



Faculty of Design

2014

Life's work: The kinds Of growth we need

Thackara, John

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A lush forest scene with moss-covered trees and ferns. The background is a dense forest with tall trees and a thick carpet of green ferns and moss on the forest floor. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the textures of the moss and the vibrant green of the ferns.


Systems Oriented Design
Oslo, 16 October 2014

LIFE'S WORK
From doing less harm, to
leaving things better

@johnthackara

- 
- A lush forest scene with moss-covered tree branches and ferns. The top half of the image shows tree trunks and branches heavily covered in bright green moss. The bottom half shows a dense carpet of various green ferns. A semi-transparent yellow-green banner is overlaid in the center, containing a list of three items.
- 1 Doing less harm**
 - 2 Leaving things better**
 - 3 Unprincipled designing**

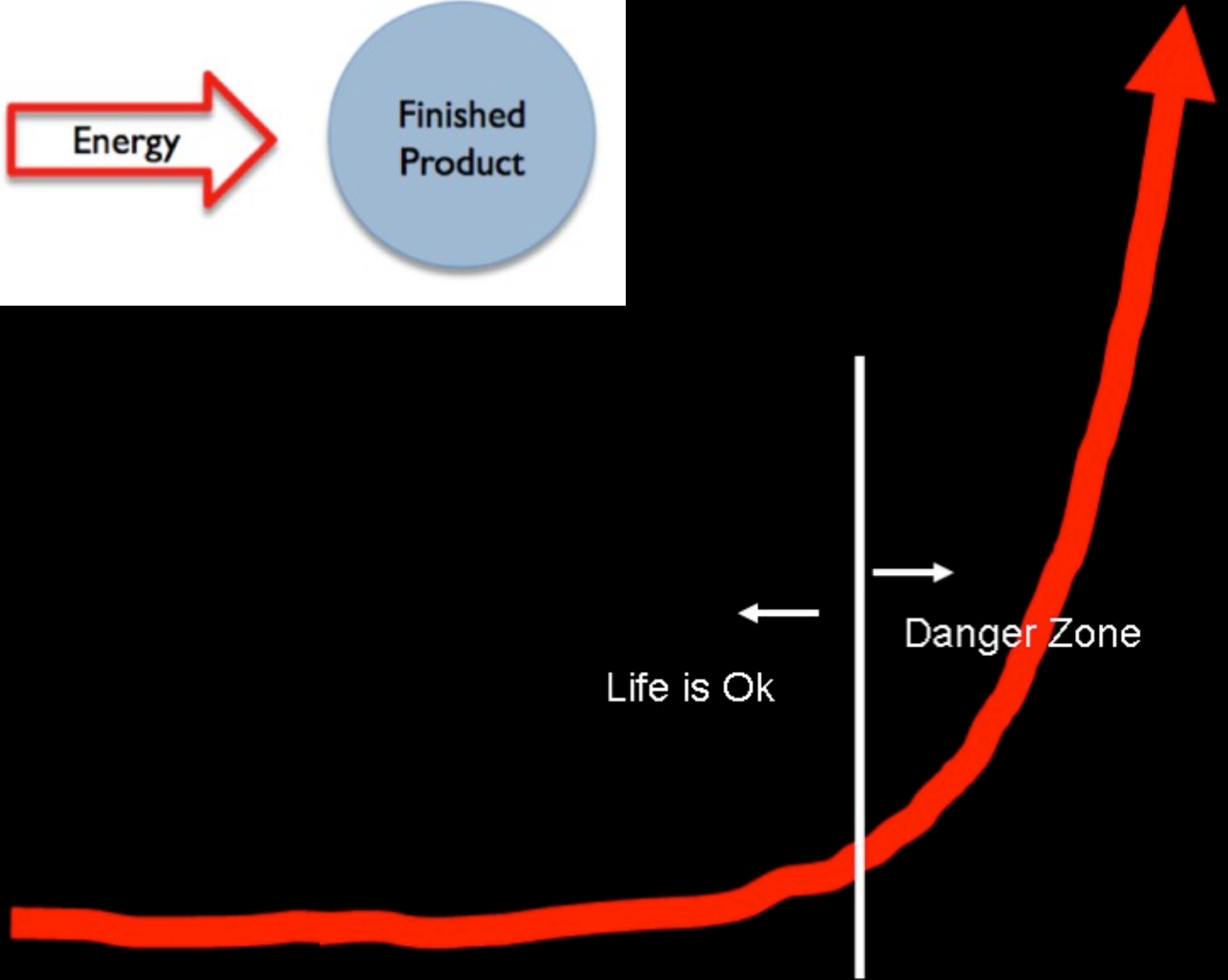
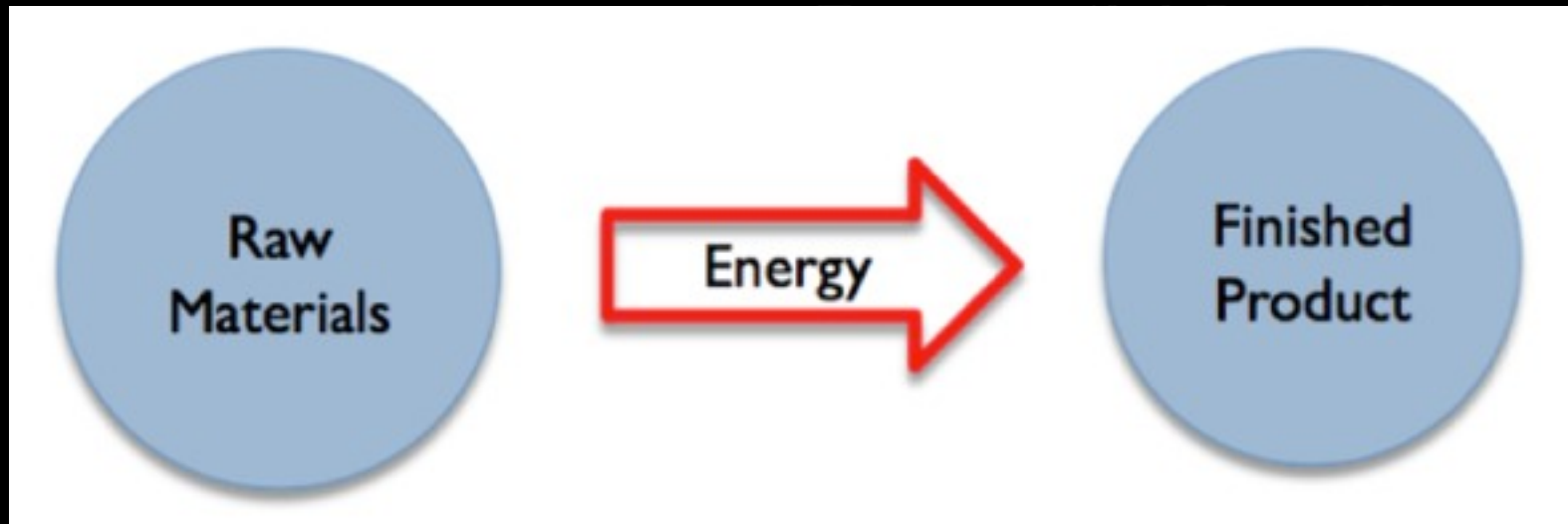
!

