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ARTICLE

Designing Cosmic Inhabiting: Amerindian Cosmologies, Flat Ontology, and Alternative Futures in the Anthropocene

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ABSTRACT

The environmental challenges of the Anthropocene demand alternative ways of inhabiting and relating to the world. This article introduces the concept of cosmic inhabiting as a framework for rethinking human and more-than-human coexistence through a dialogue between Amerindian perspectivism and flat ontology. Through a conceptual and comparative theoretical analysis, it investigates convergences between these traditions and explores their implications for environmentally responsible futures. The first part examines key dimensions of Amerindian perspectivism, particularly in the work of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Indigenous thinkers such as Ailton Krenak, highlighting forms of reciprocity, care, and co-responsibility that challenge anthropocentric assumptions. The second part analyzes how flat ontology, especially in Graham Harman's object-oriented thought and related relational approaches, similarly questions ontological hierarchies that privilege human beings over other entities. Drawing on recent debates in design anthropology, ontological design, and pluriversal design, the article argues that cosmic inhabiting provides a conceptual bridge between these perspectives and offers resources for imagining alternative futures beyond extractivism and anthropocentrism. By bringing these traditions into dialogue, the article contributes to contemporary discussions on design, ecology, and environmental responsibility in the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Anthropocene; Design Anthropology; Pluriverse; Amerindian Perspectivism; Cosmic Inhabiting; Ontological Design

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1. Introduction

The Anthropocene has generated intense philosophical, ecological, and political debates concerning the future of human and non-human life on Earth. Among the central questions raised by these discussions is whether contemporary societies can develop alternative ways of inhabiting the world that can respond to accelerating environmental degradation and climate disruption. In this article, the Anthropocene is understood as the proposed geological epoch in which human activities have become a dominant force shaping Earth's ecological systems, giving rise to unprecedented environmental transformations and climate instability.

When I began reading and researching the Anthropocene, I confess I was shocked to find an era to call our own. However, this era is not marked solely by Anthropos, but by the destruction of this being-in-the-world. Here, being-in-the-world refers to Heidegger's understanding of human existence as fundamentally relational, situated, and inseparable from its worldly context rather than as an isolated subject confronting external objects. In a way, my seven-year-old nephew was right when he unpretentiously announced at a Father's Day lunch this year, while risking a few notes on my guitar: The world is not going to die, only people will. It seems there is a depth to what children know: they intuitively sense things and allow us to unveil complex ideas in simple, randomly sung phrases. Without knowing it, my nephew summarized much of what some Anthropocene theorists claim when he proposed that human life will end if we continue on a path marked by the species' selfishness and the logic of exacerbated hyperproductive capitalism. However, other forms of life would continue without our existential footprint in the world.

In the first section, when considering the context of climate change and the global climate crisis and/or emergency, I find it important to be inspired by and learn from the indigenous peoples of Brazil and Latin America, as they have been resisting the end of the world for many centuries. In the second section, I attempt to show in what sense it is possible to establish a dialogue between Amerindian ontology, especially as articulated by Viveiros de Castro, and flat ontology, mainly developed in Graham Harman's proposal. Just as the Amerindian perspective allows us to see the river or the rocks as entities as important as any human being, the theoretical contribution of flat ontology also allows us to see human, animal and inanimate entities more horizontally, with the same ontological status, without the hierarchy of different types of existence based on the human one, which, in my view, makes it possible to design other ways of inhabiting in the Anthropocene.

Moreover, why does this matter? Well, it seems to me that we already know the anthropocentric logic that has always taught us to see the other as a means has bequeathed us a degraded environment and an unprecedented climate crisis. So perhaps thinking from another, more communal perspective, focused on otherness and co-responsibility for other ways of inhabiting the world, will allow us to care for and preserve the world. At the same time, it is still possible to postpone its end. In recent years, debates in design theory and design anthropology have increasingly emphasized the need to rethink how worlds are designed and inhabited in the context of the Anthropocene. Scholars such as Arturo Escobar[1], Tim Ingold[2], and Tony Fry[3] have argued that design should not be understood merely as the production of objects, but as a practice that shapes forms of life, relations between humans and non-humans, and the very ontologies through which worlds are enacted. This perspective has been particularly influential in the field of design anthropology, which explores how design practices can engage with cultural and ontological diversity when imagining possible futures[4]. From this perspective, design becomes a key site for imagining and cultivating alternative futures that challenge anthropocentric and extractivist ways of inhabiting the Earth.

