

## Reference Materials for Pills Cluster: **TRAJECTORIES**

### ***GLOBALISM/LOCALISM: Move from the micro to the macro, and back. Linger in the meso.***

Simultaneous occurrence of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies in contemporary social, political, and economic systems. While strong centripetal forces exist intent on reclaiming the particularity of localism, for instance through an emphasis on endogenous food production and distribution, this happens concomitantly to, and in explicit tension or conflict with, the centrifugal forces of globalism. Local-driven perspectives and practices tend to reassert local knowledges of how to use and sustain the living Earth, for instance those knowledges that were swept aside as primitive and replaced by modern scientific agribusiness and synthetic fertilizers. Here local epistemic justice intersects and scaffolds a project of global justice. Research needs to be embedded in the local dimension, and be situated in specific polities to fulfil their potential; only then can they understand both the change that is needed and how this can be brought to bear. By being locally rooted they can, and often do, have the legitimacy and credibility that external actors lack, and from there they can enter a virtuous circle of engagement with global impact and global opportunities for large-scale change and future-building especially in times of transition. The potential for a series of 'small wins', that are fully situated but have the potential of scalability, demand an understanding of the ways in which systems operate, at the micro and macro dimension. It should also be noted that local tendencies might be becoming utterly centripetal and by advocating "deglobalization" can re-coalesce into right wing, identarian and ultra-nationalistic blood and soil narratives.

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- <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199744763.001.0001/acprof-9780199744763>
- Glocal participatory design: designerly approaches for trans-local climate change initiatives <https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/2662155.2662186>
- [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275833324\\_Embedding\\_research\\_in\\_local\\_contexts\\_local\\_knowledge\\_stakeholders%27\\_participation\\_and\\_fieldwork\\_design](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275833324_Embedding_research_in_local_contexts_local_knowledge_stakeholders%27_participation_and_fieldwork_design)

### ***POSTHUMANISM: Acknowledge that the human is a fiction. Build a new story that takes you beyond anthropocentrism.***

Posthumanism is a rather uncomfortable term, conjuring the end of the human and as such one that may elicit terror or at least some disquiet. Here rather than indulge in the heroic and very human-centred fantasies of the singularity we follow instead the notion of posthumanism as a philosophy that denies humanism's conception of the autonomous, self-possessed subject and privileges and instead the multiple forms in which the human is always already technological, always already prosthetic, always already so to speak post-. Feminist philosopher Rosi Braidotti uses the term Critical Posthumanities to describe the transdisciplinary crossover of fields – e.g. post-anthropocentrism; new materialism; critique of cognitive capitalism; technoscience; nomadic, creatives and process philosophies; the ecological continuum natureculture, and human-nonhuman - that share the desire to investigate the different ways being 'human' in the posthuman era. The Critical Posthumanities articulate the myriad of responses to the posthuman condition while acting within, and through, that condition. Seen through this lens, the posthuman is not a superseding, a negation or "an abolition of the human but an expansion of the terrain in which it is constituted, and an acknowledgement that the human is never neutral but rather structured by multiple grids, gradients, layers and locations" (Braidotti and Fuller 2019: 10). Weaving together a critique of anthropocentrism with the politics and practices of decolonization, the Critical Posthumanities' focus is not trying to reach a consensus, but rather the production of minor modes of knowledge that can capture what is happening: what the present is in the process of becoming, the near future, the adjacent possible, the potential of the present. The concept of minor, and of minor line of becoming, come from Deleuze and Guattari. Minor does not mean smaller, or weak, or vernacular, and it should not be seen as a quantitative opposition against major. Instead, by minority Deleuze and Guattari intend a multiplicity in continuous flux with no definite identity, a process of transformation that has the capacity to attract new forces, generate new thoughts, produce new affects. In this sense, minority is a relay (a condenser and a releaser) for forces and transformation. It generates mutation as it departs from the standard measure. There is therefore a vitality in the minor mode, a type of unruliness that triggers uncontrollable movement and collective becoming. While the general principles of the Critical Posthumanities are "supra-disciplinarity, meta-discursivity, material grounding, nomadic generative force and affirmative ethics" (Braidotti 2019b: 46), the methodological guidelines include also cartographic accuracy, ethical accountability, the combination of critique with creativity, a flair for paradoxes, the recognition of the specificity of art practices, non-linearity, memory, imagination and de-familiarization. What matters most is that the Critical Posthumanities are already changing the institutional landscape with a new set of transdisciplinary practices and narratives (Braidotti and Fuller 2019). The task of developing new literacies and methodologies to foster productive encounters and

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alliances across disciplines is therefore more pressing than ever. If this is our aim, then, we have to do it by fostering communal learning, by nourishing minor and marginal knowledges, by decelerating institutional speed (e.g. slow science), by promoting an idea of intelligence as a situational and affective practice, by “delinking the classic canon from ethnocentric, patriarchal and exceptionalist premises to form a different cosmological imaginary from them” (Braidotti 2019a: 147).

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### **REGENERATION: Act systemically so that resources are continually renewed. Check your environment. Put things back.**

Regeneration concerns systemic strategies that afford renewal, replenishment, revitalization of their own sources of energy and materials. It is driven by the idea that any (design) intervention must work with the ecosystems it is located with so as to regenerate rather than deplete underlying life support systems and resources within socio-ecological holes.

