen, because they have not wanted to see nor have constructed realities that allow to see them[5] (Olsson, 2007: 69).

In their intro of *The Handbook of Contemporary Indigenous Architecture* the editors observe that: 'Like all cultures, Indigenous peoples have always been architectural—people design and build to accommodate, celebrate and sustain their cultures, economies and families—and given the opportunity, architectural cultures are retained' (Grant, Greenop, Refiti, and Glenn, 2018: 2). This, although true in a broad sense, by naturalised rights of classificatory conquest dilutes the uniqueness of each prefigurative practice in the cauldron of a collective name. As a strategy of the coloniser, redenomination is a powerful ideological device (Smith, 1999: 51), but it can be countered by a reverse redenomination.

Refiti's work (2015), unveils the traditional Samoan dwelling or *fale* as an inverted canoe that shelters materialy the whole Cosmos of this Polynesian culture. Under its roof it houses the future, and its systems of mooring and union are the faces and eyes of the ancestors. Conversely, the functional house of modern architecture is mute, has no spirit. So, translated into the international (Western) architectural language, Samoan spatiality of the *fale* loses a big deal of its expression only knowable in Samoan.

On that subject, in the mid–1960s, the Moravian architect Bernard Rudofsky, through his book: *Architecture Without Architects: A Short Introduction to Non-pedigreed Architecture* (1964), called attention to the neglect of the official history of his discipline of an architecture vernacular, anonymous, spontaneous, indigenous, and rural constructive forms, wondering about the absence of exotic architecture studies. For Rudofsky, architecture without architects was so unknown that it lacked a specific name. As suggestive as the title and thesis of his book may be, perhaps such 'architecture without architects' was and still is 'architecture without architecture,' anything but architecture. Perhaps an architecture of the south, other, or with other names, because in those communal cultures it was surely always called (convoked) in other ways. Namely: when the main body of architectural theory enters other traditions with its disciplinary vision, erases what lives within them like other things.

These other things are outside the design disciplines, in localised relational practices, whose occurrence does not obey any explanatory centre located elsewhere, nor are they historically derived from other places. On the theories of the Brazilian sociologist Marcelo C. Rosa, they are activities without reference in Western logic, since they are not an example of other things, are characterised

by their non-exemplarity condition, and because they are perpetual generators of difference and divergence,[6] neither can they be classified nor deduced from what is already known, (listen goethesaopaulo, 2016: min. 26:57–41:16).

Between them, the Aymara voice *Uywaña* is close to Western idea of breeding. Thus, the Andean worlds of life, and possibly their artefacts, more than produced are breeding by *Uywaña*, on mutual interdependence. *Uywaña* conjures 'cultivation, protection, and support,' practices of reciprocal care and responsibility among people, animals, places, and spirits and even artefacts with spirit. Through *Uywaña* aggregates are created that give life to spiritual and material relations, through dynamics in which coexistence and matristic ways prevail as an alternative to the productive society (Haber, 2007; Lema, 2013).

Uywaña has a double record: (1) As generative forces of change–transformation; and (2) as intensity of the activities carried out by these forces and embodied in the resurgence and realisation of the communality by the peoples from below. In the Americas these peoples are *Afrocampesindios*[7] (Afro-peasant-Indians), and many of them don't call their practices like that but these could be ongoing *uywaña*.

If we verbalise the Aymara voice and think about *uywañing* (instead of designing), we start to inhabit the translation of the untranslatable: we are before the antidote against *Occidentosis* or *Westofixication*[8] naming the way West invades its exteriorities with the projection (both, as action and effect) of the shadow of its own ways of being (ontology) and knowing (epistemes). By switching languages, we avoid, as Haber advises us, the fading of externalities that the West ignores (2011: 28), because it does not know them and because it does not want to know them, translated into and devoured by Western codes, to conquer the *polycardinal*,[9] increasing the colonial rule.

Also, prefigurative practices could be inside the Samoan conception of the Va, presented by the Samoan writer Albert Wendt (1999: 402) as ('Unity-that-is-all') communicating shared experience, togetherness of change and bond, that manifests itself across the Pacific Ocean between peoples such as the Māoris and Samoans (Refiti, 2015: 13, 16) and also in the Japanese as Ma (Akama, 2015).

The indigenous Pacific ontological view of being is that persons are woven flesh (hear Refiti, 2016: min. 41:08 onwards), linked in genealogical chains, where people bud from each other, us being the last manifestation or model of the ancestor. We are designed objects of ancestral production lines; and our purpose is to guarantee the arrival of our ancestors in the present repeatedly, on our own becoming ancestors. In this relational view objects, artefacts, spaces, and places are woven in an ecology where all of them are interchangeable, tied by the *Va*: lines of responsibility that cut through people and things and cut through time.

