

**GESTURING TOWARDS DECOLONIAL FUTURES COLLECTIVE**

**Global Citizenship Education OTHERWISE  
STUDY GUIDE**

04  
2019

# Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures

## Global Citizenship *Otherwise* Study Program

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Cover image "Earth" by Vanessa Andreotti

her hair: the universe // the sun: setting between her eyebrows // cuts, bruises and barbed wires on her skin: our arrogance // rivers of tears: her sentience // eyes closed: she speaks without words // your gaze: we start to remember how to listen

**Website:** [decolonialfutures.net](http://decolonialfutures.net)

Frequently asked questions: [decolonialfutures.net/gce-faq](http://decolonialfutures.net/gce-faq)

Recommended readings and reference list: [decolonialfutures.net/gce-references](http://decolonialfutures.net/gce-references)

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**This booklet was developed with a specific audience in mind: educators working with global citizenship education in Europe. We are developing different study programs in different thematic areas and for different audiences, based on demand (e.g. teacher education, higher education, global health, ecology, STEM and Indigenous sensibilities of entanglement). Let us know if you are interested in collaborating with us in these efforts.**

## Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective

We are a collective of researchers, artists, educators, students and activists involved in research and artistic, pedagogical and visual mapping experiments in education. Our work brings together concerns related to racism, colonialism, unsustainability, climate change, economic instability, mental health crises, and intensifications of social and ecological violence. We are attempting to enable healthier possibilities of (co)existence that are viable, but are unthinkable/unimaginable within our dominant cognitive and affective frames of reference.

Our decolonial perspective is informed and inspired by Indigenous analyses and practices that affirm that our current global problems are not related to a lack of knowledge, but to an inherently violent modern-colonial habit of being. Three clusters of illusions drive this habit of being:

- illusions related to separation (from land, other beings and each other) and superiority - denial of entanglement;
- illusions related to human centeredness, merit and innocence - denial of systemic violence and complicity in harm;
- illusions related to linear progress and the possibility of continuity - denial of the limits of the planet.

We are researching the cognitive, affective and relational patterns of this habit of being through a form of non-Western psychoanalysis where the unconscious encompasses everything (everyone, all dimensions, across and beyond time, all traumas, the good, the bad and the ugly), including the metabolic intelligence of the Earth that calibrates our vital compass – the compass that shows us what we need to heal and how to do it together.

We have developed pedagogical tools that invite people to “dig deeper” (to connect dots in their analyses of the bigger picture) and to “relate wider” (to expand their capacity for accountable responsibility). In other words, to develop ways of living that engage with, rather than deny, systemic violence, our entanglements and complicity in harm, and the limits of the planet.

These tools work intra-subjectively (internally), inter-subjectively (socially) and meta-subjectively (the bigger picture of our existence). They engage with and try to expand possibilities in and through the intellect, the imagination, and the neuro-biological systems of sensing, feeling and responding that make up our individual and collective bodies.

This pedagogy aims to mobilize disillusionment as a productive force that can help people find balance-in-movement in the eye of a storm: between “hospicing” ways of knowing and being that are dying, and assisting the “midwifery” of forms of co-existence and political possibilities that are still undefined, and are potentially (but not necessarily) wiser, with “radical tenderness”.

In our work in formal, nonformal and experiential education, we attempt to creatively translate and amplify insights from communities of high intensity struggle that are setting their horizons of hope:

- beyond modern forms of social-economy (e.g. capitalism, socialism and anarchism)
- beyond nation states and borders as mediators of relations
- beyond separation between “man” and nature (anthropocentrism, patriarchy and separability)
- beyond a single rationality and story of progress, development and evolution
- beyond social mobility as the purpose of life
- beyond consumption (of goods, knowledge, relationships, experiences and critique) as a mode of relating to the world

This study program presents an overview of what we do and outlines two pedagogical experiments. “Bare Basics” is a program for self or group study consisting of a collection of resources organized around six thematic areas. The second is an experiential program that we run by request. It involves mapping, imagination, body and land-based exercises. We invite you to engage with both programs, starting with our “broccoli seed agreement” on the back of the booklet.

**Translations of this introduction can be found at: [decolonialfutures.net/translations](https://decolonialfutures.net/translations). Please also check [decolonialfutures.net/compass-questions](https://decolonialfutures.net/compass-questions) and [decolonialfutures.net/shared-responsibilities](https://decolonialfutures.net/shared-responsibilities)**



## Global (Citizenship) Education OTHERWISE: Digging Deeper and Relating Wider

Global education (GE) and global citizenship education (GCE) are contested terms that refer to forms of education that emphasize global challenges and perspectives, representing a number of different approaches.

Most of these approaches we define as “soft reform” since they advocate for environmental awareness, empathy and citizen participation in the current socio-economic system.

Some approaches to GE and GCE go further and are critical of the current socio-economic system, wanting people to develop motivation and capacity for “radical reform.”

A few approaches to GE and GCE want to deepen our learning of the current system’s limits and harmful tendencies as we dis-invest from its continuity while working within it and enabling different possibilities of existence and politics *otherwise* to *emerge as we learn to “be” differently* together. This we define as “beyond reform”.

This position of “beyond reform” is where we locate ourselves. We are inspired by insights and practices of Indigenous knowledge keepers and scholars and the works of postcolonial, decolonial, critical race and abolitionist studies, as well as by other bodies of scholarship.

We call this educational experiment “GE and GCE OTHERWISE” in this context. Our aim is not to convince people that the OTHERWISE approach is the best way forward or what should be adopted in all educational contexts. Instead, we would like to invite people:

- to *suspend their assumptions and expectations* about this approach in order to create space to experience (without pre-determining) a little of what it can do at personal and collective levels;
- to debrief the process and understand the approach more deeply *after* having experienced both the informational and experiential dimensions of it, and to give us feedback; and
- to translate parts of the approach into their own practice in their own contexts, *if/when feasible and appropriate* and/or to *hang out more with us* to consider joining the collective if the work speaks strongly to them.

In other words, we are not here to tell people how to think or what to do, since we respect the specificities of different contexts and uphold people’s responsibility to decide for themselves.

We start from the premise that the challenges we are collectively facing are due to harmful habits of being that cannot be solved with more knowledge, information, or aligned cognitive frames alone. We believe that it is our affective and relational capacities that will help us to figure out together how to navigate these challenges: to feel, to imagine and to relate differently to everything around and within us.

We often say to participants in our experiential programs: “*we lovingly don’t care about what you think, but we do care deeply about our collective capacity to feel, to dig deeper and to relate wider*”, and this is what this “otherwise” approach invites us to do.

The table below articulates differences in assumptions and directions of “modern GE and GCE” and “GE and GCE OTHERWISE” in relation to cognitive, motivational, and affective dimensions. It also compares their different theories of change and orientations of hope.

