5 Design for Transitions

Transition Design is a proposition for a new era of design practice, study and research that advocates design-led societal transitions toward more sustainable futures. . . . Transition design solutions have their origins in long-term thinking, are life-style oriented and place-based and always acknowledge the natural world as the greater context for all design solutions.

- **Terry Irwin,** "Transition Design: A Proposal for a New Era of Design Practice, Study and Research"

Being a transition designer means adopting different values and perspectives. It is therefore a process of learning, but, for the same reason, a challenge. It requires designers to acknowledge the hypocrisy that comes from being a change agent toward a new system from within the old system.

- **Cameron Tonkinwise,** "Design's (Dis)Orders and Transition Design"

The background of the book is the great transition: a process of change in which humanity is beginning to come to terms with the limits of the planet, and which is also leading us to make better use of the connectivity available to us. . . . Starting with these it is possible to outline a design scenario built on a culture that joins the local with the global (cosmopolitan localism), and a resilient infrastructure capable of requalifying work and bringing production closer to consumption (distributed system).

- **Ezio Manzini,** *Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation*

This chapter draws connections between visions of transitions (civilizational, paradigmatic, epochal) and design. Together, they create an emergent field, variously called *transition design*, *design for transitions*, and *design for social innovation*. Given its subject and scope, this field necessarily has ontological implications, for behind any vision of transition there lies, to a greater or lesser extent, a substantial challenge to the onto-epistemic formation embedded in the current dominant form of capitalist modernity. It is this conceptual and ethical positioning that separates transition visions from more commonly established social change frameworks. This chapter provides a context for the epigraphs with which it starts. How did the leading design thinkers quoted above come to think about design as a space for such significant transformations? How did their design visions come to link into a single framework seemingly disparate elements such as place, distributed agency, paradigm change, planetary dynamics, and a new mind-set for the designer?

The chapter is divided into two parts. The first presents a range of transition visions that have been emerging with clarity and force in recent years, in both the Global North (e.g., degrowth, commoning, and the Transition Town Initiative) and the Global South (Buen Vivir, postdevelopment, transitions to postextractivism, and others). They stem from a wide spectrum of contexts and fields. Taken as a whole, these transition discourses may be said to constitute a new field, *transition studies*, which thus becomes an invaluable input for the transition design frameworks. The second part focuses on two such frameworks linking design and transitions: the transition design doctoral program being developed at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU), and Ezio Manzini's elaborate conceptualization of design for social innovation. To these, we should add Tony Fry's (2012, 2015) proposal for moving from Enlightenment to Sustainment, presented in the previous chapter. By bringing under a single roof transition narratives from the North and the South, usually kept separate, and combining these with transition design visions, this chapter hopes to present a convincing argument for the significance of transition thinking for design studies.

If the first part is intended as a contribution to the visioning element of the transition design frameworks, the second is purposely presented as a contribution to the evolving ontological design field. The emphasis on place-making and collaborative practice, as well as the unambiguous grounding of transition design in an ecological vision, is an important element of the political ontology of design.

Discourses of Transition

The formulation of transition imaginaries has been taking place for several decades, as exemplified by Ivan Illich's (1973) argument for a transition from industrial to convivial societies. However, it has intensified during the past decade. In fact, the forceful emergence of transition narratives, imaginaries, and proposals in multiple sites of academic and activist life over the past decade is one of the most anticipatory signs of our times. Transition discourses (TDs) take as their point of departure the notion that the contemporary ecological and social crises are inseparable from the model of social life that has become dominant over the past few centuries, whether categorized as industrialism, capitalism, modernity, (neo)liberalism, anthropocentrism, rationalism, patriarchy, secularism, or Judeo-Christian civilization. Shared by most TDs is the contention that we need to step outside existing institutional and epistemic boundaries if we truly want to strive for worlds and practices capable of bringing about the significant transformations seen as needed.

While talk of crises and transitions has a long genealogy in the West, TDs are emerging today with particular richness, diversity, and intensity. Notably, as even a cursory mapping of TDs would suggest, those writing on the subject are not limited to the academy; in fact, the most visionary TD thinkers are located outside of it, even if they often engage with critical academic currents. At present, TDs are emerging from a multiplicity of sites, including social movements and some nongovernmental organizations, the work of intellectuals with significant connections to environmental and cultural struggles, and that of intellectuals within alternative or dissenting scholarly traditions; TDs are prominent in the fields of culture, ecology, religion and spirituality, alternative science, food and energy, social movements research, and digital technologies.[1]

Thomas Berry explains the search for transitions in the following way: "We are in between stories. The old story, the account of how the world came to be and how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story" (1988, 123). The search for a new story (or rather new stories) is on; he puts it most pointedly and comprehensively: "We must describe the challenge before us by the following sentence: The historical mission of our time is to reinvent the human—at the species level, with critical reflection, with the community of life systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience" (1999, 159). This is a compelling mandate for all humans, and certainly for ontologically minded designers.

TDS in the Global North

Typically, TDs are differentiated geopolitically, between those produced in the Global North and those from the Global South, although bridges between them are being built. In the North, the most prominent include degrowth (often associated with debates on commoning and the commons; Bollier 2014; Bollier and Helfrich 2012, 2015; Nonini 2007) and a variety of transition initiatives. Debates on the anthropocene, forecasting trends (e.g., Randers 2012), interreligious dialogues, and some United Nations processes, particularly within the Stakeholders Forum, are also active spaces where TDs are being articulated. Among the transition initiatives are the Transition Town Initiative (in the United Kingdom), the Great Transition Initiative (Tellus Institute; e.g., Raskin 2012), the Great Turning (Macy and Johnstone 2012), the Great Work or transition to an Ecozoic era (Berry 1999), and the transitions from the Age of Separation (of individuals from community, and of humans from the rest of the living world) to an Age of Reunion (Eisenstein 2013), from Enlightenment to Sustainment (Fry 2012) or Enlivenment (Weber 2013), and from industrial civilization to ecological-cultural civilization (Greene 2015). In the Global South, TDs include postdevelopment and alternatives *to* development, crisis-of-civilization model, Buen Vivir and the rights of nature, communalization, and transitions to postextractivism. While the age to come is described in the North as being postgrowth, postmaterialist, posteconomic, postcapitalist, and posthuman, for the South it is expressed in terms of being postdevelopment, nonliberal, postcapitalist/noncapitalist, biocentric, and postextractivist (see Escobar 2011, 2015a, for further elaboration).