Specifically in the field of design, regeneration concerns a process that engages with, and stays focused on, the system of which we are all part and how it is evolving. This means that situatedness is central to regeneration: the location and context of place is fundamental to the understanding of the unique dynamics and inter-relations among existing stakeholders (humans, other biotic systems, earth systems, and the consciousness that connects them). Here place must be intended as a “unique, multilayered network of living systems within a geographic region that results from the complex interactions, through time, of the natural ecology (climate, mineral and other deposits, soil, vegetation, water and wildlife, etc.) and culture (Mang and Reed 2012). Regeneration thus builds the capability of human and nonhuman participants to engage in continuous and healthy co-evolution through continuous learning, feedback, reflection and dialogue.

Regenerative design uses whole systems thinking to create resilient and equitable systems that integrates nature with the socio-material environment. In this sense it goes further than sustainable design and its traditional weighing and measuring of environmental, social and economic impacts by focusing instead of holistic relationship mapping. In a regenerative system, feedback loops allow for adaptability, emergence and dynamism to create and develop resilient and flourishing eco-systems. Key aspects: understanding place and its unique patterns, designing for harmony within place, and co-evolution of humans and nonhumans.

### READINGS

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- *The Journey of Local Knowledge Toward Designing Neighbourhood Regeneration* [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338537443\\_The\\_Journey\\_of\\_Local\\_Knowledge\\_Toward\\_Designing\\_Neighbourhood\\_Regeneration](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338537443_The_Journey_of_Local_Knowledge_Toward_Designing_Neighbourhood_Regeneration)

### **TRANSVERSALISM: Use a diagonal to go beyond the vertical and the horizontal. Find connections across planes and dimensions.**

This is an open-ended expression that indicates a sensibility for *Transdisciplinarity*, *Transversality*, *Transculture*, *Transcendence*, *Transformation*, *Translation* and more. To be engaged in transdisciplinary research we must reflect and constantly evaluate the impact of our work upon the world, starting from the institutional ecologies we are embedded in, each with its own normative discourses, teaching and learning practices, procedural apparatuses and epistemic communities, in order to reflect on how these are contiguous to, and traversed by other, other ecologies (non-institutional, social, political, aesthetic, affective). This is where the question of transversality, the potential of relations to cultivate and establish further relations, becomes key.

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Transdisciplinarity responds to complexity by amplifying how we think about the world. It provides us with tools to develop other ways of thinking, knowing and relating to the world, helping us to navigate the epistemological shift from wanting to know the world as a homogenous entity (the fiction of a single individual world), to practices – transversal, collaborative, transformative – of attuning to a multiplicity of worlds we contribute to create. Last but not least, transdisciplinarity has the powerful effect of releasing us from the constraints of coherence, consistency and non-contradiction (Coleman and Ringrose 2013). Transversality is the dimension that attempts to overcome the impasse of verticality and horizontality, with their corollary of hierarchy, pyramidal structure and fixed organigrams. A true transversality has the capacity to trigger potential across heterogenous fields. It is a diagonal desire for building constellations, an experiment in thinking radically otherwise, a detonation across strata, labels and roles. Transversality dislodges immobilism by transcending the locked orthogonal mechanics of vertical-horizontal and by plumping instead for the free-ranging beauty of the diagonal. Trans-culture, drawn on cultural theorist Mikhail Epstein (2009), indicates a boundary experience at the crossroads with other cultures, encountered through cultural wanderings, risky experiments and even transgressions. The transcultural experience builds new, unpredictable configurations using fuzziness and interference to challenge the primacy of discrete thinking, so ingrained in established configurations of identity percolating often also in multicultural approaches. If the value of the transcultural proposition is in indicating ways of positioning oneself beyond cultures, rather than staying fixed within identity-forming practices of belonging to, or against, a certain culture of origin, there is a risk however of fetishizing this state of beyond-ness as intentional, a manoeuvre that disregards the impact of power distribution, social conflict and exogenous forces. As anthropologist Néstor García Canclini - a key proponent of the notion of hybridization - had already pointed out over three decades ago in his seminal *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (1995), processes of hybridisation must be articulated alongside concepts of contradiction, unevenness and inequality. Rather than focusing solely on “what can be fused together”, attention must be paid to what is left out, which is equally, if not more, significant to grasp power structures and hegemony. Thus, hybridisation is not about reconciling things that are different or trying to make them fit, but rather a partial, situated, ongoing process of transition from (more) heterogeneity to (more) homogeneity, and vice versa. In this sense, transculturality is more of a circuit than a space: the possibility of a constant fluid exchange, rather than a shared culture (Montezemolo 2009). This counteracts the oft-repeated idea that hybridity can only exist in opposition to purity (Stockhammer 2011). On the contrary, there has never been any purity. In Galison’s words, when he writes about trading zones: “we will never get anywhere with a too-rigid notion of stability or purity. Your body is constantly replacing cells, but enough of it remains for it to be possible to identify and reidentify yourself as the same person. Quasi-stability, not rigidity, is the relevant criterion” (Galison 2010, 29). Any fiction of purity must be abandoned. Cultures do not and cannot develop autonomously. Hybridization is always already happening.

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