

SEEDS OF CHANGE

**Unlearning & radical collective
change in online communities**

by Dorian Cavé

37C3 - Dec.29, 2023



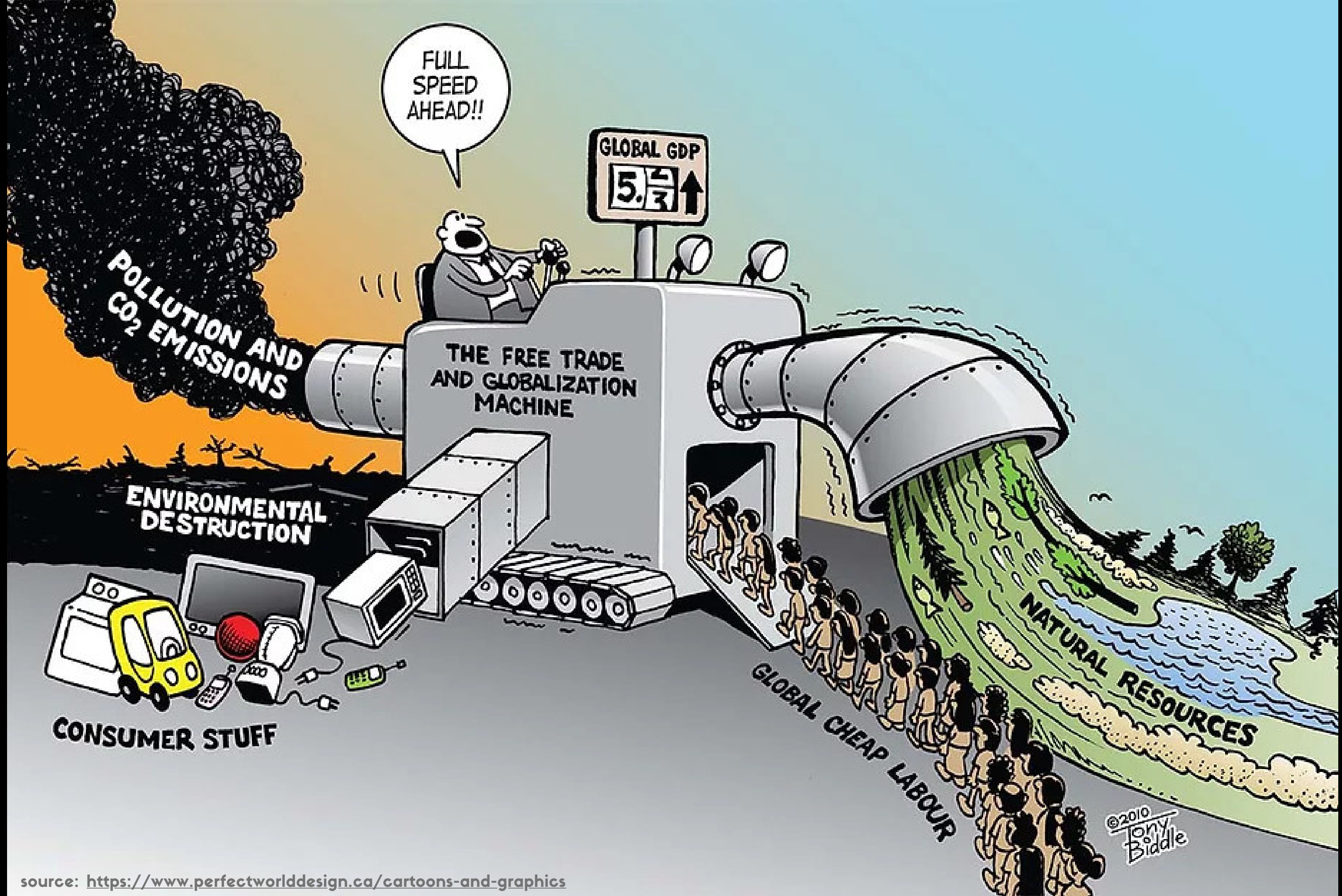
A wake-up call



So sad.

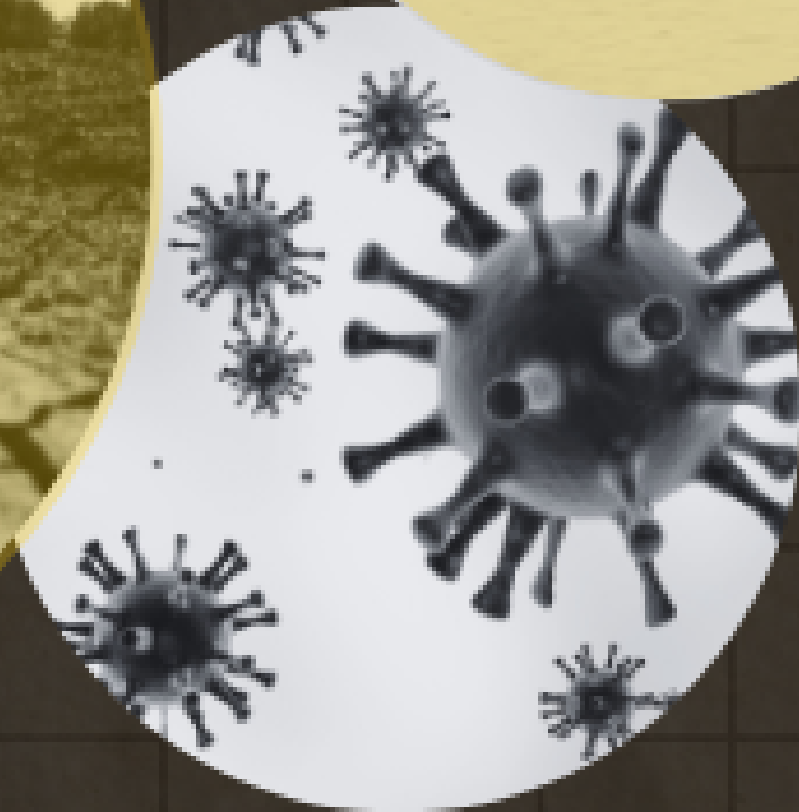
PBS NEWS HOUR

9:09 PM ET



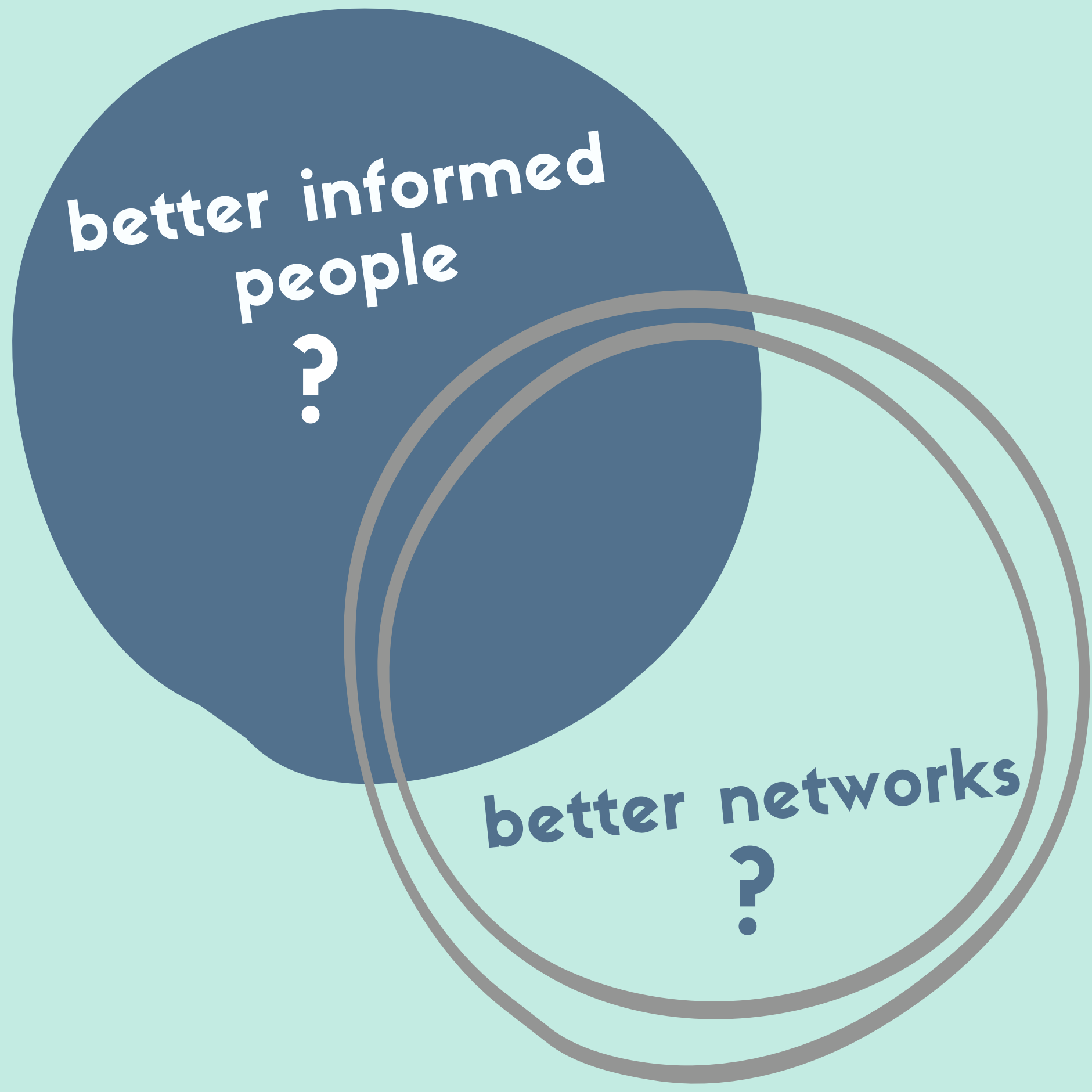


Polycrisis



**“We already inhabit what our
[Indigenous] ancestors would have
understood as a dystopian future.”
- Kyle Powys Whyte**

What can I/we do?



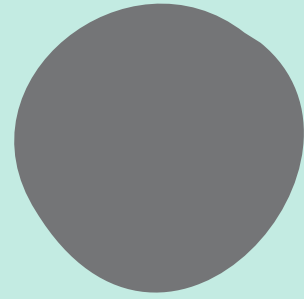
**better informed
people
?**

**better networks
?**

**Online
networks**

**Radical
collective
change**

**Social /
informal
learning**



**Online
networks**



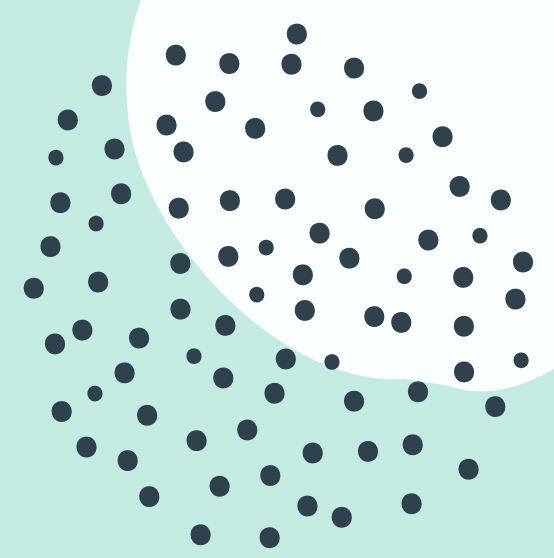
**Radical
collective
change**



**Social /
informal
learning**

relevant
responses
to the
polycrisis

people learning
from and influencing
each other



How may online networks enable radical collective change through social learning?

Read my thesis summaries online:

www.madocollective.org/connecting

CONNECTING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

An activist-scholar

Challenging unjust social structures through knowledge production

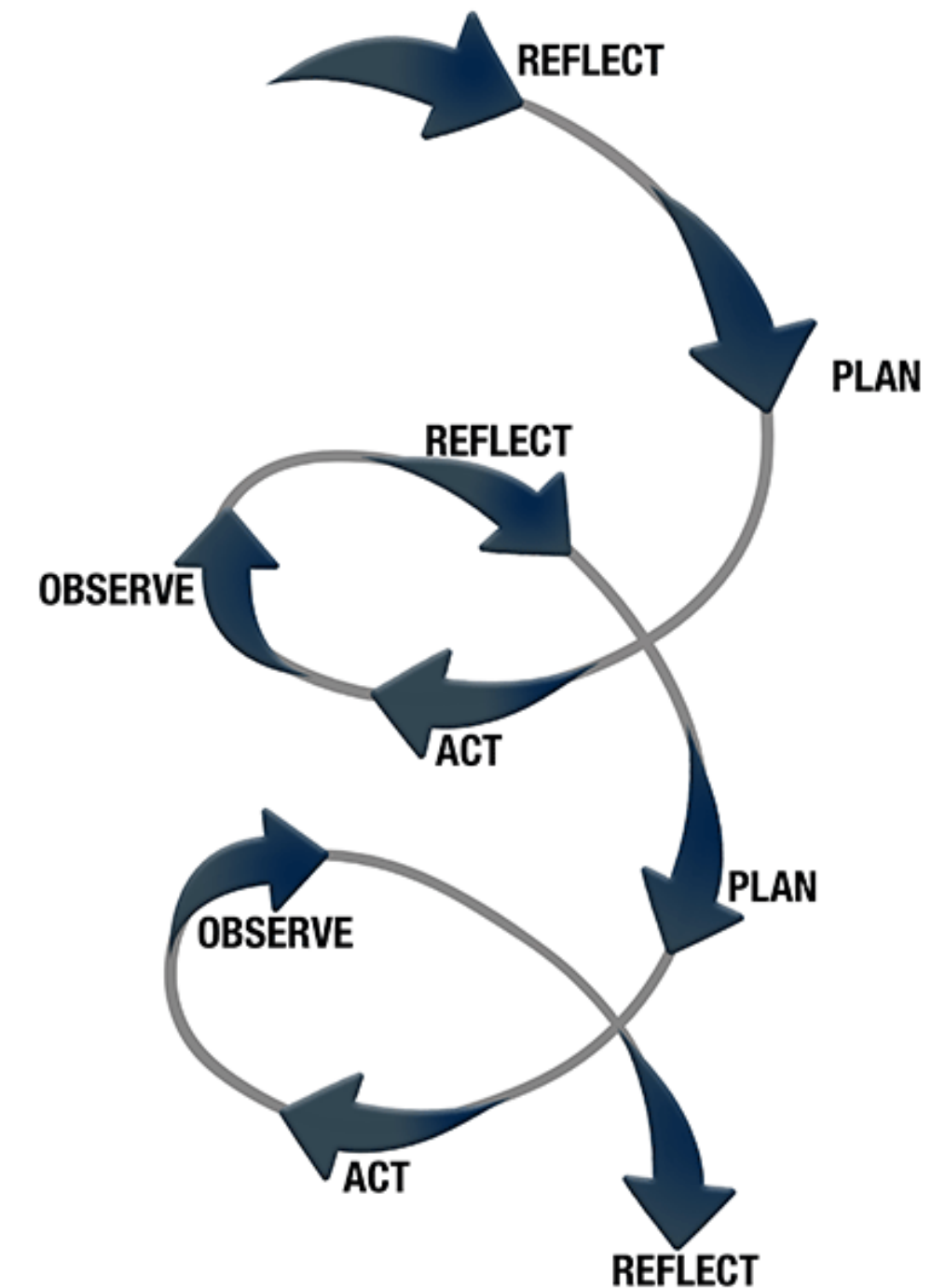
“...to look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities — as gifts.” - David Graeber



Action Research

- Open-ended, flexible approach: experimentation and ongoing reflection
- Participatory approach: deeper insights
- Critical self-reflection

source:
<https://oxfordre.com/education/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-696>