Most contemporary TDs posit a radical cultural and institutional transformation—a transition to an altogether different world. This is variously conceptualized in terms of a paradigm shift (Raskin et al. 2002; Shiva 2008); a change in civilizational model (indigenous movements); the rise of a new, holistic culture; or even the coming of an entirely new era beyond the modern dualist (Goodwin 2007; Macy and Johnstone 2012; Macy and Brown 1998; Lappé 2011), reductionist (Kauffman 2008; Laszlo 2008), economic (Schafer 2008), anthropocentric (Weber 2013; Goodwin 2007), and capitalistic (Klein 2014) age. This change is seen as already under way, although most transition proponents warn that the results are by no means guaranteed. Even the most secular visions emphasize a deep transformation of values. The most imaginative TDs link together aspects that have remained separate in previous imag-

inings of social transformation: cultural, politico-economic, ecological, and spiritual. These domains are newly brought together by a profound concern with human suffering and with the fate of life itself. Let us listen to a few classical statements on the transition:[2]

> The global transition has begun—a planetary society will take shape over the coming decades. But its outcome is in question. . . . Depending on how environmental and social conflicts are resolved, global development can branch into dramatically different pathways. On the dark side, it is all too easy to envision a dismal future of impoverished people, cultures and nature. Indeed, to many, this ominous possibility seems the most likely. But it is *not* inevitable. Humanity has the power to foresee, to choose and to act. While it may seem improbable, a transition to a future of enriched lives, human solidarity and a healthy planet is possible. (Raskin et al. 2002, ix)

> Life on our planet is in trouble. It is hard to go anywhere without being confronted by the wounding of our world, the tearing of the very fabric of life. . . . Our planet is sending us signals of distress that are so continual now they seem almost normal. . . . These are warning signals that we live in a world that can end, at least as a home of conscious life. This is not to say that it *will* end, but it *can* end. *That very possibility changes everything for us*. . . . This is happening now in ways that converge to bring into question the very foundation and direction of our civilization. A global revolution is occurring. . . . Many are calling it the Great Turning. (Macy 2007, 17, 140; emphasis added)

> Ecological civilization is not something to be arrived at, but something ever to be created. . . . Bringing it into being and sustaining it involves more just and cooperative relationships among humans, as well as transformed relationships of humans with the larger community of life. It is something that everyone may be involved in and in which everyone has a place. (Greene 2015, 3)

Common to many TDs, exemplified by the above quote from Raskin and colleagues, is the view that humanity is entering a planetary phase of civilization as a result of the accelerating expansion of the modern era, that a global system is taking shape with fundamental differences from previous historical phases. The character of the transition will depend on which worldview prevails. The Great Transition Initiative distinguishes among three worldviews—

evolutionary, catastrophic, and transformational—with corresponding global scenarios: conventional worlds, barbarization, and the Great Transition. In this framework, only the latter promises lasting solutions to the sustainability challenges, but it requires fundamental changes in values and novel socioeconomic and institutional arrangements. The Great Transition paradigm highlights interconnectedness and envisions the decoupling of well-being from growth and consumption, and the cultivation of new values (e.g., solidarity, ethics, community, meaning). It proposes an alternative global vision that replaces industrial capitalism with what they conceptualize as a civilizing globalization.[3]

Many TDs are keyed in to the need to move to postcarbon economies. Vandana Shiva has brought this point home with special force (see also L. Brown 2015). For Shiva (2005, 2008), the key to the transition "from oil to soil"—from a mechanical-industrial paradigm centered on globalized markets to a people- and planet-centered one—lies in strategies of relocalization based on the construction of decentralized, biodiversity-based organic food and energy systems operating on the basis of grassroots democracy, local economies, and the preservation of soils and ecological integrity. In general, TDs of this kind exhibit an acute consciousness of communities' rights to their territories and of the tremendously uneven patterns of global consumption and environmental impacts. Critiques of capitalism, cultural change, spirituality, and ecology are woven together in the various diagnoses of the problem and proposals for possible ways forward (Korten 2006; Mooney, ETC Group, and What Next Project 2006; Sachs and Santarius 2007). An "ecology of transformation" (Hathaway and Boff 2009) is seen as the route to counteract the ravages of global capitalism and construct sustainable communities; its main components include ecological justice, biological and cultural diversity, bioregionalism, rootedness in place, participatory democracy, and cooperative self-organization. Some recent TDs emphasize the idea of pansentience, that is, the notion—dear to many place-based and indigenous peoples—that consciousness and meaning are the property of all living beings (and even matter), not just of humans (Goodwin 2007; Weber 2013; Ingold 2011).[4]

The work of Thomas Berry (a self-described "geologian") has been influential for transition visions.[5] His notion of the Great Work—a transition "from the period when humans were a disruptive force on the planet Earth to the period when humans become present to the planet in a manner that is mutually enhancing" (1999, 11; see also 1988)—is one of the most prescient articulations

of a transition imaginary. Berry calls the new era *Ecozoic,* tellingly meaning "house of life," a notion with which designers can surely feel great sympathy. For Berry, "the deepest cause of the present devastation is found in the mode of consciousness that has established a radical discontinuity between the humans and other modes of being and the bestowal of all rights on the humans" (1999, 4). The divide between human and nonhuman domains is at the basis of many of the critiques proposed by TDS, along with the idea of a separate self. Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (2012) speak of a cognitive and spiritual revolution involving the replacement of the modern self with an ecological, nondualist self that reconnects with all beings and recovers a sense of evolutionary time, which has been effaced by the linear time of capitalist modernity. Central to transition visions, thus, is the healing of dualisms. Berry's oft-quoted phrase "Earth is a communion of subjects, not a collection of objects" is one of the most eloquent statements in this regard (Berry 1987, 107, 108).

Berry's summary statement bears repeating: "The historical mission of our time is to reinvent the human—at the species level, with critical reflection, with the community of life systems, in a time-developmental context, by means of story and shared dream experience" (1999, 159). Each of the five elements of this mission has its own unique meaning and importance, spelled out throughout Berry's work, and most of Berry's vision could easily be translated into design concepts. For instance, Berry identifies four pillars keeping in place the story that needs to be replaced (governments, corporations, universities, and religions). He also described the anthropocene with great foresight.[6] He was a pioneer of bioregionalism and adopted a living-systems perspective. His critique of anthropocentrism was radical and coexisted with his insistence on "reinvent[ing] the human," much like the critiques of Tony Fry and others. And he speaks about the activation of the human imagination in ways that designers can certainly echo (e.g., 1999, 55).

There are nevertheless aspects of Berry's work that would require deeper reflection on designers' part, such as his view of the Earth as a biospiritual planet; his insistence on the need to re-create an intimacy with the Earth as essential to crafting the new story ("We cannot discover ourselves without first discovering the universe, the earth, and the imperatives of our own being"; 1988, 195); and, perhaps most difficult and controversial, the idea that central to the transition is a transrational thought guided by revelatory visions, one that is attuned to life's self-organizing potential and best accessed through myth and dreams, "indicating an intuitive, nonrational process that occurs

when we awaken to the numinous powers ever present in the phenomenal world about us" (as, say, shamans have done throughout the ages; 1988, 211).