Akama states, that the Japanese form of Va, the Ma, without be exact is like the English 'in-between' or 'between-ness,' and depending on its context as adjective or noun, it is useful to break binarisms as self/other, subject/object, designer/user and human/non-human, as pre-established boundaries (2015: 263). Ma, Akama says, is also a way to further reinforce why being in-between is central for co-designing to emphasise becoming with, not product.

It is difficult to overcome the Western habit of understanding very quickly conceptions born in indigenous worlds, such as Quechuan *sumak kawsay* that are of slow assimilation and change as they happen, their versions summarised for busy users are useless. Mental bilingualism is required to experience contextual appearances rather than fixed meanings. It would be wrong to translate *sumak kawsay* exactly as 'good life' in the sense of moral goodness. The same happens with the *suma qamaña* Aymara, or the lekil kuxlejal of the Tsotsil and Tseltal peoples of the Mexican state of Chiapas (Schlittler Álvarez, 2012: 15), them both practices and ways of understanding, creating, and recreating existence, respecting others and the earth to seek harmony with the world and the life cycles that nurture it.

Back to design, as a prefiguration of actions and materialities, it has been said that is simultaneously an ancient human capacity neglected by conventional educational systems and traditionalists alike, and also a modern human activity aimed at creating products, services and policies of the future within the contextual limitations to express what is desirable in real worlds (Ranjan, 2005: 42–43). But as ancient and modern concept its narrow horizon of meaning silences to its many others. We need to approach them, moving us away from the already known design towards a generative 'unknown' bunch of *Dessobons*: a multiplicity of divergent prefigurative practices from a world of many worlds (de la Cadena and Blaser, 2018).

Dessobons

I have called, so far, these *polycardinal* prefigurative practices consecutively: (1) Design of the South, (2) Designs of the Souths (pluralising both terms), 3. Designs Others (and not 'other designs' that would be more of the same), and (4) Designs with/by other names. The simultaneous or separate use of these denominations allows to particularise their contexts of location or arrival and to question a vector linearity in the design field, whatever the story used to narrate it. From now on, I introduce for those designations the compressed name of *Dessobons* (by DEsigns of the South, of the Souths, Others, by Other NameS).

Dessobons evokes the prefigurative plurality of what we have in heart and mind when think of design's agency in the making of worlds within the world and also its relational possibilities to flux with the pluriverse (beings, spaces and places) towards transformative engagements to mend the historically inscribed and present consequences of 'development' (Fry, 2019a: 294), this near to the practices that post-development brings to show and offset the obnoxious effects of global development policies and procedures on peoples that supposedly need them. By the way, post-development is a misnomer name since the prefix post-post brings us back to the progressive and linear thinking (see Tostlanova in this volume) which the *dessobons* would try to get rid of.

Along the path of the weakening of modern design, *dessobons* are majority designs: the designs of the majority's worlds that paradoxically are not designs but its others. This can be compared to Chakrabarty's approach of two Histories: Design is to History 1, what the *Dessobon*s are to History 2.

Let me explain. On Marx's ideas Chakrabarty questions any presumption of universal knowledge or constructive system able to describe what happens everywhere (2000, Chapter 2). He distinguishes between History 1, as the one posited by capital, and a History 2 as forms of human belonging and being expressed and lived locally placed beyond the universal logic of capital reproduction. To Chakrabarty, History 1 cannot be generally applied worldwide, since in every circumstance, always it had been, is and will be modified by someone else's History 2s.

The local cannot be never fully captured by any universal and general term (as History 1 try us to make believe), because thoughts are emotionally linked to spaces and places and to particular expressions of knowing and being showed in History 2 (Chakrabarty, 2012: Intro). Similarly: design's self-universalisation is contested by the many *dessobons* always diverging from it.

Dessobons are polyglot, they defy the English-speaking thinking monopoly. They are the larger 'design' exceeding the term, escape what that designation may claim as modern disciplinary-professional property. *Dessobons* are design beyond the name 'design.' Never adjectives for it. What Gnecco says about indigenous archaeologies, applies to *dessobons*: as alternative to design their relationship with the future just can be convey by nouns carrying different ontologies in their own languages (2017b: 153).