Against this backdrop, the main question of this article is: how can dialogue between Amerindian perspectivism and flat ontology help rethink contemporary ways of inhabiting the world in the Anthropocene? Specifically, the article explores whether the similarities between these perspectives can provide conceptual tools for envisioning alternative futures through what I term cosmic inhabiting.

Methodological Approach

This article employs a qualitative, conceptual, and theoretical method rooted in philosophical hermeneutics, design theory, and current anthropological discussions. Instead of conducting empirical fieldwork, it creates a conceptual dia-

logue between Amerindian perspectivism—particularly as presented by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and modern Indigenous thinkers like Ailton Krenak—and flat ontology, especially in Graham Harman's work. By conducting a comparative theoretical analysis, the article aims to find overlaps between these perspectives and examine their significance for design theory, ontological design, and alternative ways of inhabiting the world in the context of the Anthropocene.

In this sense, the article adopts a conceptual-analytical approach that brings Amerindian perspectivism into dialogue with flat ontology in order to reflect on how design can contribute to rethinking modes of inhabiting in the Anthropocene. By connecting Amerindian cosmologies with contemporary debates on ontological design and design anthropology, the paper proposes cosmic inhabiting as a way of imagining more relational, plural, and environmentally responsible futures. This proposal resonates with recent developments in design anthropology that seek to connect design practice with ecological responsibility, ontological plurality, and more-than-human forms of coexistence[5].

Analytically, the comparison proceeds in three steps. First, the article reconstructs key ontological assumptions of Amerindian perspectivism. Second, it examines central concepts of flat ontology and object-oriented thought. Third, it compares points of convergence and divergence between these frameworks to assess their relevance to design theory and environmental thought in the Anthropocene (see **Figure 1**).

2. Amerindian Worldview: Everything Everywhere All at Once

To begin the discussion of this section, I would like to address the concepts of dwelling and inhabiting briefly. In this article, dwelling refers to a more restricted term, meaning living in a physical structure, inhabiting is a broader concept, encompassing the act of occupying a space and being present in a material or immaterial territory. When I mention ways of inhabiting here, my point is to show that inhabiting requires time, a lingering in a given environment, and a way of relating to human and non-human beings. According to Tim Ingold[6], to inhabit is to be alive, which amounts to being perpetually in the process of inhabiting, involving a dynamic, two-way relationship between a being and its environment. In this sense, according to Gadamer[7], who argues that we always start from a horizon, from a point of view about the world, I would like to highlight some elements of the Amerindian worldview and way of living, as I believe there is an important peculiarity there from which we can learn to deal with the problems of the Anthropocene.

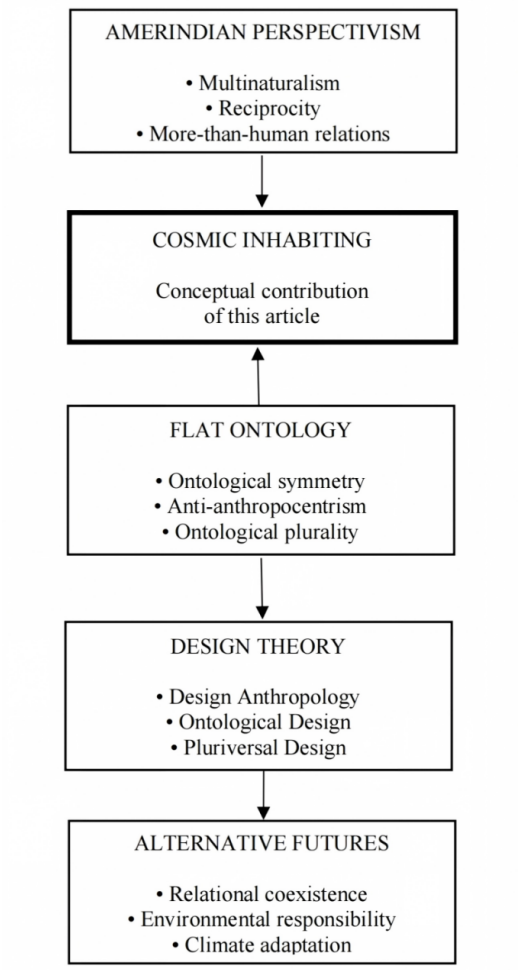


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of cosmic inhabiting.
Note: The figure illustrates the conceptual dialogue proposed in this article between Amerindian perspectivism and flat ontology, whose convergence is synthesized in the notion of cosmic inhabiting and projected toward alternative futures in the Anthropocene.