Building on Berry's work and on the tradition of process thought (largely associated with the British mathematician and philosopher Alfred North Whitehead), Herman Greene (2015) proposes a transition from an industrial-economic to an ecological-cultural age, or, shortly, to an ecological civilization (a more user-friendly term for Berry's Ecozoic). Like Berry, he emphasizes both inclusion of the Earth as an active participant in the creation of worlds and civilizational change as a new dimension for action. For Greene, given the globalization of Western civilization, it becomes imperative to revisit the intersection of human history and natural history within a cosmological scope of inquiry. Ecological civilization thus becomes a new stage of human civilization; it starts with the premise that Earth is a single sacred community bound together in interdependent relations, and that humans' role is to celebrate and care for this community in conscious self-awareness. The ecological civilization also recognizes the right to justice and fairness for all humans and all living beings; is grounded in places and bioregions, as well as in historic cultures and civilizations; protects the commons; and has the overall goal of bringing about the integral functioning and flourishing of the Earth community as a whole. Its promise is that "for centuries to come we will have a viable human future in a flourishing life community" (Greene 2015, 8). A related approach has been proposed by Phillip Clayton in association with the Institute for Postmodern Development in China, where the notion of an ecological civilization is being developed. An interesting feature of this proposal is that besides the usual areas of concern (the economy, technology, agriculture, education, etc.) it includes spirituality and worldview as essential ingredients of the transitions. These projects explicitly theorize the reorganization of social domains necessary to achieve a civilized existence on the planet.[7]

The Transition Town Initiative, Degrowth, and the Commons: Three Emerging Spaces for Transition Design

The Transition Town Initiative (TTI), started in the town of Totnes in southern England and spearheaded by Rob Hopkins, is a main source of inspiration for the transition design framework developed at CMU, to be discussed shortly. Taken together, the TTI, degrowth, and the commons may be seen as constituting a somewhat unified space for the further development of the theory and practice of transition design. In the next section, I will propose a

similar set of notions from Latin America, including postdevelopment, Buen Vivir, the rights of nature, and transitions to postextractivism, as important spaces for advancing transition design.

The TTI is one of the most concrete proposals for a transition to a post–fossil fuel society (Hopkins 2008, 2011). This compelling vision uses post–peak oil scenarios to propose a path for towns to move along a transition timeline. The relocalization of food, energy, housing, transportation, and decision making is a crucial element of the TTI. The TTI contemplates the reinvigoration of communities so that they become more self-reliant, a carefully planned but steady "powering down" or "energy descent" in human activity, and tools for rebuilding ecosystems and communities eroded by centuries of delocalized, expert-driven economic and political systems. Resilience is the TTI's alternative to conventional notions of sustainability; it involves seeding communities with diversity and social and ecological self-organization, strengthening the capability to produce locally what can be produced locally, and so forth. The TTI is indeed "one of the most important social experiments happening anywhere in the world at the moment" (Hopkins 2011, 13). Like other TDs, it is based on a new story positing a radical shift in society within the time frame allowed by the ecological crisis. One of the cornerstones of the approach is that of building community resilience as "a collective design project" (45). Rethinking resilience through localization practices is, in fact, one of the main contributions of the initiative. This real-life social-innovation design experiment has become a large network with transition initiatives in more than thirty-four countries by now.[8]

The notion of degrowth is creating a visible transition imaginary and movement, particularly in parts of Europe, and has the potential to become an important ingredient in transition design frameworks. As its name implies, the degrowth movement is based on the critique of economic growth as the number-one goal and arbiter of what societies do. As ecological economists and others have demonstrated, growth cannot continue indefinitely, nor for much longer at current levels, before many more ecosystems collapse. Degrowth articulates a political vision of radical societal transformation, appealing to broad philosophical, cultural, ecological, and economic critiques of capitalism, the market, growth, and development. Its sources are diverse, from Illich's (1973) critique of industrialism and expert institutions and Polanyi's (1957) analysis of the disembedding of the economy from social life, to bioeconomics and sustained attention to economic and ecological crises. Degrowth has a strong ecological basis (from sustainable degrowth to strong sustainability),

but its most farsighted variants encompass a range of cultural and nonmaterial concerns. As some degrowth advocates provocatively put it, degrowth is not about doing "less of the same" but about living with less *and* differently, about downscaling while fostering the flourishing of life in other terms (Kallis, Demaria, and D'Alisa 2015).[9]

Degrowth is described as "a way to bring forward a new imaginary, which implies a change of culture and a rediscovery of human identity which is disentangled from economic representations" (Demaria et al. 2013, 197). The new imaginary involves displacing markets from their centrality in the organization of human life and developing an entire range of different institutions for the relocalization and reinvention of democracy. To this end, degrowth considers a broad array of strategies and actors, from oppositional activism and the construction of alternative economies to various types of reformism. Rather than voluntary simplicity, which has proven controversial, degrowth theorists prefer the notion of conviviality as a descriptor of the aims and domains of degrowth (tools, commons, economies, etc.). Degrowth's goal thus becomes "a transition to convivial societies who live simply, in common and with less" (Kallis, Demaria, and D'Alisa 2015, 11). Degrowth also deals with population, although somewhat obliquely, emphasizing the need to link population issues to feminist emancipatory politics.

The movements around the defense and re-creation of the commons brings together northern and southern TDS, contributing to dissolving this very dichotomy. As David Bollier (2014) points out, the commons entail a different way of seeing and being, an alternative model of socionatural life. Struggles over the commons are found across the Global North and the Global South, from forests, seeds, and water to urban spaces and cyberspace, and the interconnections among them are increasingly visible and practicable (see, e.g., Bollier and Helfrich 2012, 2015). Debates about the commons are one of those instances in which diverse peoples and worlds have an interest in common, which is nevertheless not the same interest for all involved, as the visions and practices of the commons are place based and world specific (de la Cadena 2015). Reflection on commons and commoning tends to reveal commons-destroying dualistic conceptions, particularly the dualisms between humans and nonhumans, the individual and the communal, and mind and body; these discussions resituate the human within the ceaseless flow of life in which everything is inevitably immersed. Commons have this tremendous life-enhancing potential at present.

Degrowth and commoning are emergent movements that contribute to the deconstruction of the individual and the economy. Working toward a "commons-creating economy" (Helfrich 2013) means working toward re-embedding the economy in society and nature and calls for the reintegration of persons within the community, the human within the nonhuman, and knowledge within the inevitable coincidence of knowing, being, and doing. These are key issues for ontologically oriented design practices.

Postdevelopment, Buen Vivir, the Rights of Nature, and Civilizational Transitions

There is likely no other social and policy domain where the paradigm of growth has been most persistently deployed than that of development. Development continues to be one of the main discourses and institutional apparatuses structuring unsustainability and defuturing. It is crucial for transition designers to resist the intellectual and emotional force of this imaginary, even more so now when the "international community" (a self-serving and self-appointed elite group intent on keeping the world going without major changes) is gearing itself up for fifteen more years of bland and damaging policy prescriptions in the name of so-called sustainable development.

The golden age of development was the decades from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s, when the dream of poor third-world countries catching up with the rich West still captured the imaginations of most world leaders. Starting in the late 1980s, cultural critics in many parts of the world started to question the very idea of development, arguing that development was a discourse that operated as a powerful mechanism for the cultural, social, and economic production of the Third World by the West (Rist 1997; Escobar 2011). These analyses entailed a radical questioning of the core assumptions of development, including growth, progress, and instrumental rationality. Some started to talk about a "postdevelopment era" as an extension of these critiques, meaning three interrelated things: first, development is displaced from its centrality in the representations of conditions in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. A corollary of this first goal was to open up the discursive space to other ways of describing those conditions, less mediated by the premises of development. Second, discursive space is created to think about the end of development and to identify alternatives *to* development, rather than development alternatives, as a concrete possibility. Third, awareness is cultivated of the acute need to

transform development's order of expert knowledge and power. To this end, postdevelopment advocates proposed that useful ideas about alternatives could be gleaned from the practices of grassroots movements.