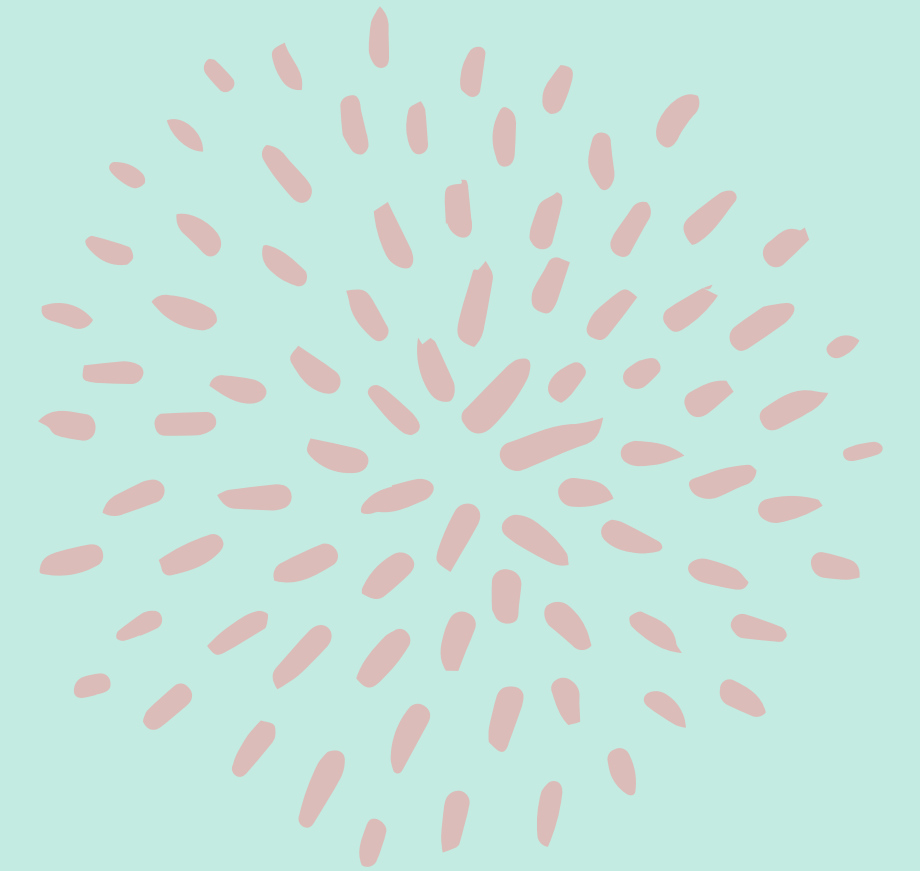


Prefigurative (online) communities

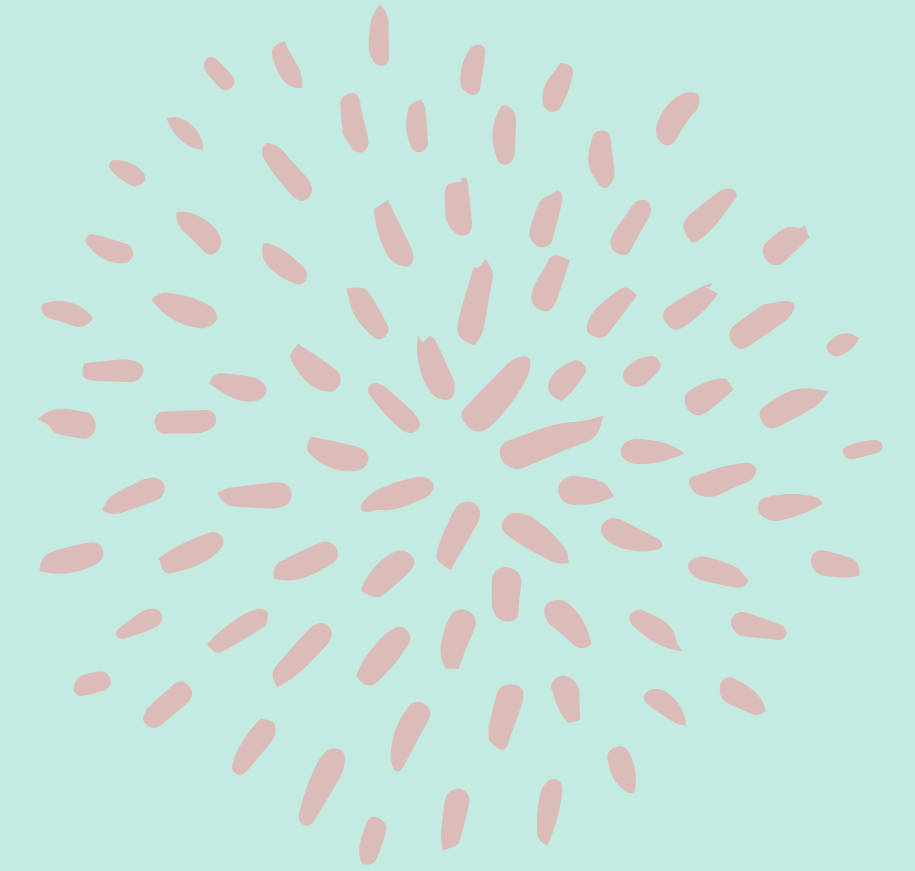
- interact over time around a shared purpose, interest or need
- seek to embody, in how they function, those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture and human experience that their members consider ultimately beneficial for the whole society



Prefigurative (online) communities



Prefigurative (online) communities



Deep Adaptation Forum

Decolonial theory & practice



Decolonial theory & practice



<https://decolonialfutures.net>

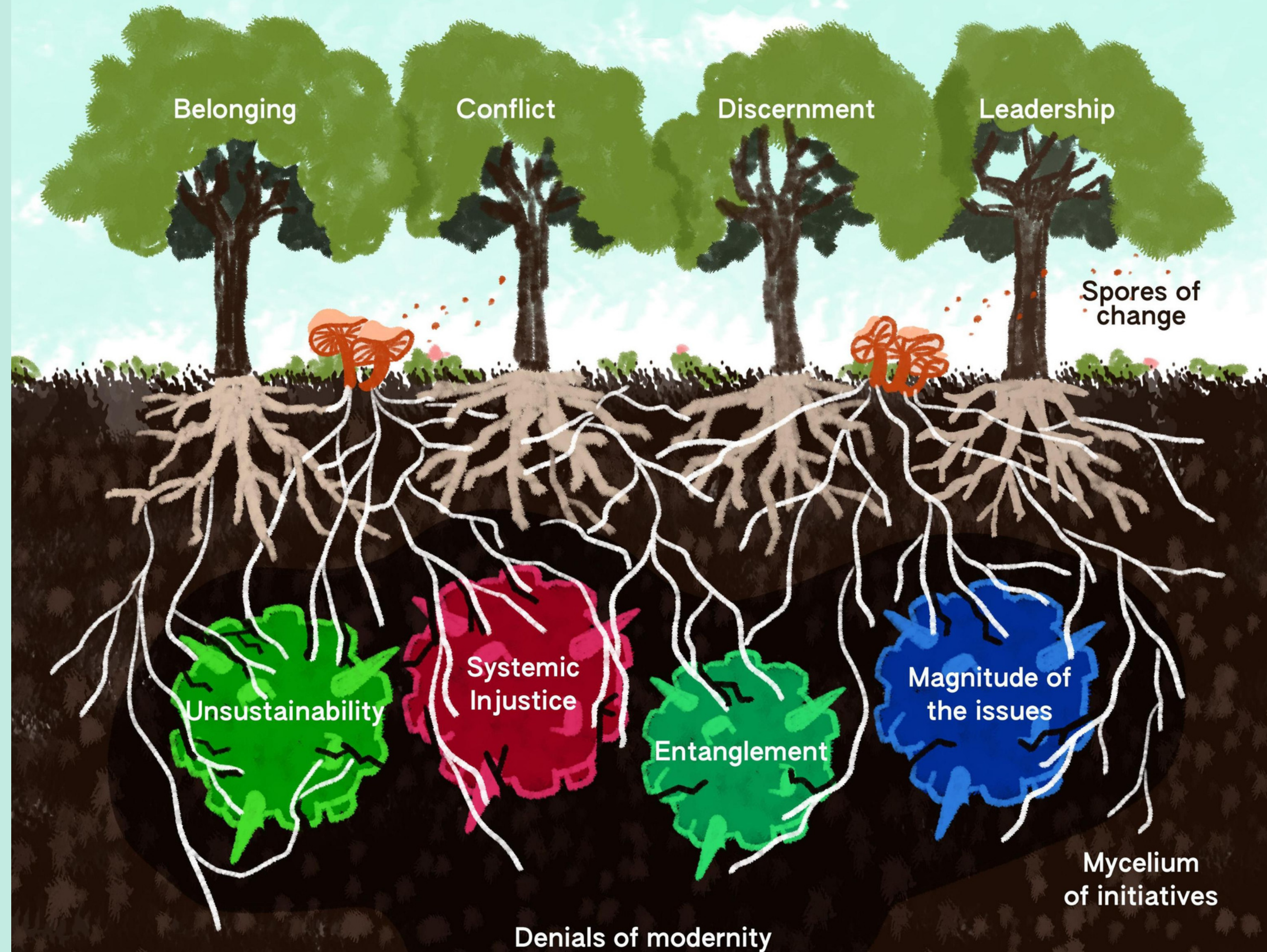


Diversity & Decolonising Circle

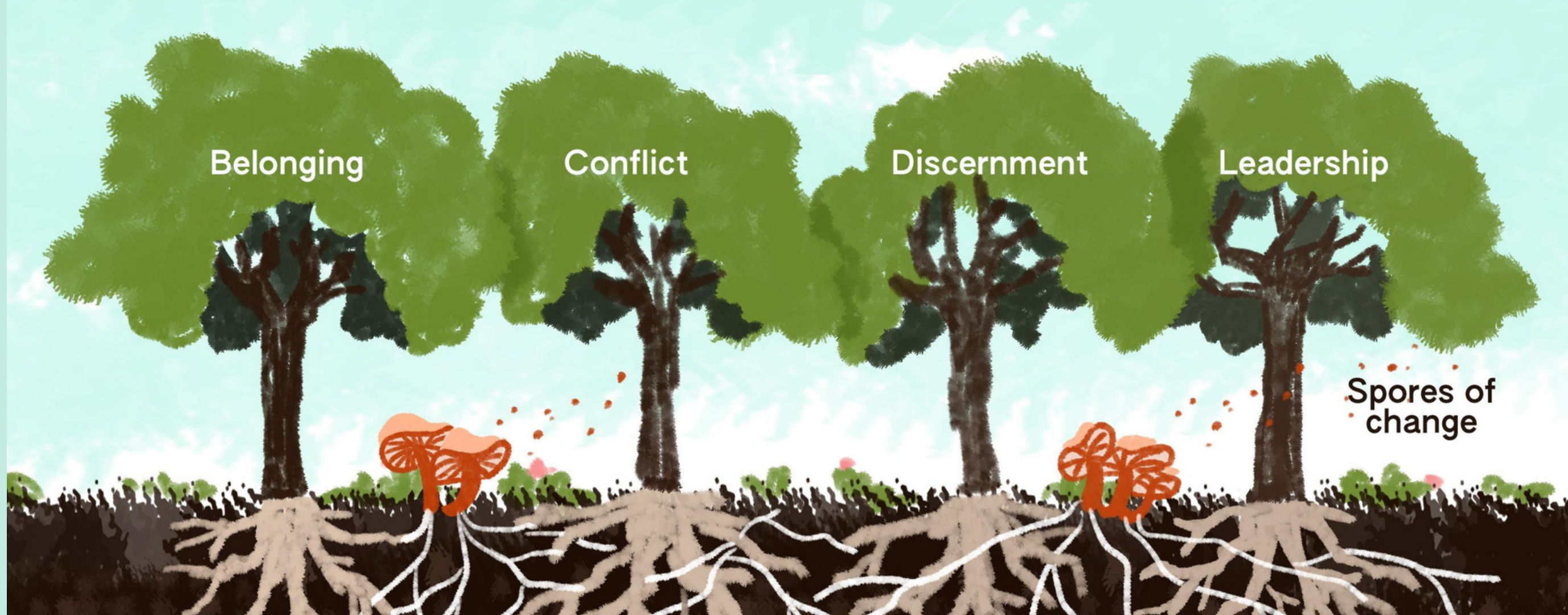
GESTURING TOWARDS DECOLONIAL
FUTURES

A close-up photograph of a hand with a red line drawn across the palm, symbolizing a gesture or a mark. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of purple and pink tones.

Creating radical change in prefigurative communities (a sketchy theory)



Artwork by Yuyuan Ma



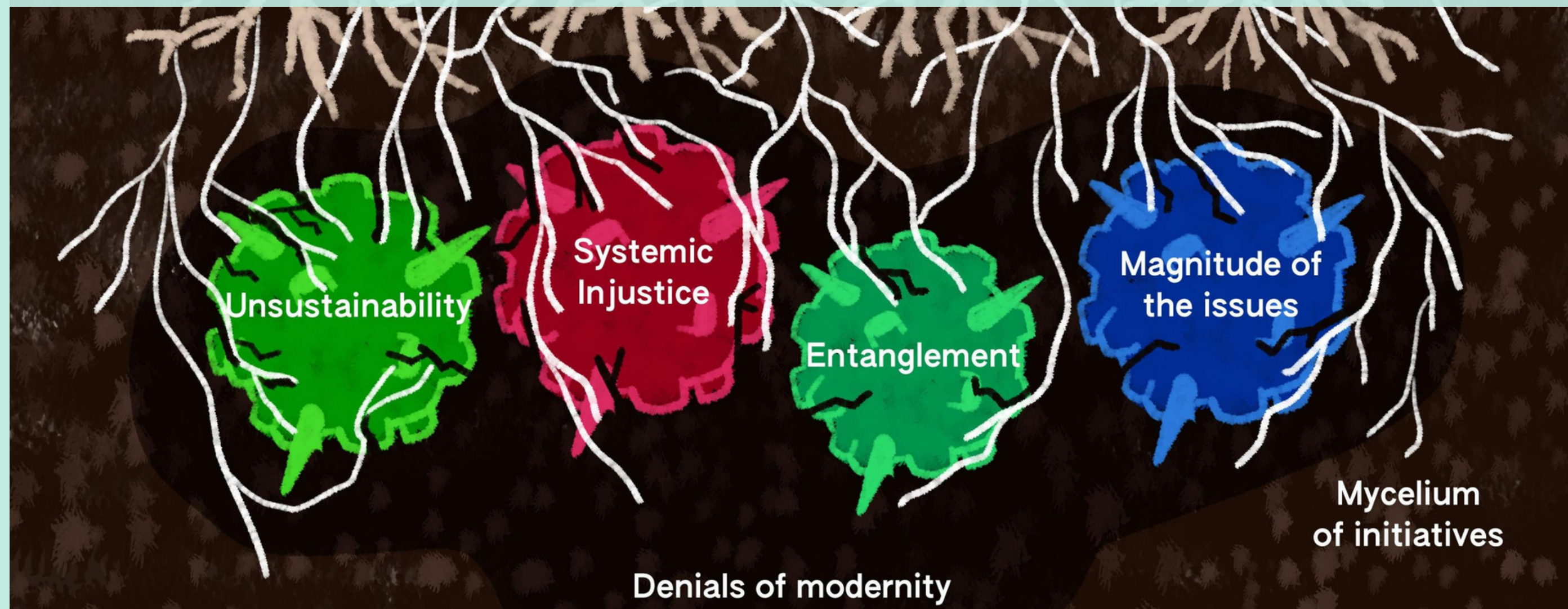
Condition #1:
**A community of care and
critical discernment**

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity

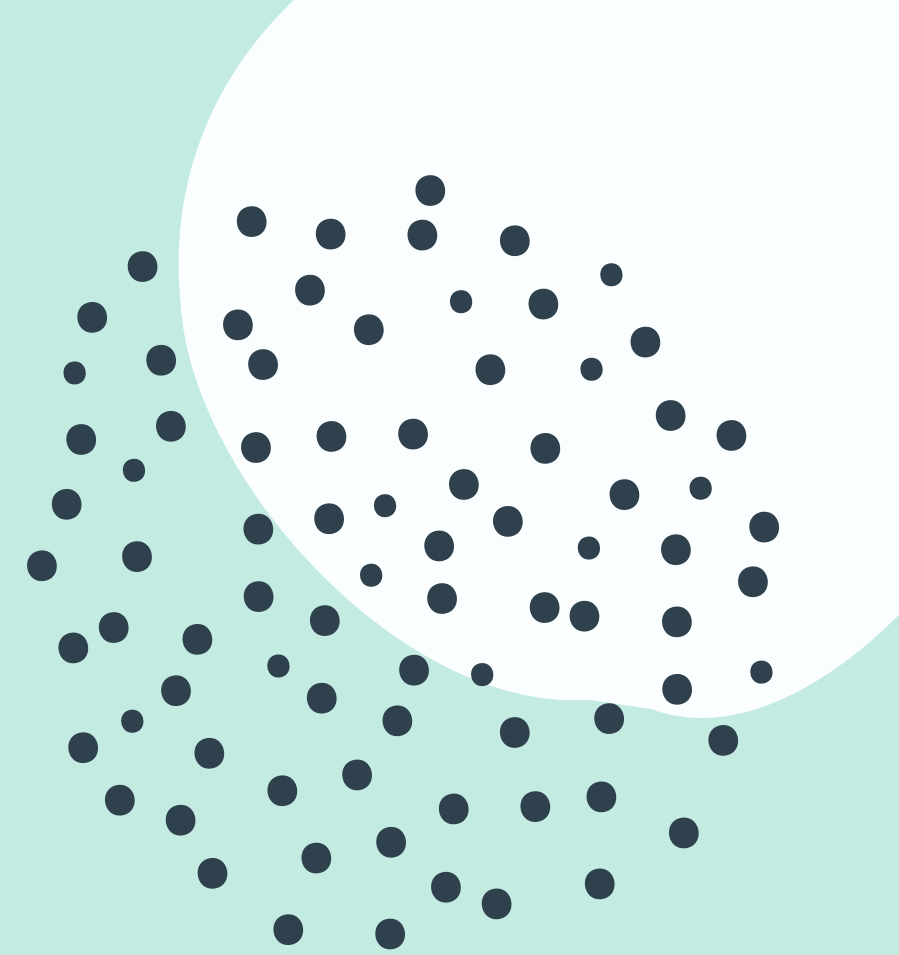
Belonging Conflict Discernment Leadership

