

# Modernity/Coloniality



# Itinerary

- Welcome and introduction
- The House modernity built
- Grammar of modernity/coloniality, Affective attachments and loops
- Bus methodology
  
- LUNCH
  
- Cognitive, affective and relational justice
- Reform space: soft, radical, beyond reform
- Debrief and closing

*Imagine a field of ripe ears of corn;*

*quickly slide the corn,*

*remove the ears of corn,*

*and display them in front of you:*



What can this imply for our imagination?



# Broccoli Seed Agreement

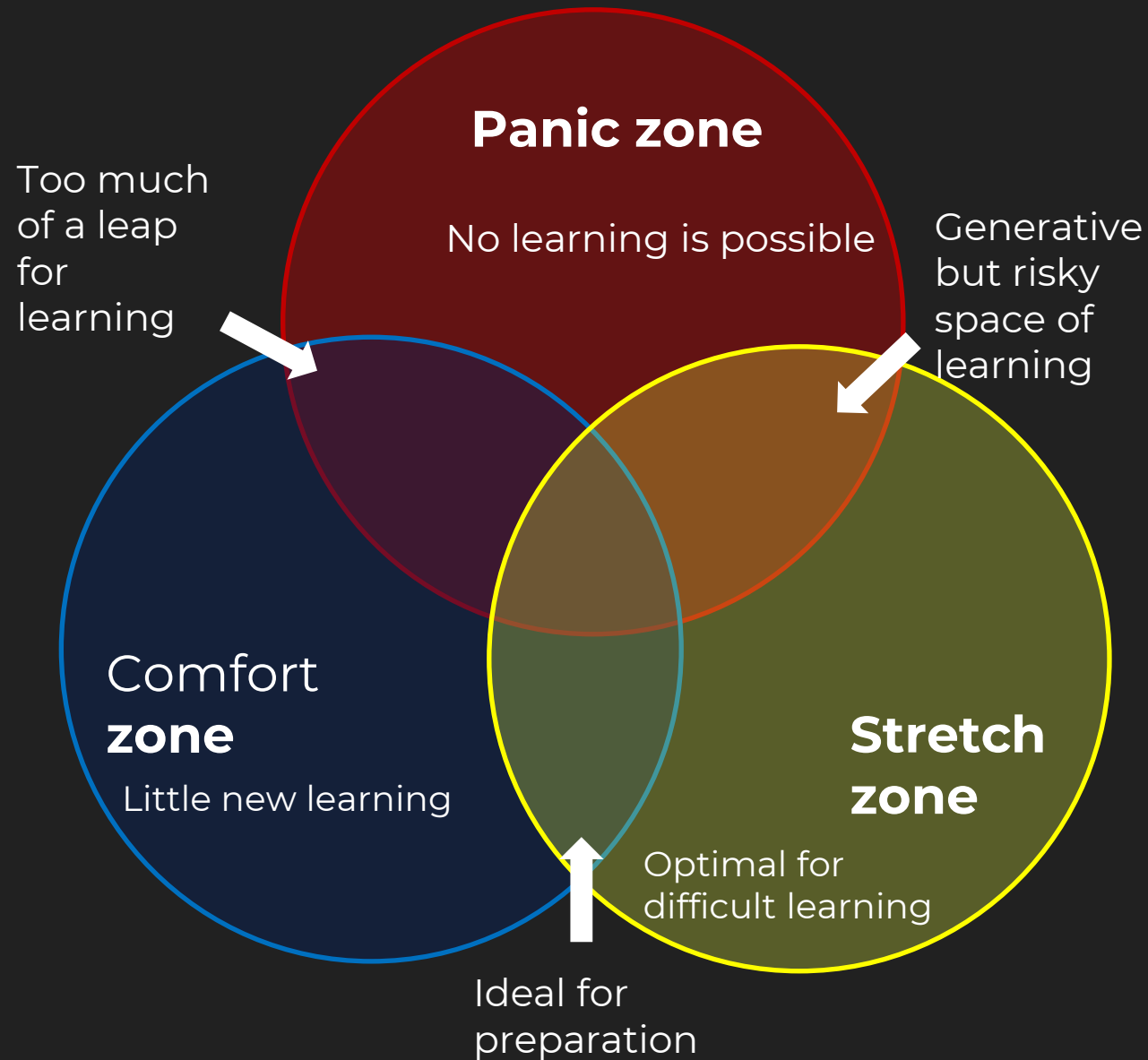
The broccoli seed agreement invites you to consider the following statement...

## **I understand that...**

- 1.The program *may* not have any immediate practical application in my context and that is ok.
- 2.I *do not* have to agree with anything presented, but I am happy to see what happens.
- 3.I *may* feel uncomfortable, confused, and frustrated through this process and I take responsibility for observing and learning from my conscious and unconscious responses/resistances.
- 4.It is *up to me* to decide when to push myself further and when to stop and reflect/observe.



# Zones of learning



# Pedagogical invitation: The Bus



The bus” is a central figure in a methodology for collective inquiry that emerged as a response to the need for difficult, honest and sober conversations where the integrity of relationships are prioritized above the emotional charge of the content being discussed.

# The Bus - Individual reflection

- How challenging is to think of yourself as a bus?
- Check in with your bus.
- Who is driving?
- Can you identify 3 passengers that have different affective responses to this exercise? Close your eyes, and as you look at them, 3 parts of yourself... if you can see them, pay attention to what they might be saying, thinking (which may not be the same as what they are saying) and feeling.
  - Are their sensations pleasant/unpleasant?
  - Are their sensations nourishing or depleting their sense of vitality?



# What Can the Bus Do?

Support individuals and collectives to:

- to face and sit with paradoxes, contradictions, complexities and diversities internal to the self;
- to identify the relationship between external social demands and individual affective, intellectual and subsistence investments;
- to build stamina to engage productively and agonistically with dissonance, dissensus, complicity, conflict, ambivalence, divergence, indeterminacy, and incommensurability;
- to discern between wants and needs and their sources; and
- to reduce collective anxieties and to transform conflict into generative experiences

# The House Modernity Built

The cartography synthesizes critiques of modernity that have been mobilized in Indigenous, Black, Decolonial, Post-development, Post-colonial studies through the works of scholars like Gayatri Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Nelson Maldonado-Torres, Fred Moten, Arturo Escobar, Vandana Shiva, Boaventura de Souza Santos, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Sylvia Wynter, Glen Coulthard, Michalinos Zembylas, Ilan Kapoor, Sara Ahmed, Leela Gandhi, David Scott, M. Jacqui Alexander, and many others.