	<b>Modern GE and GCE</b>	<b>GE and GCE OTHERWISE</b>
<b>Cognitive focus</b>	understanding the global dimension of local issues; forming better informed opinions; developing consensus on values and ways forward; harvesting and exposing people to different voices and perspectives; developing skills for participation	developing capacity to face and embrace complexities, uncertainty, paradoxes and internal contradictions without becoming irritated, overwhelmed, anxious or depressed; connecting dots in the bigger picture in relation to the roots and effects of material and relational poverty; understanding how we are complicit in harm; rationally exploring the limits of a single rationality and of a single story of progress, development and evolution <b>(self-reflexive multi-layered reasoning)</b>
<b>Motivational focus</b>	“making a difference”; “being a hero/ine”; giving people hope for the future; empowering and motivating people to act locally and globally in ways that are authorized by official institutions	developing stamina to engage with difficult issues and conversations without relationships falling apart and without turning to harmful kinds of hope for redemption; tapping exiled capacities to expand possibilities for: trust, collective strength, developing familiarity with being in/with the uncomfortable, the unknown, the unknowable, the unexpected, “composting shit” together, and tuning into different modes of accessing personal and collective joy <b>(possibility of relating differently through radical tenderness)</b>
<b>Affective focus</b>	encouraging (self-congratulatory forms of) tolerance, empathy, virtue, care, autonomy, courage to stand up against injustice, choosing from (prescriptive) ethical frameworks	interrupting patterns of consumption and other neurobiological addictions related to fears, (in)securities, anxieties and perceived entitlements at individual and collective levels; finding balance-in-movement at the “eye of the storm”; staying at the edge and “with the trouble”; nurturing humility, generosity, compassion, patience and response-ability “before will” (not dependent on choice, convictions or convenience) <b>(tapping metabolic intelligence and composting shit)</b>
<b>Theory of change</b>	active citizens involved in in/formal democratic processes can fix the system	the current system’s dependence on exponential growth fuelled by over-consumption is violent, unsustainable and unfixable; when the limits of the planet and of the system itself are reached in different contexts at different times we will be forced to figure out how to be, to relate, to imagine and to work together differently; although we cannot predict with certainty or plan for this time, we can prepare for taking up this challenge collectively <b>(attempting to extend the glide and soften the crash)</b>
<b>Hope</b>	human rationality and ingenuity will engineer a society that is in balance with nature	we will learn from the recurrent mistakes that our current habit of being reproduces (especially in relation to separability) and, when the time comes, there will be a chance that a wiser way of being will emerge and that we will only make different mistakes in the future <b>(tapping the “adjacent possible”: possibilities that are viable, but unthinkable within our current frames)</b>

For more information on pedagogy, see the text “what we have learned so far 2019” and other resources at [decolonialfutures.net/project-type/pedagogical-experiments/](http://decolonialfutures.net/project-type/pedagogical-experiments/)



## Bare Basics Informational Plan of Study: Where Do We Start?

If you are new to the topic of *wicked* global challenges, this Bare Basics plan of study will help you navigate through some of the questions and resources that can help you to get started. We invite you to begin this process by calculating your ecological footprint at [www.footprintcalculator.org](http://www.footprintcalculator.org) and your slavery footprint at [slaveryfootprint.org](http://slaveryfootprint.org). These tools are limited in what they can do, but they will give you an idea of how many planets we would need if everyone had the same patterns of consumption that you have, and how many modern slaves are already necessary for you to sustain these patterns today.

These educational tools were created to offer a rough overview of the hidden costs of our lifestyles and of the scale of the problems we are facing in terms of the environmental destruction and human exploitation that are necessary to maintain our comforts, benefits, securities and enjoyments. They also point to the fact that the strategy of increasing growth and consumption as a way to address poverty and promote prosperity (the promise of middle class for all) is deeply problematic if we take into account the limits of the planet and the multiple forms of violence required for this expansion.

We have organized this plan of study around socially authorized denials. What we mean by a socially authorized denial is something that is proactively **not** talked about in formal education, in the media or in modern institutions. We do not talk about the hidden violence and costs of the promises of the current system because it is not easy nor convenient to do so. Talking about it is uncomfortable and frustrating, it can prompt feelings of guilt, shame, and anger, it can make us look in the mirror and see something that we don't want to see, and it can make us enjoy less the things that can be pleasurable if we don't think about

where they come from and at what and whose expense.

Indeed, if given a choice, many people would choose to continue not to think about these things and to keep enjoying these pleasures and comforts uninterrupted. However, in the current state of affairs where these pleasures and comforts may be affecting the very possibility of the continuation of life in the planet, we have to consider our responsibility towards future generations of human and non-human lives. We need to have the courage and honesty to face what we are collectively doing and the difficulties of imagining and doing something different – relating “otherwise”.

We believe that part of us knows already that we are in a huge mess, but because we do not know what to do or how to sit with this knowledge, we evade it. We prefer to avoid “connecting the dots” out of a fear that we will be overwhelmed with information, anxiety, hopelessness and grief. However, unless we find a way to face this “collective shit” together and learn to compost it collaboratively, and to transform it into new soil for something else to grow from, we will drown in it collectively.

However, this “otherwise” approach is not about “saving the planet” (the Earth will be fine without us) or even about “saving ourselves”. It is about recalibrating our vital compass in order to feel connected (beyond “thinking” we are) with and part of the living metabolism that the planet is (within an even greater whole). This is the first step towards re-activating the neurobiological capacities that have been numbed by our perceived separation from the whole.

This recalibration can re-activate the sensibility that makes us feel that, since we are part of everything, any form of violence towards the whole affects all of us. In turn, this sensibility compels us to exercise a form of visceral responsibility for *everything*.

Through this vital compass and exiled capacities we receive the inspiration, the visions and the energy necessary for the work that needs to be done next – like being plugged to a “bio-internet”. Through this work we also recalibrate our rational and moral compass towards collective balance and wellbeing (in its intra-, inter- and meta-subjective forms) away from separation, consumption and individualism.

In this approach there is no “good” and “bad” teams – we are one team only and we need to figure out how to address the dis-ease of the metabolism together, with assistance from and in tune with the metabolic bio-intelligence that the living planet has.

The three denials that provide the structure for this plan of study are:

## Plan of Study: Questions and Resources

The questions and resources presented below have been selected for their educational usefulness and online accessibility primarily for people in the “global North” or the “north of the South” who have been socialized within modern schooling and institutions.

We ask you to engage with the resources with both your heart and critical eyes open: explore what each resource is trying to offer, consider the limitations of this offer, consider the limitations of your own interpretations and expectations, and exercise both critical thinking and intellectual generosity towards them. We do not necessarily endorse fully all the perspectives presented here, nor the organizations or personalities presenting them.

You can go through this plan of study on your own or with a group. As you engage with this learning, we also invite you to try practices that interrupt our socialized tendency to relate to the world through consumption, in order to open the possibility of relating to the world as an encounter (of the world and ourselves within it). Within the current system, we are encouraged to relate the world as a supermarket of endless options of products, experiences, relationships and identity-brands for our

- the denial of systemic violence and complicity in harm (the fact that our comforts, securities and enjoyments are subsidized by expropriation and exploitation somewhere else),
- the denial of the limits of the planet (the fact that the planet cannot sustain exponential 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 wider metabolism that is bio-intelligent).

We have also included in the study plan questions and resources that invite a reflection on:

- how formal education has contributed to the problems we face and the naturalization of the denials,
- what challenges we can expect to face together soon, and how we can prepare to meet them.

enjoyment and self-actualization: we are consuming the world and ourselves in it. In order to interrupt this pattern, we need practices of attention, intention and attunement with the wider living metabolism we are part of; and to do so in a way that can cultivate genuine humility, generosity, compassion, patience and responsibility.

We emphasize the importance of practicing *reverence without idealization*: remembering that every being is sacred, without casting upon them blankets of interpretation and expectation. You can start with a simple practice like intentionally having reverence and gratitude for the water and the life and death that becomes the food that then becomes part of your body. Create a simple ritual that reminds you to stop, pay attention and say “thank you”. You can also try to change the language you use to refer to other beings: try using language that does not frame the environment as a “resource” (to be managed and consumed), but as a living entity, a relation.

We also emphasize that practice should not be a performance of “virtue” (something you make part of your Instagram brand) or something that you score points in, or that you police in yourself or in others (otherwise we are back to consumption).



