

Planet-centred Design

by Jerneja Rebernak

In the end, therefore, instead of many possible times, we can speak only of a single time: the time of our experience: uniform, universal and ordered. This is the approximation of an approximation of a description of the world made from our particular perspective as human beings who are dependent on the growth of entropy, anchored to the flowing of time.
(Carlo Rovelli, *The order of Time*).

Poetics of attunement, while engaging sensibilities, empathy and rituals, can inspire the multiplicity of our ecosystems, our *umwelt*. It feels imperative to enable sites of resistance, to embrace our non-human agents, in the hope to shift from the rapid acceleration of climate shifts, sea level rise, mass extinction and societies of fear. Attunement to our vibrations, planetary frequencies and higher realms of being is perceived as mystic, sacred, ritualistic, immaterial, and not always equal to knowledge or science. This connection is unconditionally necessary, yet care and guidance to reconnect with purposeful spaces of attunement to experience and adjust to these fundamental planetary vibrations, is not widely accessible, and has been eradicated from our culture, traditions and knowledge. It is an obligation to contest and raise concern of outdated techno-scientific beliefs in the wake of new frontiers of studies embracing experiential multi-dimensionality of human nature that embraces into a future oriented Planetary Humanities. If we are to think across design and architecture, could we strive towards attunement when we plan, create and make?

Rosi Braidotti's affective words from her lecture at UCL in December 2018 are deeply resonant with this idea when she says that we should think of a shift towards '*Planetary Humanities*' which could form new alliances and engineer our survival. In order to do this, she said, we need to act through slowness, enabling social experiments, creating new social imaginaries and embracing an epistemic acceleration while resisting the anthropocentric post-human acceleration, i.e. cognitive capitalism. We need to take an ethical position to '*taking in and on the world –and becoming one and with the world*'.

Could a possible answer be to shift our sensory and perceptual field and engage scientifically with modes of attunement, and to open psychotropic research across Humanities to engage in the production of new forms of language?

Attunement, as atmosphere or tone becomes a critical positionality if we think through its signifier, and we may even try to distribute its meaning across disciplines as a network. It might be that we can relate attunement as proposition for Lefebvre 'unitary theory', a 'unity between fields': 'the physical space of nature, the Cosmos, the mental space including logic and abstraction and the social. Or could this be an integration alongside the articulation of the subtle world of experience of the imagination – the Imaginal. The imaginal relates to a dismantling of the hard division between an external material reality and an internal psychic landscape, *the liminal land of enchantment that bridges the material to the psychic* (M. Rowlandson).

I decided that the only way to start engaging with a community of practice is to write this short essay and to engage in a broader discussion by writing this manifesto below in trying to imagine how to engage with our common futures.

Fifty years on, Aldous Huxley's 1959 account of the psychedelic state as an 'expansive' state of consciousness, research on psychedelics is expanding once more, from anti-depression clinical trials from London to the Harvard. Also, public knowledge is gaining momentum from Michael Pollen recent

book 'How to change your mind', to activist endeavors like the Psychedelic Society London. Personally, the importance of attunement to spirit became immediately perceptible when I entered sacred realms at the Blue lake in Colorado while experimenting with psilocybin. Being a highly personal and sacred journey, I kept a distinct and respectful attitude towards psychedelics since then.

Most energetic healing practices are passed orally, in shamanic and tribal cultures, however they became lost in translation, at least in my culture, most likely burned with the knowledge of millions of women healers in Europe. Until now, I feel that I have been living in a dormant state, however a new path opened after an intense period of grief and trauma experienced in the last year. I rediscovered these path and vibrations when I started to work with the Tibetan singing bowls and during my recent journeys in Mexico. After this passage, I felt the need to transmit my experience, and to engage, share and create in a spirit of open knowledge and open culture. I am blessed and grateful to all teachers I encountered on this journey and for new ones yet to cross my path.

Tesla's famous statement 'if we want to know the secrets of the universe, we should focus on the non-physical aspects than physical aspects'. This closely relates to the embodiment experienced felt during a state of trance, a state of attunement I felt when I was embodying the cosmos and our planet Earth as vibration, primordial energy field connected to all other energy fields simultaneously like a giant timeless network. Once we enter these transformative and expanding states of expansive consciousness our life changes. A new path of understanding opens, offering attunement in every moment of life. I am yet at the very beginning of this journey, however I feel encouraged to share, to pass on, to inspire communities of practice, a network of sisterhood and brotherhood.

The heartbeat of the Earth, its fundamental beat, is recorded at 7.86hHz, the so-called Schumann's resonance. When we attune to Nature we attune to this primordial beat. Although unknown to most human beings, I recognized that there should be ways to enter the alpha, beta, theta, delta state of mind when we choose and accept to do so. This now became a quest.