The focus of *dessobons* studies will be *designorance* (design + ignorance) as a search for what design ignores, or what is ignored from design, in a double way: (1) What design doesn't know (positive *designorance*), and (2) What design doesn't want to know (negative *designorance*). The last one is much more difficult to grasp because it involves everything that is voluntarily and purposely despised, refusing the possibility of knowing it.

Where design is one-way (nature to artificial) and makes us humans 'non-animals' (not because we are not but because we insist on rejecting it). The *Dessobons* are two-way (from nature to artificiality and back), bring to being artefacts that take from the environment but that also give back to it permanently, as plants and animals do in an ecosystem, along all their life cycle.

A *Dessobons* practice could reverse the tendency identified by Escobar of the moderns to inhabit abstract spaces for us to return like *polycardinals* (Escobar calls them not modern) to inhabit places produced by alive ways of relation (2018: 173). *Dessobons* are design-others and not 'other designs' as more of the already known, this according to both ideas: Walter Mignolo's paradigm-other and the thought-other (in French pensee-autre) by the Moroccan essayist Abdelkebir Khatibi. To Mignolo the 'paradigm other' brings together critical and utopistic thinking articulated in all those places, and peoples to which the imperial/colonial expansion denied any possibility of reason or thought to properly anticipate their future (2011: 20). In relation with Khatibi's 'thought-other' the *dessobons* describe the paradoxical movements that we undertake journeying towards other's languages and cultures *(cf.* McNeece, 2001: 94). They are outside of what the reductionist and reduced Western academy allows to see, to do, to believe or to create.

As they bring design to its ending, to dissolve it within the indigenous pre-figurative practices, the *Dessobons* as a decolonial archaeology strive for liberate the past. To the *Dessobons*, futures are plural pasts make present. Us who breathe Western Indo-European airs, as indigenous peoples do, also walk with our backs turned to the future, even without notice it. We call 'anterior' a time that past and the body front part, so what we see is that which already existed, similarly, 'posterior' is the time to come and also the body rear part, what remains when we pass.[10] Thus, prefiguration, is post-figuration, *past-anticipation*: futures change when pasts change.

On their way to pluriverse *Dessobons* involve different worlds and temporal-ities. Here memories are not just to see again the past, but bring back complete entangled versions of yesterday that are in front of us; nor the presentiments are just anticipations of the future but ways to make that the pasts that we decide to take into account constitute the futures that we carry on our backs); then, more than walking with our backs to the future, we walk towards other pasts bringing other futures behind our backs, the futures that will come after we pass.

Dessobons are related to the same expanded ontologies to which average westernised humans have their perception closed. Such expanded ontologies, are based on caring for the prefiguration and creation of worlds and artefacts with spirit, in reciprocity towards all that exists, and with pluriversal imag-ination as a generative base through which the *dessobons* of *polycardinal* cul-tures can be free of the word 'design' and its Western presumption of ruling over what it does not know and configure what ignores, to support an ethical praxis of worlding where a paradoxical autonomy emerges not as faculty to act independently of everything but as radical interdependence whit the whole (Escobar 2018: 21).

The *dessobons* open decolonisation possibilities, they modify the balance between ontological designs: they are the positive or (re-existent) alternative to the negative (defuturing). They unfurl many worlds letting things, peoples and humans can be in multiple ways, free of the Western ontological, epistemic, and axiological notions forcefully imposed worldwide (Tlostanova, 2017: 51–53). Through them come the pluriverse, in proliferative ways, from many languages and contexts. They undermine the design on its connotations of uniqueness, its capitalist, modern, patriarchal genesis linked to the idea of unity: good, God, Nation, Science, individual, all of them as one and no more, supported by a clas-sificatory army ready to suppress all variety.

The *Dessobons* share Satan motto: 'My name is Legion' (because we are many), (Lizcano 2006: 84), they horrify the hegemonic gaze of the West, where unity means good so much as multiplicity means evil. Dessobons arrive with declassification: logical pluralism, changing configurations, even accepta-tion of traditional classificatory hierarchies, but deliberately in secondary and subordinate forms, disobedience to the constraints of conventional logic, they recognise and even prioritise to ambiguity, equivocation, and contradiction (García, 2018: 23).