Debates on postdevelopment and alternatives *to* development have gained force in Latin America over the past decade, in connection with the existing progressive regimes, although the main force behind this resurgence has been the social movements. Two key areas of debate closely related to postdevelopment are the notions of Buen Vivir ("Good Living," or collective well-being according to culturally appropriate conceptions; *sumak kawsay* in Quechua and *suma qamaña* in Aymara) and the rights of nature. Defined as a holistic, de-economized view of social life, Buen Vivir "constitutes an alternative *to* development, and as such it represents a potential response to the substantial critiques of postdevelopment" (Gudynas and Acosta 2011, 78). Very succinctly, Buen Vivir grew out of indigenous struggles as they articulated with the social-change agendas of peasants, Afrodescendants, environmentalists, students, women, and youth.[10] Crystallized in the Ecuadorian and Bolivian constitutions (of 2008 and 2009, respectively), Buen Vivir "presents itself as an opportunity for the collective construction of a new form of living" (Acosta 2010, 7; see also Gudynas 2014, 2015).

Buen Vivir subordinates economic objectives to the criteria of human dignity, social justice, and ecology. The most substantive versions of Buen Vivir in the Andes reject the linear idea of progress, displace the centrality of Western knowledge by privileging the diversity of knowledges, recognize the intrinsic value of nonhumans (biocentrism), and adopt a relational conception of all life. It should be emphasized that Buen Vivir is not purely an Andean cultural-political project, as it is influenced by critical currents within Western thought and aims to influence global debates. Debates about the form Buen Vivir might take in modern urban contexts and in other parts of the world, such as Europe, are beginning to take place. Degrowth and Buen Vivir could be "fellow travelers" in this endeavor.[11]

Comparing Degrowth and Postdevelopment as Transition Imaginaries

It is useful to contrast degrowth and postdevelopment in order to clarify their potential incorporation into transition design framings. The strategies for reaching postgrowth, postcapitalism, and postdevelopment are somewhat different in the postdevelopment and degrowth frameworks. For degrowth

advocates, these goals have fostered a genuine social movement, understood in terms of the construction of an alternative interpretive frame of social life (Demaria et al. 2013, 194). Regardless of whether this is a sufficient criterion to identify a social movement, it is fair to say that postdevelopment, rather than being a social movement in itself, operates through and with social movements. At their best, degrowth and postdevelopment will be more effective when they function on the basis of *societies in movement* (Zibechi 2006), or even *worlds in movement* (Escobar 2014). One important convergence concerns the relation between ecology and social justice. Joan Martínez-Alier (2012) emphasizes the fact that the considerable environmental justice movements in the Global South (including climate and water justice, ecological debt, and so forth) can serve as strong bridges with degrowth. Patrick Bond (2012) and Naomi Klein (2014) have similarly argued that climate justice will be tackled effectively only through transnational networks of movements and struggles.

Both movements agree that markets and policy reforms, by themselves, will not accomplish the transitions needed. Shared as well is a substantial questioning of capitalism and liberalism as arenas for advancing sustainable degrowth, postdevelopment, or Buen Vivir. Degrowth's emphases, such as energy descent and the redefinition of prosperity, are rarely considered in the South, being seen as inapplicable or even ridiculed (there are exceptions, such as the growing movement of *ecoaldeas* [ecovillages] in Latin America, which involves dimensions of spirituality and frugality). These concerns could buttress the critique of overconsumption among the Latin American middle classes, and elsewhere in the Global South, which has barely started. The bias toward the small and the place-based, under the banner of relocalization, is another feature bringing together degrowth and postdevelopment. An important concern for both schools of thought is the emphasis on local autonomy, which reveals a certain predilection for anarchist political imaginaries.

Finally, degrowth and postdevelopment confront overlapping challenges. On the postdevelopment side, the clearest challenge is the appropriation of Buen Vivir and the rights of nature by the State in countries like Ecuador and Bolivia while continuing to pursue aggressive extractivist policies and, not infrequently, the repression of environmentalist and grassroots organizations. Also noticeable is the trend for local communities to acquiesce, under pressure, to conventional development projects with corporations, nongovernmental organizations, or the State (e.g., for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation [REDD] projects). On the degrowth side, a main risk is the subversion of its meaning through green-economy and postgrowth

schemes that leave untouched the basic architecture of economism. Finally, a partnership between degrowth and postdevelopment could contribute to dispelling the idea (in the North) that while degrowth is fine for the North, the South needs development, and, conversely (in the South), that the concerns of degrowth are only for the North and not applicable to the South.

Transitions to Postextractivism

One of the most concrete and well-developed proposals for transitions to come out of South America is the framework of "transitions to postextractivism." Originally proposed by the Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social (Latin American Center for Social Ecology, CLAES) in Montevideo, Uruguay, it has become the subject of intense intellectual-activist debate in many South American countries (Alayza and Gudynas 2011; Massuh 2012; Velardi and Polatsik 2012; Gudynas 2015; Svampa 2012). The point of departure is a critique of the intensification of extractivist models based on large-scale mining, hydrocarbon exploitation, or extensive agricultural operations, particularly for agrofuels, such as soy, sugarcane, or oil palm. Whether these activities take the form of conventional—often brutal—neoliberal extractivist operations, as in countries like Colombia, Peru, and Mexico, or follow the neo-extractivism of the leftist regimes, they are often legitimized as the most efficient growth strategies. Given the avalanche of highly destructive extractivist projects in much of the world, the usefulness of the transitions-to-postextractivism framework to buttress critiques of the growth model, its relevance to transition design and movements such as degrowth and postdevelopment, must be taken seriously. In fact, according to its proponents, this framework, while offering guidelines to organizations wishing to slow down extractivism, locates itself within the epistemic and political space of alternatives *to* development and hence also points beyond modernity.

The postextractivism framework does not endorse a view of untouched nature, nor a ban on all mining or larger-scale agriculture, but rather the significant transformation of these activities so as to minimize their environmental and cultural impact. It posits a horizon with two main goals: zero poverty and zero extinctions, to which we need to add, from a political ontology perspective, zero worlds destroyed. It proposes a typology that differentiates among predatory extractivism (activities taking place without regard for environmental and social impacts), sensible extractivism (those that obey existing environmental and labor regulations), and indispensable extractivism. The

latter category includes those activities that are genuinely necessary to support Buen Vivir and that fully comply with environmental and social conditions. As Eduardo Gudynas concludes in his comprehensive book on the subject, the imaginary of postextractivism "opens up the path to alternatives capable of breaking away from the shackles of anthropocentrism and utilitarianism. It is time to start treading other paths, framed by plural ethics, inclusive of the rich and diverse valuations of people and nature. Once again, it is the value of life itself that is in question" (2015, 434).