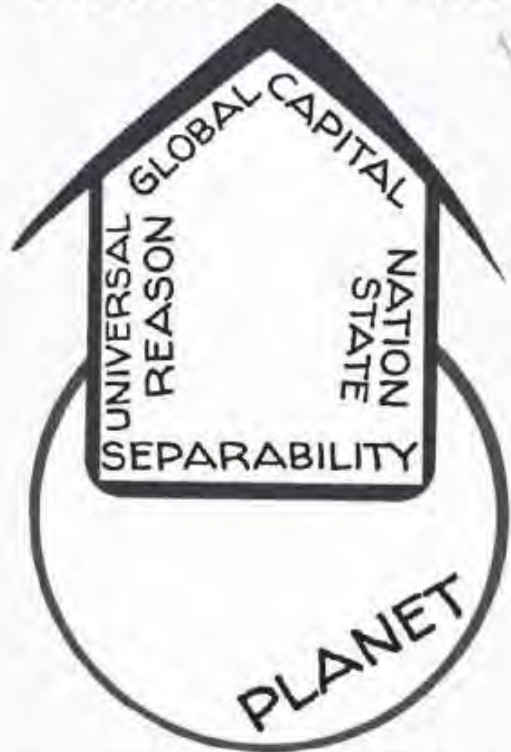
*The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.* Audre Lorde

# Theory of change: diagnosis and proposition

3 levels of analysis:

- Systemic violence and unsustainability
- Intellectual and affective investments
- Setting horizons of hope beyond the house of modernity  
in a way that centers the planet

# THE HOUSE MODERNITY BUILT



<http://decolonialfutures.net>

house exceeds limits of planet

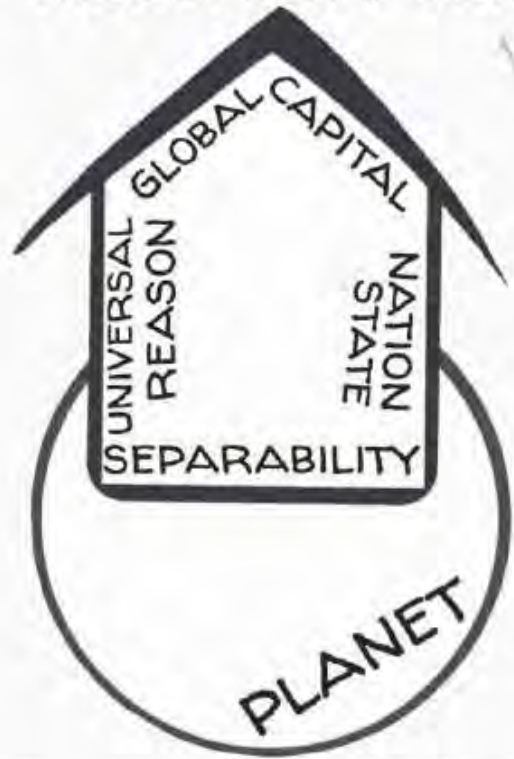
fantasies of separation, ownership, and hierarchy: the main features of modernity's way of being

promises: an endless consumption, comfort, safety, seamless progress and social mobility

subsidized by: a colonial underside (the externalized and invisibilised costs of building and maintaining the house)