Condition #2: A mycelium of change composting the denials of modernity



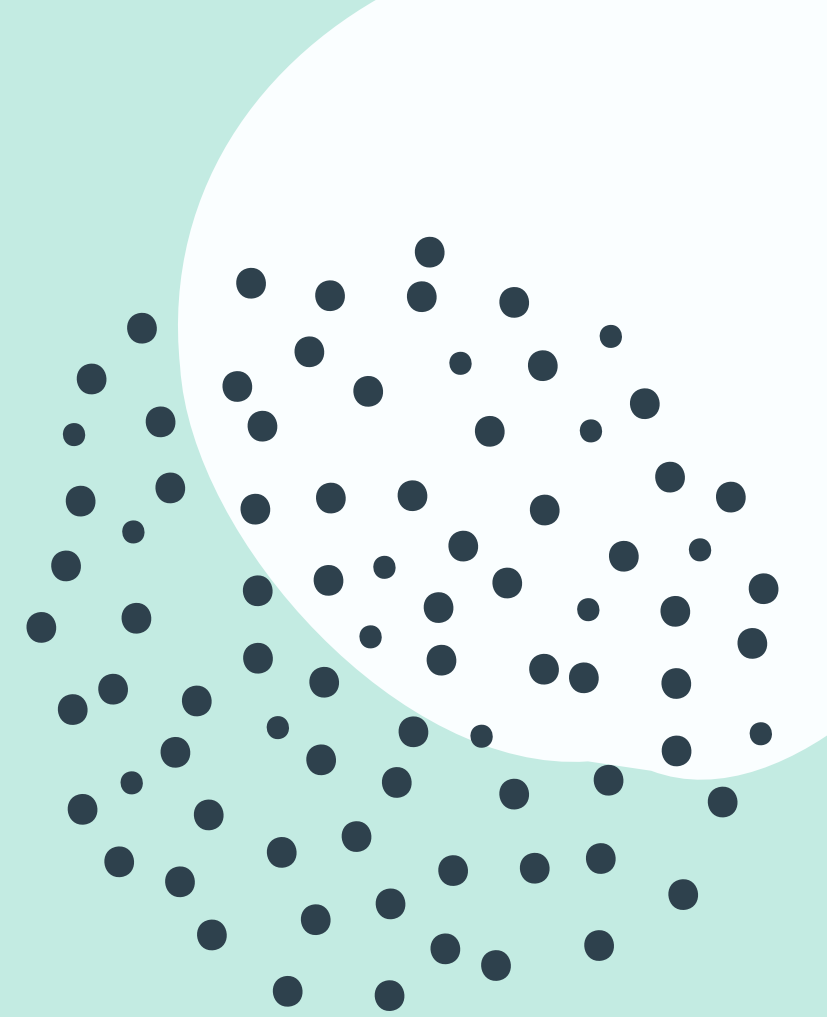


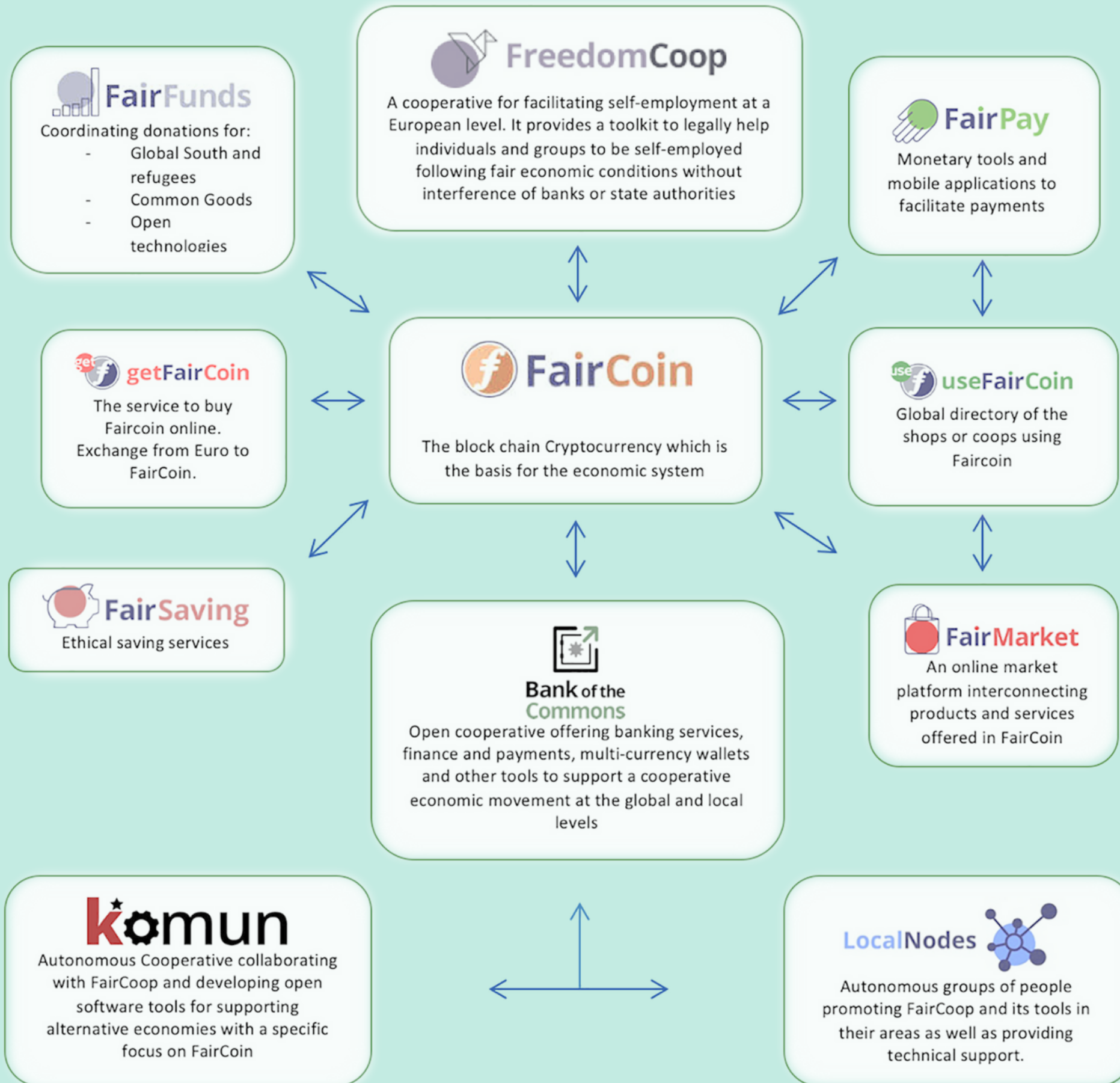
(2014-2019?)



Aim: To change the economy

- Building an alternative, grassroots economic system and a post-capitalist commons
- Using the ecological cryptocurrency Faircoin









Condition #1:
A community of care and
critical discernment

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity



- an ethics of care
- 'safe enough' spaces - in affinity groups and more widely
- capacity to live with uncertainty, ambiguity and contradictions

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity



- more attention to software development that to cultivating relationships

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity



- normalise conflict, as a source of (potentially) generative discomfort, and mutual learning
- processes and agreements

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity



- no conflict management processes

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity



- encouraging critical reflexion – personal and collective
- living with and listening to dissident voices

Denials of modernity

Mycelium
of initiatives

Magnitude of
the issues

System
unsustainability



- too little space for critical voices

Systemic Injustice

Magnitude of the issues

Mycelium of initiatives

Denials of modernity



- from “leaderlessness” to “leaderfulness”
- distributed, emergent, collective leadership
- recognising key enablers

Denials of modernity

Mycelium
of initiatives



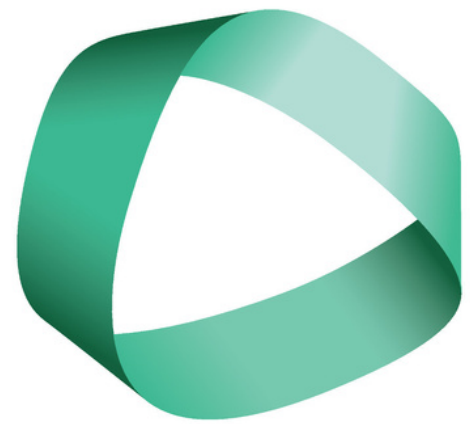
- concentrated power and accountability issues

Mycelium
of initiatives

Denials of modernity

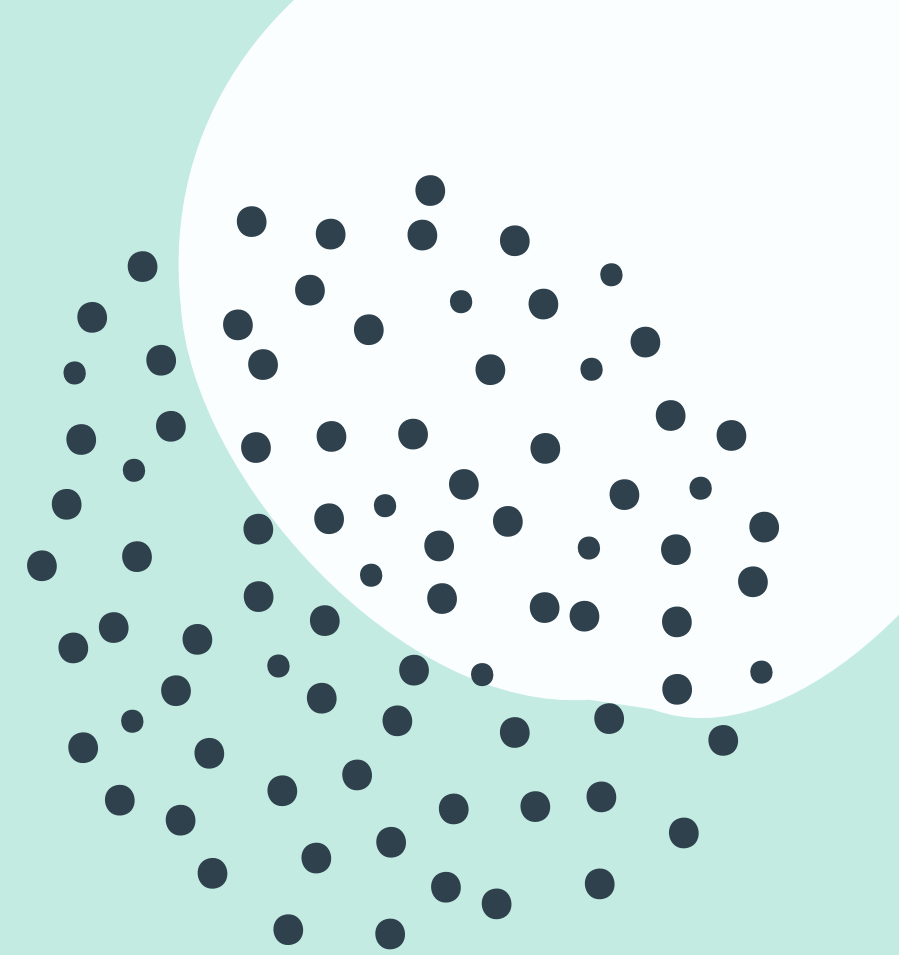


- **Powerful tools and dynamic groups** can get started and develop with funding and enthusiasm...
- ... but tech engineering without **relational glue** will not work for long!



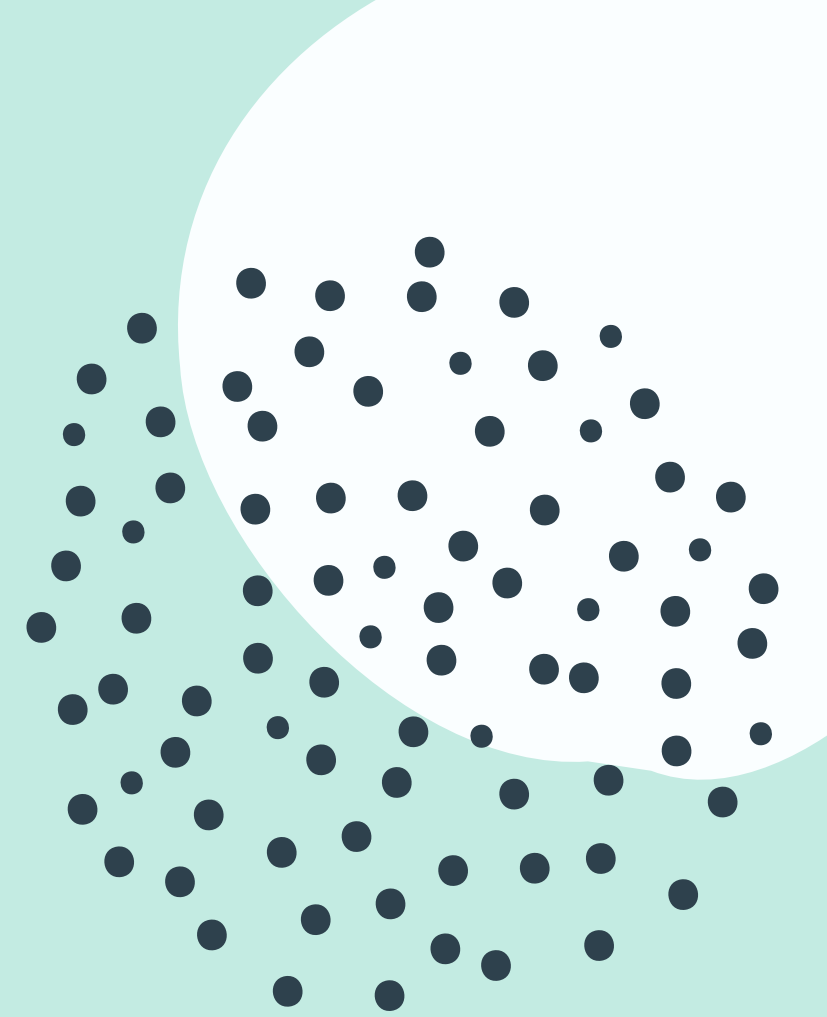
**Deep Adaptation
Forum**

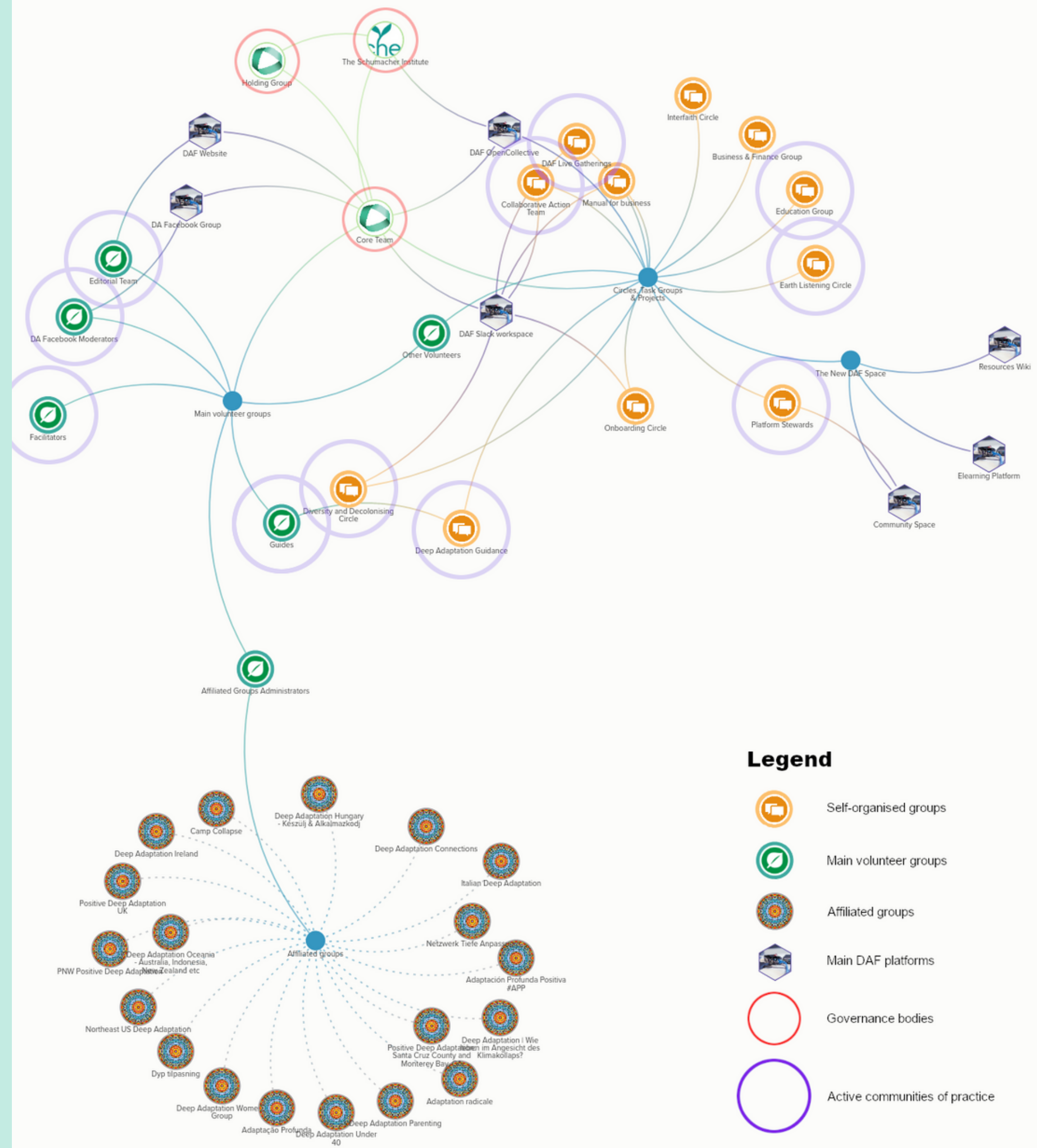
(2019-)