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“growth”



“developing”



One



x 60

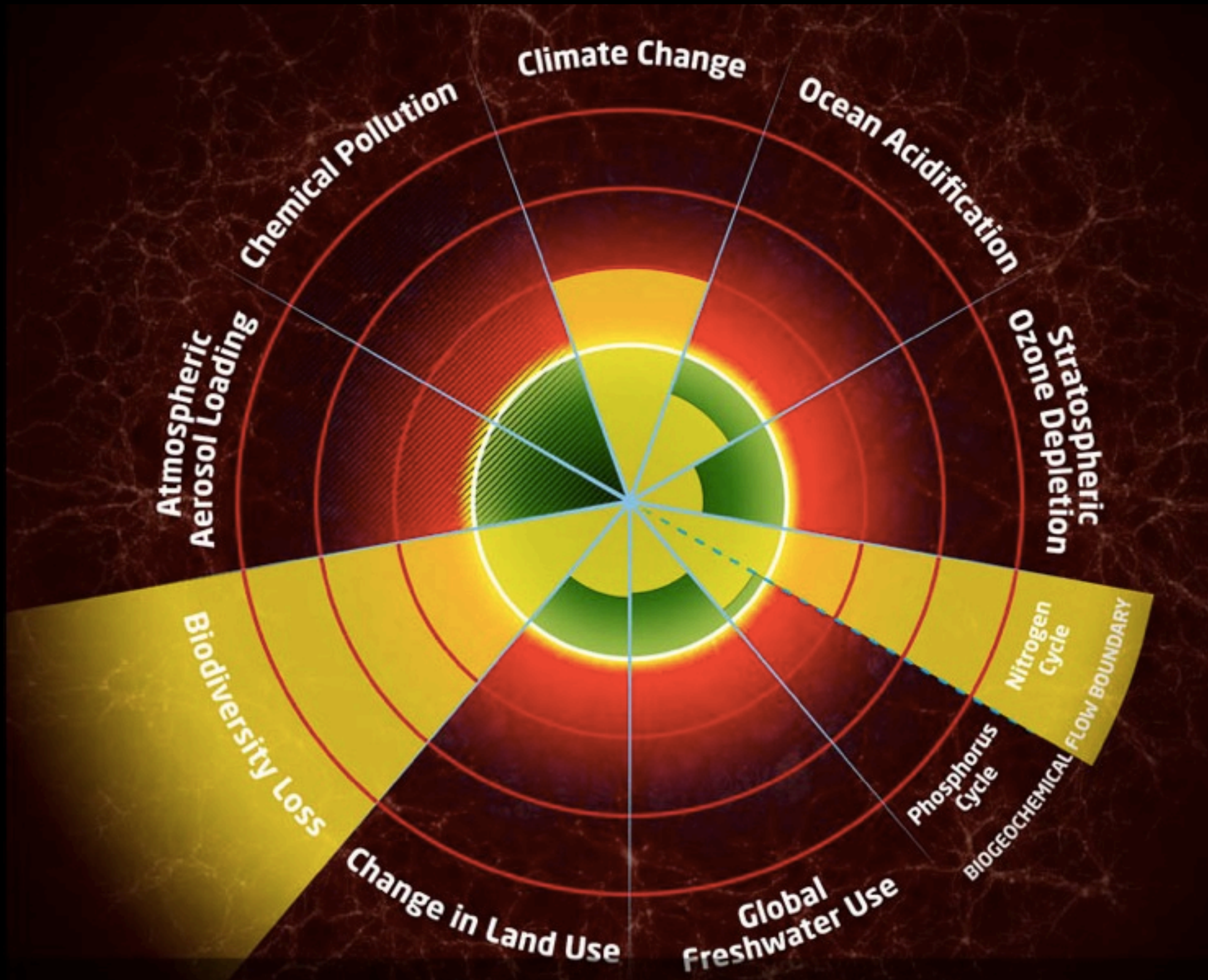


“developing”



“risk”

“resilience”



Stockholm Resilience Centre



metabolic rift

there's good news, too !

good news #1

**“the ecological catastrophe has
already occurred”**

(Tim Morton, Ecology Without Nature)

good news #2

**transformational phase shifts
are not necessarily a bad
thing**



“no new buildings, power stations or hard infrastructure after 2020”

Flagship Report

World in Transition A Social Contract for Sustainability



“A global transformation of values has already begun...a more sustainable society would be welcomed by a significant part of world society”

CATAGENESIS

“renewal through reversion to a simpler state - followed by the emergence of a novel form of society”

“The Upside of Down”

- 
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!



healing the metabolic rift

**reconnecting with
place**



Céline Boyer



reconnecting with soils

reconnecting with soils

For growing enough food to feed an abundance of life sustainably, without killing anything in a field simply to grow a single crop? she asks.