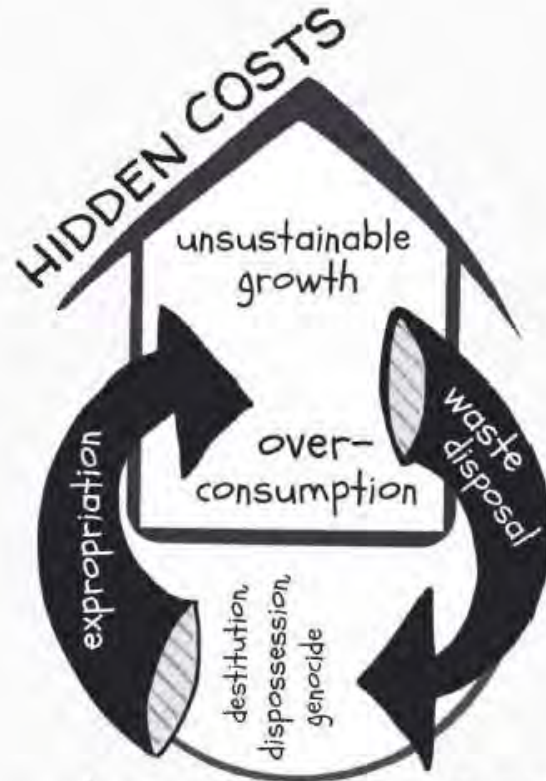
# THE HOUSE MODERNITY BUILT

v4.1

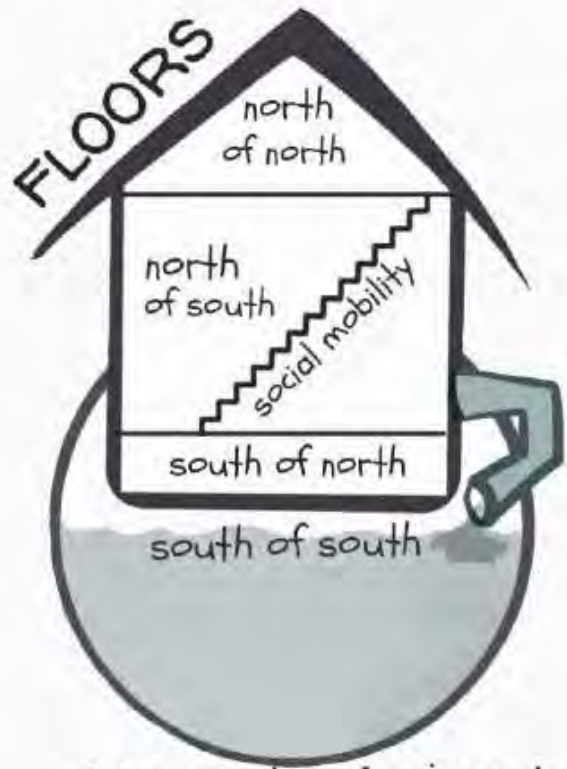


<http://decolonialfutures.net>

house exceeds limits of planet

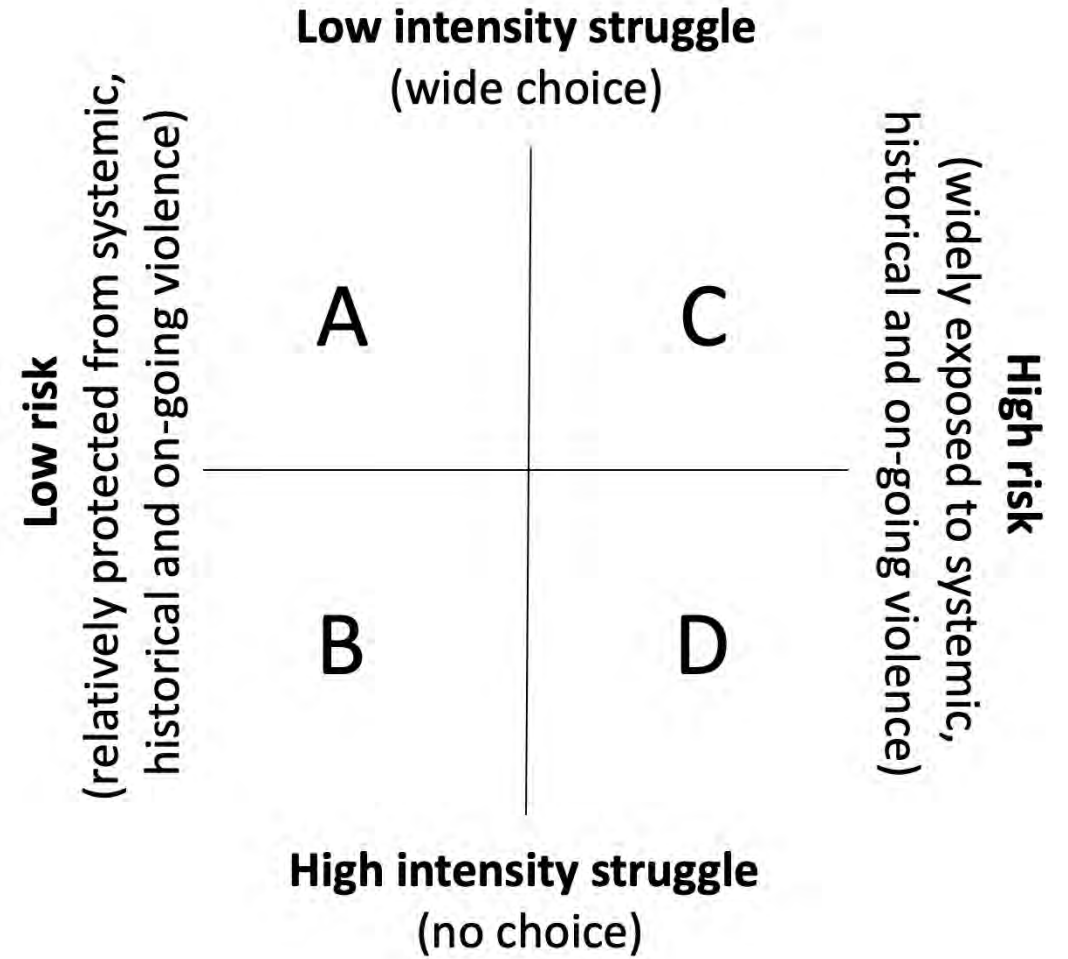


house subsidised & maintained  
by violence



false promise of universal  
middle class

# Locating your struggle





fix? expand? build another?  
live without? find more planets?



Affective feedback loop



metabolic intelligence  
**YEARNING** for connection, wellbeing and wholeness

experienced within the house as a felt need for securities and enjoyments tied to the consumption of products, relationships, sensations, narratives, experiences, hopes and fantasies

# Affective and relational feedback loop

Certain fears are harnessed and recast as compensatory desires which in turn become perceived entitlements inside the house

- o Scarcity – accumulation – property
- o Uncertainty – certainty – stability
- o Worthlessness – superiority – immunity
- o Guilt / shame – purity – innocence
- o Chaos – control – order
- o Loss / pain – relief – denial
- o Emptiness – fulfilment – consumption
- o Entrapment – agency – choice
- o Incompetence – mastery – authority
- o Death – safety - legacy

# Pedagogical invitation: The Bus



# Individual and collective reflection

Try to identify passengers deeply attached to the different structural features of the house (universal reason, modern nation states, capitalism, separability, social mobility).

Try to identify passengers who may aspire to live in different parts of the house (penthouse, stairs, basement, outside).

Pay attention to what what they are thinking, feeling, and saying in response to the house. (The invitation is to accept their responses, without endorsing them).

What do you think will happen to the passengers invested in the house once they notice the house is cracking?

