

[design for] the

the more than human?

can we speak with the more

Debates around the rights of nature and environmental personhood increasingly turn on the preposition of representation: whether we speak about, for, or with non-human entities. Recent work on relational representation, for instance, argues that speaking with rivers or waterways requires an ongoing, situated relation rather than a purely symbolic proxy. Yet even in these more advanced eco-juridical models, the figure of the human representative remains largely taken for granted: a bounded individual presumed capable of "hosting" more-than-human perspectives without much attention to how such a capacity is formed.

This research starts from that gap. Before representation comes the formation of the representer. What kind of human subjectivity, sensorium, and relational disposition is needed for more-than-human (MOTH) beings to be intentionally and imaginatively included in decision-making at all?

Answering this questions requires a shift in how we understand continuum and threshold in human-MOTH relations. Drawing from Luigina Mortari's idea of nature as a non-given that demands an open, generative encounter, and from agro-pastoral "grammars of cohabitation" in the Mediterranean (Enzo Bianchi), the project treats care as participation in a socio-ecological continuum that links bodies, ancestors, landscapes, and futures. In dialogue with Descola's

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typology of ontologies and Viveiros de Castro's contrast between "making souls" and "making bodies," this continuum is not only ecological but also socio-spiritual and political.

Design for the Continuum proposes a pre-deliberative, pre-representational response to this condition: somatic dramaturgies that work in the space of metaxy, staging thresholds as permeable zones where new relations to the continuum can be rehearsed. Through somatic, sonic and relational exercises—many of them emerging from Mediterranean "continuum communities" and then re-framed within design education—the project explores how designers, guardians and civic actors can be trained to perceive themselves less as autonomous individuals and more as divedual nodes in a wider ecology of care.

In this sense, the research is situated between design pedagogy and emerging experiments in design-for-MOTH-governance. Its central question is whether design can be reimagined as the formation of bodies capable of co-regulating with the living world, so that future practices of representation do not merely speak for nature, but emerge from lives already entangled with it.

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re-enchantment



By re-enchantment I refer not to a nostalgic return to "magic," but to contemporary efforts to counter Weberian "disenchantment" by restoring a felt sense of liveliness, relationality, and mystery in human-world relations without abandoning critical thought. Scholars in environmental humanities describe re-enchantment as a way of unsettling modern notions of a dead, mute world, foregrounding instead the affective and ethical force of vibrant, more-than-human ecologies.

ecopedagogy



Ecopedagogy names a strand of critical pedagogy (rooted in Paulo Freire) that links environmental and social justice, treating education as a space to read and transform the connections between ecological destruction, oppression, and global inequalities. Greg Misiak, for instance, defines ecopedagogy as a Freirean, dialogical approach that cultivates critical ecoliteracy oriented toward planetary justice and the disruption of anthropocentric, neoliberal forms of violence.

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dividual voice



A dividual person, in anthropological terms, is a self constituted through relations and exchanges rather than a bounded, autonomous individual—an idea developed in Melanesian studies by authors such as Marilyn Strathern and later elaborated as "partible personhood."

In speaking of dividual voice, I extend this insight to vocal and expressive practices, where voice is understood not as a purely individual property but as something co-authored by bodies, places, lineages and more-than-human agencies.

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Recent eco-juridical moves (e.g., rights of nature, more-than-human councils) extend standing to non-human beings yet leave largely unexamined the formation of the representer.

I posit that before representation comes understanding and training representational subjectivity (even in a collective perspective).

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Research Problem

Research Question

Research Objectives

All living can be thought of as meeting (Buber) and when we are dealing with representation of MOTH subjectivity, an attitude of meeting the living as an intersubjective experience need necessarily be adopted.

This is obviously a poetic as well as a political, or poethical approach. In Native Hawaiian world-making, an element of the world—wind, rock, ancestor, or place—is experienced as alive insofar as it participates in, and is carried by, the ongoing creation of stories.

From this epistemological perspective, mo'olelo (story) is not just narrative but a living weave of relations.

Reductionist mechanistic views are obsolete, we require ways of engaging with the world that present possibilities for co-existence. For this, it is important to explore the whole range of intersubjective experiences, starting from the Ethics of care, which is about the relationship of respect and commitment for what is radically foreign to us. A relationship experienced firsthand, in the cognitive encounter "open and receptive" (p. 63) that makes experience the starting point for the development of new vocabularies. Nature, in fact, is not a given, but in the encounter, the subject experiences "a generative thinking that invents new paths for interpreting experience"

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Research Problem

Research Question

Research Objectives

RQ1

In what ways can we re-enchant human rationality and relationality so that the threshold between the human and (super)natural forces is unlearned?