To sum up: TDs from both the Global North and the Global South advocate for a profound cultural, economic, and political transformation of dominant institutions and practices. This transformation is often imagined to take place in tandem with those communities where the regimes of the individual, ontological separation, and the market have not yet taken complete hold of socionatural life. In emphasizing the interdependence of all beings, transition visions bring to the fore one of the crucial imperatives of our time: the need to reconnect with each other and with the nonhuman world. The relocalization of food, energy, and the economy is seen as essential for the transitions, and TDs often endorse diverse economies with strong communal bases, even if not bound to the local (Gibson-Graham 2006; Gibson-Graham, Cameron, and Healy 2013). Degrowth, commoning, Buen Vivir, and the search for nonextractivist models of the economy are offered as guiding imaginaries and tangible goals for moving along transition pathways while upholding the radical questioning of growth and development. These notions map a whole domain—concrete issues, dimensions, and goals—for transition design initiatives.

Designs for Transitions

Considering the great transition that might be unfolding, Italian design theorist Ezio Manzini wrote:

> So today, we must expect to be living this turbulence for a long time, in a double world where two realities live together in conflict: the old "limitless" world that does not acknowledge the planet's limits, and another that recognizes these limits and experiments with ways of transforming them into opportunities. . . . [A] continent is emerging. . . . It is a transition (long for us, but short for world history) in which we must all learn to live, and live well, on the new islands, and in doing so, anticipate what the quality of life will be like on the emerging continent. (2015, 2–3)

Manzini deliberately refers to the long-standing cultural background within which a design practice appropriate to the transitions is beginning to take shape. It resonates with Berry's auspicious reading of the coming of the new age: "The universe," Berry writes, "is revealing itself to us in a special manner just now" (1988, 215). According to climate scientists, humans may have a narrow window of opportunity (perhaps only three decades) to change direction radically in order to avoid the catastrophic effects that will come about with an increase in the Earth's temperature above two degrees Celsius. The space evolving from such a dire predicament is already being populated by myriad tiny transition islands where unsustainability and defuturing are being held at bay. But there is still a long way to go until such islands give rise to the new continents where life might again flourish.

The literature on transitions makes it clear that transitions are not designed but emergent; they depend on a mix of interacting dynamic processes, both self-organizing and other-organized (by humans). Emergence, and this is one of its key principles, takes place on the basis of a multiplicity of local actions that, through their (largely unplanned) interaction, give rise to what appears to an observer to be a new structure or integrated whole (say, a new social order or even civilization), without the need for any central planning or intelligence guiding the process.[12] Systems views of the transition emphasize that the paths and character of the transitions cannot be predicted in advance. Transition scenarios are a tool to inquire about possible paths and futures, and of course not all of them lead to satisfactory outcomes, as the Great Transition Initiative's helpful analyses illustrate. Hence, it is important to change the way we think about change itself. Ideas about emergence, self-organization, and autopoiesis (chapter 6) can be important elements in rethinking theories of social change (Escobar 2004). One thing is certain: most transition thinkers are adamant that the transition is happening. Many social movements have a lucid awareness of this realization. We are riding the cusp of the transition.

At a recent workshop on transition design, the notion that transitions are not designed but emergent led to reflection about the most appropriate category for the design imagination being born at the intersection of transition thinking and critical design studies.[13] Whatever the category adopted—whether transition design, design for transitions, design for social innovation, or what have you—there is a shared understanding that the transitions are emergent and plural. In what follows, I present two evolving but already well-structured frameworks: the transition design graduate program at CMU's School of De-

sign, and the conceptualization of design for social innovation and transition proposed by Manzini in his most recent book.[14]

The Transition Design Framework at CMU

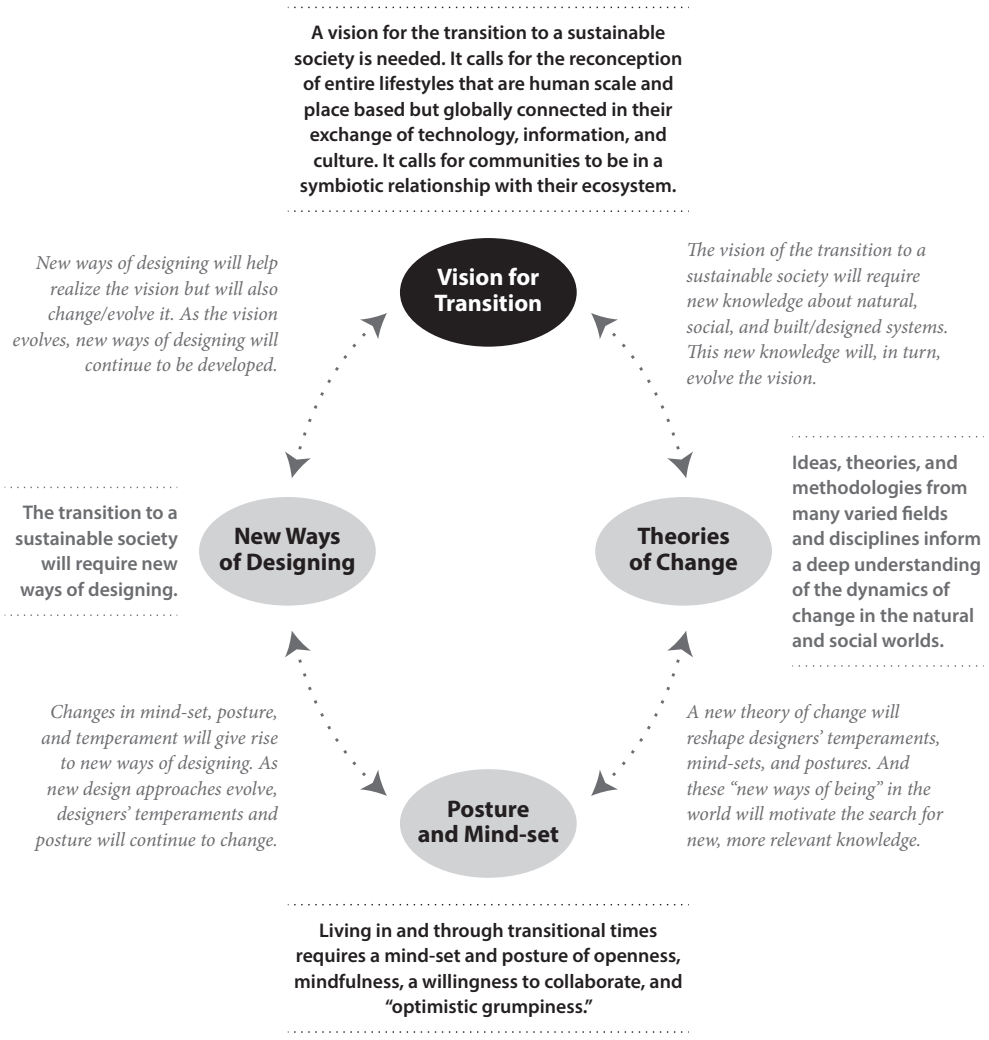
The transition design project at CMU has a clear mission statement: "Transition Design acknowledges that we are living in 'transition times' and takes as its central premise the need for societal transitions to more sustainable futures and the belief that design has a role to play in these transitions" (Irwin, Tonkinwise, and Kossoff 2015, 2). This premise is spelled out in two major ways: by demarcating a subfield of transition design within the school's graduate program, but with implications for design studies as a whole, and by proposing a preliminary but well-thought-out conceptualization of transition design. The school's graduate program structure is based on overlapping "design tracks" (products, communications, and environments) and "areas of focus," including design for service ("design within existing paradigms and systems in which moderate positive change can be achieved"), design for social innovation ("design *within* and *for* emerging paradigms and alternative economic models leading to significant positive social change"), and transition design ("design *of* and *within* new paradigms that will lead to radical positive social and environmental change"). Both the tracks and the areas of focus are placed within an overarching umbrella, "Design for Interactions" (among people, the built world, and the natural environment). Tellingly, the approach explicitly identifies the natural world as the context for all design activities, not only for the transition design focus area.[15]