Some concluding remarks

1. I am not against design, when I compare it with an invasive species, only ask for that making sense within the lands and cultures to which it belongs, in others *Dessobons* must take over.
2. I have mentioned some concepts from the indigenous *polycardinal* worlds (uywaña, sumkak kawsay, va) within which I infer there are other prefigurative practices, a term that I did not even define, but to which I approach. I do not romanticise indigenous worlds, nor do I think they are exempt from conflict, but I think that inside them there are survival paths for our species.
3. Concerning neologisms, to me 'creating new languages is the most important task that people do to design' (v. Pangaro, 2010: min. 21:30–22:30). Learning languages and specially return to the forgotten ones, is useful, for instance to contact again with things and places, renaming them, reliving with them. Place are firstborns, enveloping, and transtemporal beings that still speak, teaches, and creates but we need local languages to hear their voices (Larsen and Johnson 2018: 201–202).
4. There is *Dessobons* route in the revival of Polynesian ancestral navigation, and culture and languages through it. Polynesians performed a radical return that broke coloniality (Tlostanova, 2017: 55) and through precedence (Vazquez, 2017: 87) they recovered links with their forgotten techniques and pasts (Kyselka, 1987; Finney, 1994; Gutiérrez, 2018).

★★★

Here ends the design journey to the south, to futures where it found other pasts present, from decoloniality where it was de-designed, and got rid of the project to pick up other ways. Through declassification, design opened itself to the ever-changing flow of meaning. Then *Teotdawki* happened, and design forgot its unity becoming in their others, afterwards, returned from other worlds as *Dessobons*, with other names and words, like other things. Its identity disappeared in the exchange. *Tootdawii* has begun.

Notes

1 Calderón and Gutiérrez (2017: 2).
2 Think about European origins of design, its historical positioning, and the location in developed countries of the so-called global North (United States, United Kingdom, Italy, etc.) of the majority of outstanding practitioners, established authors and literature production on the subject. The same goes with the major design firms, professional associations, and the most prestigious universities and schools (whose approaches usually aim to model all planetary materiality). Slowly things are changing, but on design field, North Atlantic euro modernity, whiteness, and masculinity still reign.
3 Instead of artisan, these are neologisms for hypothetical experts in doing things with mastery handling the respective Lakota, Aymara, and Quechua relational conceptions.

4 Instead of 'designed' these are neologisms for things conceived in detail or for a specific purpose using the respective relational conceptions Lakota, Aymara, Quechua, Nguni Bantu, Ojibwe, and Brazilian.

5 Upon the Aesthetic Imperative posed by Klaus Kripendorff: *Construct your own reality to see*. Made intentionally ambiguous, can be read in two ways: 'in order to see, you must construct a world that affords being seen' and 'what is seen is the reality you have constructed.' (2009: 19).

6 'Divergence constitutes practices in their heterogeneity as they become together—through each other even—while remaining distinct' (Stengers apud de la Cadena, M., 2019: 478).

7 *Afrocampesindios*, is a neologism to designate rural, poor, black, indigenous and peasant communities around the planet. It emerged by 2018, in conversations between Arturo Escobar and me with regard to peoples of the Colombian Pacific taking part in the transitionade: an 'entangled process' (not a project), started by the afro Colombian thinkers and activists María Mercedes Campo and Elba Mercedes Palacios Córdoba and Escobar himself, aimed at an Ontological redesign of the Cauca River Valley, to transform a today bio-uniformed region sick by development into a multi-diverse land where relational nurturing of life can flourish again. The term expands the '*campesindio*' (peasant-indigenous) neologism, by the Mexican sociologist, Armando Bartra (2010: 12).

8 Specific to Iran, this conception could apply to similar dispossession dynamics perpetrated by the West everywhere. The term *Occidentosis* or *Westoxification*, in Farsi *Gharbzadegi* meaning 'Strike of the West,' was created by the Iranian philosopher Ahmad Fardid, and spread in Persian literature during the pro-Western reign of Sha Mohammad Reza Pahlevi, through his disciple's Seyyed Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, book *Occidentosis: a plague of the West* (1962). *Occidentosis* is the widespread and uncritical adoption of Western cultural models that made Iran a submissive receptacle of European modernity and its culture, and also a disease that affects life, culture, civilisation and way of thinking of peoples with fractured historical continuity and deprived of their own transforming gradient, that as addicts consume Western machines and technologies that uproot them from their relationships with their lands and take away their forms of creation and ancestral techniques (Ahmad 1984: 27, 34).

9 *Polycardinal*, meaning 'coming from all directions,' instead of 'non-western,' is my proposal to avoid the West as reference.

10 Maybe due to that, 'before' means 'in the past' but also 'in front,' and 'after' means 'behind' but also 'later in time'?

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DESIGN IN CRISIS

New Worlds, Philosophies
and Practices

Edited by Tony Fry and Adam Nocek

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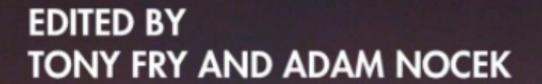
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