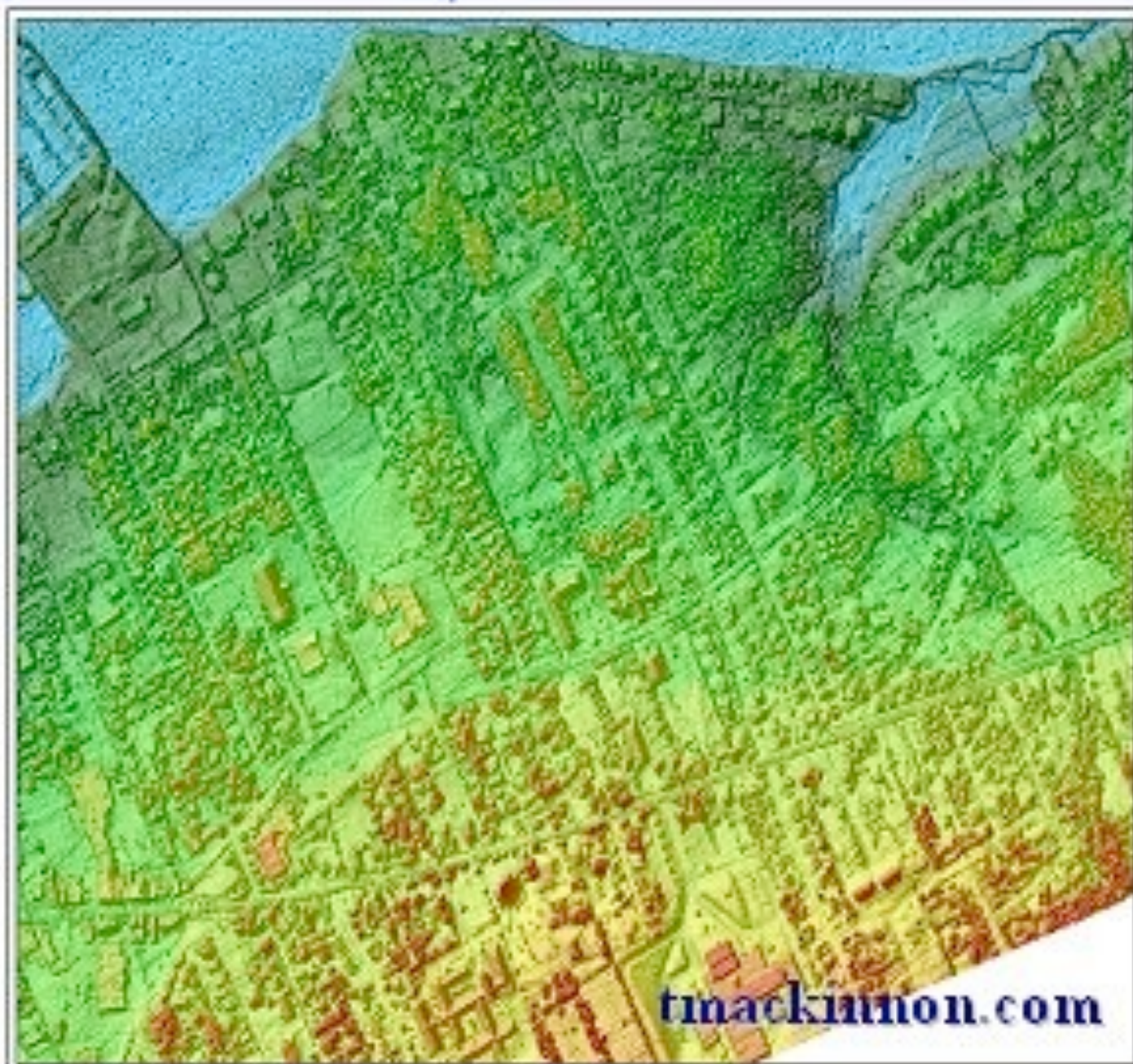
Our use of toxic chemicals to grow food has greatly impeded our soil, rivers, lakes, streams and oceans. In many areas of the world, our impact has been massive.

DR. ELAINE INGHAM BELIEVES GETTING A HEALTHY FOOD WEB BACK INTO OUR DIRT WILL STOP POISONING US AND TURN THIS SICK WORLD AROUND.

'the economy'



bioregioning



ROBERT L. THAYER, JR.