The transition design framework constitutes a significant intervention into design discourse and education, at a moment when many design schools are feeling the pressure to adapt to the mounting ecological and social challenges of today's world. This is of course easier said than done in a field that, since the Bauhaus, has been so wedded to the making of unsustainable modern styles of living. The CMU group's identification of an area of design research, education, and practice committed to radical social change in the face of structural unsustainability can thus be seen as the group's most courageous and proactive intervention, not only within the design field but within the academy as a whole. The intitiative to form a transition design track can be considered a particular attempt at reorienting design, perhaps parallel to but different from those cited in chapter 1 (such as those by John Thackara; Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby; and Pelle Ehn, Elizabeth Nilsson, and Richard Topgaard). The

group's transition design imagination, in fact, goes beyond the changes currently being implemented in the social sciences and humanities, or within interdisciplinary fields such as global and environmental studies, at least in the Anglo-American academy. (In my view, most major universities are bowing to the pressures to train people to be allegedly successful in what is described without much reflection as an increasingly globalized and interconnected world; this means preparing individuals to compete in market economies, and many of these individuals will carry on the mandate of unsustainability and defuturing.) Let us see, then, how this new area is being conceptualized.

The framework is based on a heuristic model structured around four different and interrelated areas (see figure 5.1), and it has some unique features. First, it is a design approach oriented to longer time horizons and explicitly informed by visions of sustainable futures. The creation of *visions* of and for transitions is the cornerstone of the approach. This component of the framework is under development; it focuses on tools and methods for facilitating discussion about alternative futures (e.g., scenario development, forecasting, and speculative design), rather than on a full-blown strategy for the critical study and articulation of visions. It embraces some of the trends discussed in chapter 1 and in the first part of the present chapter, such as the necessarily place-based character of much transition design work, and design's relation to the transformation of everyday life. The "visions" dimension also appeals explicitly to a few of the TDs already discussed, particularly the TTI and the Great Transition Initiative.

A second unique feature of the framework is its explicit incorporation of theories of social change as central to design strategies for the transition. These are intended to instill in designers an always-evolving attitude of critical learning about the world. One of the key theories espoused by the transition design track is living-systems theory, a body of knowledge that explains the dynamics of self-organization, emergence, and resilience taking place within natural and social systems (see the recent tome by Frijof Capra and Pier Luigi Luisi [2014] for an outstanding and comprehensive account of this theory). This body of thought is central to a number of TDs (e.g., those of Joanna Macy, Brian Goodwin, Erwin Laszlo, and the Great Transition Initiative), although it remains relatively marginal within the life sciences and is practically unknown within established theories of social change, with few exceptions (Taylor 2001; B. Clarke and Hansen 2009). Working within the holistic perspective of living-systems theory, Gideon Kossoff, from the transition design team at CMU, develops a relational conceptualization of the domains



5.1 CMU's Transition Design Framework. The four areas represented co-evolve and mutually reinforce each other. Source: Irwin (2015: 5). Redrawn based on diagram by Terry Irwin, Gideon Kossoff, and Cameron Tonkinwise.

of everyday life in terms of nested structures (household, village, city, region, and planet), each with its own dynamics of self-organization around collaborative networks. "The transition to a sustainable society," Kossoff explains, "will require the reconstitution and reinvention of households, villages, neighborhoods, towns, cities, and regions everywhere on the planet as interdependent, nested, self-organised, participatory and diversified wholes. This will essentially be the transition from counterfeit to authentic holism in everyday life. The result will be a decentralized and diversified structure of everyday life which is in contrast to the centralized and increasingly homogenized structure that we have become accustomed to. It will . . . embody the communion not just of people, but of people, their artifacts, and nature, and

will come into being at multiple, interrelated levels of scale" (2015, 36). This conceptualization endows transition visions with a scalar imagination that avoids the conventional vertical hierarchy of scales, which inevitably gives too much weight to the global and too little to the local or the place-based. With their emphasis on relocalization and recommunalization, all transition initiatives aim to reverse this hierarchy. Thinking in terms of nested structures and networks provides the basis for a distributed understanding of agency.

The theories-of-change dimension of the framework appeals to postnormal science (the science that takes seriously the knowledge of nonexperts) with the goal of making designers actively reflect on their taken-for-granted ideas about change. In some versions it incorporates design theories and methods that embed an understanding of change (e.g., Richard Buchanan's four orders of design and Arnold Wasserman's heuristic design framework; see Scupelli 2015). Many questions remain insufficiently addressed, however, by the theories of change incorporated into the framework thus far; these questions include design-specific issues such as how to disentangle the coexistence of futuring and defuturing in most human actions, the role of key agents such as business, and so forth (Scupelli 2015). There are other issues that remain insufficiently theorized; the reliance on systems and complexity theories, for instance, poses challenges for dealing with a range of questions that critical social theories (whether of Marxist or poststructuralist provenance) have routinely dealt with, in particular questions about history and context, power and politics, and domination and resistance.[16] This incompleteness, however, is indicative of the current impasse in modern social theory as a whole. As we discussed in chapter 2, notions of networks and assemblages have gone a long way to deconstruct taken-for-granted notions of agency but have yet to provide compelling accounts of what social theory calls domination, resistance, class/gender/race, and so forth, within a posthumanist landscape.[17]

Transition design thus proposes design-led societal transformations toward more sustainable futures. By applying an understanding of the interconnectedness of social, economic, political and natural systems, it aims to address problems that exist at all levels of scale in ways that improve quality of life, including poverty, biodiversity loss, decline of community, environmental degradation, resource, and climate change.

The remaining two dimensions of the framework are design specific. The dimension "posture and mind-set" is of utmost interest since it calls on transition designers to develop "a new way of 'being' in the world" (Irwin 2015, 8).

This involves both a particular value system and new practices of relating to others and to the world. This aspect of the proposal openly problematizes design ethics and practice, favoring the development of relational ethics. Here we find a variation of Francisco Varela's (1999) question of how best to foster nondualist rationalities in the West. What does it mean to take seriously the insights of relationality in design work? As the CMU group contends, it requires active inner work on the transition designer's part. In other words, transition design seeks to imbue design with a nondualist imagination. Again, this is easier said than done, given our entrenched dualist ways of thinking, being, and doing and the fact that they are embedded—indeed, "concreted-in," to use Cameron Tonkinwise's (2013b, 12) fitting metaphor—in the forms, norms, and structures of our capitalistic everyday life. The collective discussion of the challenges entailed by this dimension of the project might become an integral part of how it is carried forward. This debate takes the transition designer along the path of the transitions, as the questions likely to be raised in these discussions—for example, of the individual versus the communal, embedded reflexivity versus abstract knowledge, single versus multiple reals, and so forth—will be unsettling.