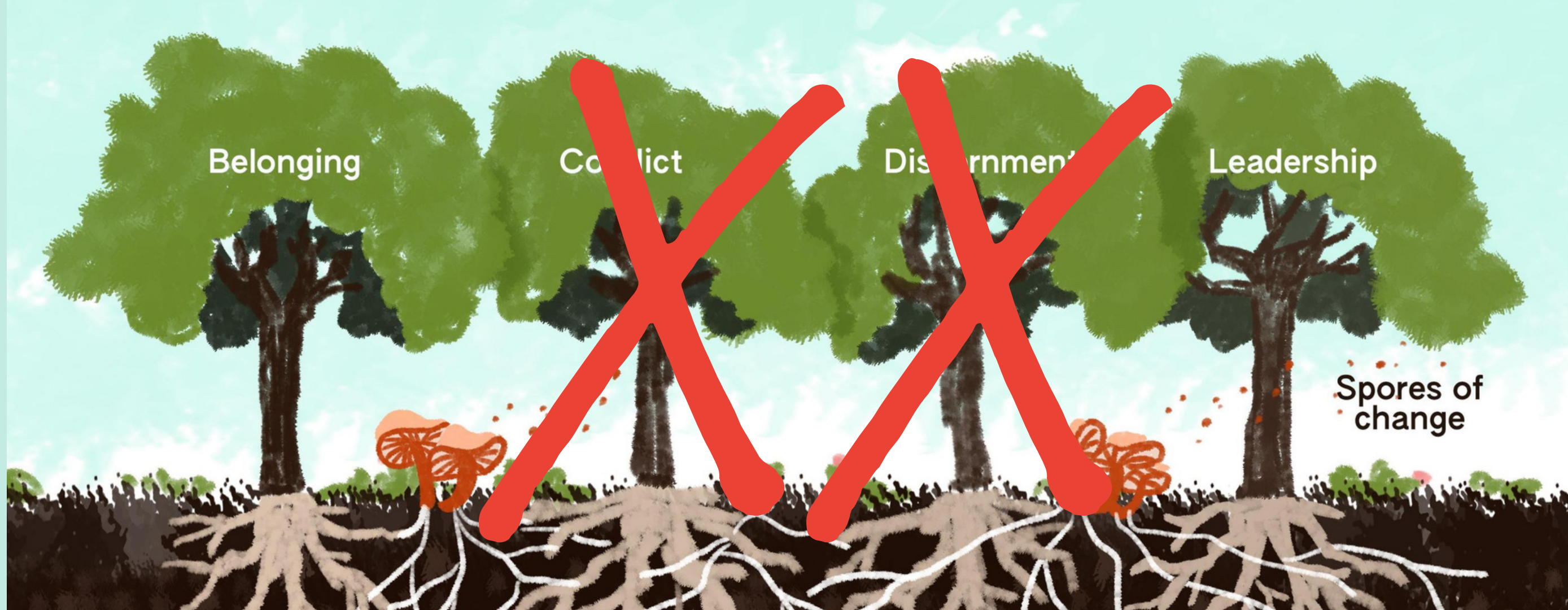


Aim: To face collapse generatively

- Enabling and embodying loving responses to the observation or anticipation of the collapse of modern industrial societies
- Individual and collective scales
- attention to self-organisation







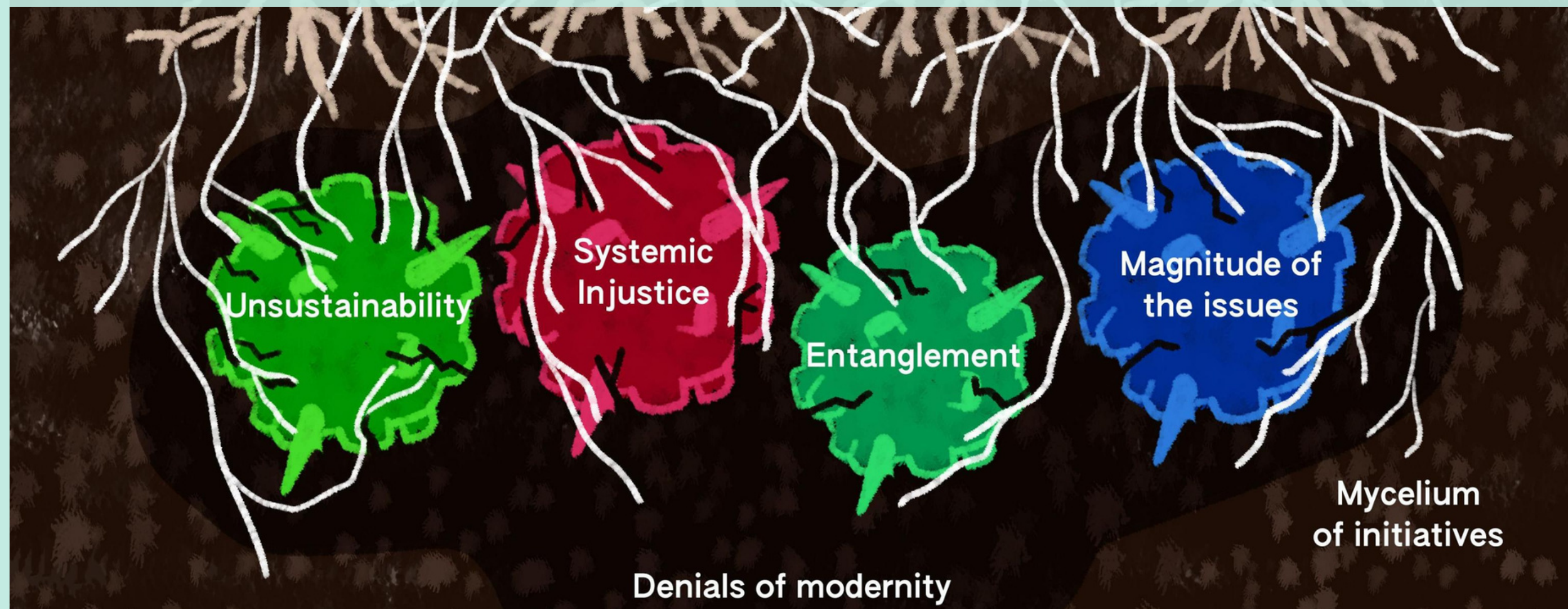
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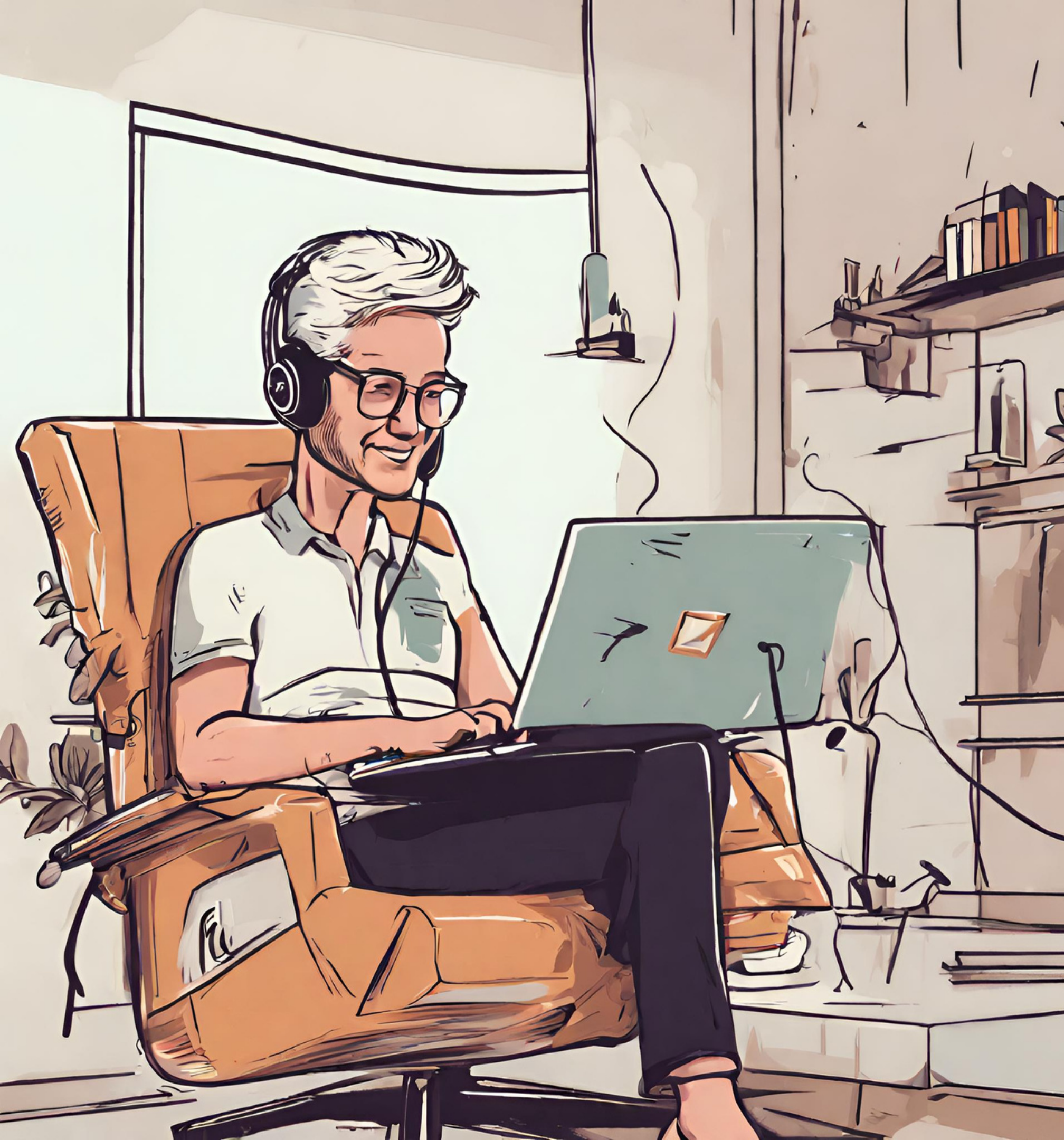
Mycelium
of initiatives

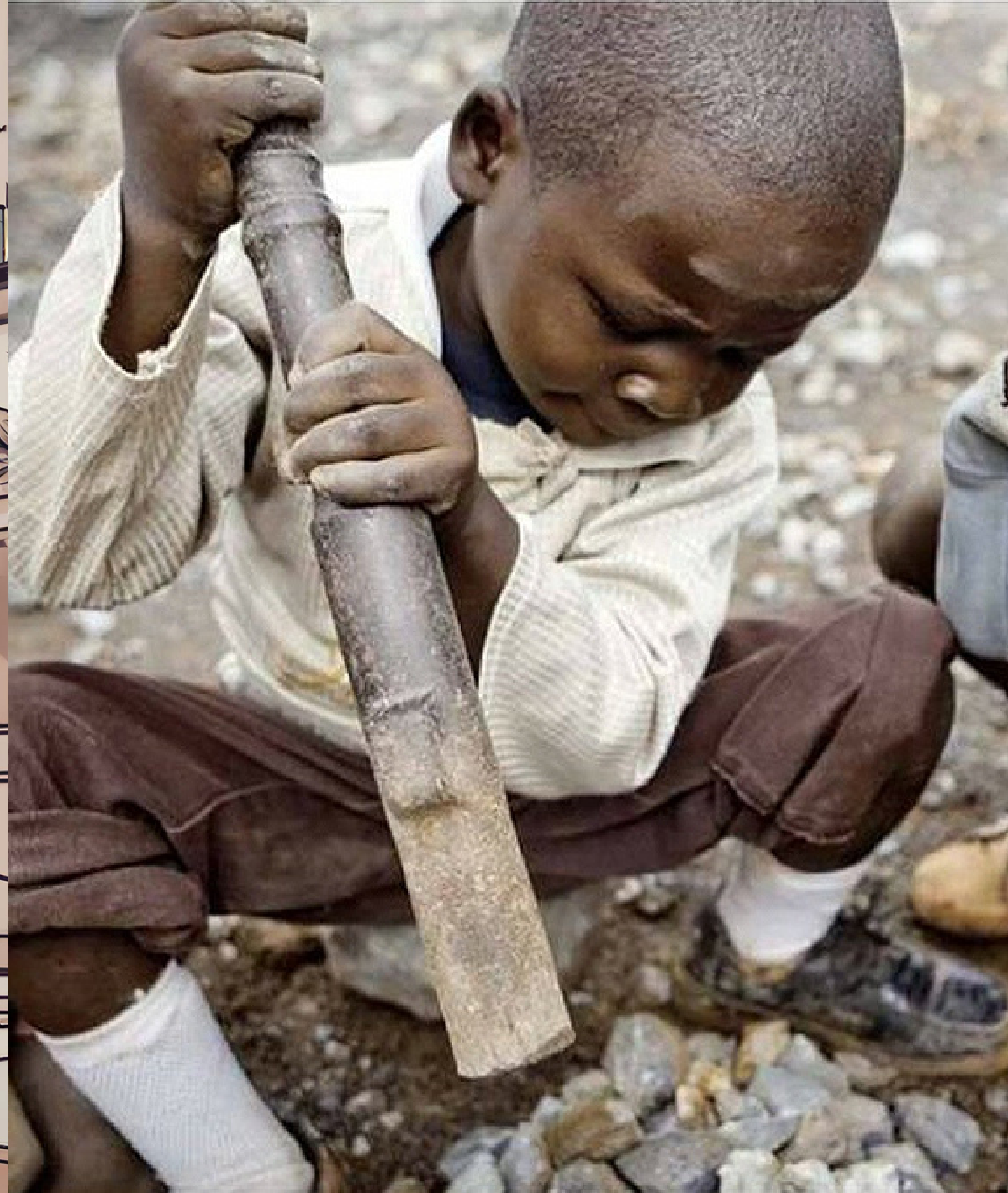
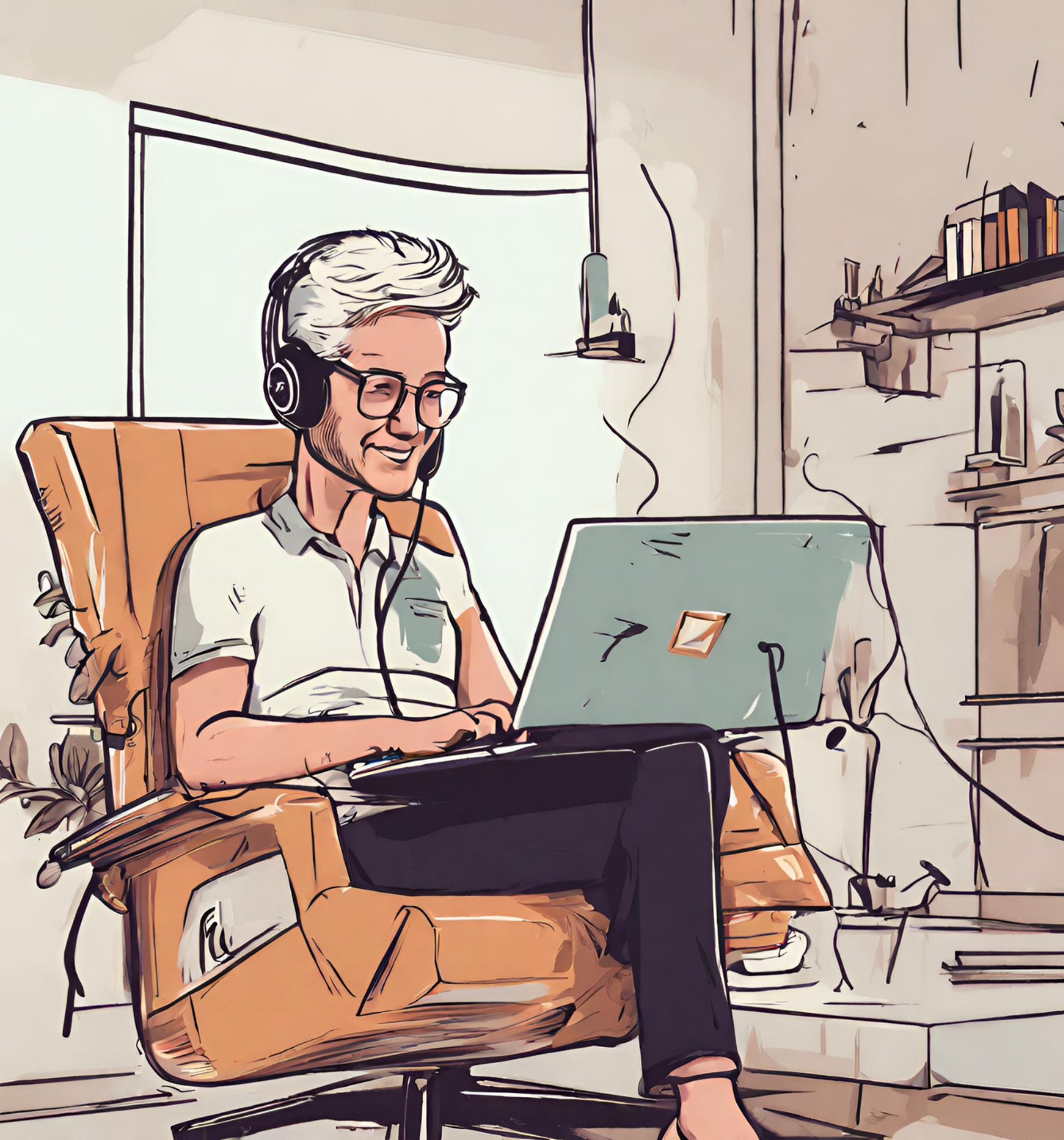
Denials of modernity