LifePlace

BIOREGIONAL
THOUGHT
AND
PRACTICE

SOIL ATLAS OF EUROPE

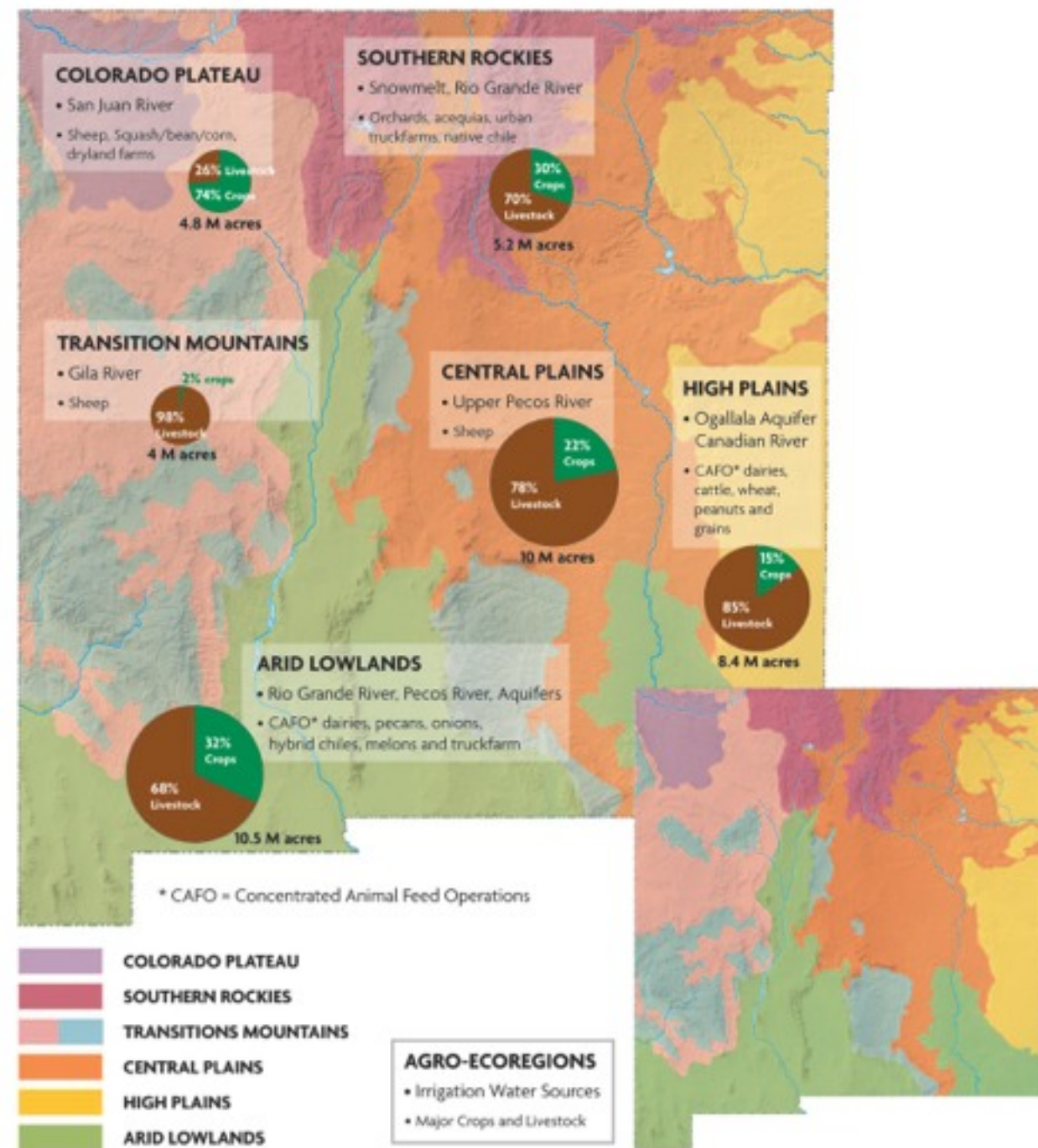


Dreaming New Mexico

AN AGE OF LOCAL FOODSHEDS & A FAIR TRADE STATE



AGRO-ECOREGIONS



Agro-ecoregions are human-managed ecosystems: The rainfall has been modified by irrigation, the temperature by greenhouses, the soils by adding fertilizers and other amendments, and the plants are, of course, mainly crops and livestock useful to us as food, fiber and fuel. New Mexico has a long history of farming and irrigation that greatly intensified with tractors, massive dams and piping, groundwater pumping, European sheep, goats, cattle and horses, petroleum-based fertilizers and pesticides, and industrial crop breeding. Today, there are six distinct agro-ecoregions each with many micro-climates. They extend into parts of other states as well as Mexico. For each agro-ecoregion, the map lists the main sources of irrigation and most profitable crops. Look at your agro-ecoregion and what grows best within it, and see which crops/livestock could be locally raised and processed. New Mexico agro-ecoregions include the Colorado Plateau, the Southern Rockies, the High Plains, the Central Plains, the Arid Lowlands and the Transition Mountains and Plateaus.



landlording

watershed recovering (STRAW, USA)



Saturday, 14 March 15

reconnecting with rivers (Mexico City)



THE VANISHING POINT

fig. 1 water underground



SEWERS / DRAINS



HYDROELECTRIC



UTILITY TUNNELS



LAND / SUBSCAPES



The 2009 incarnation
humanriver.ca

river regenerating (Philadelphia)



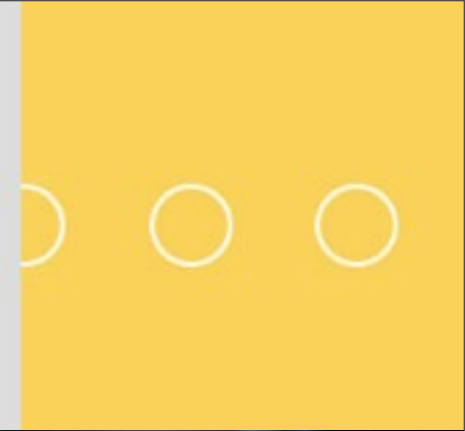
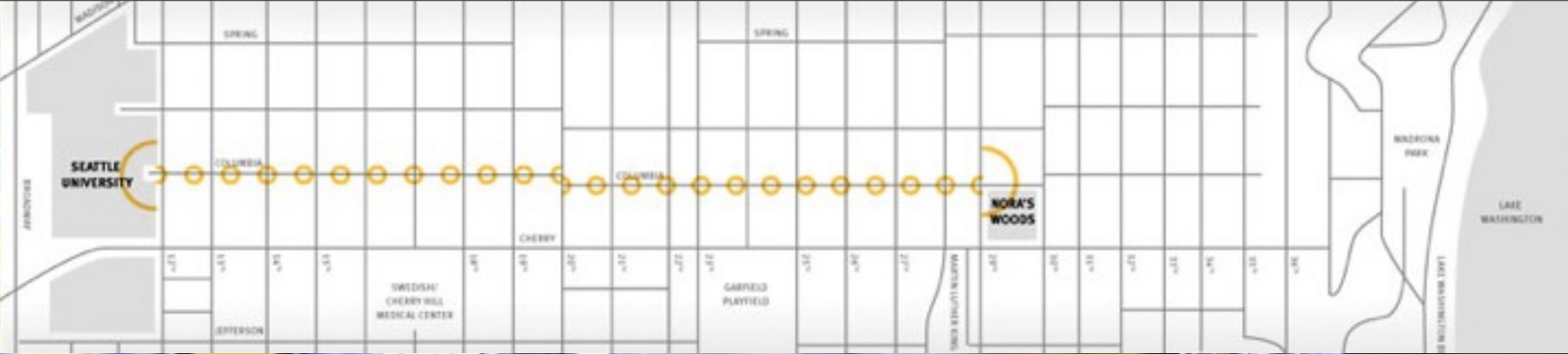
watershed regenerating (Jamaica Bay, USA)

Saturday, 14 March 15

farming as schooling (Yorkshire)



Saturday, 14 March 15



pollinator wayfinding (Seattle)



watershed managing (Tucson)

Saturday, 14 March 15



urban orcharding

(Dundee)



foodscaping (Den Haag)

Saturday, 14 March 15

(a process returns nutrients to the soil and increases soil fertility), the soil remains exposed to the elements. Wind erosion will

carry some of this precious top soil away, and in so doing, releases carbon back into the atmosphere.

reconnecting with biodiversity



Nothing grows here (unless Rick's neighbor¹ says so).

rosemary (harvested year round)

Knoll Farms
Home of Jaiava Produce
Brentwood, CA
3 December 2010

BIODIVERSITY VS MONOCULTURE

weeds + trees + crops + critters + soil =
an integrated food web
allowing biota to self-regulate =
(no pesticides needed)

growing a single crop over a vast amount of land
increases the risk of fungus, disease and specialized
predators, which conventional farming combats
with pesticides, herbicides and fungicides.