To start my discussion of the Amerindian way of life and habitation, I begin with some conceptual assumptions consolidated in the anthropological studies of Eduardo Viveiros de Castro[8, 9]. According to Viveiros de Castro[10], "Amerindian perspectivism is the conception according to which the world is inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view." Broadly speaking, the notion of Amerindian perspectivism stems from the indige-

nous mythological conception of ancient times, in which the entities of the cosmos shared a common trait that enabled communication. In this sense, this is why I reference the film *Everything Everywhere All at Once*, since, as in the film, from the Amerindian perspective, all entities [human and non-human] cohabit the same space, share the same cosmos at the same time, but in the same dimension—or in a different one, if we consider the spiritual context as something detached. Everything happens at the same time or in a flux of constant transformation: human beings can communicate with rivers, stones, for eventually they would turn into one of these elements. Naturally, Amerindian cosmologies are quite diverse. This discussion does not aim to reduce indigenous traditions to a single worldview but instead highlights common themes across anthropological perspectives on perspectivism and various indigenous writings. For Donna Haraway[11], for instance, the current era demands accepting that we live in a context where human and non-human beings are intrinsically intertwined, and that our task is to live with the complexities of a degraded planet and forge alliances with other species to design still-habitable futures.

In recent discussions within design anthropology, Amerindian perspectivism has also been interpreted as part of what Arturo Escobar[1] calls the pluriverse—a world in which many worlds fit. Rather than assuming a single universal ontology of nature and culture, pluriversal perspectives emphasize the coexistence of multiple ways of understanding and inhabiting reality. Recent developments in relational thought further reinforce this perspective. Escobar et al.[12] argue that the contemporary ecological crisis stems from assumptions of separateness and dualism, proposing relationality as a basis for constructing more livable worlds beyond human-centered frameworks. From this viewpoint, indigenous cosmologies do not simply represent cultural differences but alternative ontological frameworks that can inform how design engages with environmental and social challenges. In this sense, Amerindian perspectivism also contributes to broader discussions on decolonization and epistemic justice by challenging the epistemic privilege historically attributed to Western ontologies and by recognizing the legitimacy of multiple ways of knowing and inhabiting the world. This shift from a universalist worldview toward a pluriversal one has become central to debates about designing alternative futures in the Anthropocene. Similar arguments have been made in anthropological discussions of cosmopolitics, which highlight how indigenous worlds often include entities such as mountains, rivers, and forests as political and relational actors within shared worlds[13].

The idea that human beings can be understood as cohabitants of the same environment is not new in philosophy. If we consider, for example, Heidegger's conception in *Being and Time*, human beings are described by their way of being-in-the-world among and intertwined with other entities, in a movement of relating, concealing, and revealing, for the world is about possibility and meaning[14]. Obviously, for Heidegger, there is a distinction: Dasein is a different category of existence, as it questions its own nature; it is an entity conscious of its self-awareness and finitude, whose identity is based on its own interpretative and situated action. Heidegger uses the term Dasein (being-there) to designate the specifically human mode of existence, characterized by its capacity for self-interpretation, temporality, and questioning its own being. Human beings are entities among other entities, but with their own way of being, as they question their being, their existence, finitude, and their relationship with other beings.