## Questions and resources

### ***Denial of violence***

How is material prosperity here created by poverty somewhere else? How do poor (or rather, impoverished) countries and peoples subsidize our comforts, securities and pleasures? How do we benefit from exploitation, expropriation and destitution? How are we complicit in harm? Why don't people talk about this? Why can't people stop this? Bare basics:

- Global wealth inequality (The Rules): <https://youtu.be/uWSxzjyMNpU>
- Aid in reverse (Jason Hickel): <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jan/14/aid-in-reverse-how-poor-countries-develop-rich-countries>
- Growth=Poverty (Vandana Shiva): <https://youtu.be/7M3WJQbnHKc>
- First as tragedy then as farce (Slavoj Žižek and RSA Animate): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpAMbpQ8J7g>
- Debunking myths about race (Robin DiAngelo): <https://youtu.be/wjHg65JORi8>
- It's not your fault - missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada (Raven Davies): <https://youtu.be/yXOHTNFWujQ>
- Belo Monte: Announcement of a war (André D'Elia): <https://youtu.be/ZoRhavupkfw>

### ***Denial of unsustainability***

How are we consuming the planet and making it un-inhabitable? Why do people deny that the current patterns of ecological destruction, consumption and exploitation are unsustainable? How long do we have left? How are we going to face the end of the world as we know it? Bare basics:

- Deep adaptation: A map for navigating climate tragedy (Jem Bendell): <https://jembendell.wordpress.com/2018/07/26/the-study-on-collapse-they-thought-you-should-not-read-yet/>
- Indigenous warnings about climate change (Leanne Betasamosake Simpson): <https://psmag.com/ideas/indigenous-knowledge-has-been-warning-us-about-climate-change-for-centuries>
- 'We're doomed' (Mayer Hillman): <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/apr/26/were-doomed-mayer-hillman-on-the-climate-reality-no-one-else-will-dare-mention>
- Indigenous leadership from Brazil at COP24 (Uma Gota no Oceano): [https://youtu.be/z\\_pKXzjzHSs](https://youtu.be/z_pKXzjzHSs)
- Behind the world's 'crisis of humanity' (interview with Zygmunt Bauman): <https://youtu.be/EG63MkQb1r4?t=1170>
- Rio Summit 1992 speech (Severn Cullis-Suzuki): <https://youtu.be/oJJGuIZVfLM>
- School strike for climate 2018 (Greta Thunberg): <https://youtu.be/EAMmUIEsN9A>
- Dark Mountain Manifesto (The Dark Mountain Project): <https://dark-mountain.net/about/manifesto/>
- Hope beyond hope (Dougald Hine): <https://youtu.be/1U1i97xaErc>

### ***Denial of entanglement (of how we are part of "nature" not above it)***

Where does the separation between (hu)man and nature come from? Why do we see ourselves as separate from the Earth and from each other? What are the consequences of thinking and feeling we are separated from nature and from each other? How could Indigenous knowledges and practices inspire us to figure out how to feel



interconnected and responsible for everything (without appropriating, projecting onto, or idealizing them)? How does greed work and how could it be interrupted? Bare basics:

- Soil, soul and society: You are therefore I am (Satish Kumar): <https://youtu.be/uSLUd0veioU>
- Huwā Karu Yuxibu (Mapu Huni Kuin): <https://youtu.be/W3gfAqy3HQ4>
- Emergence network: <http://www.emergencenetwork.org/>
- This is not the truth: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdUBFdGc1bpWxNJntkmu2CA>
- Against purity (interview with Alexis Shotwell): <https://www.artandeducation.net/classroom/video/244607/alexis-shotwell-against-purity>
- Seeds: The Untold Story (PBS – Independent Lens): <https://youtu.be/3ys0fgZ7hmA>
- La Belle Verte (Coline Serrau): <https://vimeo.com/214163453>

### ***How has education contributed to the problem?***

How has formal education colonized our hearts, intellect and imagination with messages about and desires for individualistic metropolitan consumerism? Bare basics:

- Schooling the world (Carole Black): <https://youtu.be/oDxYWspiN-8>
- Hummingbird text (Vanessa Andreotti): <https://decolonialfutures.net/hummingbird/>
- The Parrot’s Training Retold (Manish Jain and Atreyee Day): <http://www.shikshantar.org/initiatives/walkouts-network/parrots-training-retold>
- The trouble with knowledge (Munir Fasheh): <http://shikshantar.org/articles/trouble-knowledge>
- Spaces of Transformation: Epistemologies of the South (Boaventura de Souza Santos): <https://youtu.be/UzeczpSzXZOY>
- The Ecoversities Alliance: <http://ecoversities.org/>

### ***So what? Now what? How we can start to breathe differently together?***

How do we prepare to face the global challenges and crises ahead of us? How can we unlearn harmful ways of thinking, feeling, doing, relating, knowing and being? What will it take for us to wake up and do the difficult and uncomfortable work that needs to be done when many people just want to feel good, to look good and have a good time? When will this work be most needed?

- Multi-layered selves: colonialism, decolonization and counter-intuitive learning spaces (Vanessa Andreotti): <https://artseverywhere.ca/2016/10/12/multi-layered-selves/>
- Shouldering our colonial backpack (interview with Vanessa Andreotti): <http://fachstelle-glis.de/interview-mit-vanessa/>
- Against purity - Living ethically in compromised times (interview with Alexis Shotwell): <https://kpfa.org/episode/against-the-grain-january-23-2017/>
- Mobilizing different conversations about global justice in education (GTDF collective): <https://www.developmenteducationreview.com/issue/issue-26/mobilising-different-conversations-about-global-justice-education-toward-alternative>
- Reflections on our learnings thus far: <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/whatwehavelearnedsofar2019/>
- Mapping decolonization in higher education: <https://decolonialfutures.net/mapping-decolonization/>

### ***The (im)possibilities of imagining otherwise***

The initiatives below present analyses that can be very useful. They also propose ways forward that claim to be different, but that tend to reproduce the same problems. This is because it is practically impossible to address the three denials at the same time (in analyses and propositions) at the levels of doing, reasoning, hoping and being, and still be “legible” (as possible or desirable) within the current system. Use the map at [decolonialfutures.net/3denials](https://decolonialfutures.net/3denials) to evaluate how each initiative addressed each denial in its critique of the system and in its proposals for solutions.

- The Green New Deal (Alexandria Ocasio Cortez and the Intercept): <https://theintercept.com/2019/04/17/green-new-deal-short-film-alexandria-ocasio-cortez/>
- The Big Picture – how we got into this mess and how to get out (Robert Reich): <https://youtu.be/gSIHVZpNxMM>
- Extinction Rebellion: <https://rebellion.earth/>
- Theory U (Otto Scharmer): <http://www.ottoscharmer.com/theoryu>
- GlobalPov – Can we shop to end poverty? (Ananya Roy): <https://youtu.be/mpuf-N66CGI>



## Experiential Education Program: Digging Deeper and Relating Wider

We run experiential learning workshops and residencies by request. In this section we present an outline of the exercises involving the imagination, the body and the land, which we invite participants to experiment with during the experiential sessions.

We use two main pedagogical strategies:

- creative social cartographies (or visual maps) to support participants as they “dig deeper” into the complexities and paradoxes of collective challenges: to connect dots and to rationally explore the limits of rationality (p. 11 to 20);
- a set of affective, embodied and land-based exercises that we call “radical tenderness” designed to support participants as they “relate wider”: to develop the stamina for the difficulties of this work and to tap into exiled capacities that can support wellbeing and the “composting of individual and collective shit” together (p. 11/19).

Creative social cartographies (CSC) are pedagogical tools that are not normative: they are *not* about describing reality accurately, but about moving conversations beyond points where they often get stuck. They use images (metaphors and analogies) and comparison tables to invite different conversations. These images and tables were designed to help us to trace historical and systemic processes, to draw attention to points of tension, and to make visible aspects that are often made invisible and connections that are usually conveniently hidden.

The cartographies invite us to take a distance from our opinions and to see them with healthy scepticism. Then we can ask where the opinions come from, where they lead to, who decides, in whose name, for whose benefit, how come and how things could be imagined differently. They also invite us to consider

what we could be gaining (affectively and materially) from holding on to certain ideas, hopes, desires, perceived entitlements and forms of relationship, and what we could also be blocking, losing and missing out in this process. We say that the cartographies help us to face our “constitutive foreclosures”: what we have to deny in order to continue to believe what we want to believe in, and desire what we want to desire. However, they do not intend to take participants from A to B – to change their positions in a directed way. They do aim to shake things up a little by making hidden processes and gaps visible – and leave it up to each person to decide what to do next.

We encourage participants to go through the “Bare Basics” plan of study before they come to the experiential sessions, but we understand this is not always possible. Therefore, we usually start with an overview of the work of the collective, the “broccoli seed agreement” (p.24) and the same “bare basics” introductory exercise of calculating ecological and slavery footprints as a way of making the three denials tangible in the space. We often write the numbers of planets and slaves for the group in a visible place in the collective space, so that we don’t forget about them – we use them as a reminder of who is bearing the costs of our learning and its pace. This exercise is not about improving your footprints, but about acknowledging the multiple hidden forms of violence and unsustainability of things we take for granted.