THE CONVENTIONAL FARMERS NEXT DOOR¹ CALL RICK'S ORGANIC METHODS "DIRTY FARMING" (THEY'RE "CLEAN")



Living room restaurant

Gardening

Community

social innovation is everywhere



Community garden

Social activities

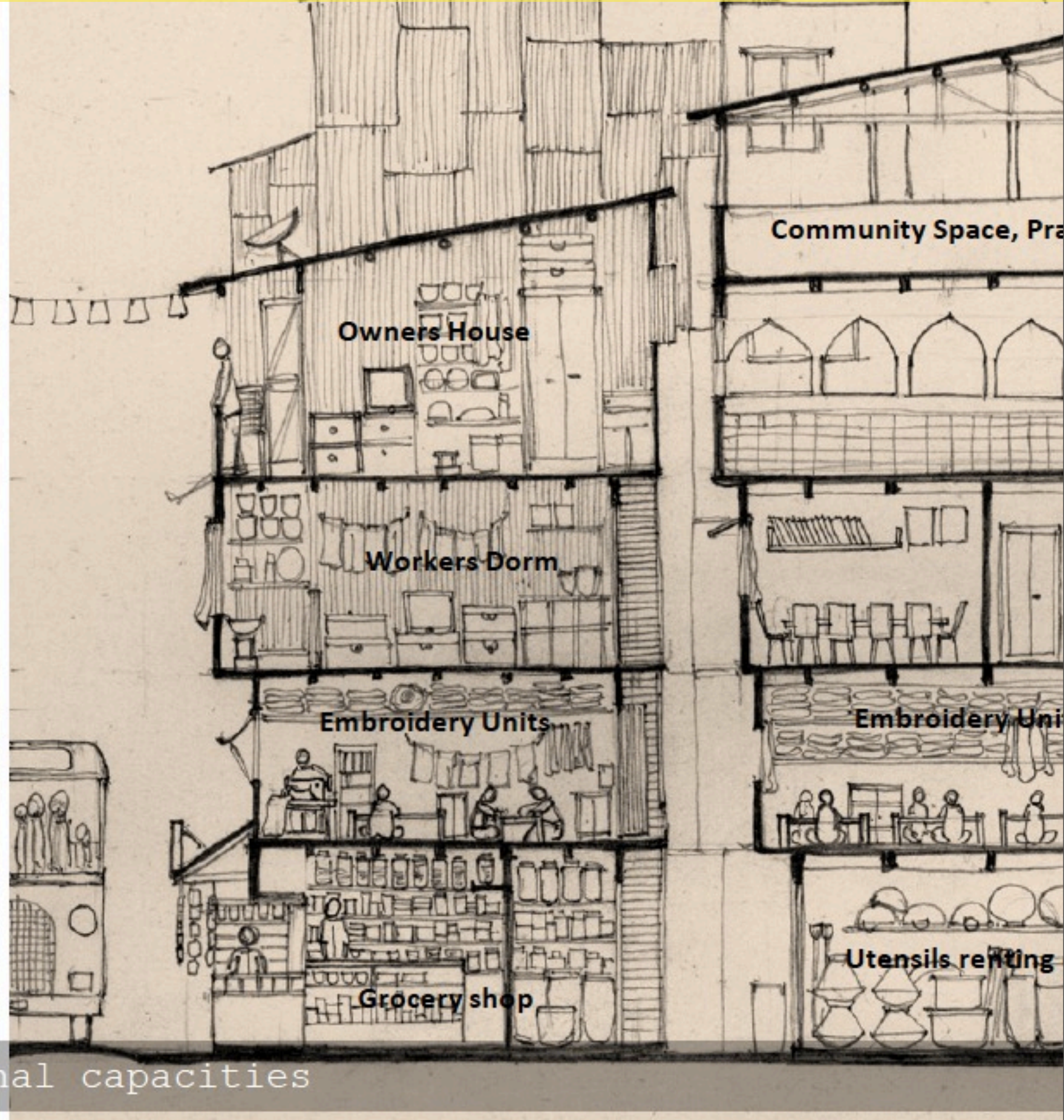
Private homes



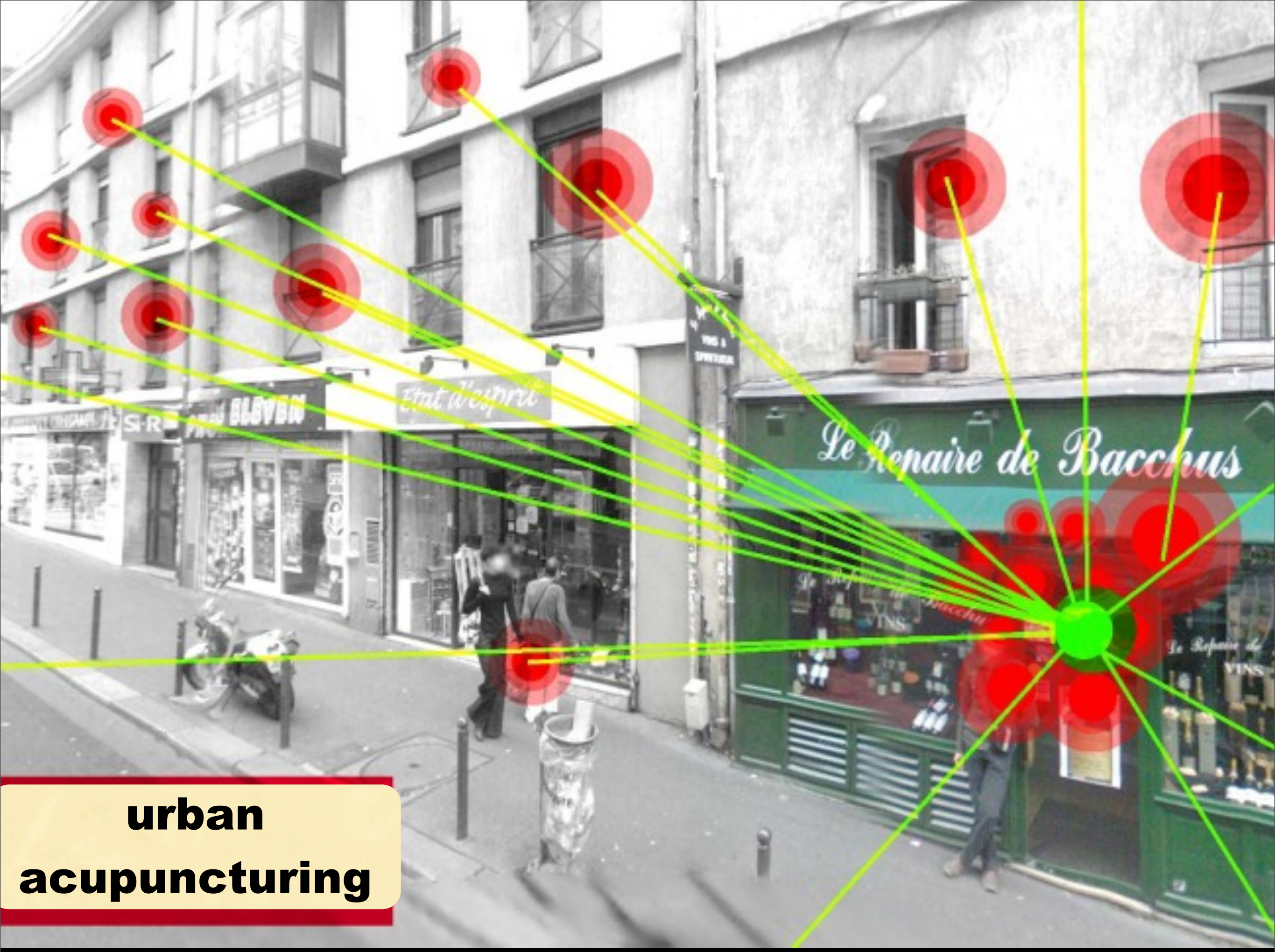
“urbanologyjeitinho”