Returning to the Amerindian worldview, it is worth emphasizing that, from this perspective, the impossibility of ontologically distinguishing between culture and nature, and between humans and non-humans, is evident. In this sense, among Amerindians, it is unprofitable to understand nature as something separate and objective, since it always exists in one perspective, one point of view, and thus cannot be reduced to the notion of Western cultural relativism, for "Nature and culture are not two domains or substances but two perspectives, each being the reflex of the other"[10]. The Amerindian idea posits a single soul that permeates the multiplicity of bodies, thus creating a form of Amerindian multinaturalism, in which nature serves as a backdrop for different natures emerging from different bodies (human and non-human). This is in accordance with what Viveiros de Castro[10] supports, when he argues, "The common condition of beings is humanity, and what differentiates them is their bodily form. The body is an assemblage of affects or capacities which define what a being can do." From this perspective, the condition we share with other beings is not animality but humanity, and this is especially evident in Amerindian myths, whose narratives include free communication and the mutual

recognition of different beings as human. It is through myths that the Amerindians indicate that there was a speciation of living beings, so that they no longer recognized themselves as human due to the differentiation of their bodies.

According to Tânia S. Lima[15], for example, when Amerindians hunt peccaries, what Amerindians understand as hunting is understood by the hunted as war. These are two parallel events that intersect, so the hunter must be careful not to impose the peccary's perspective on him, or risk losing his humanity. It is as if humans (hunters) are fighting peccaries (warriors), so the hunter must maintain his point of view to prevent his soul from being captured by the peccary's perspective, which could cause him to lose his identity as a human hunter and begin to identify as a peccary warrior. Here, losing humanity would mean losing the capacity for reflection and human subjectivity, because a human being is a designation that informs a person's place and situates their point of view; these are pronominal expressions that define the point of view in which such subjectivity is formed or by which one considers oneself human. Once again, there is a spiritual/cosmological identification that unites all beings under the same metaphysical mantle, yet different natures emerge from the distinct perspectives of the Amerindians. On the same subject, Hanna Limulja[16] affirms that the Yanomami, for instance, can understand dreams not only from an analytical, psychological perspective, but also as a pragmatic possibility. When dreaming of a machete stuck in the ground, for example, they can understand the likelihood of an imminent snake attack and, based on this knowledge, abandon a hunt or change their sleeping location. There is much more to this than a merely rational analysis, but one that considers dream elements that allow them to see the invisible, bringing in elements of a decolonial metaphysics unique to the Amerindians.

Shifting my theoretical framework a bit, I would like to mention another author, not so academic, but who, especially in the last decade, has gained more visibility as an ambassador of Brazilian Indigenous culture and thought. His name is Ailton Krenak, an Indigenous member of the Krenak ethnic group, who was born and raised in the middle Doce River region—the same river that was severely impacted and contaminated by mining tailings during the Fundão dam collapse in Mariana, Minas Gerais, Brazil, in 2015. Krenak[17] discusses, among other things, ideas to postpone the end of the world, emphasizing in particular the importance of environmental preservation and the demarcation of Indigenous lands—given that Indigenous people are the greatest guardians of the forests—and is also a staunch critic of the capitalist system that, in his words, devours the planet. For the author, "Humanity invented the idea that it is separate from the Earth, that it can live without it. This illusion is at the root of our collective insanity"[17]. This is a flimsy excuse to justify the assault that large corporations are making on our notion of nature, as it makes us live alienated from the Earth, of which we are a part, considering it as something separate.

Since Krenak embraces the same Amerindian perspectivism I mentioned above, for him, everything is nature, the cosmos is nature, and everything he thinks is nature. For the author, a mountain on the banks of the Doce River, near the Krenak village, has a name, a personality. As the author explains, "For us [indigenous peoples], the mountain has a spirit. When we wake up, we look at it to know if it is time to celebrate or to be quiet. The mountain speaks to us"[17]. When looking at the mountain in the morning, people know whether it is better to celebrate or remain quiet, because the mountain's mood is considered in their way of inhabiting the world. In short, there is an identification and consideration of the ontological status of beings without there being a necessarily preponderant hierarchy on the part of human beings in relation to other beings, as everything is connected. It is in this sense that the author defends both the proposal that life is not useful and that the future is ancestral, because, in his view, one of the most intelligent and practical ways to reconnect human beings with the cosmos, so that they understand themselves as part of the same whole, is via ancestral indigenous wisdom, which recognizes nature as part of the human condition, and not as something separate to be merely used and exploited[18, 19].