It is necessary to reiterate that learning how to take seriously the insights of relationality is one of the most intractable issues modern humans, particularly those qualified as experts, have to confront. What does "nondualist existence" mean in everyday life? An entry point into this question, and a sequitur of this book's ontological analysis, is the phenomenological insight that we are not just, or even primarily, detached observers but rather participants and designers who engage the world by being immersed in it. Knowing is relating. As the Mapuche poet and *machi* (shaman) Adriana Paredes Pinda puts it in a lecture at Chapel Hill (2014), "*we have to relearn to walk the world as a living being.*" Engaging with people's lifeworlds and attaining again a certain intimacy with the Earth are essential to this endeavor. This inner work is led not only by analytical knowledge but also by what Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa (2002) called *conocimiento*, which involves embodied knowledge, reflexivity, intuition, and emotion. In other words, the inner work demanded for a relational practice of living and designing requires other tools than (or besides) those of theoretical reflection.

Finally, the fourth dimension envisages "new ways of designing." Here the group makes a rich and challenging set of contributions. Some of these were already mentioned in the previous chapter when discussing Fry's (2012) work,

such as elimination design and the debates on de/futuring and the dialectic of creation and destruction inherent in all design work. The questions arise: how can designers become newly aware of the fact that design careers often result in the use of vast amounts of materials that contribute to ecosystem destruction and pose risks to fellow humans? That "designers do a lot of material destroying on their way to being creative" (Tonkinwise 2013a, 5)? New habits—essential if different design futures are the desired outcome—need to involve ecological literacy and a renewed attention to materiality as inputs into radical sustainability design; rethinking of innovation beyond conventional business, commercial, and service design consulting and toward transformative kinds of social innovation; new pathways for design and its expansion into explicitly change-oriented domains; the relocalization of sustainable innovations; and, of course, foregrounding of the role of visioning in designing.[18] It is no surprise that at this level the transition design framework is seen as fostering "a paradigm shift and an entirely new way of understanding households and understanding societies" (Tonkinwise 2012, 8). Besides changes in mind-set, one might thus expect the creation of skill sets appropriate to the transition design task. Transition design is thus conceived as a new area of design methodology, practice, and research, and it is offered as such for further discussion. The following is an apt summary of the approach: Transition design

> (1) Uses living sytem theory as an approach to understanding/addressing wicked problems; (2) Designs solutions that protect and restore *both* social and natural ecosystems; (3) Sees everyday life/styles as the most fundamental context for design; (4) Avocates place-based, globally networked solutions; (5) Designs solutions for varying horizons of time and multiple levels of scale; (6) Links existing solutions so that they become steps in a larger transition vision; (7) amplifies emergent, grassroots solutions; (8) Bases solutions on maximizing satisfiers for the widest range of needs; (9) Sees the designer's own mindset/posture as an essential component of the design process; (10) Calls for the reintegration and recontextualization of diverse transdisciplinary knowledge. (Irwin, Kossoff, and Tonkinwise 2015, 3)

This statement implies a major transformation of design. Design itself becomes a project in transition. It joins other theoretical-political projects seeking to enrich our understanding of life and the human.

Design for Social Innovation: Design, When Everybody Designs

Design, When Everybody Designs: An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation (Manzini 2015) is about the relation between design and social change, and the best way to enact such a relation in practice. It is based on a particular but sophisticated vision of what social life is and might come to be.[19] The work can also be seen as a sustained reflection on the increasingly contested modern cultural practice that design is, explicitly approached from the perspective of design's potential contribution to what he also sees as a "great transition" (2015, 2). The book starts with four propositions. (1) We live in a world where everybody has to design and redesign their existence; hence, the goal of design becomes the support of individual and collective life projects. (2) The world is undergoing a great transition; design may contribute to fostering a culture of cosmopolitan localism that effectively links the local and the global through resilient infrastructures that bring production and consumption closer together, building on distributed systems. (3) People's actions to change their everyday life conditions increasingly take place through collaborative organizations; design experts thus become part of creating the conditions for collaborative social change. (4) All of the above takes place within an international conversation on design, intended to transform the cultural background for both expert and nonexpert design work. Four interrelated propositions, then: everybody designs; this designing is integral to significant transitions that are under way, operating on the basis of distributed agency; collaborative organizations are central to designing; and all of this means that a new culture of design is emerging. Taken together, these four statements—concerning the agent, historicity, form, goals, and culture of design—ground a powerful vision of design for social innovation. Let us see how.

The contemporary landscape of social practice is full of examples of collaborative projects where local actions create new functions, practices, and meanings. Strategies for the relocalization of food are one of the best-known examples, but one could cite here a whole range of transition activities, including in the sectors of energy, infrastructure, construction, and many aspects of the economy. What is interesting to note is that many of these innovations take place through a new logic, that of distributed systems. In essence, this refers to the fact that, unlike the dominant centralized, top-down modern systems and infrastructures (representing a hierarchical model of organization and social life), distributed systems operate on the basis of decentralized elements that

become mutually linked into wider networks. An insightful design implication of distributed agency is the fact that "the more a system is scattered and networked, the larger and more connected is its interface with society and the more the social side of innovation has to be considered" (Manzini 2015, 17). The result of increasingly networked action is more resilient systems and a redefinition of work, relations, and well-being (akin to Buen Vivir) and, eventually, "a new civilization" (3). This can be considered to be the case, says Manzini, at least as a design hypothesis (26), with design participating proactively in the social construction of the civilization's meaning.

To substantiate this hypothesis, Manzini introduces two useful distinctions: first, between two dimensions of design, namely, problem solving and sense making; and, second, between diffuse and expert design—*diffuse design* refers to the fact that everybody is endowed with the ability to design, *expert design* to professional design knowledge. In between problem solving and meaning making, and diffuse and expert design, there opens a space for rethinking "design in a connected world," as the title of chapter 2 states. In Manzini's model this space functions as a heuristic device allowing the visualization of design modes, from "cultural activism" engaged in diffuse design and meaning making to technological agency focused on expert-led problem solving (see Manzini's diagram on p. 40). These modes often overlap, nurturing new design cultures out of their convergence in particular places and situations. The aim of these new cultures is the construction of a new ecology of places and regions (perhaps along the lines of Sustainment). New practices of codesign, participatory design, and design activism (to which we will add autonomous design in the next chapter) become the stuff of a new model of design for social innovation. New design approaches are to be based on a positioning that is both critical of the current state of things and constructive, in terms of actively contributing to broad cultural change.

Discussing social innovation from design perspectives enriches the social science understanding of how change happens and at the same time radicalizes design practice. Examples could again be drawn from many parts of the world and areas of social life.[20] There are many lessons to be learned from open-ended codesign processes, including the iterative character of research and knowledge production, the ways in which local initiatives might generate general visions (e.g., for the transformation of an entire practice, such as that of cultivating food and eating with the slow food movement), and visions for the reimagining of a region (see chapter 6 of this book). From here follows the definition of design for social innovation as "*everything that expert design*

can do to activate, sustain, and orient processes of social change towards sustainability" (62; italics in the original). Not all design, of course, needs to fit this definition; a great deal of it will continue to adhere to conventional ("big-ego" and "post-it") design models. Clearly, the principle of dialogic collaboration makes a huge difference in this respect. This dialogism might take place across worlds or ontologies, making design for social innovation genuinely pluriversal.[21] Its practices are conducive to the design of coalitions in which visionary capacity, dialogic process, and diffuse and expert design knowledge are all interwoven, with designers playing the role of facilitator, activist, strategist, or cultural promoter, depending on the circumstances and the character of the coalition at play.