”

transacting smartly



the city - high transactional capacities



**urban
acupuncture**



Maker Faire

Saturday, 14 March 15

making

off-grid greywater system making (Amsterdam)





food system connecting (France)



Community Supported Baking (Lapland)



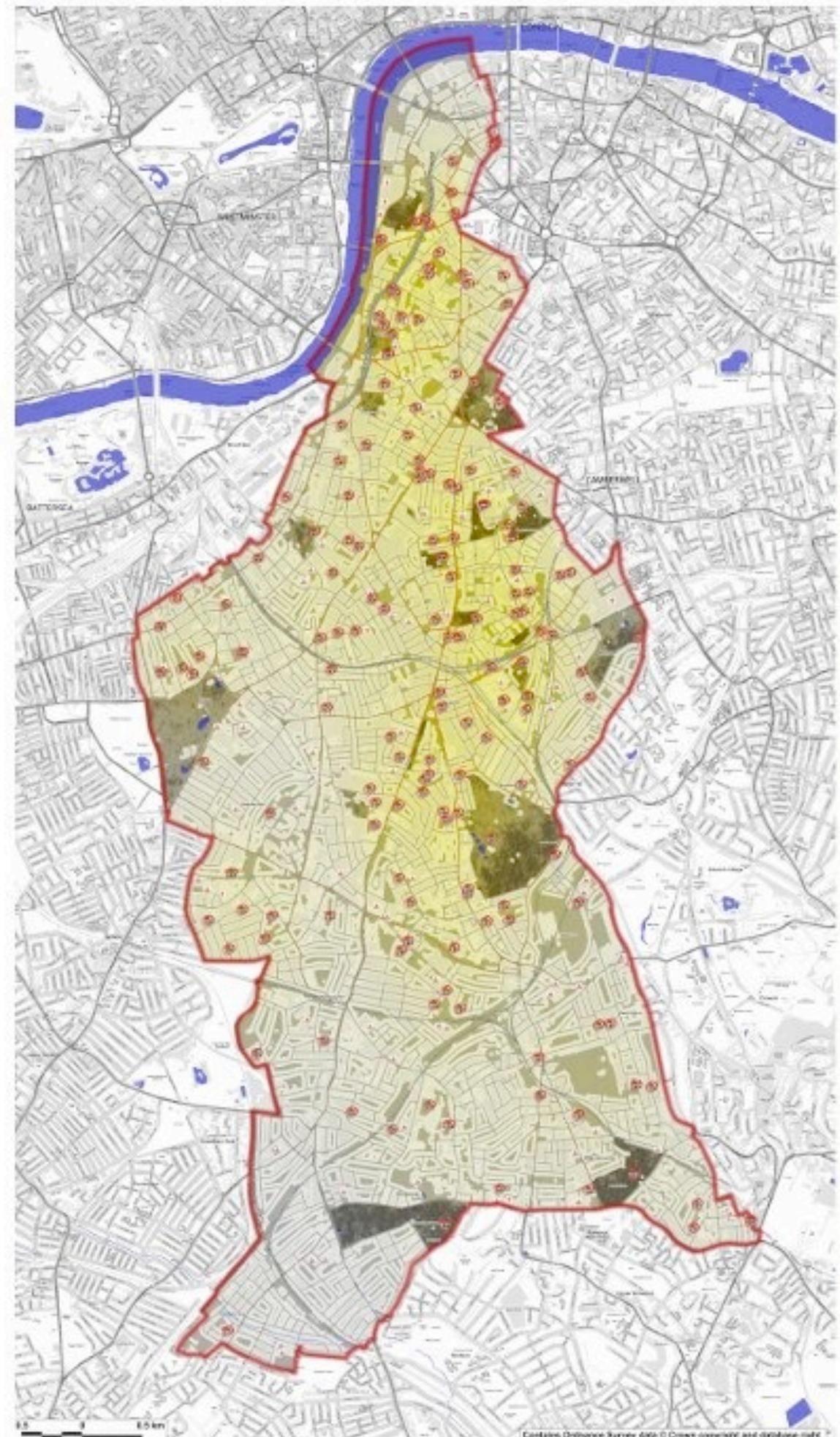
nomadic incubating



CRATE
BREWERY

London

**connecting
urban dots**



INCREDIBLE EDIBLE LAMBETH

Address	Green Space	Urban Area	Water Body
1. 100 Waterloo Road	100 Waterloo Road	100 Waterloo Road	100 Waterloo Road
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100. 199 Waterloo Road	199 Waterloo Road	199 Waterloo Road	199 Waterloo Road

reconnecting with each other



Saturday, 14 March 15

- 
- A lush forest scene with moss-covered tree branches and ferns. The top half of the image shows tree trunks and branches heavily covered in bright green moss. The bottom half shows a dense carpet of various green ferns on the forest floor. A semi-transparent yellow banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing a list of three items.
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!