This Amerindian vision, expressed both in anthropological accounts of perspectivism and in contemporary indigenous thinkers such as Ailton Krenak, once again emphasizes that we humans are cosmically connected to the environment and to other entities, placing us in a condition I call cosmic inhabitation. To some extent, with a completely different framework and approach, this idea converges with what Charles Taylor[20] discusses in his latest work, which addresses the need to reconnect with our cosmic connec-

tions. This way of inhabiting the world, which places us on equal footing with other beings, is a mode of dealing with others, the environment, and nature based on respect and care. Animals, rocks, and rivers are as important as human beings, so they should be preserved in the same way and treated with dignity, not exploited. By cosmic inhabiting, I do not mean merely dwelling in a physical environment. Rather, the concept denotes a mode of inhabiting grounded in the recognition that humans, non-humans, landscapes, and material entities participate in shared worlds of mutual dependence. Unlike dwelling, which often emphasizes place, or ontological design, which focuses on design's world-making capacities, cosmic inhabiting highlights the ethical and cosmological implications of coexistence in a more-than-human world. In this sense, a direct implication of overcoming the anthropocentric and self-centered ontology of humankind is evident in the struggle of the Pankararu indigenous people, who seek to grant legal status to rivers such as the São Francisco. This vision is only possible because their legal defense is based on a perspective that considers rivers part of the indigenous way of life and sacred entities. This allows them to fight for a legal status that protects the river from exploitation, since it is now considered an end rather than a means.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that this perspective places us in a position of humility and smallness before the world, prompting us to question our ontological status and to reconsider it from a more horizontal, flat perspective. I will discuss this in the next section, which examines ways of designing through a flat ontology, which, I believe, resonates with the Amerindian way of understanding the world and can be useful in addressing environmental and climate issues, since it does not consider human beings more important than other entities.

3. Designing through Flat Ontology: An Alternative for Environmental Issues?

To begin this section, I would like to say that my interest in flat ontology is not new, but this is the first time I have allowed myself to relate it to the Amerindian worldview. Assuming that we are relational beings, that we coexist and cohabit on the same planet, that we live alongside animate and inanimate beings, human and non-human, we lose sight of a strong, hierarchical ontology based on anthropocentrism. According to Graham Harman[21], "All entities, whether real or sensual, human or non-human, are equally objects. None is ontologically privileged," which shows that there is an ontological flattening. I hypothesize that this type of millennial anthropocentric ontology, within the logic of domination, exploitation, and the use of other forms of life considered inferior to humans, led us to develop capitalist modes of production that completely disregard the care we should have for our shared home, planet Earth.

Starting from authors such as Bruno Latour[22] and Manuel DeLanda[23]. For example, those who adopt a relational stance toward the world, focused on agency, and not necessarily on the preponderance of subject and object, can help us understand how we can think about our human ontological status from afar and outside a speciesist pedestal. In terms of design itself, Harman[24], inspired by Heidegger, when approaching object-oriented ontology, understands that every designed artifact, regardless of its nature (human, non-human, natural, or artificial), has the same ontological status, hence a flat ontology. By rejecting the traditional hierarchy, which privileges humans over objects, such a perspective disregards the distinction between humans and other entities. While Harman's object-oriented ontology posits withdrawal and autonomy of objects, Latour's and DeLanda's approaches stress relational agency. This distinction may be crucial when aligning such frameworks with Amerindian relational cosmologies.

While these perspectives share a critique of anthropocentric hierarchies, they are not identical. Object-oriented ontology, particularly in Harman's formulation, emphasizes the autonomy and withdrawal of objects, suggesting that all entities exist on the same ontological plane. By contrast, approaches such as Latour's actor-network theory and DeLanda's assemblage theory focus more explicitly on relational processes and distributed agency. Despite these differences, what these perspectives share—and what makes them particularly relevant for thinking about design in the Anthropocene—is the attempt to move beyond human exceptionalism and to recognize a more symmetrical ontology between human and non-human entities. Nevertheless, significant differences persist. Amerindian perspectivism is fundamentally relational and grounded in shifting viewpoints

among human and non-human entities, whereas Harman's ontology highlights the independence and withdrawal of objects regardless of relational access. This dialogue should not be seen as equating the two frameworks, but as a constructive convergence focused on critiquing anthropocentric ontological dominance, which, as I insist, seems to contribute to the anthropocentric view that has led humanity to a socio-environmental abyss.