Belonging Conflict Discernment Leadership

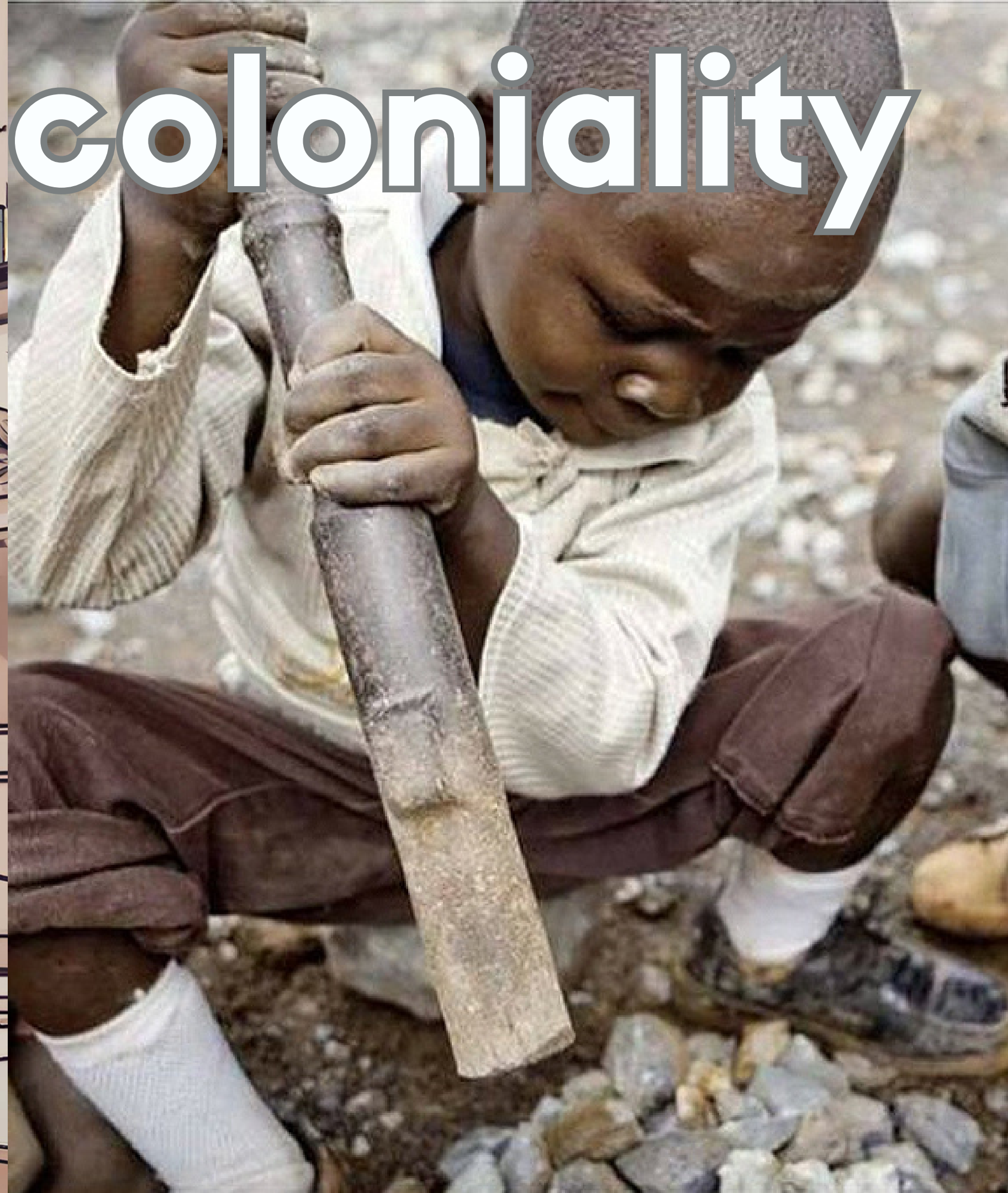
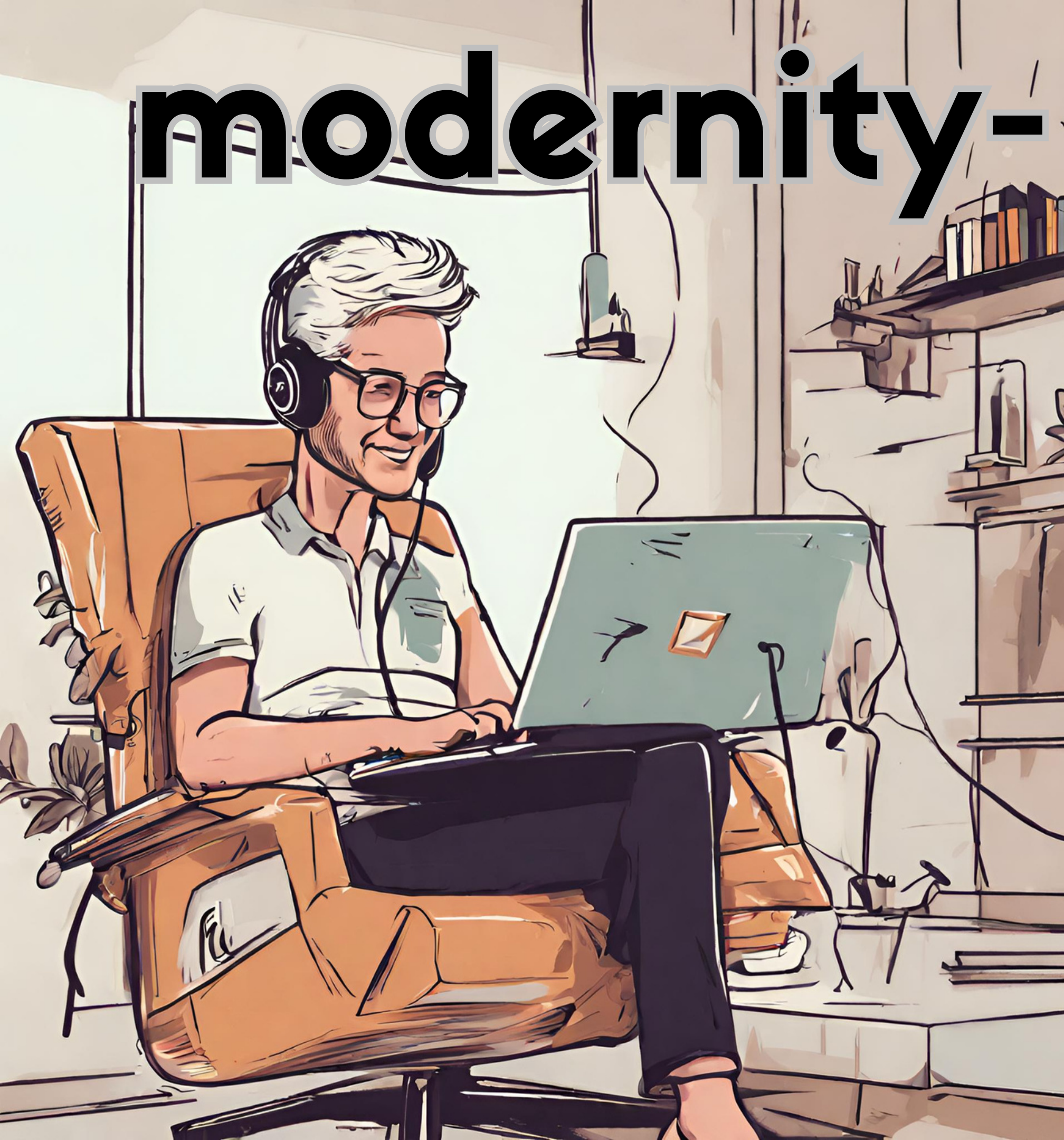
Condition #2: A mycelium of change composting the denials of modernity







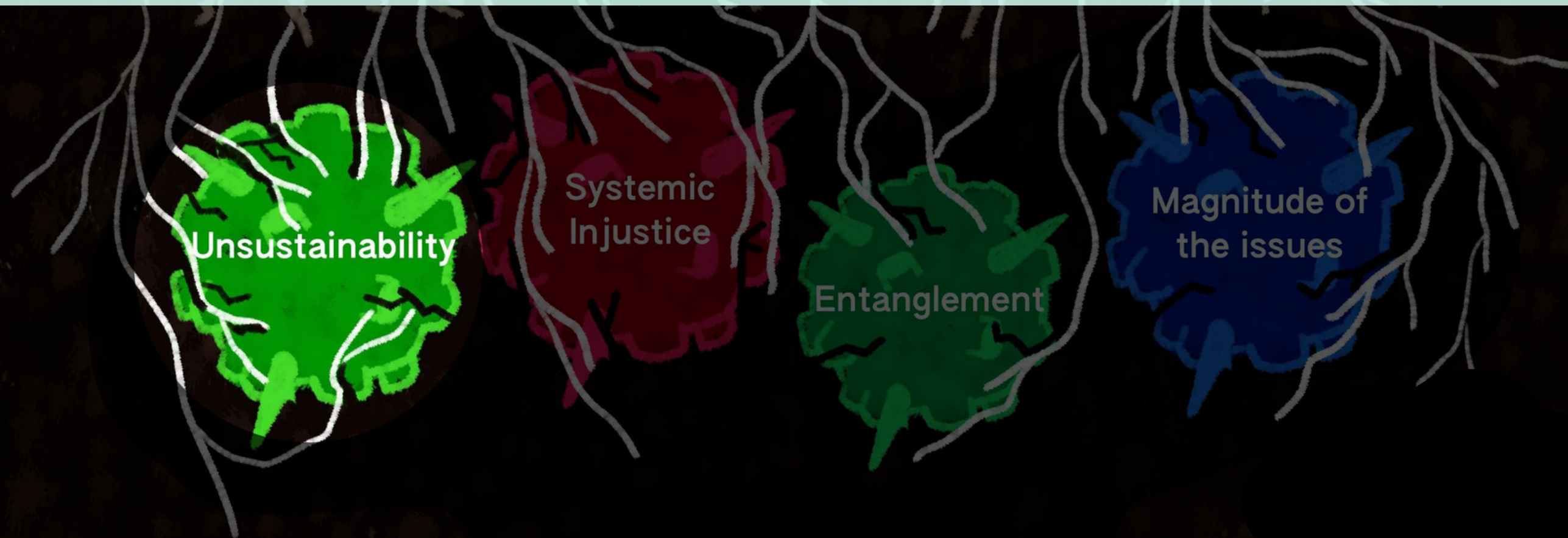
modernity - coloniality



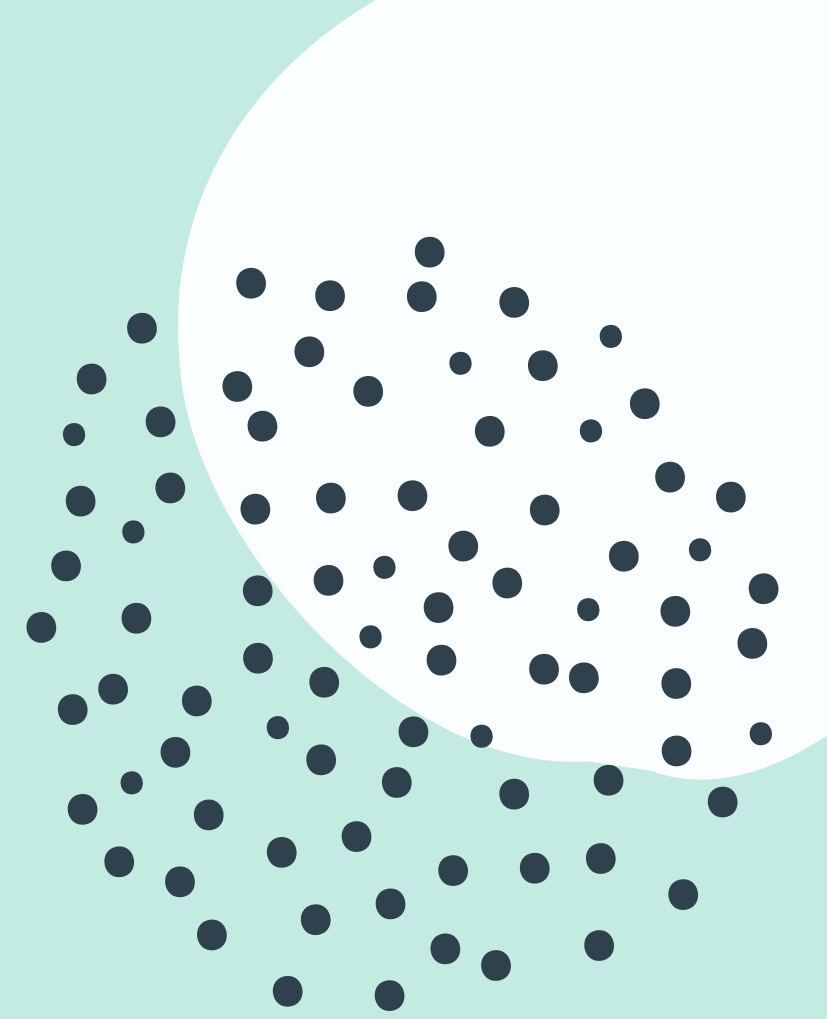
Composting the 4 denials of modernity-coloniality

Vanessa Machado de Oliveira, 2021

the denial of the limits of the planet and of the unsustainability of modernity/coloniality



the finite earth-metabolism cannot sustain exponential growth, consumption, extraction, exploitation, and expropriation indefinitely