We generally begin with the social cartographies “House Modernity Built” and “The Bus” to create the container for the body and land experiments that will follow. We often use the “Radical Tenderness Exercises” and “The Eye of the Storm” in most of the sessions. The other exercises and cartographies are selected according to the needs of each group.

### ***The bus within us: Seeing ourselves with more nuance***

This CSC was designed to support us as we learn to sit with our internal complexity and develop our capacity to be able to sit with the complexity outside of us. It invites us to meet a whole world within each of us; to learn about how our shadows (i.e. fears, traumas and insecurities) affect our decisions and relationships; and to develop the capacity to be in discomfort without feeling overwhelmed or irritated. The bus CSC is used as a facilitation technique that helps participants to process learning with a certain distance from their own cognitive-affective responses, to express different and often paradoxical aspects of their complex existence without the usual self-imposed coherence, and to notice themselves as “unreliable narrators” of their experience, opening up to multiple and layered interpretations and relational possibilities. For more information, see [decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/the-bus](http://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/the-bus)

### ***The house modernity built: Living in a house that is cracking and possibly collapsing soon***

This CSC (p. 13 and 14) presents an analysis of global problems coming from marginalized communities and scholarship that addresses the roots and implications of an unsustainable and violent system that separates us from the Earth and from each other. The “In Earth’s CARE” framework offers a horizon of hope beyond the house modernity built that centers the earth and employs an organic/metabolic metaphor. This CSC is not a normative theory of change (that everyone should adopt), but an invitation for participants to reflect upon their own theories of change: what is the problem? what is the nature of the problem? what would be the solution at a macro level? what can individuals do to contribute towards that? For more information, see [decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/mini-zine-house-mycelium/](http://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/mini-zine-house-mycelium/)

### ***Eye of the storm: Learning to find stability-in-movement***

This CSC (p. 15 and 16) offers the metaphor of a storm between hospicing a world that is dying and assisting with the birth of something new. It presents the “eye” of this storm as the place where one can find stability-in-movement with the storm itself: stop, walk too slowly or too fast and you get caught in the storm. This cartography involves group work with four texts: “Wanna be an ally?” (poem excerpt p. 17); “The Beach” (set of questions p. 18); “Bones Left Broken” (poem excerpt p. 20); and the “Radical Tenderness Manifesto” (manifesto excerpt p. 19).

### ***Radical Tenderness exercises: Expanding senses and sensibilities***

Radical tenderness exercises (see p. 19) are based on a methodology developed by Dani d’Emilia ([danidemilia.com](http://danidemilia.com)). The exercises invite participants to learn to un- numb and expand sensorial and affective capacities and to dissolve imposed barriers within and between ourselves. The exercises help participants to learn how to allow the body to move the intellect (rather than the other way around). This work is being developed further through a collaboration between Dani d’Emilia and Vanessa Andreotti called “Engaged Dis-Identifications”, see for example: [decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/engaged-dis-identifications-notes1-gesturing-towards-existence-with-out-representation/](http://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/engaged-dis-identifications-notes1-gesturing-towards-existence-with-out-representation/)

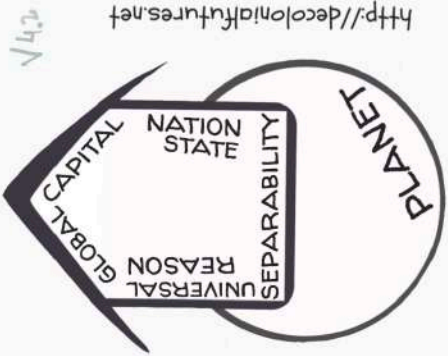
**The following CSCs and exercises are used as needed in the process [participants are invited to select from the list]. The printable creative social cartographies can be found at [decolonialfutures.net/creativecartographies](http://decolonialfutures.net/creativecartographies)**

1. **HEADS UP CSC:** acronym of a list of patterns of engagement and representations that are common in initiatives involving dominant groups reaching out to marginalized groups. These are: hegemonic practices (reinforcing and justifying the status quo); ethnocentric projections (presenting one view as universal and superior); historical thinking (forgetting the role of historical legacies and complicities in shaping current problems); depoliticised orientations (disregarding the impacts of power inequalities and delegitimising dissent); self-serving motivations (invested in self-congratulatory heroism); un-complicated solutions (offering ‘feel-good’ quick fixes that do not address root causes of problems); paternalistic investments (seeking ‘thank you’ from those who have been ‘helped’).
2. **Towards braiding project CSCs:** project booklet related to engagements with Indigenous perspectives in Canada offering several CSCs related to the ethics of engagement, including differences between senses and sensibilities, an invitation for a conversation on the topic of appropriation, red flag questions related to inclusion, and what to do when relationships fall apart in organizations due to racial/colonial issues.

3. **Theories of change CSC:** comparison of six different theories of change in terms of their understanding of the causes and solutions of global problems.
4. **Soft, Radical, Beyond reform CSC:** map of three approaches to change in relation to modernity and their implications: soft reform of modernity (the system is working well, it just needs to change a little); radical reform of modernity (the system is not working well and needs major change); modernity beyond reform (the system was flawed from the outset and we need something different).
5. **With/out modernity cards:** questions related to relationality and affective investments that invite us to reflect on our political commitments both within and gesturing out of modernity.
6. **Global citizenship questions CSC:** questions related to global citizenship at three levels of depth: methodological (only focusing on “doing” without questioning where this doing comes from); epistemological (focused on tracing reasoning and power relations); and ontological (focused on “being” and opening possibilities that are unthinkable within normalized imaginaries).
7. **Tower, fort and podium CSC:** analysis of changes in the means and politics of knowledge production and how the internet has already shifted how we consume, source and apply knowledge (analyses of belly-buttonization, salad-barization, sausagization, sloganization).
8. **Knowledge relations CSC:** maps of relationships between dominant and marginalized knowledge systems, presenting two possibilities for our relationship with knowledge and meaning.
9. **Pile of shit CSC:** outline of the dangers of using joy and unconditional acceptance for escapism rather than for doing the difficult work that needs to be done in composting collective shit together.
10. **Humanity ship CSC:** exploring the layers of the iceberg that was hit by the “ship of humanity” that is sinking as we face the challenges of climate change – this CSC highlights the relationship between climate change and colonialism as the separation between “humans and nature”.
11. **Happier, healthier, wealthier CSC:** response to the argument that we should celebrate the present since we have never been happier, healthier or wealthier
12. **Desires and archetypes CSC:** inventories of colonial desires and entitlements that prevent us from facing and composting shit together, and of traits and responsibilities that could come out of composting the shit “before will” (not dependent on choice, conviction or convenience).
13. **Sign versus moon CSC:** this image illustrates how we may have become more interested in the wording (codifying) of the world rather than being within and encountering the world itself. This was inspired by a Sufi saying that words and stories are like fingers pointing to the moon: most people want to consume the finger rather than engage with the moon.
14. **Excavator, dumping truck and hummingbird CSC:** image of a heart being excavated for profit and having its sense of intrinsic worth removed; a dumping truck fills the heart with “stuff” that offers temporary relief, but that does not address the pain. Hummingbirds study the excavator as they feed the part of the heart that has the potential to fight the excavator’s aggression.
15. **Out of the playground CSC:** image that shows a hummingbird calling us out of a playground where we are still entertained by pleasurable distractions.
16. **Bigger picture CSC:** analysis of the implications of the changes prompted by efforts related to decolonization, Indigenization and abolitionism.
17. **LAPSED CSC:** acronym related to colonial aspirations for heroic leadership, canonical authorities, virtue posturing, formulaic solutions, projective empathy and redemptive delights.
18. **Responses to decolonial critique BINGO CSC:** catalogue of common (resistant) responses to decolonial critique that can be used as a means to disarm and pre-empt, and/or to start a conversation about these responses and where they come from.
19. **From spinning in the living room to composting in the land CSC:** pathway from the living room, to the kitchen, to the bathroom, to the land.
20. **The four mountains (story by John Crier retold):** this story is used as the introduction to a collective and collaborative “dreaming and drawing” exercise that has been described by a participant as “learning to download from the bio-internet through precarious body-apps”.
21. **Composting party (blindfolded dancing):** learning to enable movement to emerge without over-prescribing direction based on visual perceptions (observing movement emerge from a place other than the intellect).
22. **Through other eyes:** project booklet (2008) offering CSCs comparing relational and mainstream understandings of education, poverty, equality and development.
23. **ESCAPIST CSC:** list of the problems with uncritical forms of spirituality that promote individual enlightenment while turning their back to collective (historical and systemic) “shit”.
24. **Broken mirror exercises:** exercises that show how privileged people are often perceived from the point of view of communities of struggle – they help you to see yourself as both cute and pathetic.