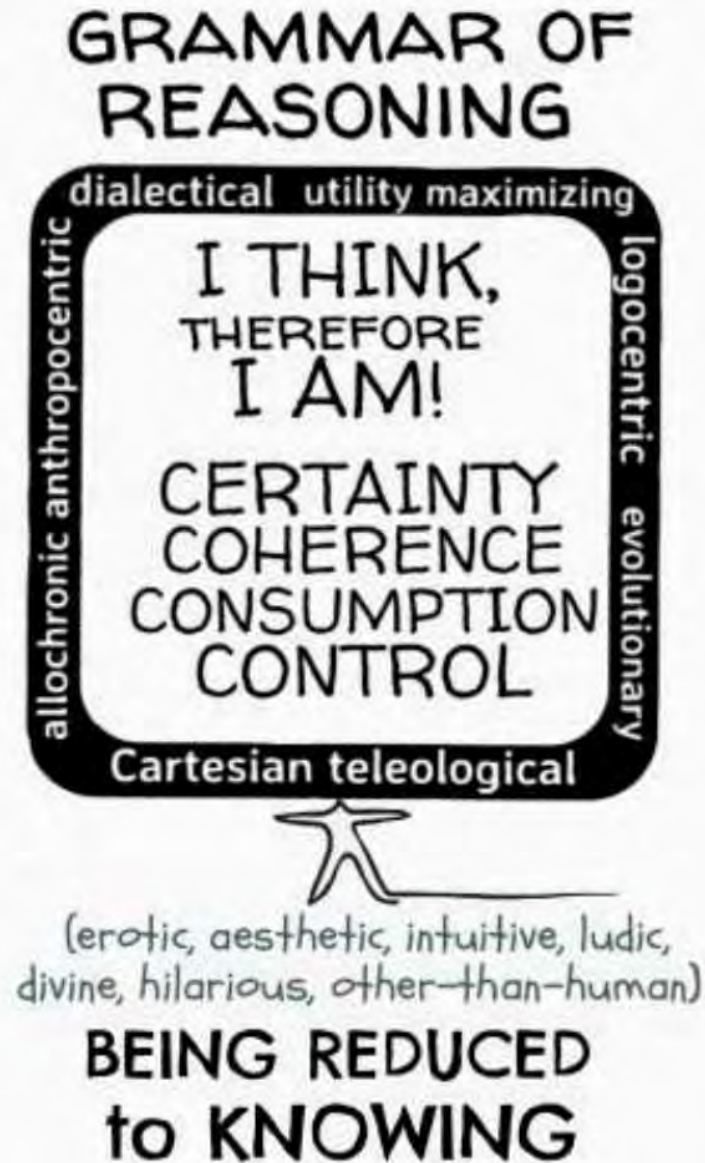
- This is not a confessional exercise, but an opportunity to share our collective learning
- Learning the language of observing oneself and creating a meta-language:
  - What you are learning from starting to observe your bus?
  - What am I observing now that is different from what I could understand before?
  - What are we learning from listening to other people talking about their buses?

Grammar of modernity/coloniality

**Dialectic:** „It's this, so it can't be that“. Dialectic thinking relates to linear logic of progression (thesis, antithesis, synthesis) , which can't handle paradox, complexity and contradiction.

**Utility maximising** – a transactional mode of reasoning that calculates action according to the greatest benefits to be gained. „I invest, therefore I benefit from it“.

**Teleological** thinking wants to plan to create the future we can imagine – establishing predefined goals for engineering the world.