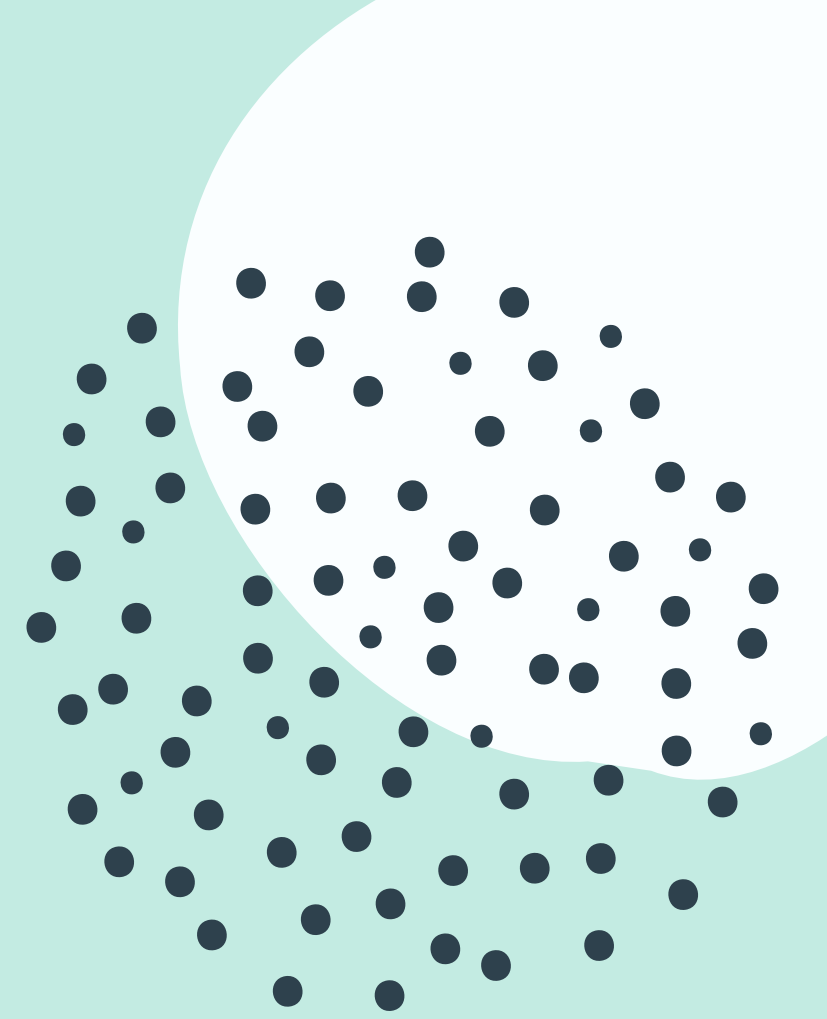


Composting the 4 denials of modernity-coloniality

the denial of systemic, historical, and ongoing violence and of complicity in harm



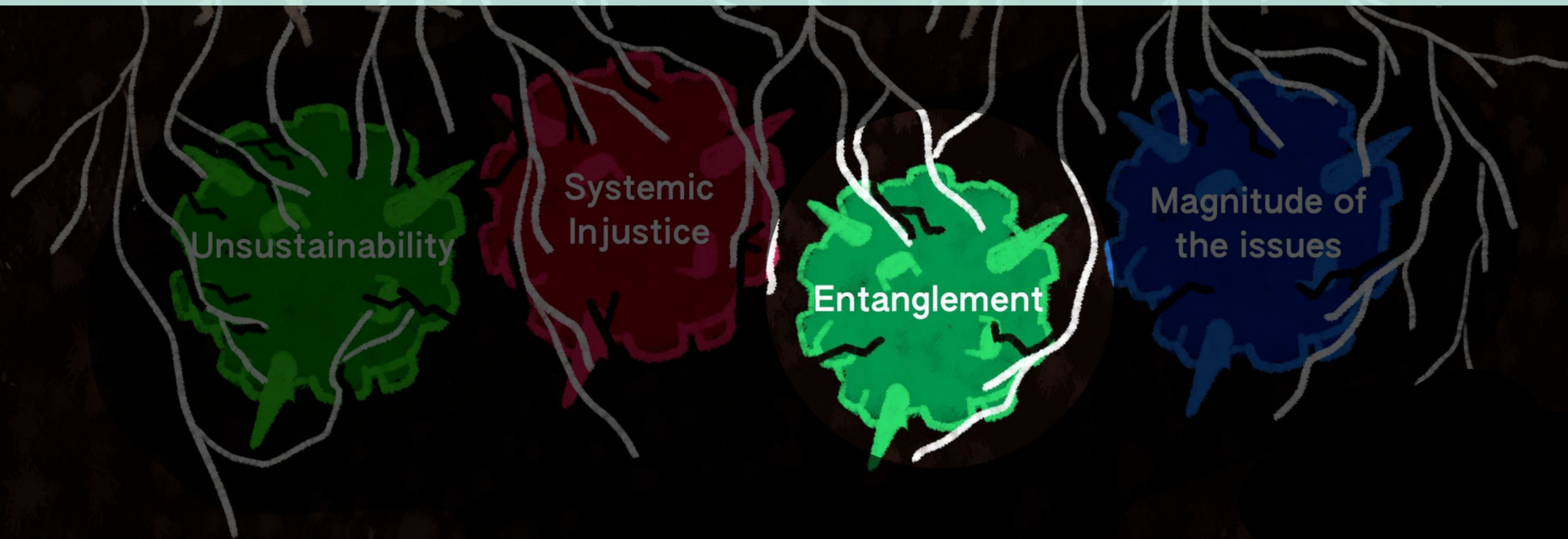
our comforts, securities, and enjoyments are subsidized by expropriation and exploitation elsewhere



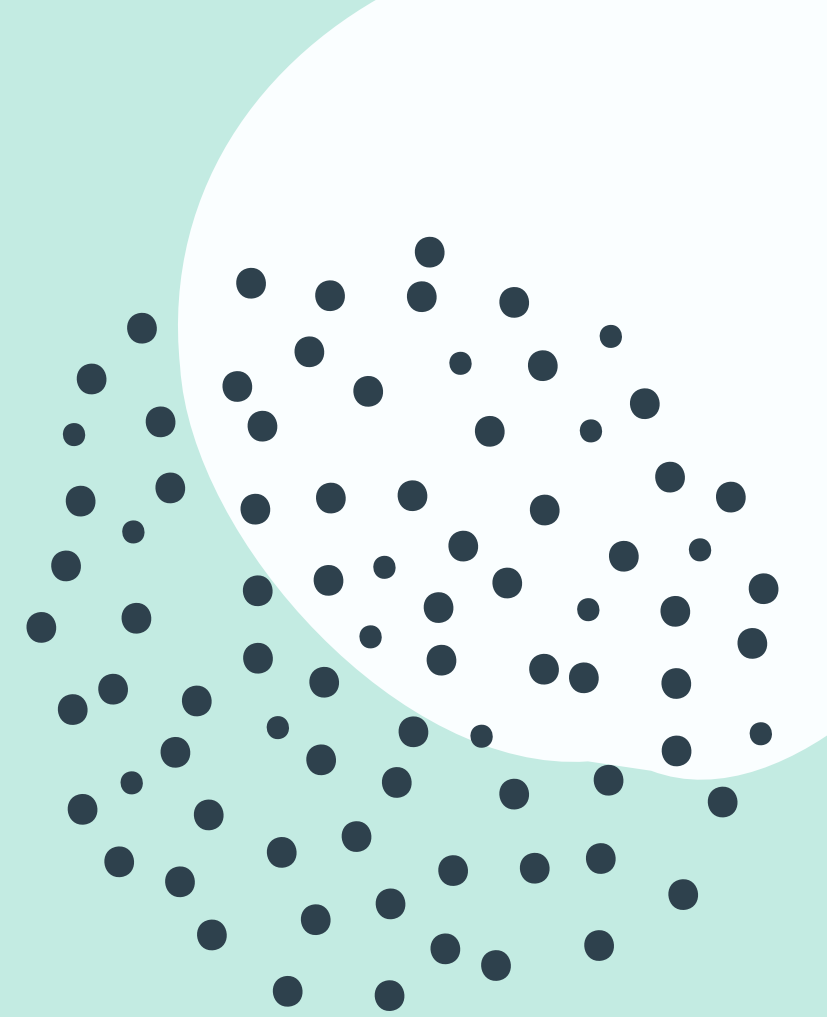
Spores of change

Composting the 4 denials of modernity-coloniality

the denial of entanglement



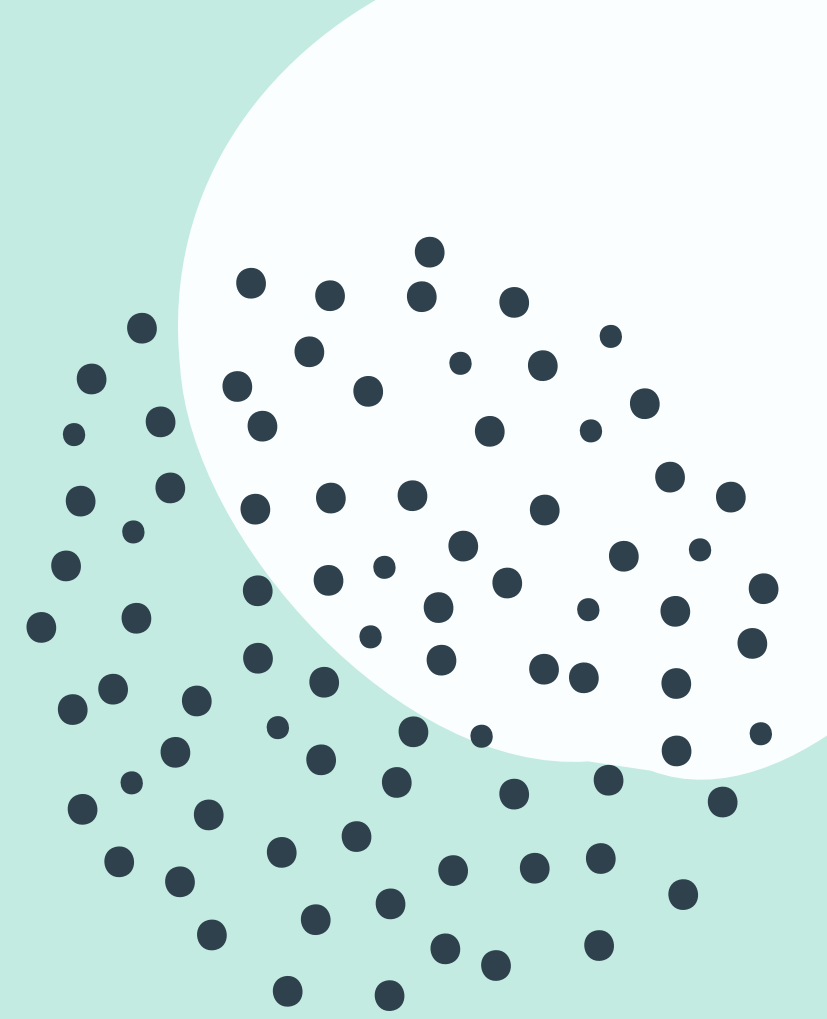
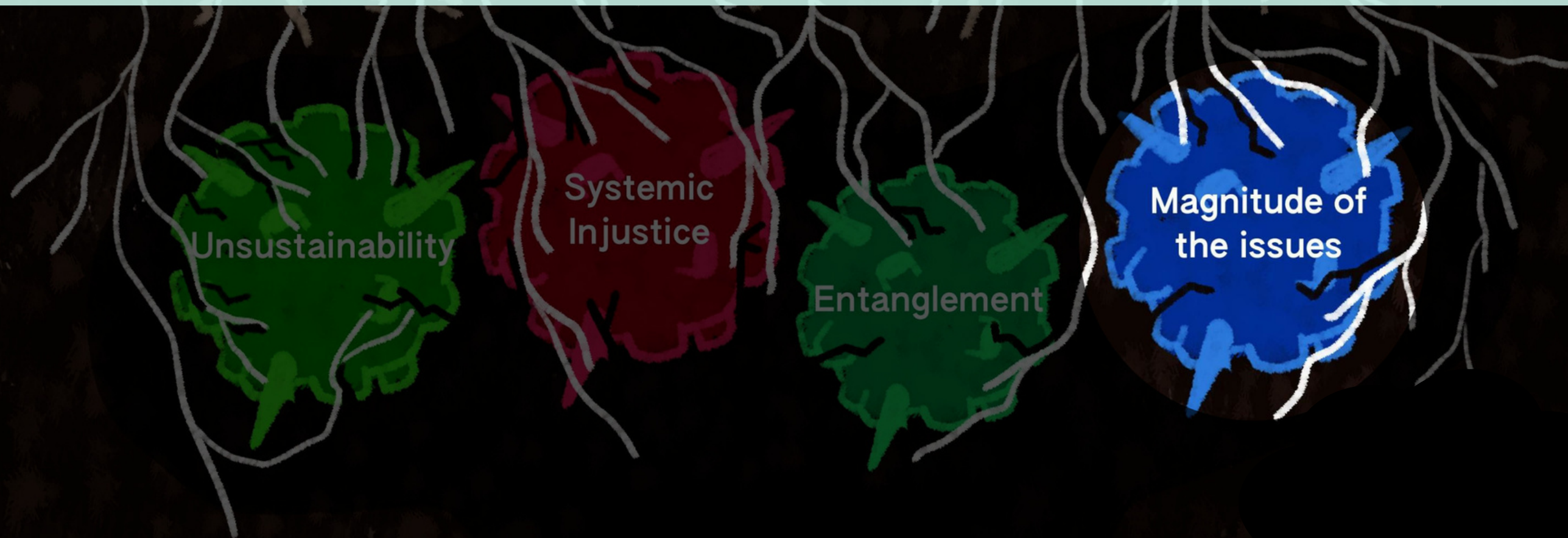
seeing ourselves as separate from each other and the land, rather than 'entangled' within a wider living metabolism that is bio-intelligent



Spores of change

Composting the 4 denials of modernity-coloniality

the denial of the magnitude and complexity of the problems we need to face together



the tendency to look for simplistic solutions that make us feel and look good and that may address symptoms, but not the root causes, of our collective complex predicament