# THE HOUSE

MODERNITY BUILT

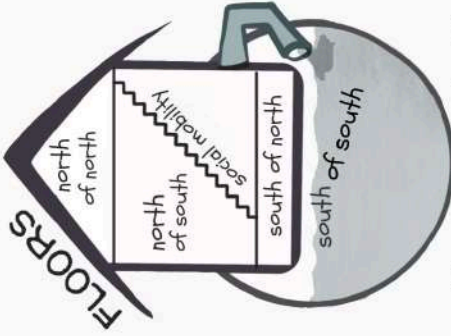


house exceeds limits of planet

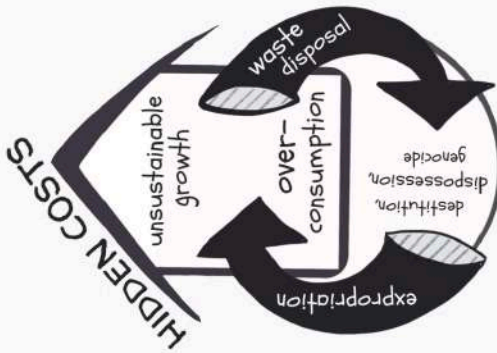
<http://decolonialfutures.net>



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



false promise of universal middle class



house subsidised & maintained by violence

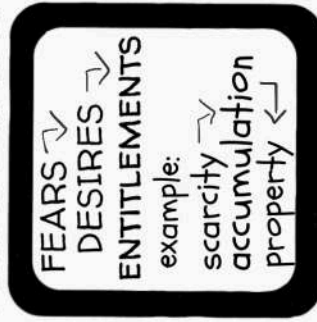
## GRAMMAR OF REASONING



(erotic, aesthetic, intuitive, ludic, divine, hilarious, other-than-human)

BEING REDUCED TO KNOWING

## AFFECTIVE FEEDBACK LOOP



UNRESTRICTED AUTONOMY

## ARCHETYPES OF AGENCY



JUSTICE ARBITRATION & MORAL AUTHORITY

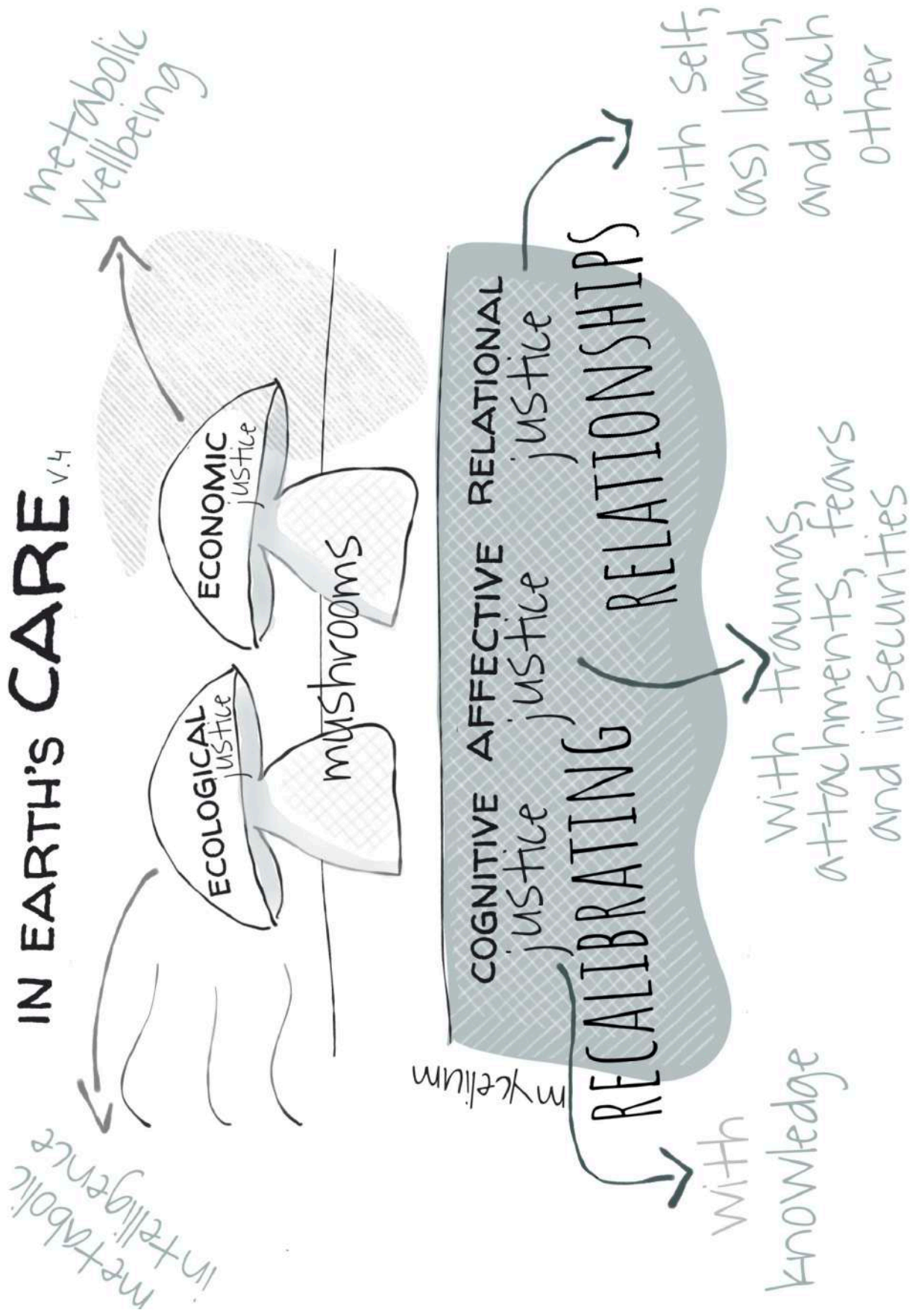
## ARCHETYPES OF BENEVOLENCE



DUTY & SACRIFICE

THE INNOCENT THE VIRTUOUS THE DESERVING

# IN EARTH'S CARE <sup>v.4</sup>





## GESTURING TOWARDS DECOLONIAL FUTURES

### Eye of the storm CSC

Imagine a storm between the ways of knowing and being (within and outside) that are dying and those that are being born. On one side there is the work of offering palliative care to assist with dying worlds (what we call “hospicing”). On the other side, there is the work of assisting with the birth of something new, undefined and potentially, but not necessarily wiser (assisting with “midwifery”).

In the middle, in the eye of the storm, we need to keep balance-in-movement, moving with the storm: if we walk too fast, we get caught in the vortex; if we walk too slow, we also get caught.

In the hospicing process, we learn about intellectual accountability and existential surrender – we learn to process the lessons of the repeated mistakes of the current system so that only *different* mistakes will be made in the future. In assisting with midwifery, we learn about existential accountability and intellectual surrender – we learn to remove the blockages that prevent the land from dreaming through us.