As I am writing this experience for the first time, I feel the need to engage in a more systematic intellectual overview on this theme, and as a curious being, I became a sponge for opportunities presented to me in synchronicity to my research. I am now sharing my process and vision, which I hope will be inspiring and engaging for the reader. Forgive me if you will not find glimpses of illumination along the way, however I hope you will find at least some desire to become more open, and more attuned to the possibilities of the non-physical, the immaterial and the imaginal.

Harmonics of the mind

The wooden doors adorning Kings College's chapel are breathing moist from the heat generated by patient bodies awaiting to enter the hall in Mays' humid day in London. Inside, the artist group Senscapes is preparing an immersive sound performance. An aurally and visually enchanting dance captured through magnetoencephalography (MEG) permeated the space. Cymatic-type images and sound responses offered a glimpse into the brain reaction to the psilocybin chemical. A roundtable discussion followed with researchers from prominent UK universities contextualizing their current research on psychedelics for medical purposes.

Data shows us that a new harmonic language is being created; the brain creates vibration frequencies; in this state, the brain is able to use its potential patterns, to expand the repertoire of harmonic brain states. It creates a more spontaneous and complex order, than in its usual resting state. A reorganization is happening, the brain becomes more creative.
(Selen Atasoy @King's College, 2018)

Neuro-transmitting functions of serotonin are found from single organisms to humans. When LSD was isolated by Hoffmann at Sandoz Laboratory in Zurich tests shown this correlation. The equivalencies among both chemical compounds are evident. But why do we need more serotonin in life? While the earth is going through the fastest rise in temperatures in hundreds of years, even more animal species are threatened to extinction, the Earth is being depleted of its minerals and we are experiencing an out of order situation.

In Michael Pollen's book *How to Change your mind: The new science of Psychedelics*, Paul Stamets imagines how the psilocybin is [*a chemical messenger sent from Earth*]. We can then embody it as a [*virtue of the gift of consciousness and language*] upon which we must ACT before it's too late. Can these traces of psychoactive elements bring us closer towards truly understanding an embodied Nature?

Also from a philosophical argument, an embodied understanding of Nature is not an abstract idea, but dwells in Spinoza's theory of 'substance', a continuation of Stoic principles of indivisibility: [Unextended (i.e thoughts) and extended matter are derived from the same substance (...) 'Absolutely infinite substance is indivisible'] (Peg Rawes, 2008). The pervasiveness in feeling One with nature is fundamental when experiencing states of mind that are expanded. Meditation, Pranayama, Yoga, Sacred sounds, Shamanic practices are dedicated ancient practices of knowledge, fundamentals that enable our transmissions in deep state of connection to ourselves and to consciousness as a whole. As much as we should embrace these ancient practices, we should re-familiarize and remember how we felt when we were ego-less, open and curious to the world. There is an interdependence among all things, and expansive consciousness is teaching us how to do this. The paths to open towards this knowledge are multiple and personal, however I feel we need to recognize a major shift in thinking and working though these is truly necessary for our survival on this planet.

Psychedelics and Extinction

I impatiently waited to pass the double doored entrance of Conway Hall on a cold January evening. Around 200 people filled the room to attend the *Psychedelics, Extinction and Social Change* event. When I heard both speakers on the stage, Dr. Gail Bradbrook, co-founder of Extinction Rebellion, and Stephen Reid, founder of The Psychedelic Society, I thought the moment was groundbreaking. Massive civil disobedience actions have been already taking place in London, a social movement for

transparent government action in tackling climate change, fair reporting and local participation in decision-making. It is unprecedented that in such a short time, an activist group gained so much uptake, decentralization being at its core organizational model. At the core of this movement manifesting was Gail's embodiment of nature's pervasiveness experienced through sacred plant medicine and spirit guides.

One of the key points I took away that evening was a message from Gail. She shared three important forms of practice that can guide us in shifting our consciousness:

- To bring our bodies and mind in good shape,
- To build a community
- The universe has intelligence and we can learn how to communicate with it.

Not necessarily the answer here should be escapism into the woods, silent spiritual practice or continuous experimentation with psychedelics. I feel that in our connected realities we should engage in deep cooperation to create transnational publics and compassionate relationships of all kinds. My own personal view on this has been the need to create a manifesto for planetary-centred design.

I hope many of you thinkers, artists, designers, architects, activists, educators and philosophers will join me in responding to this and feedback on how we can truly design a more compassionate and caring planetary future.

A Manifesto for a Planetary-centred Design: moving from a geo-mechanical perspective to a Gaian perspective;

- Shifting from Human to Earth care, healing and conservation practices;
- Engaging with situated ecologies when making and creating with reflection;
- Merging individual consciousness towards cosmic consciousness;
- Stepping into active spaces of imagination and work with mythical realms to dream our reality;
- Listening, creating spaces of solidarity and act in resonance;
- Attuning to all sentient beings to create a legacy on planet Earth;
- Approaching our creations and endeavors with humility, gratitude and joy;
- Manifesting decolonized knowledge and respectful attitude to build trust with cultures, ecological systems and indigenous practices.