Belonging

Conflict

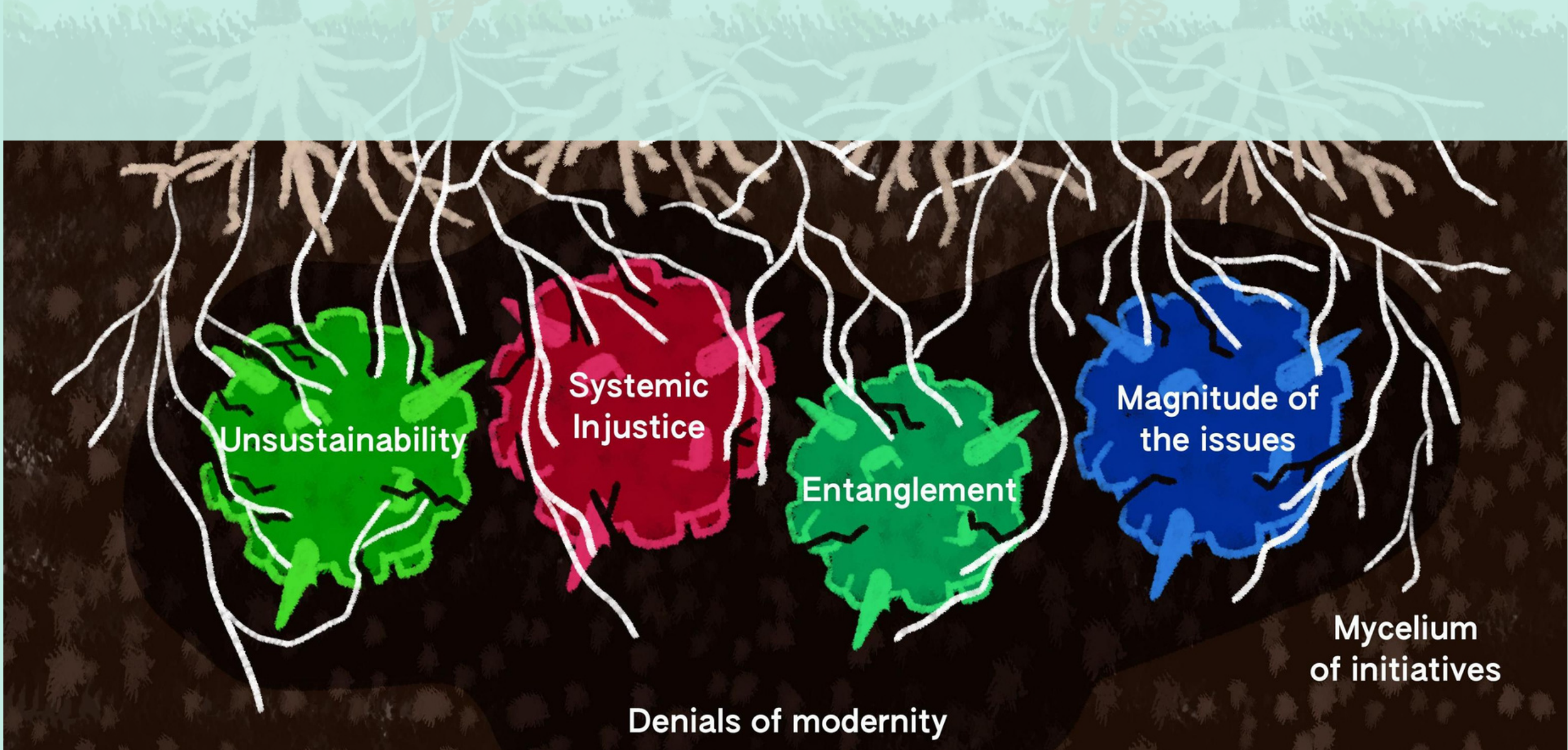
Discernment

Leadership



Deep Adaptation Forum

Spores of change



Belonging

Conflict

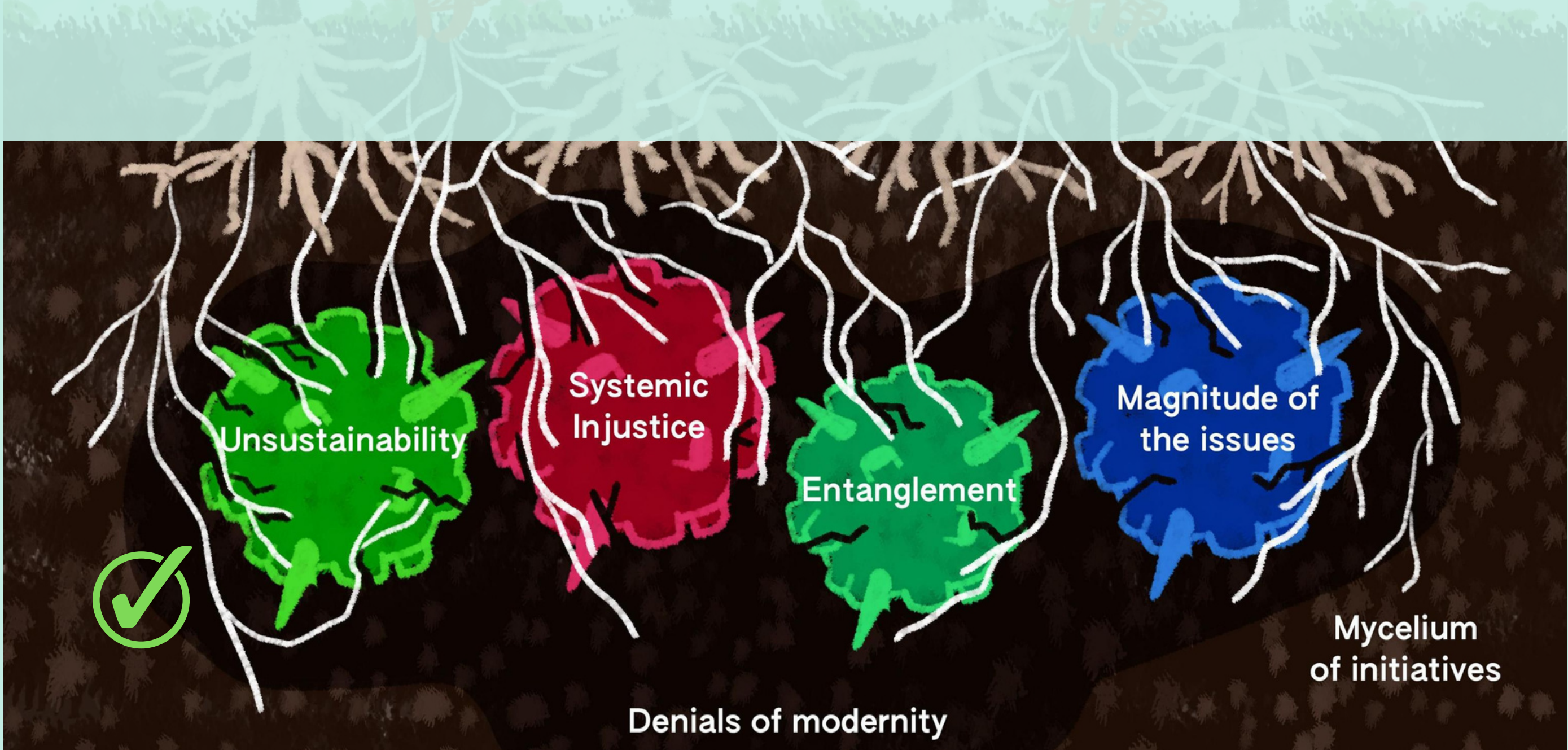
Discernment

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Deep Adaptation Forum

Spores of change



Belonging

Conflict

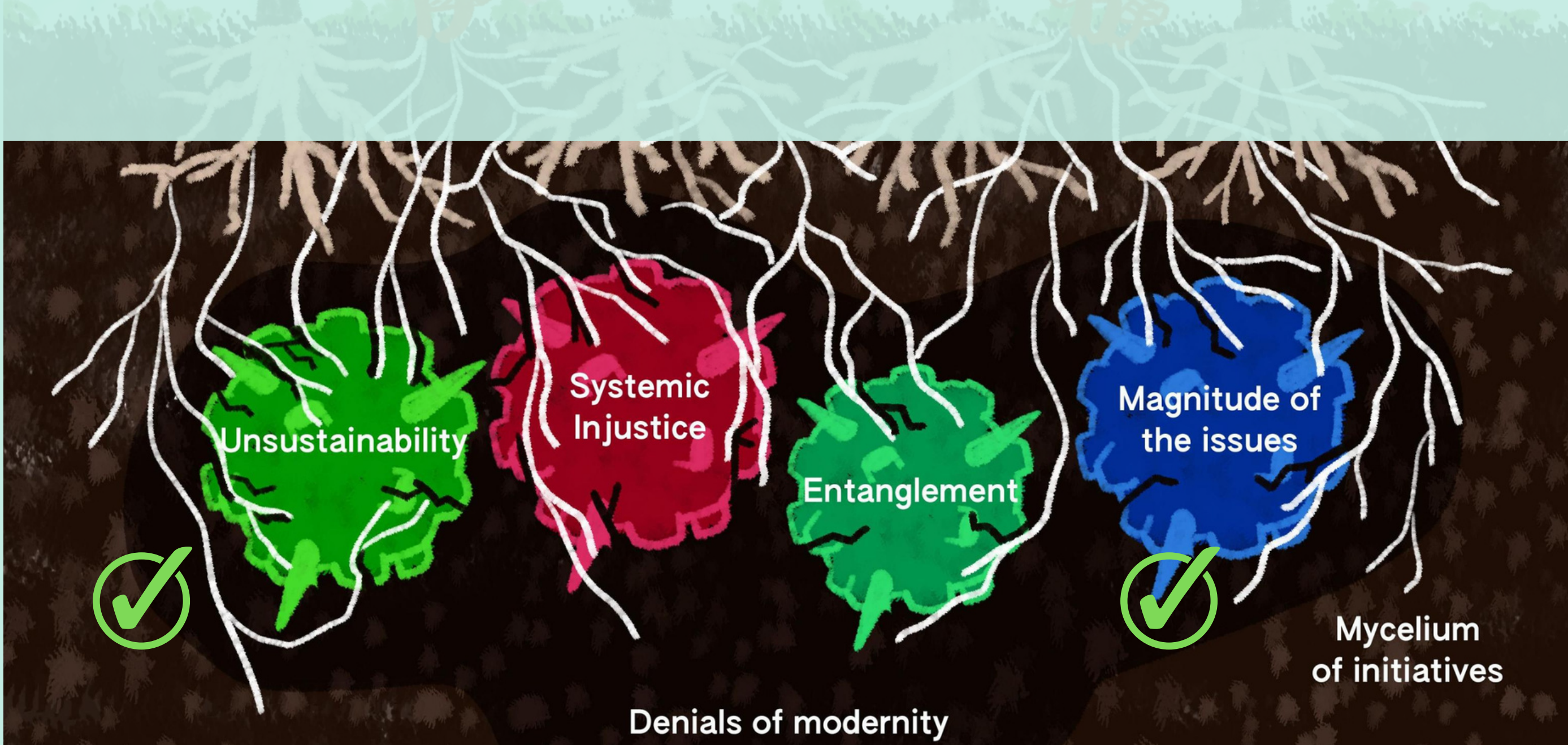
Discernment

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Deep Adaptation Forum

Spores of change



Belonging

Conflict

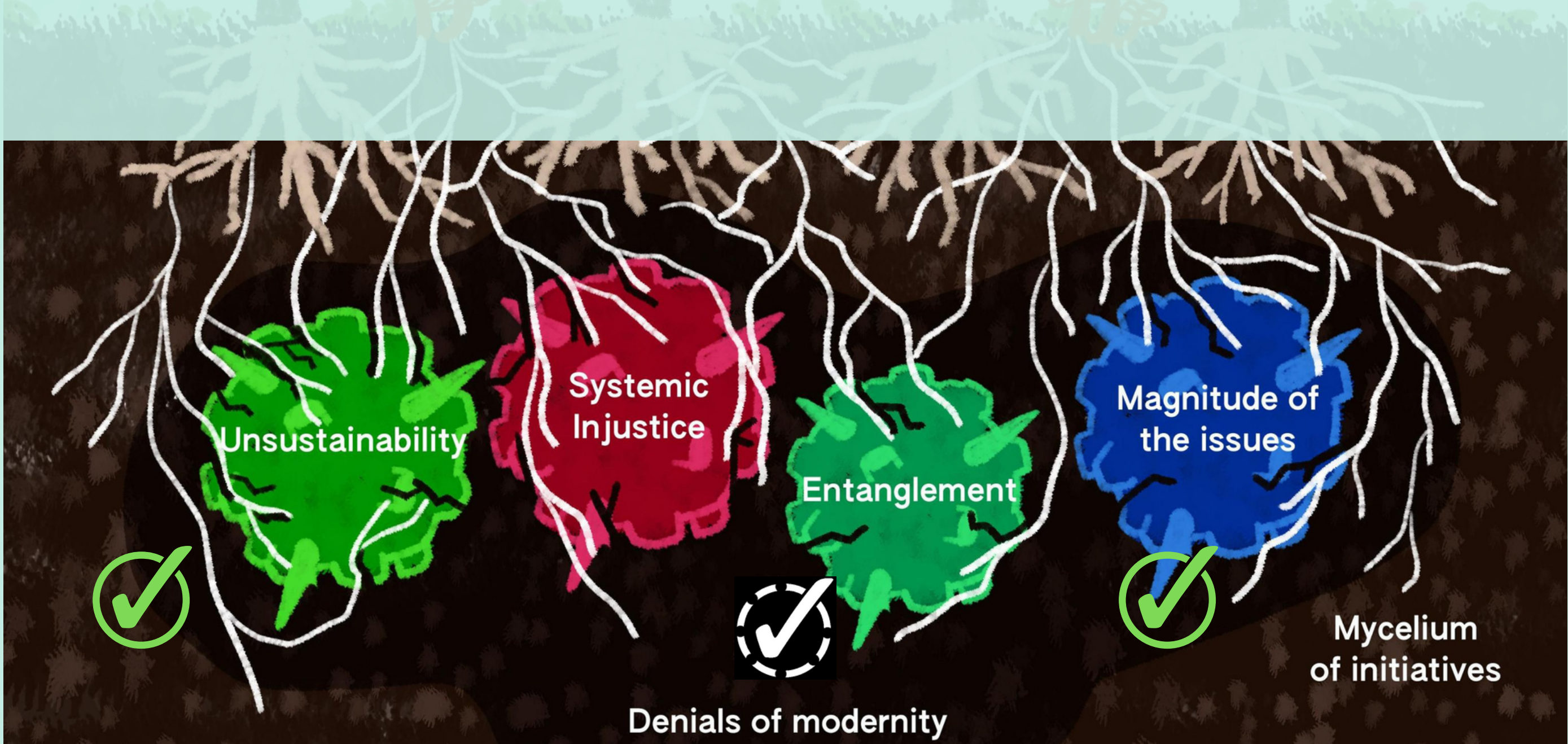
Discernment

Leadership



Deep Adaptation Forum

Spores of change



Belonging

Conflict

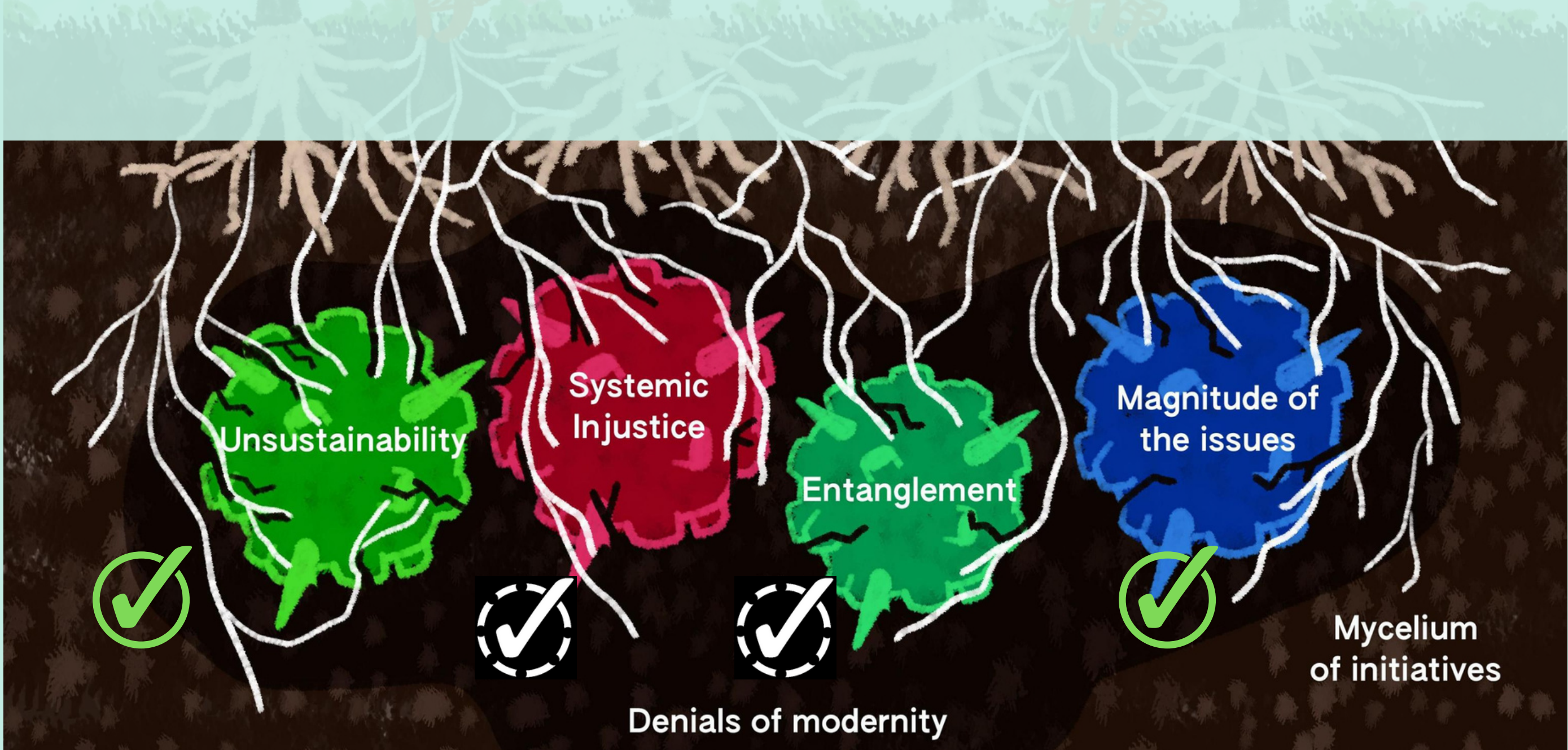
Discernment

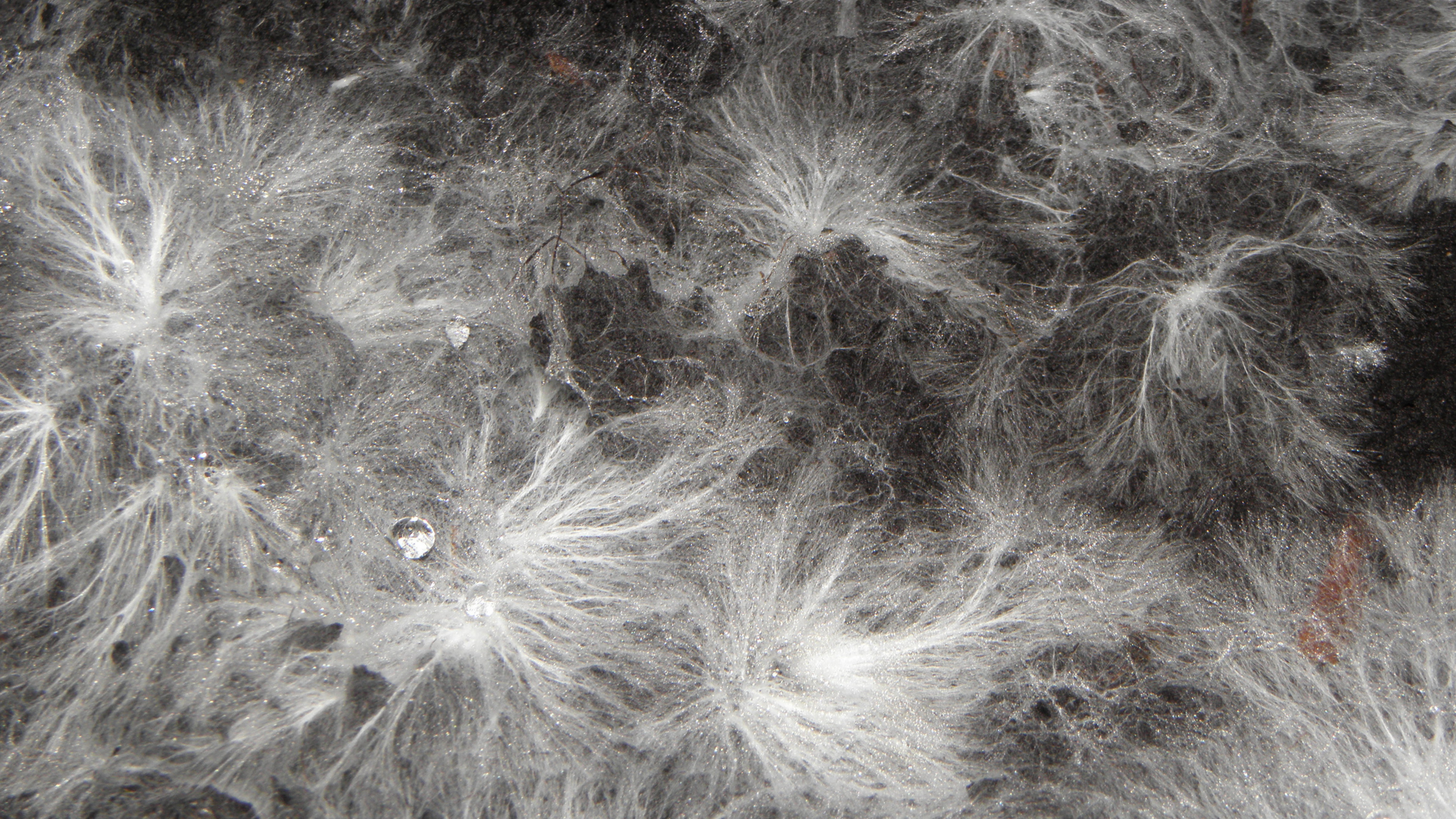
Leadership



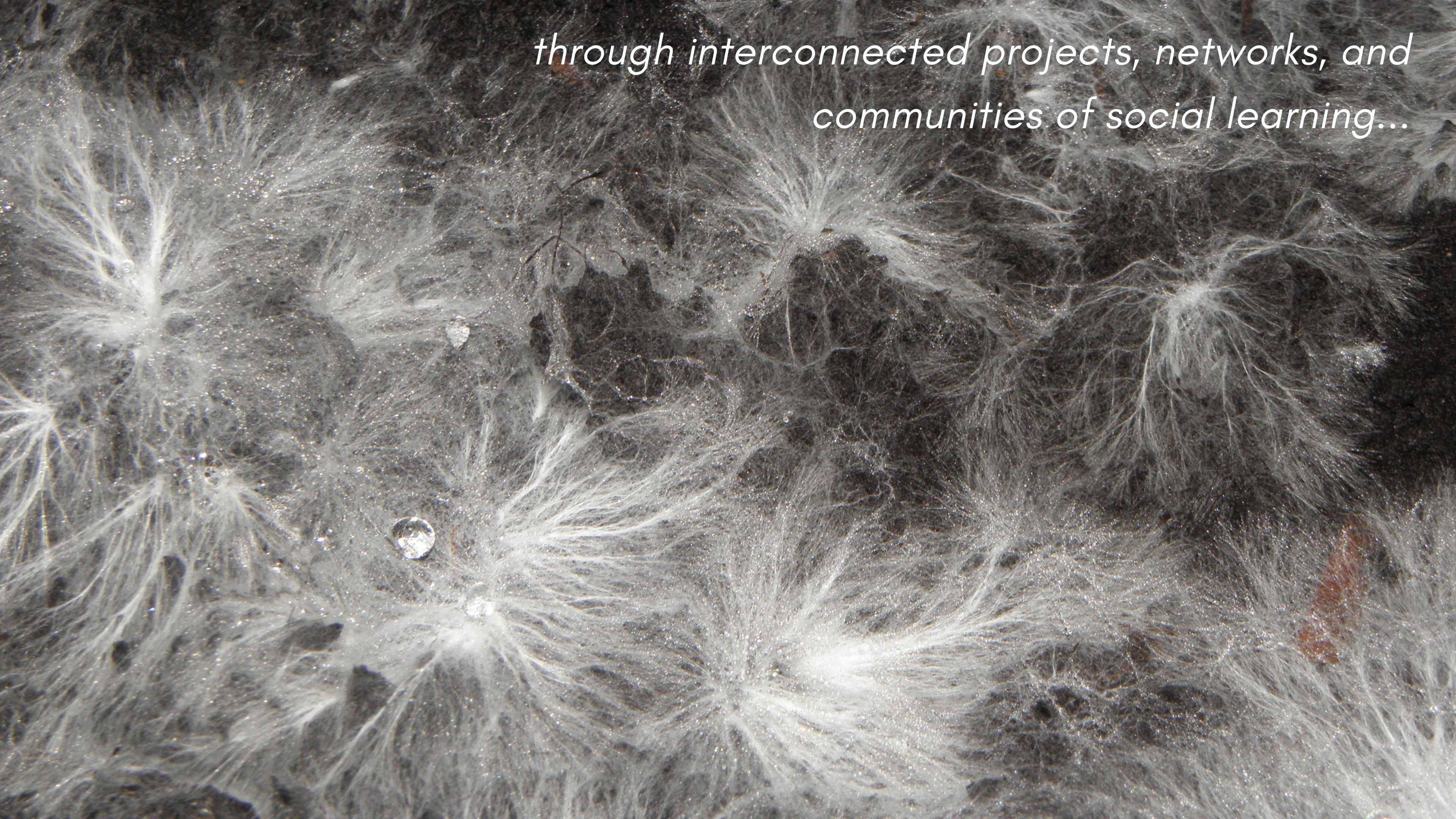
Deep Adaptation Forum

Spores of change





*through interconnected projects, networks, and
communities of social learning...*



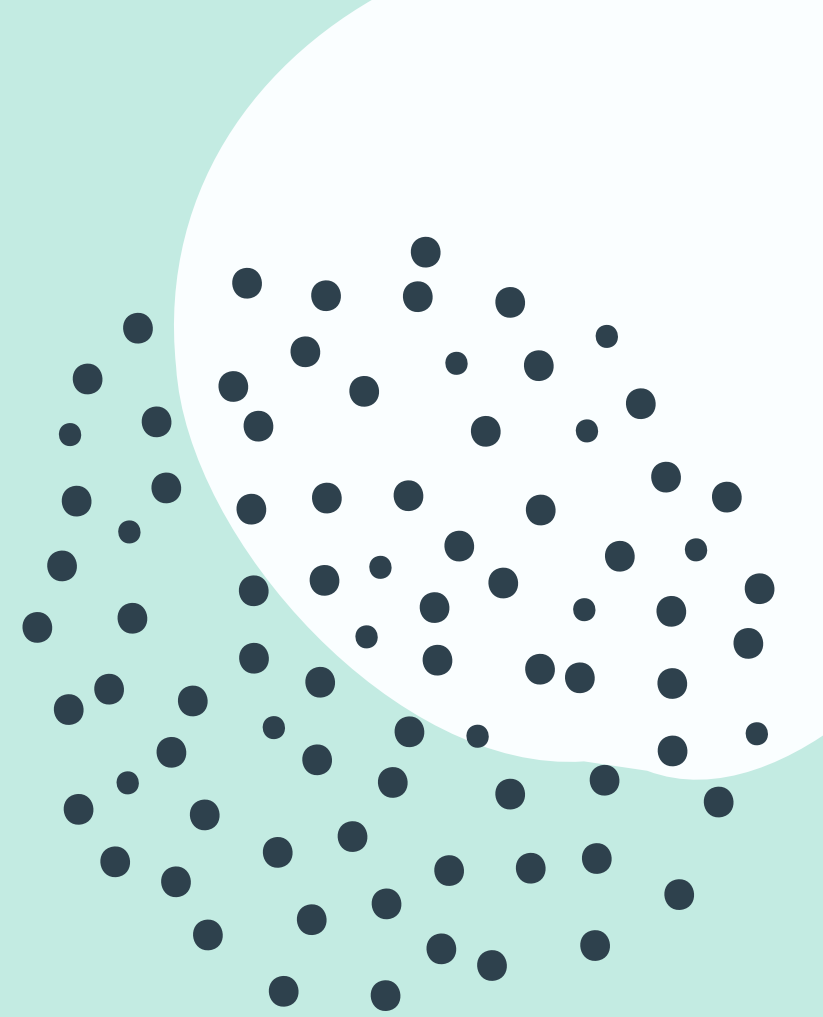


Deep Adaptation Forum

- small '**cells**' of potential change started to emerge thanks to online tools...
- ... but these cells were not yet very **closely connected** as a 'mycelium' (resources, information, participation, etc.)

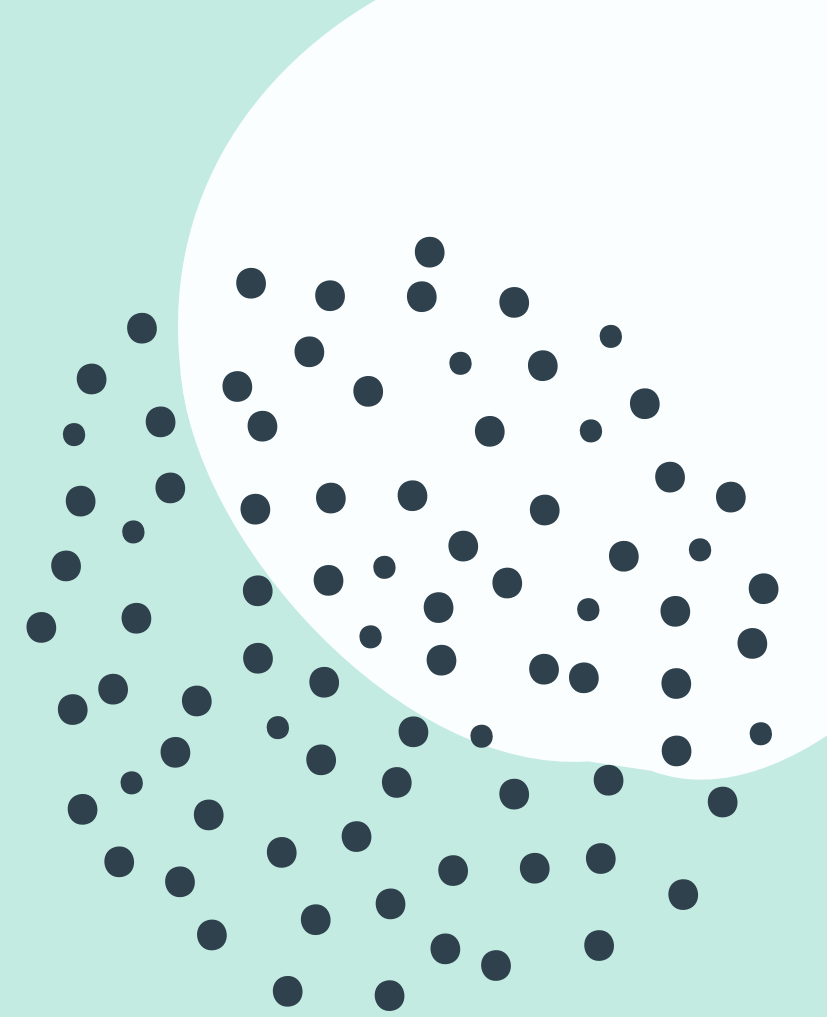
In brief...

- in the right **conditions** (mutual care + conflict transformation + leadership + critical discernment), a community can help useful initiatives to emerge
- these initiatives, when **confronting the denials** of modernity and **collaborating** closely, can help deep personal and collective changes to happen



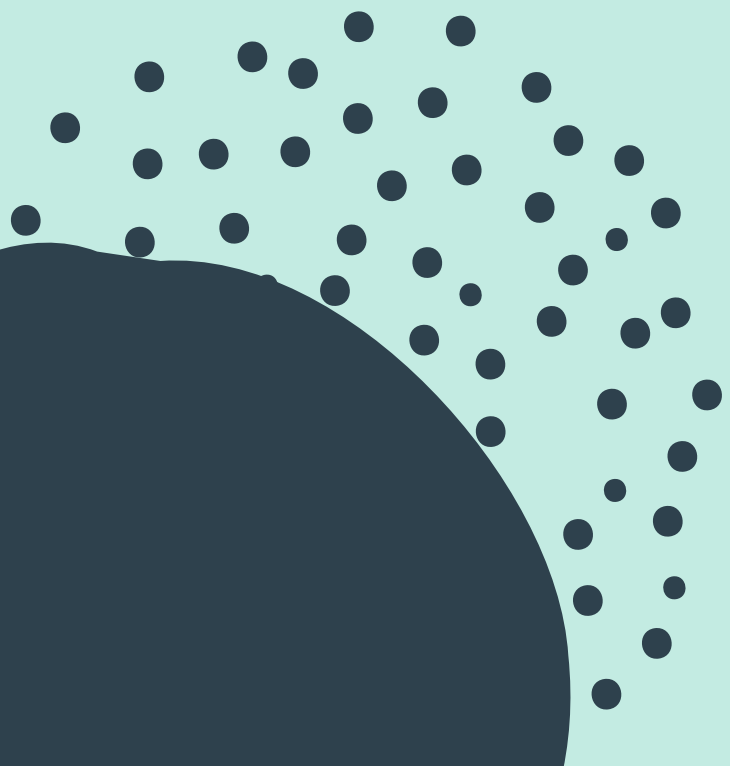