**Intellectual accountability:** engage with the three forms of sanctioned ignorance/denial – of violence/complicity, unsustainability and entanglement; learn about how you are implicated/complicit in harm both historically and systemically; learn about how you benefit from unfair and exploitative structures that impoverish and hurt communities elsewhere; take responsibility without seeking redemption, innocence or political purity. *Wake up*

**Existential surrender:** interrupt business as usual, face fragilities, difficulties and insecurities, release back to the land your personal shit: traumas, entitlements, addictions; your resentments, vanity, arrogance, aversions, obsessions, and attachments to certainty and control. *Un- numb*

**Existential accountability:** activate your sense of connection with the collective pain and joy of the whole world; find the cooking pot for your unique medicine and make time to cook it; offer it with humility; integrate it with other medicines. *Grow up*

**Intellectual surrender:** de-clutter your existence so that an organic intelligence can guide you; identify your distractions; learn to let go; tap into collective exiled capacities; tune in to the metabolic intelligence in the “bio-internet”. *Undo the individuated self*



## Invitations

**Group work:** let one of the capabilities below choose you. Work with other people to create embodied exercises that can manifest the pedagogical invitation of each text.

### Intellectual accountability

Sit with the poem: “Wanna be an ally?” (p. 17) and develop an embodied exercise that mirrors and honors the invitation that is issued in the poem.

### Existential surrender

Sit with the text “Radical tenderness” (p. 19) and develop an embodied exercise that emphasizes the difficulties of the invitations in the text to decenter, de-clutter, disarm and dissolve the individuated self.

### Existential accountability

Sit with the questions in the text: “The Beach” (p. 18) and develop an embodied exercise that replicates the levels of readiness presented and that can honor both the pace of learning of different people AND the people who are negatively affected by this learning and its pace (the people who are often asked to “clean other people’s toilets” and who bear most of the emotional labor). The exercise should invite people to ask: “Who is bearing the costs of your learning?”

### Intellectual surrender

Sit with the poem “Broken bones” (p. 20) and develop an embodied exercise that invites people to cut the plaster, rip off the band-aid and re-break calcified bones so that these bones (our relationship with the earth and each other) can be healed again

**If your group finishes early, work together on trying to translate the text below into something that may resonate generatively with the communities or institutions you are engaged with.**

How does this text relate to the embodied exercise you have collectively created?

Five propositions to decolonize the unconscious

(creative adaptation by Vanessa Andreotti and Dani d’Emilia from a text by Suely Rolnik)

1. Activate the vital compass: re-activate the body as a knowing entity that receives and experiences the world as continuous with itself in its living condition and that is affected by the forces of the world in an un-mediated way.
2. Remove the blockages to the difficult experience of making what is strange seem familiar and making what is familiar seem strange in order to register world-interpolations that are always already happening anyway.
3. Do not interpret the resulting vulnerability and its discomfort as a bad thing and do not project fantastic interpretations onto this state of instability. These interpretations usually come from premature responses of a threatened ego provoked by its helplessness, failures and fears of demotion, rejection, social exclusion and humiliation
4. Allow what is agonizing within you to die without trying to rescue the old state and its sensation of coherence and stability – remember that the vital force needs this space that is being cleared by the death of the old in order to emerge. Stay in this state of uncomfortable instability until the creative imagination can articulate the contours of the new entity that is gestating as a result of the registered encounter with the world. Do not impose limits on the time that the creative imagination needs to support the gestation of the new entity. Do not turn the creative imagination into “creativity” ready for consumption and reproduction of the status quo.
5. Hold on to the life-affirming yearning that keeps life open to being “fertilized” by the world and its difference and endless differentiation. Do not negotiate with what obstructs the possibility of life regenerating itself. Calibrate thinking towards its best behaviour: to reimagine its image of the world every time that life demands it to do so.





## Wanna be an ally?

(excerpt from poem: <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/wanna-be-an-ally/>)

don't do it for charity, for feeling good, for looking good, or for showing others that you are doing good don't put it on your CV, or on Facebook, or in your thesis, don't use it for self-promotion don't try to "mould" me, or to "help" me, or to make me say and do what is convenient for you

do it only if you feel that our pasts, presents and futures are intertwined, and our bodies and spirits entangled, do it only if you sense that we are one metabolism that is sick, and what happens to me also happens to you

and expect it to be, at times, messy, uncomfortable, difficult, frustrating, infuriating, boring and painful and prepare for your heart to break and to be stretched

do you still want to do it?

then share the burdens placed on my back, the unique medicines you bring, and the benefits you have earned from this violent and lethal disease

take a step back from the center, the frontline from visibility relinquish the authority of your interpretations, your choice, your entitlements, surrender that which you are most praised and rewarded for

don't try to teach, to lead, to organize, to mentor, to control, to theorize, or to determine where we should go, how to get there and why

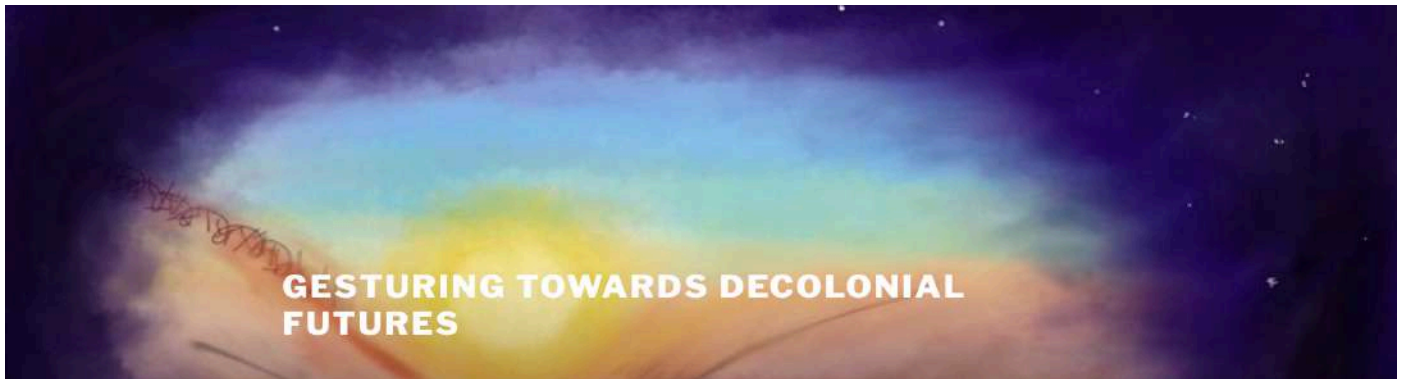
offer your energy to peel potatoes, to wash the dishes, to scrub the toilets, to drive the truck, to care for the babies, to separate the trash, to do the laundry, to feed the elders, to clean the mess, to buy the food, to fill the tank, to write the grant proposal, to pay the tab and the bail

to do and support things you can't and won't understand, and do what is needed, instead of what you want to do, without judgment, or sense of martyrdom or expectation for gratitude, or for any kind of recognition

then you will be ready to sit with me through the storm with the anger, the pain, the frustration, the losses, the fears and the longing for better times with each other

and you will be able to cry with me, to mourn with me, to laugh with me, to "heart" with me, as we face our shadows and find other joys, in earthing, breathing, growing, cooking and eating, sharing, healing, and thriving

side by side.



## The Beach Questions

(excerpt from text: <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/the-beach/>)

Imagine a beach with some people standing in front of the sea, putting their feet in the water and splashing a bit (this is the group starting to explore the sea). Imagine some people who want to go past the breaking point of the waves so that they can float in the water (those looking for easier solutions). Imagine a few people past that point, putting their faces in the murky water, but afraid to drown (those exploring complexities, but feeling overwhelmed). Imagine a few people diving, not afraid of the sea (those already working with what is deemed “impossible” by the three previous groups). The questions below represent what each group would be asking in relation to a specific issue (e.g. climate change, inequalities or social fragmentations). What sets of questions have been socialized to ask?

### ***Splashing questions (what is the issue?)***

What is the problem? What is the way forward? How does it affect me? Why should I do something? How can I start to contribute to make it better?

### ***Floating questions (how can we do the same things better?)***

What strategies are effective? What outcomes are expected? How can outcomes be objectively measured? How does/will it work? How to improve effectiveness? What obstacles prevent success? What knowledge/expertise/data/ is missing? What policy is needed or not being implemented correctly? How does this compare to what happens in other contexts?