**Universalism:** sees its interpretation of reality as the objective, only and valid view of the world

**Allochronism:** „I am here and now, therefore you are there and behind“.  
- developing and developed countries

**Anthropocentrism:** „I think, therefore the world was created for me“.

**Logocentrism:** believes that reality is describable by language  
- what you don't have a word for doesn't exist.



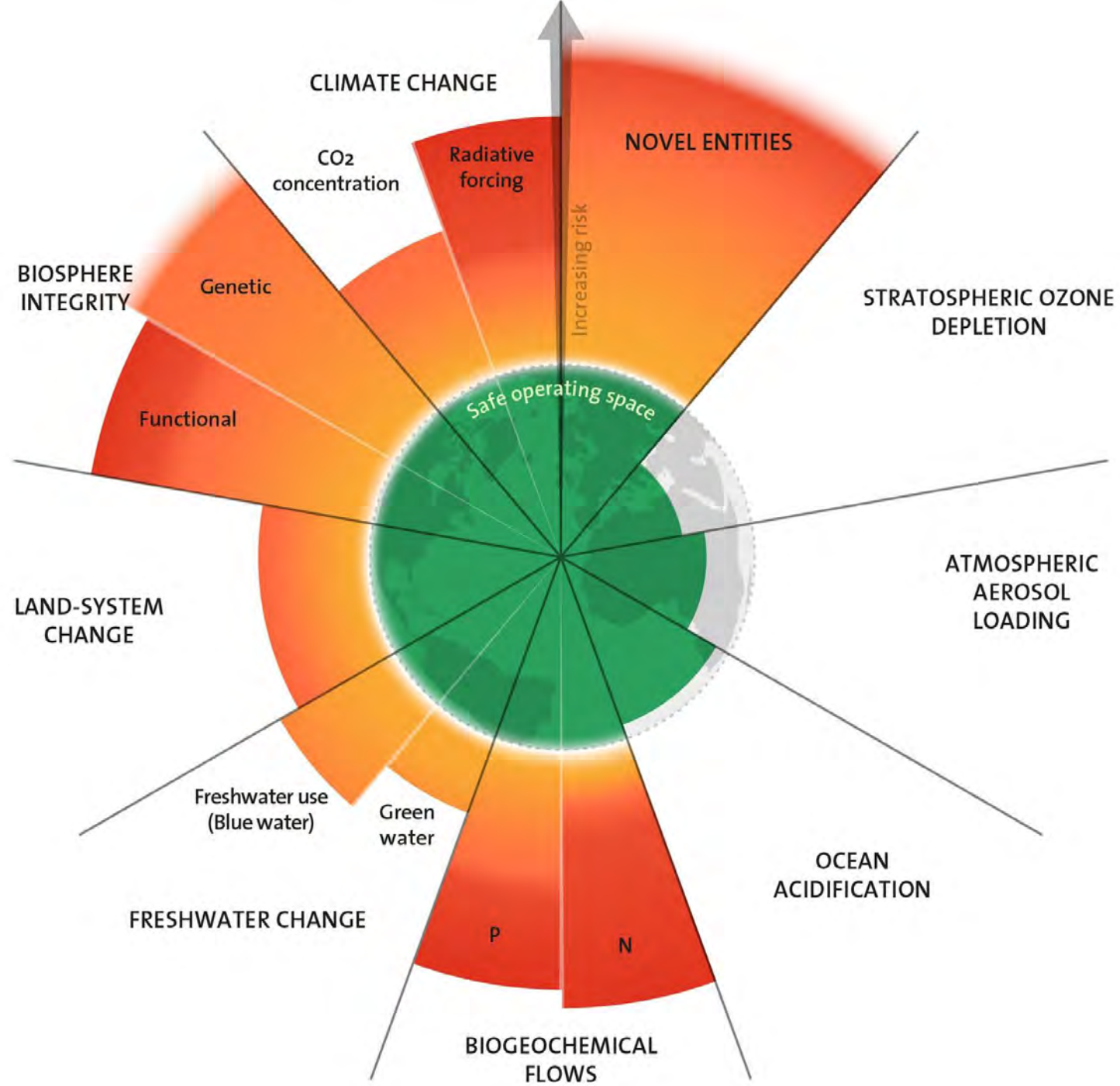
# Individual reflection

Consider:

- How much space take Boxheads up on my bus?
- How much time they spend in the driver's seat?
- To what extend have Boxheads been useful on my bus?
- To what extend have they been harmful to my mode of relating to the world?

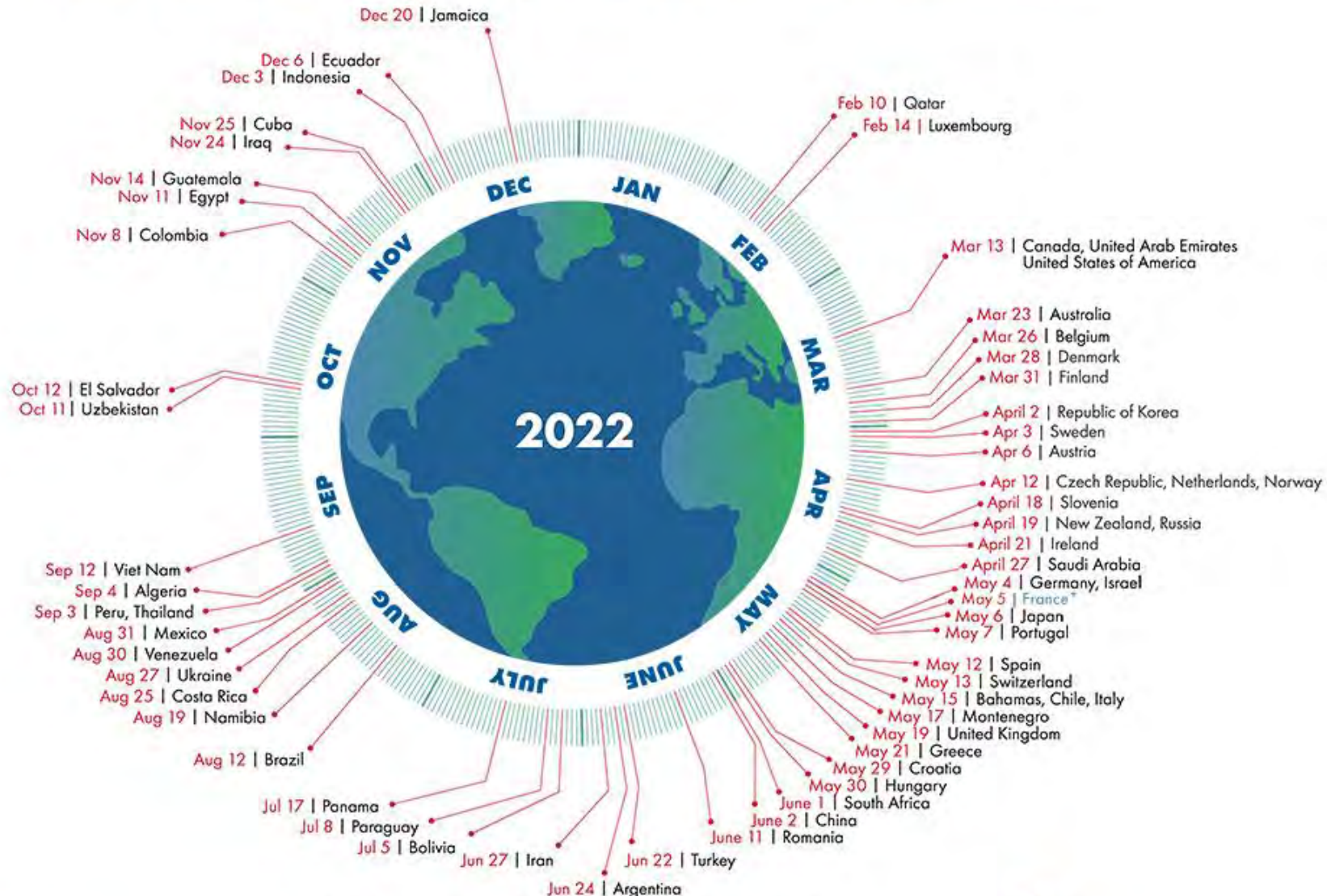
Modern-colonial habit of being is marked **by four denials** and **associated illusions**:

- denial of systemic violence and complicity in harm: the fact that our comforts, securities and enjoyments are subsidized by expropriation and exploitation somewhere else
- denial of the limits of the planet: the fact that a finite planet cannot sustain infinite growth and consumption
- the denial of entanglement: our insistence in seeing ourselves as separate from each other and the land, rather than “entangled” within a living socio-ecological metabolism
- the denial of the magnitude and complexity of the problem: the difficulties we will need to face together



# Country Overshoot Days 2022

When would Earth Overshoot Day land if the world's population lived like...