“models of the world are not the world”

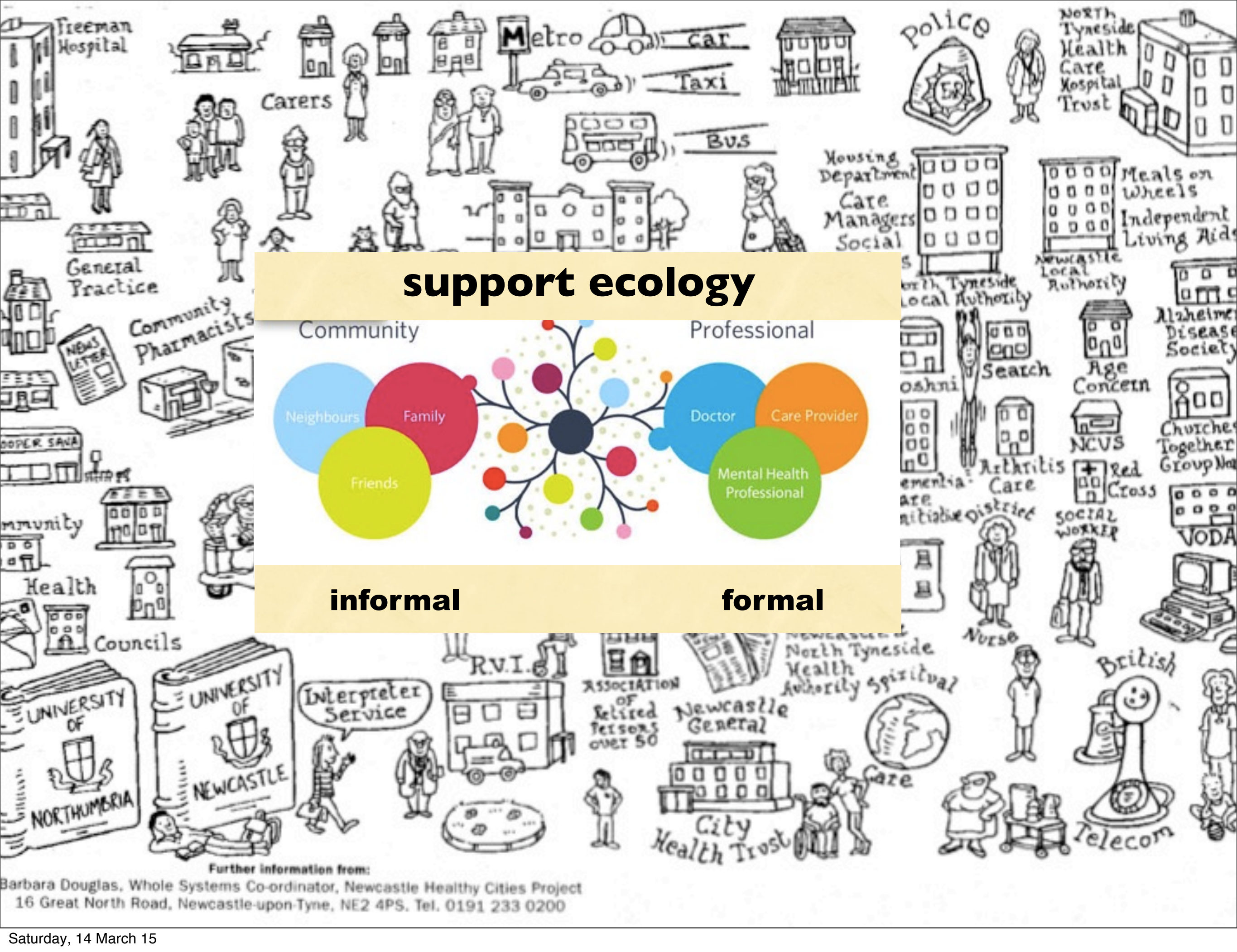
Ranulph Glanville

“or me”





**“you cannot
know what it is like to
be me”**



support ecology



informal **formal**

Further information from:

Barbara Douglas, Whole Systems Co-ordinator, Newcastle Healthy Cities Project
16 Great North Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE2 4PS. Tel. 0191 233 0200