Although Heidegger[14] does not propose a flat ontology in the strict sense, his reflections on being-in-the-world help to situate human existence as fundamentally relational and embedded among other entities. This perspective resonates, in different ways, with contemporary attempts to move beyond anthropocentric hierarchies in ontology. Incidentally, it is in this same sense that Heidegger[25] speaks when he explains that modern technology sees nature as a resource to be exploited, because, when human beings are understood as essentially superior to the world in which they live, the natural world is reduced to a set of things to be used and dominated by humans. From the perspective of flat ontology, all entities exist on the same ontological plane, so that no entity is superior or more fundamental than another; all entities are valid, real, significant, and related in some way. Therefore, Heidegger is not portrayed here as a proponent of flat ontology. Instead, he is viewed as a thinker whose relational perspective on being-in-the-world raises questions that subsequent ontological theories develop in various ways.

Traditionally, design has been considered, taught, and understood as a field of knowledge focused on the production of objects[26]. However, design has long been considered much more for its speculative capabilities, as shown by Dunne and Raby[27], as well as by other authors who consider the ethical elements involved in the design process, such as Peter-Paul Verbeek[28]. Contemporary design theory increasingly understands design not simply as the production of artifacts but as a world-making practice. Arturo Escobar[1] emphasizes its pluriversal and relational character, arguing that design participates in the creation of multiple worlds rather than reproducing a single universal model of development. Anne-Marie Willis[29] highlights design' s ontological dimension, suggesting that while humans design the world, they are simultaneously designed by the material, social, and technological environments they create. Tony Fry[3] argues that design plays a central role in shaping sustainable futures, insisting that every act of design either contributes to defuturing or helps redirect society toward more viable forms of inhabiting. From a hermeneutical perspective, I have likewise argued that design can be understood as a philosophical and interpretive practice that unfolds in dialogue with the arts[30, 31]. Recent discussions on ontological design have reinforced the idea that design does not merely produce objects or systems, but actively participates in shaping forms of being, practices, and ways of inhabiting the world. In this sense, design can be understood as a process through which worlds are continuously constituted and transformed[32]. In this sense, contemporary discussions on pluriversal design have emphasized that designing alternative futures requires engaging with diverse ontologies and forms of life rather than assuming a single universal model of development[33]. Such a perspective becomes particularly relevant in the context of accelerating ecological and social crises, where the challenge is not merely to redesign artifacts but to reconfigure the political and institutional conditions through which futures are imagined and enacted. As Fry argues, responding to planetary emergencies requires political transformations capable of overcoming unsustainable modes of existence and creating conditions for more viable futures[34].

Aware of this opening in contemporary design, more speculative and philosophical, my proposal, when speaking of designing alternative ways of inhabiting the Anthropocene, takes up the task of seeking in design the attitude I feel is missing in philosophy. As we philosophers tend to theorize a lot and propose few practical solutions to urban problems, I felt the need to look to design for guidance and a suggested approach to crafting public policy proposals in my region. To provide context, in May of 2024, my state, Rio Grande do Sul, in the extreme south of Brazil, experienced the worst flooding, affecting 95% of its cities. Since then, my new research project seeks not only theoretical but also practical solutions for the cities surrounding the university where I work and the city where I live. To think about alternative ways of inhabiting the world amid a degraded environment and the exacerbated events of the climate crisis, I realized that there were proposals for designing cities and behaviors, as well as a more critical proposal for sustainable urbanism in design-specific research. From this perspective, design interventions might include flood-adaptive urban planning, river restoration projects, community-led environmental monitoring, and

participatory planning that treats ecological systems as integral to urban life rather than merely external resources—lessons I learned during my study mission at Delft University in the Netherlands last year and in my current research project on climate resilience education at Takachiho University in Japan.