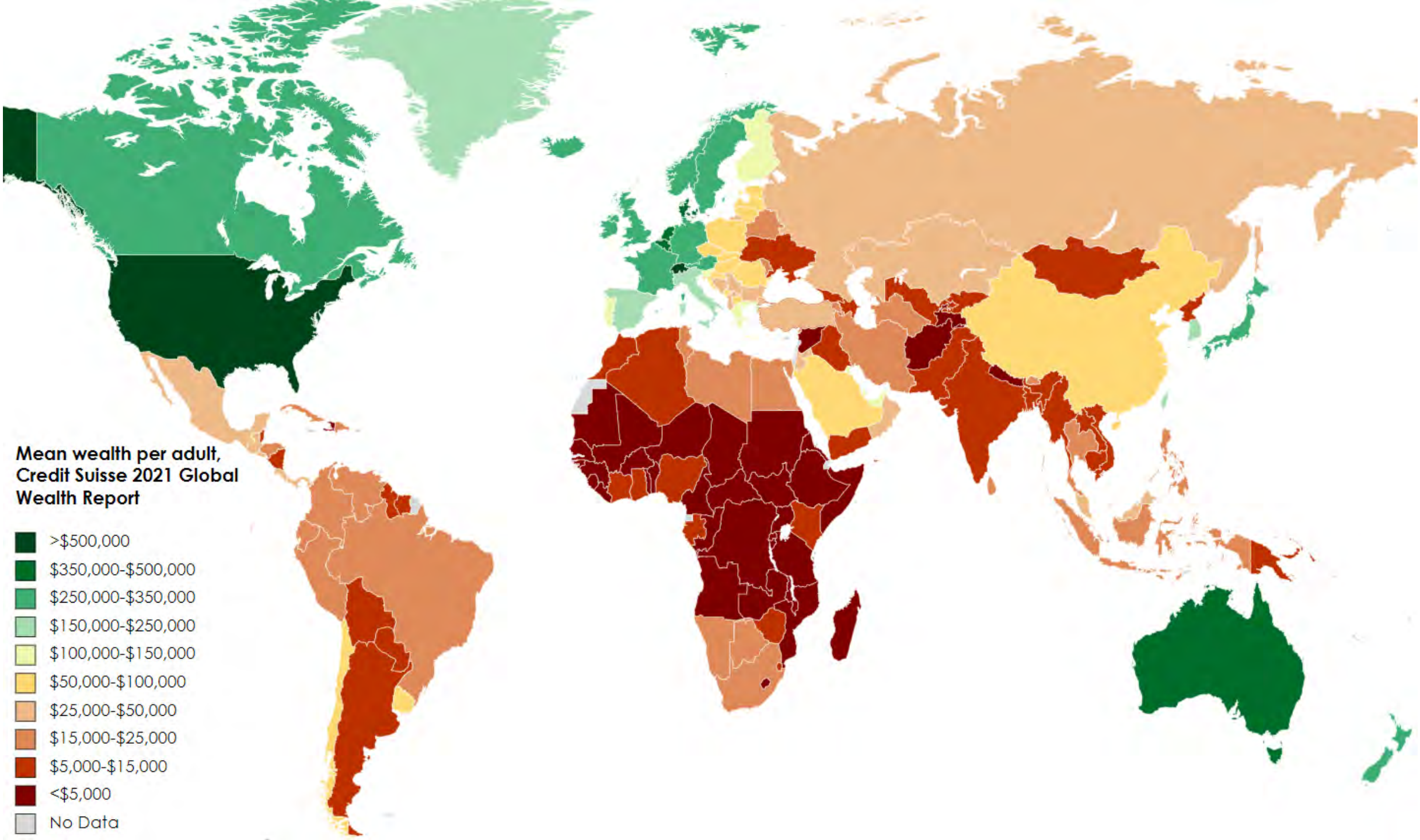


For a full list of countries, visit [overshootday.org/country-overshoot-days](https://overshootday.org/country-overshoot-days).

\* France Overshoot Day updated April 20, 2022 based on nowcasted data. See [overshootday.org/france](https://overshootday.org/france).

Source: National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts, 2022 Edition

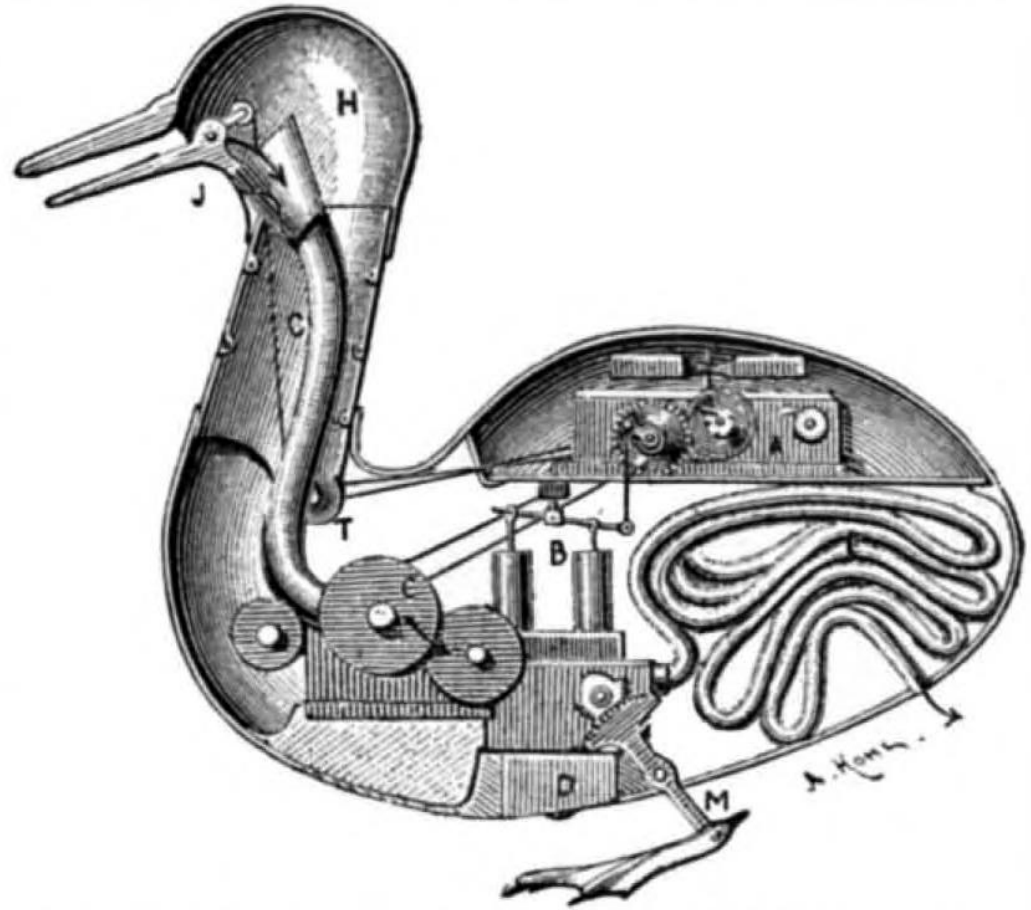
[data.footprintnetwork.org](https://data.footprintnetwork.org)