However!

- ICT tools can **connect people and ideas**, BUT also can **prevent change** from happening (exploitation, ecocide, echo chambers, polarisation...);
- **inner/behavioural changes** have to spread and become embodied into **new social, political and economic structures.**



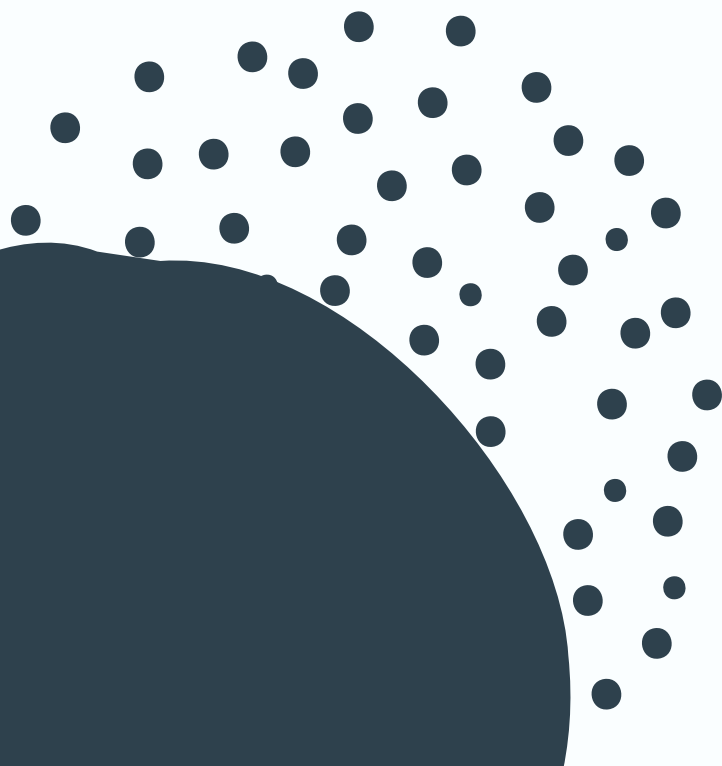
“How can we move together differently toward a future that is undefined, without arrogance, self-righteousness, dogmatism, and perfectionism?”

The Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures collective



LET'S CONNECT!

... to learn together how to cultivate
more mycelia of change, online and offline



daoyanger@riseup.net
www.madocollective.org/connecting

References

Machado de Oliveira, V. (2021) *Hospicing Modernity: Facing Humanity's Wrongs and the Implications for Social Activism*. North Atlantic Books.

Stein, S., Andreotti, V., Suša, R., Amsler, S., Hunt, D., Ahenakew, C., Jimmy, E., Cajkova, T., Valley, W., Cardoso, C., Siwek, D., Pitaguary, B., D'Emilia, D., Pataxó, U., Calhoun, B. and Okano, H. (2020) 'Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures: Reflections on Our Learnings Thus Far', *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education (NJCIE)*, 4(1), pp. 43–65. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.3518>

Whyte, K. (2018) 'Indigenous science (fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral dystopias and fantasies of climate change crises', *Environment and Planning E: Nature and Space*, 1(1-2), pp. 224–242. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2514848618777621>.