### ***Ducking questions (how can we think differently about this?)***

What assumptions are we taking for granted? Who decides which direction is forward? In whose name?

For whose benefit? How come? Who would disagree with our solutions? Whose terms of dialogue/inclusion are in operation? What collective traumas are present? Whose vulnerabilities and labour are visible/invisible? What notions of authority, merit, credibility, normality and entitlement are at work? How am I part of the problem? How am I reading and being read? What truths are we not ready, willing, or able to speak or to hear? What important questions are we not asking? What fantasies/delusions are we invested in? What are our perceived entitlements? How do they get in the way? What prevents us from listening deeply without fear and without projections? Do we even know how to listen? Where are we stuck? Who is bearing the costs of our learning and its pace?

### ***Diving questions (how can we “be” differently as we approach this?)***

Who are we beyond our perceptions, self-images and categories of thought? How can we disarm and de-center in order to be able to “be with” where we are and what is in front of us? How can we be naked and vulnerable before each other without fear? What are the non-human ‘people’ around us teaching/showing/reflecting back? How can we support each other when we fail or make mistakes? How can humour, art, eros, the non-human and the divine be welcomed and respected as important teachers? How do we un-numb? How do we awaken other senses? How do we reason beyond time and form (organic temporalities)? How do we make space for the land to imagine/dream/design through us? How can we stop this new learning from solidifying into a dogma? How can this learning be passed on to others so that mistakes may not be repeated? “Who is this really about?”



## **Radical Tenderness Manifesto “Me in You”**

(adapted from: <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/radical-tenderness-me-in-you/>)

RADICAL TENDERNESS is practicing resonance and attunement

It is engaging with each other beyond desires for consensus, coherence and control

It is letting go of possessions, of possessiveness

It is feeling part of a wider metabolism with a much longer temporality

It is interrupting patterns of consumption and narcissism

It is being present to what we don't know yet and what is unknowable (in ourselves and in others)

It is not casting upon everything a blanket of interpretation

RADICAL TENDERNESS is being receptive to the teachings of our shadows

It is fermenting ourselves, mourning illusions, composting our shit and being courageously vulnerable

It is looking in the mirror and confronting what is not beautiful without turning the gaze

It is disinvesting in arrogance, superiority, and status

It is to embrace oneself as both cute and pathetic

It is not being afraid of fear, disappointability, or nothingness

It is discovering a whole bus of people inside oneself

RADICAL TENDERNESS is engendering new forms of co-existence

It is respecting different medicines, cooking them together and integrating them

It is witnessing ourselves and each other moving between our comfort, stretch and panic zones

It is relating beyond identity, knowledge and understanding

It is dissolving the limits and weight of our bodies by allowing other beings to move through, with and for us

It is neither me nor you, it is me and you, me in you

It is not either or, but both and more

RADICAL TENDERNESS es el dolor de traspasar el corazón (or the pain of piercing the heart)

It is not about belonging, it is about being whole with the whole shebang

It is looking at painful and difficult things with the love of really wanting to see

It is learning from repeated mistakes in order to only make new ones in the future

It is listening to the non-human authority, and caring about our relationship to it

It is about being open to what we can't and may never understand

It is learning to breathe water together

Radical Tenderness is to practice engaged detachment as we hospice a dystopic world ...while respecting the teachings it offers // Radical Tenderness is assisting with the birth of something new, which is potentially, but not necessarily, wiser...without suffocating it with projections

RADICAL TENDERNESS is being critical and loving, at the same time.



## **Bones Left Broken**

(adapted from poem: <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/po-ethic-inquiry-7-broken-bones/>)

Imagine a broken limb with an open fracture  
and broken bones left un-connected, already  
calcifying, with an infected wound on top

Imagine that in order to heal it we put a Band-Aid on  
the wound, a cast around the limb, and we take  
powerful opioids as anaesthetic without re-joining the  
bones

The Band-Aids are super exciting: they are colourful,  
hopeful and make us feel really good  
they are simplistic solutions that promise us hope and  
comfort - "everything is going to be ok"

The plaster casts make the limb look functional:  
they are culturally sensitive and artistically crafted  
they give us the warm fuzzy feeling of community and  
care (as long as we don't mention the disjointed bones)

The anaesthetic numbs the chronic acute pain  
celebrating avoidances, denials, delirious and delicious  
distractions - we feel powerful as we escape into bliss  
and indulge with the consumption of pleasurable  
hope

For rehabilitation we would need:  
to cut the cast to expose what is hidden underneath  
to rip off the Band-Aids with the mess of glue and hair  
to scoop the rotten flesh to stop the infection  
to disinfect the wound with stinging anti-septic, and  
to break the tips of each bone again to remove the  
calcification so that the bones can be put together  
again

Who wants to go first?  
When will this choice (of doing it or not) no longer be  
viable?



## Existential and political accountabilities

Our understanding of colonialism emphasizes that it starts *before* the subjugation of peoples. Colonialism starts with the objectification of the Earth as property and the separation of humans from the land/nature, from other-than-human beings and from each other. This imposed sense of separability is the basis of all other hierarchies and forms of subjugation and exploitation between species, peoples, and cultures. From this perspective, we need to de-center our self-importance, in order to recognize the harm that our delusions of superiority have created. We need to re-activate and calibrate the vital compass in our neurobiology towards sensing that we are entangled with (and within) the land's metabolism. We need to center the Earth as a (literal) common ground where new forms of co-existence and political cultures can emerge (assisted by human and non-human forms of metabolic intelligence).

This is different from forms of decolonial work that aim only to center the knowledge, experience and leadership of oppressed peoples in efforts related to "3R politics": *representation, recognition and redistribution* of resources and opportunities within the current system. While some people refer to "3R" politics as "identity politics" to emphasize the fact that every political struggle is inherently related to identity hierarchies in society (whether explicit or not), the term identity politics is frequently instrumentalized in negative ways by conservative groups to criticize, delegitimize and block anti-oppressive affirmative action efforts (therefore, we prefer to use "3R"). Political mobilizations around the 3Rs have been and can be effective and productive if aims are to gain access to institutions, social mobility, markets and platforms for voice and power.

This has indeed helped reduce harm in many contexts. However, as we approach the limits of the current system, this form of politics has *four* main limitations that affect negatively the very people it aims to protect and to empower.

First, the system itself mobilizes diversity as a form of currency that is consumed by the dominant groups without a substantial commitment to changing the conditions of suffering. For example, the general unwritten contract for institutions committed to inclusion as a trade is: *business as usual (the same profitable forward), plus diverse content and bodies, minus historical guilt and risk of bad press*. Marginalized people usually see their own role very differently and tend to expect much more from institutions than what institutions are ready to give. This frequently results in marginalized people being instrumentalized for other people's learning and virtue signalling. In this context, marginalized people bear most of the emotional costs of tokenistic inclusion, and very often burn out.

Second, in times and contexts of perceived economic scarcity different marginalized communities are pitched against each other in a competition for more space or for the (unrealistic) ideal of replacing the dominant system. Very often, this can become a competition based around the perception of "who is the most deserving" community/person, and frequently this turns into a competition for the community/person who has suffered the most (what some call "oppression Olympics"). The system itself benefits from and plays with these competitions. It offers small pockets of resources for diversity work that increase the stakes of the race and give the impression that the ideal (of more space or replacement) may, one day, become possible. The

high unrealistic expectations of successful inclusion (or subversion of the system) are the cause of much frustration and pain amongst marginalized people.

Third, many marginalized groups tend to assume, relying on the Cartesian presupposition that changes in thinking drive changes in relationships, that exposing the problem (calling things out) leads to change of personal and institutional behaviour. However, these groups eventually find out that although people may agree with analyses of oppression, their unconscious affective structures depend on the continuity of the system as it is. With time, the pleasures and frustrations of calling things out creates a form of self-righteousness that tends to fragment and weaken marginalized groups (internally), benefitting the dominant system once again. Making visible oppressive systems that are denied and invisibilized can surely make people feel better for some time, providing some pain relief, but it ultimately cannot heal the deep collective wound. We have plenty of evidence that critique often leads only to cosmetic rather than to substantive changes. This is because the problems are much deeper than cognitive frames – they involve affective, relational and material economies that sustain the world as we know it and that can only fundamentally change when the limits of the planet are reached and all easier options are exhausted.