Mean wealth per adult,  
Credit Suisse 2021 Global  
Wealth Report

- >\$500,000
- \$350,000-\$500,000
- \$250,000-\$350,000
- \$150,000-\$250,000
- \$100,000-\$150,000
- \$50,000-\$100,000
- \$25,000-\$50,000
- \$15,000-\$25,000
- \$5,000-\$15,000
- <\$5,000
- No Data

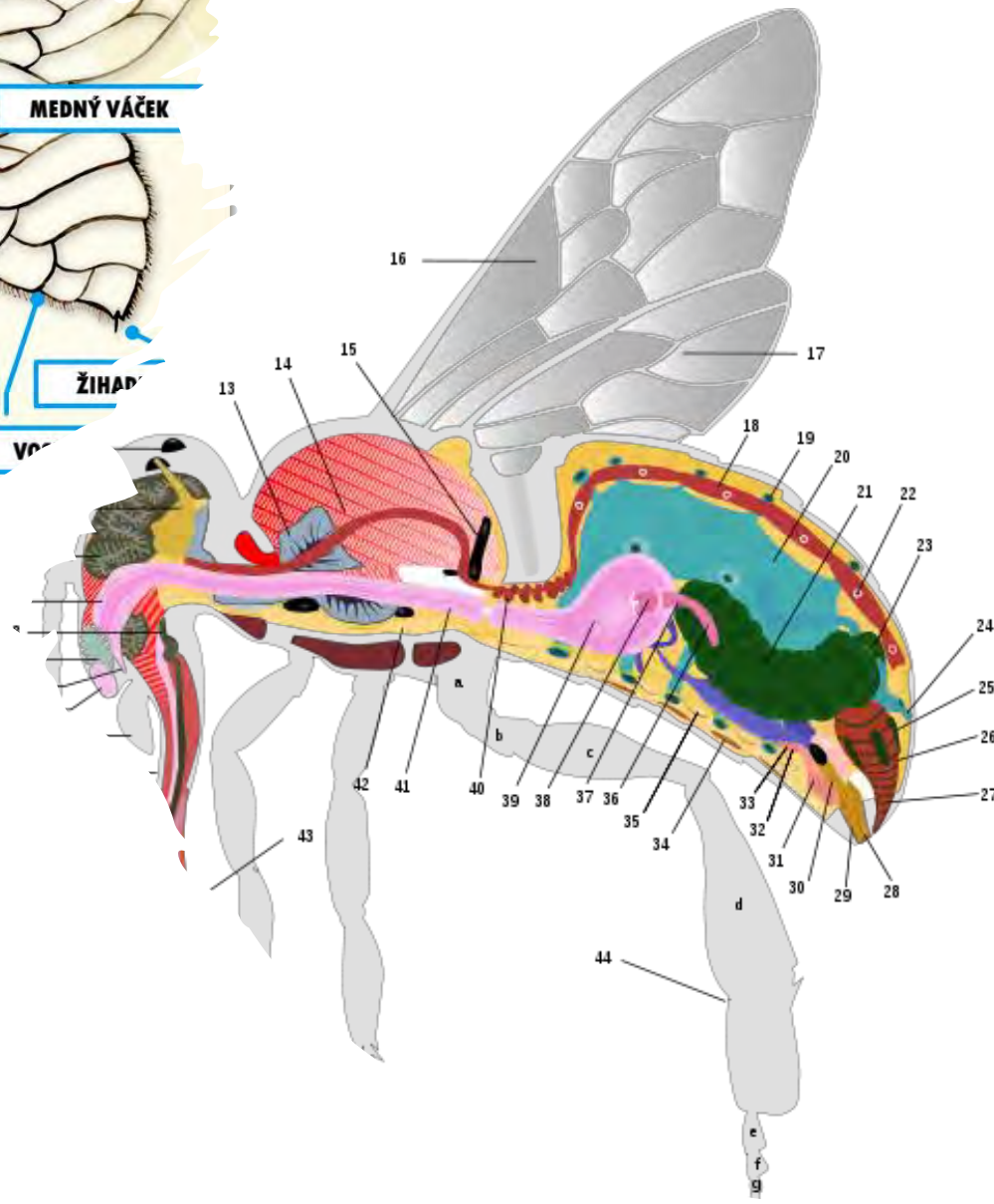
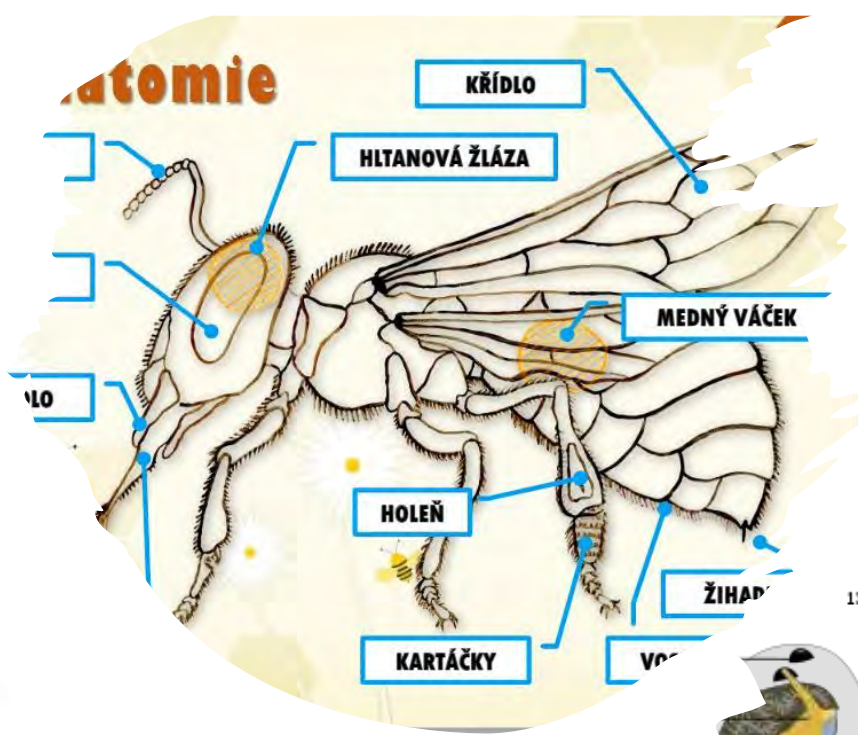
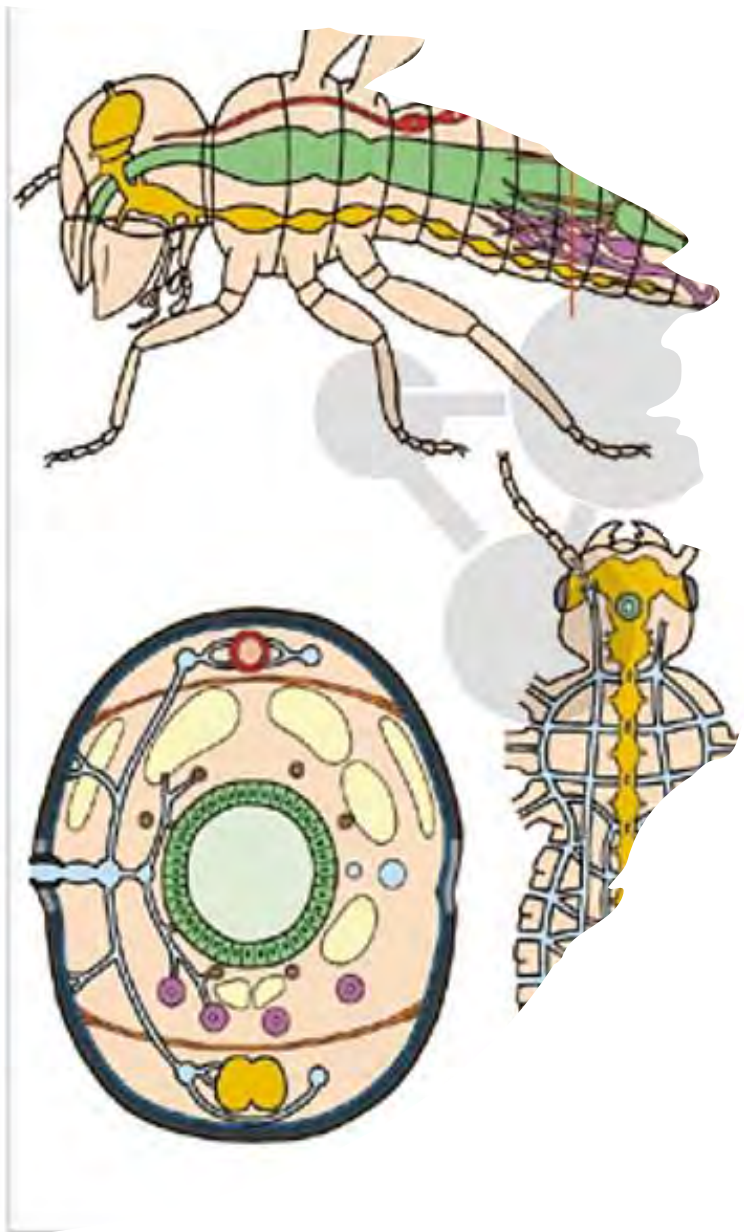
# Der Mensch als Industriepalast