Collaborative organizations are vital to design for social innovation. In a world that is both loaded with problems and highly connected, social innovation happens "when people, expertise, and material assets come into contact in a new way that is able to create new meaning and unprecedented opportunities" (77). Oftentimes these conditions materialize at the intersection of grassroots organizations or local communities and digital networks, enabling new bottom-up, top-down, and peer-to-peer practices and their combination. The amalgamation of face-to-face and virtual interactions creates propitious conditions for the reexamination of people's collective life projects. "Collaborative life projects" have become salient in modern life in recent times, in part as a corrective to the excessively individualistic lifestyles promoted by the modern ontology and as a response to the disabling effect of expert-based systems in health, education, transportation, and so forth.[22] Embedded within the concept of collaborative life projects is therefore a critique of these central aspects of modernity; said otherwise, the concept takes seriously the anthropological insight that individual actions occur within meaning systems that are ineluctably historical and collective. As such, "*collaborative organizations should be considered as bottom-up initiatives not because everything happens at grassroots level, but because the precondition for their existence is the active involvement of the people concerned*" (83).

Manzini's concept of collaborative life projects resonates with the concept of life projects that some indigenous peoples in the Americas have been proposing in contradistinction to development projects (Blaser, Feit, and McRae 2004). The indigenous concept is meant to make visible the notions of the good life emerging from their own experience *in their place,* and the ways it differs from the allegedly universal vision of the good life offered to them by development projects. In doing so, indigenous peoples are rendering visible

the heterogeneity of visions of the good life among place-based groups on the planet (Blaser forthcoming).[23] They do so precisely as a way to defend their territories and relational ontologies. While these communities also create collaborative organizations at times, their real strength lies in the fact that their cultural-political mobilization for the defense of their life projects stems from their long-standing historical experience of cultural autonomy, even if under harsh conditions of domination. There are thus bridges to be built at this level between various ways of conceiving the nature and organization of the communal, with their respective "relational intensities" (Manzini 2015, 103).

Collaborative organizing for social innovation gives rise to a whole set of design tools and practices, whether new or adapted and redefined from existing repertoires, which Manzini develops throughout the book based on an array of examples from Europe and North America, from housing co-ops and community-supported agriculture to digital storytelling and urban-planning ecolabs. They include tools for mapping collaborative encounters; heuristics for discussing types and degrees of involvement on the designer's part; collaborative scenario building; mapping and visual tools to facilitate social conversations; and the generation of metavisions of alternative, although as yet unrealized, forms of living. Scenarios take on a double character: they are based on social innovation, and they are also intended to create the conditions for social innovation. What results is "an ecology of collaborative encounters" (118); in this context, society becomes "a laboratory for new ways of being and doing" (132).

Generating auspicious conditions for collective life projects demands the creation of supportive environments through appropriate "infrastructuring." Enabling infrastructures—the result of codesign—are intended to counter the defuturing infrastructures at the basis of most modern activities, subverting them from within (e.g., through retrofitting, broadly understood) or from without (via new designs). Making codesign possible requires a multiplicity of elements, from research, experimentation, and prototyping to platforms, local networking, and community-oriented tool kits. An interesting aspect of the framework is the idea that diffuse design capabilities can also be enhanced through these tools and practices, and that this might be an important step in making codesign effective. Enabling solutions will arise in accordance with the strength of codesign tools and methodologies. "*Enabling solutions are product-service systems providing cognitive, technical, and organizational instruments that increase people's capacities to achieve a result they value*" (167–168). They stem from a seemingly straightforward question: how can we achieve the

life we want to live? Here again we find the strong relevance of the notion of life projects and the importance of visioning.

Strategies function at two levels: first, through projects aimed to make the general context more favorable, by creating larger visions and different meaning frameworks (say, within the same social domain or through geographical expansion); and, second, through local projects in support of the desired enabling solutions. While solutions may remain local and place based, they are also open to networking. Given that "today *the small is no longer small* and *the local is no longer local*" (178), the potential for gaining strength through connection is huge. This main lesson of the notion of distributed systems—for example, distributed infrastructures, power, and production, as well as, one may add, distributed activism (Papadopolous 2015; Escobar 2004)—constitutes a new ground for social innovation: small, local, open, and connected (SLOC) (Manzini 2015, 178).[24] By coordinating with others through networking, local projects might achieve scalar effects at the neighborhood and regional levels. The resulting configurations may rightly be considered instances of *cosmopolitan localism* (202).

Design for social innovation decidedly locates place making and the re/creation of communities at the heart of the design mission. Far from being a neutral and allegedly objective position, it is an ethical and political position that takes a stand on the side of a particular understanding of life and a particular style of world making that privileges localization, self-organization, and a collaborative social praxis. In advocating for a new civilization, it directs our attention away from the "big dinosaurs of the twentieth century" (193), namely, those hierarchical systems underlying Berry's four defuturing institutional structures (governments, corporations, universities, and religions), toward the emergence of "territorial ecologies"—assemblages of ecosystems, places, and communities—where open-ended codesign processes might function with greater ease. Manzini is perfectly aware that place-based politics can lead to exclusionary tendencies and regressive localisms. If these tendencies can be held at bay, however, "the resulting localities and communities are exactly what is needed to promote not only a new territorial ecology and a resilient ecosystem, but also a sustainable well-being" (202). Toward the end of his book, Manzini articulates this option at its most wide-ranging: "Place building can therefore carry considerable weight in the definition of a new idea of well-being. . . . I think that what social innovation is indicating, with its idea of well-being based on the quality of places and communities, is the seed of a new culture. Or better, of a metaculture which could be the platform for a multiplicity of cultures [a pluriverse?]" (202).

This statement resonates with the Latin American debates on Buen Vivir. But perhaps one of the most noteworthy aspects of the transition imaginaries that have inhabited this chapter is their willingness to bring back a politics of place into the picture as a central aspect of progressive and perhaps radical politics (e.g., Harcourt and Escobar 2005). This will become an important theme in the next chapter. Before tackling this task, let us pause for a moment to listen once again to Berry, as he articulates the stakes embedded in the call for transitions at their most fundamental; in the last chapter of *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future*, appropriately entitled "Moments of Grace," he puts it thus:

> We are now experiencing a moment of significance far beyond what any of us can imagine. What can be said is that the foundations of a new historical period, the Ecozoic era, have been established in every domain of human affairs. The mythic vision has been set into place. The distorted dream of an industrial technological paradise is being replaced by the more viable dream of a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever-renewing organic-based Earth community. The dream drives the action. In the larger cultural context the dream becomes the myth that both guides and drives the action.
>
> But even as we make our transition into this new century we must note that moments of grace are transient moments. The transformation must take place within a brief period. Otherwise it is gone forever. (1999, 201)