Research on design and nature, however, is not necessarily new. I am thinking here of the work of Ian McHarg[35, 36], who, starting in the 1960s, proposed a type of urban design and planning that considered natural terrain, elements like sponge cities, and environmental preservation as part of human subsistence and the security of future generations. The author, like Heidegger, stood in open opposition to what he understood as the heritage of urban-industrial modernity, whose style was marked by destruction and domination. Unlike philosophical discussions about climate justice that only touch on the issues and think in broad categories about how to equate socioeconomic solutions that, in theory, could solve real problems when/if applied, a design approach that considers environmentally integrated and regionalized solutions seems more sensible. Here, I'd like to note that since the beginning of my project in 2024, I've been in contact with the city government and have asked the environmental and urban planning departments what they're doing to minimize the impacts of the city's recurring, increasingly severe floods. I hope it will be possible to engage in dialogue and work with the government to design viable solutions that help mitigate the population's suffering without necessarily compromising the local biome. Recent scholarship has increasingly connected design practices with climate adaptation, resilience, and environmental stewardship, highlighting the need for locally situated responses to climate-related disruptions[37].

As Papanek[38] explained in the 1970s, design is about planning, designing, and standardizing actions toward an expected and predictable end. For the author, design is like composing a poem or a concerto; it is a conscious and intuitive effort to impose order with meaning. In addition to this more conceptual and theoretical explanation, there is also an application of responsibility for what is designed, considering the environmental impact, the pollution caused, the natural resources used/destroyed, as well as the conditions of the workers involved. One contemporary author who has been proposing discussions of the Anthropocene and provoking us to think in terms of defuturing is Tony Fry[39]. For the author, it is impossible to establish a viable future for humans without design, and thinking about the absence of a future prompts us to confront the imminent finitude of our species and our unsustainable agency in the world. In a way, our challenge is precisely to think about the end affirmatively, in the most Heideggerian sense, given our condition of Being-towards-death, and to acquire a taste for life through the recognition of our own finitude[40].

From a less anthropocentric perspective, or inspired by the Amerindian perspective I discussed in the first section, I believe it is possible to think and act in the world toward a less apocalyptic way of living. This certainly involves promoting a struggle that confronts and/or circumvents what many contemporary authors describe as the Capitalocene—that is, an ecological crisis driven not simply by humanity as a whole, but by the historical dynamics of capitalist production—perhaps along the lines of Kohei Saito's argument for degrowth[41]. Saito argues that confronting the ecological crisis requires moving beyond the imperative of endless economic growth toward forms of production and consumption oriented by ecological limits, democratic participation, and the regeneration of the commons. His proposal is particularly relevant here because it offers a political and economic framework compatible with the more relational and less extractivist modes of inhabiting advocated throughout this article. This makes even more sense given the ecological crisis of the Anthropocene, which compels us to transition to a society that focuses more on use value than exchange value, reducing the working day, democratizing production, and no longer thinking in terms of exclusively exploitative, stockpiling logic. Being anti-anthropocentric, in this sense, does not imply adopting a nihilistic or self-destructive view of humanity. Rather, it means refusing to grant human beings a privileged ontological or moral status over other entities.

This way of thinking, as I argue, seems to open our eyes to a way of inhabiting the world that considers the environment as part of our habitat. When we consider that the world is not something distant from us, that nature is not something separate from our lives—because we live among other beings, the environment, and nature, because we are part of it all—it becomes more difficult to think only in an exploitative and destructive logic. When we consider that everything has a more balanced, less hierarchical value, in which all entities are recognized in their entirety, whether from the perspective

of the Amerindian cosmic view or of a flat ontology, we consider ourselves part of the great dwelling that is the planet. Treating animals and nature beyond the perspective of natural resources to be exploited requires a radical shift in how we inhabit the Earth. Such a shift also implies rethinking the role of design itself, not merely as a discipline oriented toward production and innovation, but as a practice capable of participating in the reconfiguration of how humans and non-humans coexist within shared ecological worlds. In this sense, I believe and advocate that designing new ways of inhabiting the world marked by the climate crisis and its consequences requires giving importance to other forms of inhabiting the world, whether human or non-human, as this would make it difficult to think exclusively through the capitalist logic of excessive exploitation.