## INTERIOR OF VAUCANSON'S AUTOMATIC DUCK.

*A*, clockwork; *B*, pump; *C*, mill for grinding grain; *F*, intestinal tube;  
*J*, bill; *H*, head; *M*, feet.

“Human as an industrial palace” Fritz Kahn (1926)



Which of these denials is the strongest in your context of work?

Which of these denials you feel most prepared to confront at this moment?

What do you think is the most challenging denial for you and why?

- denial of systemic violence and complicity in harm: the fact that our comforts, securities and enjoyments are subsidized by expropriation and exploitation somewhere else
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Towards horizons of hope

# IN EARTH'S CARE

metabolic intelligence

metabolic wellbeing



with knowledge

with traumas, attachments, fears and insecurities

with self, land and each other

# In Earth's Care framework

- cognitive justice/well-being - interrupting the monoculture of the mind based on a single rationality and moving toward ecologies of knowledges (and ignorances)
- Affective justice/well-being - awareness of the collective need to heal from historical and intergenerational traumas and prioritize collective well-being; learning to tolerate difficulty and discomfort in dealing with complexities, paradoxes, uncertainties and disillusionment
- relational justice/well-being - moving away from transactionalism and learning to develop relationships rooted in trust, respect, reciprocity, accountability, and consent
- economic justice/well-being - enacting modes of collaboration, coordination, and circulation that enable metabolic well-being, beyond the framing about “distribution of resources”
- ecological justice/well-being - learning to relate to ‘the environment’ as a set of living beings rather than as a set of resources to be extracted or owned

## Soft Reform

change "doing":  
policies, practices,  
individuals

HOPE for  
CONTINUITY

Recognition of dominant ways of knowing

## Radical Reform

change "power  
relations": include  
more people and  
perspectives

HOPE for FIXING  
and EXPANDING  
the same system

Recognition of dominant ways of being

## Beyond Reform

change of "way of  
being and co-  
existing"

HOPE for OTHER  
systems (adjacent  
possibilities)

Thank you!

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## Resources :

### **Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective. 2023. <https://decolonialfutures.net/>**

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