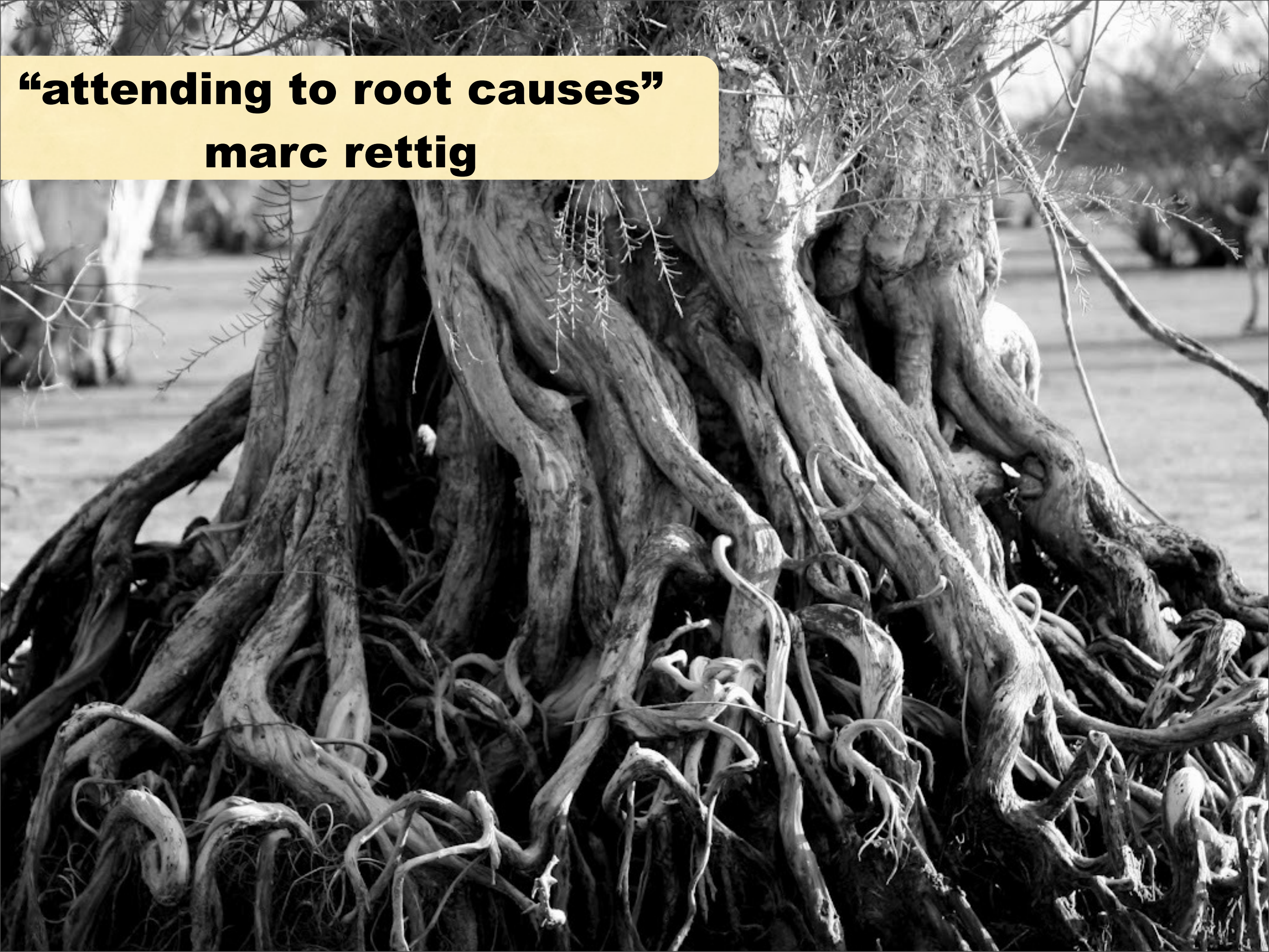


**system health = *property of a social/ecological context*
not something you ‘deliver’, like a pizza**

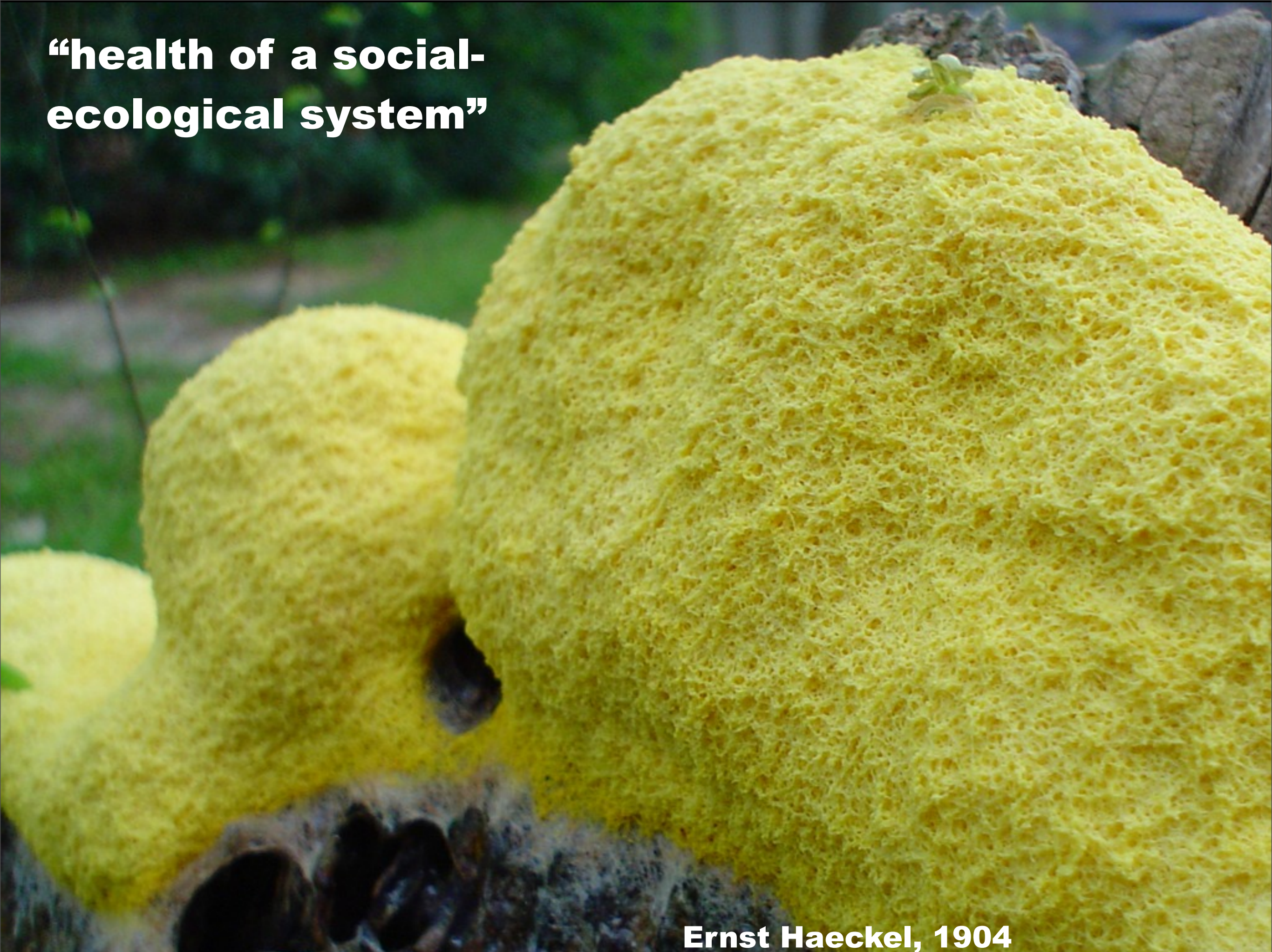


Saturday, 14 March 15

“attending to root causes”
marc rettig



**“health of a social-
ecological system”**



Ernst Haeckel, 1904



Designing like a slime mould?

verbs, not nouns

social + ecological

place-specific

**diversity, not
optimality**

don't say (or think)

“deliver” - it's not a pizza

“intervene” - it's not a fight

“impact” - it's not a meteorite



thank you

@johnthackara