4. Conclusions

The main contribution of this article is to show that a dialogue between Amerindian perspectivism and flat ontology can provide a conceptual foundation for rethinking inhabitation beyond anthropocentric assumptions, thereby offering new resources for design theory in the Anthropocene and for rethinking different ways of dealing with climate issues. Thinking about new ways of living is a necessary movement at a time when the environment is degraded by a housing model focused on extractivism, and when exacerbated capitalist production has proven to be outdated. By proposing the horizon of life and the way of life of the Amerindian worldview, I intended to show that it is possible to inhabit, give meaning to, and live by lingering in a space, in a territory, without necessarily being guided by hyperconsumption and the logic of exploiting others. By understanding that we are entities among other entities, drawing from Heidegger's reflections on being-in-the-world, we find points of contact with the ancestral cosmic vision of Indigenous peoples, who long before already understood humans as co-participants in the world and in nature. In this sense, what Andean cosmologies call Pachamama refers to Earth as a living, relational, and sacred presence rather than as a passive repository of natural resources.

From the perspective of design anthropology, engaging with indigenous cosmologies and relational ontologies is not simply an intellectual exercise but a way of expanding the ontological horizons through which design imagines and enacts possible futures. As several scholars have argued, the challenge in the Anthropocene is not only to design new objects or technologies but to design new ways of living, inhabiting, and relating within a shared world. As scholars working on multispecies worlds have argued, imagining alternative futures requires paying attention to the entangled lives of humans and non-humans that constitute shared environments. Tsing's work demonstrates how forms of life emerge through precarious interdependencies that exceed human planning and control, revealing the ecological and social complexity of coexistence in damaged landscapes [42]. More recently, van Dooren has further emphasized that human and non-human beings participate in the co-creation of meaningful worlds, suggesting that environmental responsibility depends on recognizing these relations of mutual dependence and vulnerability [43].

Since I brought up the Andean peoples, I would like to mention the concept of *sumak kawsay*, which, in Quechua, means good living centered on the community, in harmony with the environment, and culturally sensitive. This way of understanding our life as part of a whole allows us to design other ways of inhabiting the world, considering nature not as a resource to be exploited, but as part of our being-in-the-world. In a context in which all entities in the world are interconnected and have a similar ontological condition, it is impossible to relegate care for nature as something less important, because, from this perspective, it is part of the human condition to be a guardian of forests and nature, and to fight against climate issues. We need to think of new ways of inhabiting the world that allow us to postpone the end of the world and live with more extreme weather events, more frequent floods, and droughts.

Later, when I approached flat ontology through theorists such as Latour and Harman, I aimed to demonstrate that there are other ways of projecting our lives into the world that do not privilege the subject over objects. In this flat perspective, all entities in the world have the same ontological status, which removes the burden of the human being, the Anthropos, being more important and having the right to surpass other forms of life. Disregarding the more restricted vision of design, which proposed itself as a field of knowledge focused on the production of objects, when dealing with flat ontology, I align myself with the more speculative vision

of design, which allows us to deal with more conceptual, philosophical, and ethical questions and, in this sense, is capable of making worlds and designing more sustainable worlds. Krenak's recent reflections on ancestral futures reinforce the idea that sustainable futures may depend less on technological acceleration and more on recovering relational forms of inhabiting rooted in memory, territory, and reciprocity[18]. While the notion of cosmic inhabiting proposed in this article remains a developing conceptual framework, it aims to open new avenues for dialogue among environmental philosophy, design theory, and Indigenous cosmologies. Future research may further explore its implications for design practice, environmental governance, and intercultural approaches to ecological responsibility.

From this design perspective, which focuses on developing new ways of living in the world that are more ecoresponsible, I believe it is possible to draw a dialogic line with the ancestral proposal of the Amerindian peoples' cosmic vision. Perhaps looking to the past, to non-capitalist ways of life, allows us to glimpse other ways of designing futures in which we can cohabit with other entities more harmoniously. Following Krenak's suggestion, "Postponing the end of the world means restoring our sense of belonging to the Earth, recovering our capacity to dream and to be affected by the life that surrounds us"[17]. I argue that slower and more relational ways of inhabiting the world may allow us to pollute less, exploit less, and care more for the environments in which we live, since waters, jaguars, birds, and rocks are as important as human life. In this sense, designing cosmic inhabiting becomes a way of imagining alternative futures in which humans learn to live as participants in a shared planetary community rather than as its masters.

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