RQ2

What are the ways in which experiences can be designed, curated (and measured) to act as a catalyst for the unlearning of threshold and re-enchantment of human rationality and relationality?

RQ3

What kind of potentialities of engagement arise, after human re-enchantment, from queering the relationship with MOTH?

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Research Problem

Research Question

Research Objectives

RO1

To select and analyze practices coming from Mediterranean ancestral "continuum" communities, figuring out ways to learn how their effects and affects can be measured

RO2

To redesign and formulate approaches (ecopedagogy) training the perspectives of a designer?

RO3

To generate functional outcomes (like new ideas for conservation, shifts in attitude or motives for stewardship) at the personal and collective level of engagement with MOTH.

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Methodology

Output

M1

"critical training in empathetic relational imagination"

1. training through gestures, dances, music coming from Mediterranean ancestral "continuum" community (open to other convenings from more than design radical pedagogies and epistemologies)

M2

"against extinction of experience"

1. workshops in design institution inspired from practices studied (sub1)

M3

"venturing beyond the bifurcation of nature"

1. collaborate with related experiences of MOTH representation

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Methodology

Output

O1

1. knowledge platform and community: new "interaction/connections" with a reviewed goal (MOTH participation)

2. awareness about the practices and dynamics at play, and some insights on how to possibly measure

3. curated repertoire to be further tested

O2

1. A curated syllabus with a framework to measure its efficacy

2. International experience of critical engagement and knowledge production

O3

1. Opening up possibilities for "self-social-eco-realisation" (creation of new relationships)

2. Experiment with RoN and MOTH representation in the Mediterranean

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HERstories
TO1
CANTARE NEI LUOGHI
TO2
CHOROS
TO3
CCTA
TO4
EMBODIED MUSICALITY
TO5

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HERstories

TO1

location: Femminamorta, Giarre
duration: 13-16/8/2025
facilitator: Hiram Salsano, Rachele Andrioli, Barbara Crescimanno



The masterclass is led by teachers from different regions of Southern Italy (Puglia, Sicily, Campania), who will guide participants through the women's vocal and percussion repertoire of the South, and into the relationship between body movement and frame drum, drawing on techniques of the ancient Greek chorus and its rhythmic-choral movement in space.

Starting from the dynamics of the percussion circle, the work expands into movement through space,

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exploring how bodies and sounds relate physically and rhythmically in lines and ranks, and then in more complex formations such as diamonds, flocks, and packs. The chorus gradually becomes three-dimensional, opening toward the outside and engaging with its surroundings.

Through choral movement, traditional singing, and percussion, participants will work on homophony/unison and vocal and percussive polyrhythms; on the voice as it is tied to gesture and movement; and on the drum as both musical and expressive instrument. Attention will be given to coordination between BODY movement, rhythm on the DRUM, and VOICE, to converging and diverging rhythms and movements, on- and off-beat patterns, pauses, doubled and halved tempos, basic pulse and rhythmic cells, and meters in 2, in 3, and their combinations.

Drawing on each participant's skills and capacities, the masterclass encourages group-based artistic creation, helping everyone to engage with and gradually master the mechanisms of collective

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Our present ego-feeling is, therefore, only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive—indeed, an all-embracing—feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it.

[1929 book Civilization and Its Discontents, Sigmund Freud]

continuum = the spatio-temporal field where bodily development, socio-spiritual kinship, ecological interdependence, and political responsibility co-emerge.

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When and how does this continuum become experientially explicit?

We can think of a continuum episode as a situated, somatically mediated experience in which a person feels:

- unusually present in their body
- less separate from their surroundings
- in relation with more-than-human life
- and oriented toward care or responsibility all at once.

Continuum is an event of relation that can be felt, described, and tracked. It's a state that happens in specific practices (singing in a choròs, listening walks, rituals, assemblies, etc): embodied, situated, coproduced.

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The Continuum Connection Framework (CCF) is a way to name and observe what happens in these practices trying to see whether somatic dramaturgies actually change how representers feel self-world-MOTH relations.

Dimensions of the “Continuum Connection”

Embodied Presence / Interoception

This dimension resonates with interoceptive awareness research, but for us it is also pedagogical: practices like frame-drum work, Greek chorus, Grotowski-inspired exercises are deliberate techniques to expand this capacity.

Boundary / Threshold Experience

More-than-Human Relatedness

Collective Field / Communitas

Integration & Ethical Orientation

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