Fourth, as we see structures in the dominant system starting to fail (i.e. un-kept promises of endless prosperity), many people in the dominant group will feel resentful and insecure. This will prompt them to look for scapegoats, easy solutions and leaders that will promise to fix the perceived chaos and return things to the “normal” order. Those who will see the promises of the system as broken have the potential to turn violent in their effort to protect their place in the hierarchical order of society. In this context, those involved in pursuing the 3Rs will become easy targets for aggression because they will be perceived as being responsible for the moral and financial disorder and as undeserving competitors in the narrowing ladder for economic survival.

Taking all this into consideration, our educational proposal is about attempting something that is somewhat counter-intuitive. We are trying to create spaces where people can have difficult conversations without relationships falling apart and engage in challenging and uncomfortable processes of re-

allocating (colonial) desires non-coercively. This is about learning to compost individual and collective shit together with “radical tenderness”. This is a tough sell as people are increasingly used to treating education as a supermarket shelf of pleasurable choices, and this process is often uncomfortable and frustrating.

We contrast what we are trying to do with other types of political and educational spaces. We see many spaces where critique is weaponized and often manifests as self-righteousness. While we are often grateful for the work of these critics in risking a lot (including their sanity and sometimes their jobs and safety) to make violent practices visible, we do not think a punitive approach or an approach that relies on guilt, resentment or shame is the long-term answer. On the other side of the spectrum, we see many spaces where people desperately want to build community and, in this process, they prioritize “going along to get along”. In those spaces critical questions are avoided in order not to create discomfort, conflict or animosity between groups and to keep peace, connections and a sense of togetherness. While we understand the need for people to feel accepted in all their complexity, we believe that genuine relationships and collective movements are born out of the struggle of addressing difficult issues together. We also see alternative learning spaces designed to counter banking education (i.e. education as knowledge transfer), which is perceived as oppressive, where people are encouraged to choose what and how they want to learn, according to their personal preferences. These spaces are created for participants to feel safe in the sense that they will receive unconditional validation for their choices, voices and self-images. While we know that, for marginalized groups this kind of space has been used in very generative ways, in the current economic context of consumption of learning and experiences these spaces can also prevent people (particularly from dominant groups) from engaging in more challenging educational processes as they may take it as their entitlement not to be challenged.

By centering the land and its vital compass, rather than any group of people or set of entitlements (e.g. to autonomy, choice or affirmation), we recognize the invisibilized labour of the Earth in keeping us alive – for free. We acknowledge **every** knowledge system as potentially useful, complex, dynamic, but also partial, limited and insufficient in addressing the task at hand.

We start from the assumption that no one has the answers, and we are all insufficient and indispensable to the completion of this task. Additionally, we see Western and other forms of rationality, although important in keeping us learning and accountable, as inadequate in themselves to help us to figure out another way of co-existing in the finite living planet that we are part of. This is a different starting point where no one is off the hook – not even those who have been victimized by the current system. While we recognize that vulnerabilities are unevenly distributed as the dominant system still protects the interests of the dominant groups and places unbearable burdens on the backs of marginalized groups, we believe that neither inclusion nor redress are viable responses within the existing system *in the long run*.

We will eventually be forced, by the gradual collapse of the system, to find ways of composting our historical and systemic “shit” collectively, or we will end up drowning in this shit as we destroy our life-support systems and start to kill each other to protect our right to consume what is left. In this scenario, we all “die of civilization”. We will either have to learn to transform ourselves quickly (neuro-biologically, existentially) or we will perish together. There is only one metabolism, one team. This is not about seeking

innocence, redemption or purity. This is about the end of the world (and of our privileges and securities) as we know it. But this is not the end of the world “period”: this is just the end of certain ways of knowing, feeling, relating and being in the world and the opportunity for something else, possibly wiser, to emerge. The task is to activate a form of coexistence that un-numbs and enlivens our capacities for trust, humility, generosity, humour, (self)compassion, patience and visceral responsibility “before will” that is not dependent on convictions, convenience or choice. This demands that we center what is important in a time when we are no longer here, in the bodies we inhabit today.

***How can we start to prepare for this now so that the task can be a little easier when we no longer have a choice?***

If you feel called by this question and what was described here, this study program could be for you. If *not*, we hope you will find what you are looking for and we wish you the very best. And since all of what we say could also be wrong, we invite you to share what you have learned in your experiments with us too as our paths may cross again.

### **A few caveats about possible misinterpretations of this educational orientation:**

Sometimes people in dominant groups understand our educational orientation as an invitation to criticize marginalized people who are demanding representation, recognition and redistribution. While we are proposing a different educational pathway, at the same time, we support and often lead 3R efforts and initiatives, since many members of the collective are part of marginalized groups. We support initiatives that can hold space for the anger, frustration and burnout that are part and parcel of the struggle of marginalized groups to survive within the system (e.g. [decolonialfutures.net/towardsbraiding](http://decolonialfutures.net/towardsbraiding)). We have also started to run differentiated experiential learning processes for non-dominant groups that explore how the struggle within the system forces us to adopt colonial language, strategies and entitlements that are harmful and unsustainable in the long term.

As the heat and complexity of discussions in contexts of 3R intensifies around questions of tokenism, recognition and appropriation, the interface between marginalized and dominant groups feels uncomfortable and frustrating for both sides. While some of these clashes can become toxic or non-generative, it is important to recognize that these clashes are pushing important boundaries and generating the sense of urgency for important difficult conversations to happen indirectly.

Some people come to us saying with certainty that they are already doing this kind of work. We are generally cautious about these claims, because doing this work with the depth and rigour that are required is incredibly difficult - to the point where sometimes we doubt whether what we are proposing is even possible. Thus, celebratory narratives seem to miss the importance of engaging this work with humility and with a recognition that grappling with the challenges, common circularities, and failures involved is central to the process (rather than a distraction from it). We are never done learning, and the minute we think we have 'figured it out' is generally when we fall back into harmful patterns and colonial desires. We have also observed that it is much easier for people (including us!) to say that we are doing something, or that we believe in something, than it is to actually 'do' it. Finally, we note that it is virtually impossible to fully counter all three denials in both the diagnosis and proposition of a problem (especially at the layer of being – see [decolonialfutures.net/3denials](http://decolonialfutures.net/3denials)), given that doing so essentially renders one unintelligible within existing frames of reference, therefore, the work that is “understandable” is inevitably contradictory.

**Frequently asked questions:** [decolonialfutures.net/faq](http://decolonialfutures.net/faq)

**Recommended readings and complete reference list:** [decolonialfutures.net/references](http://decolonialfutures.net/references)



## Broccoli Seed Agreement

In our current consumption-driven societies, where time and knowledge are perceived as commodities and education is becoming a transactional process between clients and service providers, we would like to create a different form of relationship with those interested in learning about the work of the collective and this study program. In our experience, we have found frequently that people look for approaches with a very strong desire for something that fits their expectations of immediate consumption, convenience and autonomy/choice (we call this “candy”): they want something practical, fulfilling and pleasurable, and very frequently they feel disappointed, frustrated and sometimes angry when they do not have their demands met and desires fulfilled. Thus, we say that, while we understand that people may want “candy”, we can only offer “broccoli seeds” that will require soil, planting, watering and attending to for a possible harvest. We request that people engaging with our work consider the following “broccoli seed agreement” that confirms that they understand what may happen during this study program, particularly the experiential sessions.

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.

**Please consider and sit with this invitation carefully before you engage with the work presented in this booklet. For more information, check [decolonialfutures.net/broccolisseedagreement](http://decolonialfutures.net/broccolisseedagreement) To leave comments and suggestions, please access: [decolonialfutures.net/gce-feedback](http://decolonialfutures.net/gce-feedback)**