

Principles and Practice of Deep Transformation

Jeremy Lent

Week 1

How Did We Get Here?

Session 1

Historical Patterns of Meaning

A climate emergency...

WILDFIRES



A climate emergency...

WILDFIRES



FLOODS



A climate emergency...

WILDFIRES



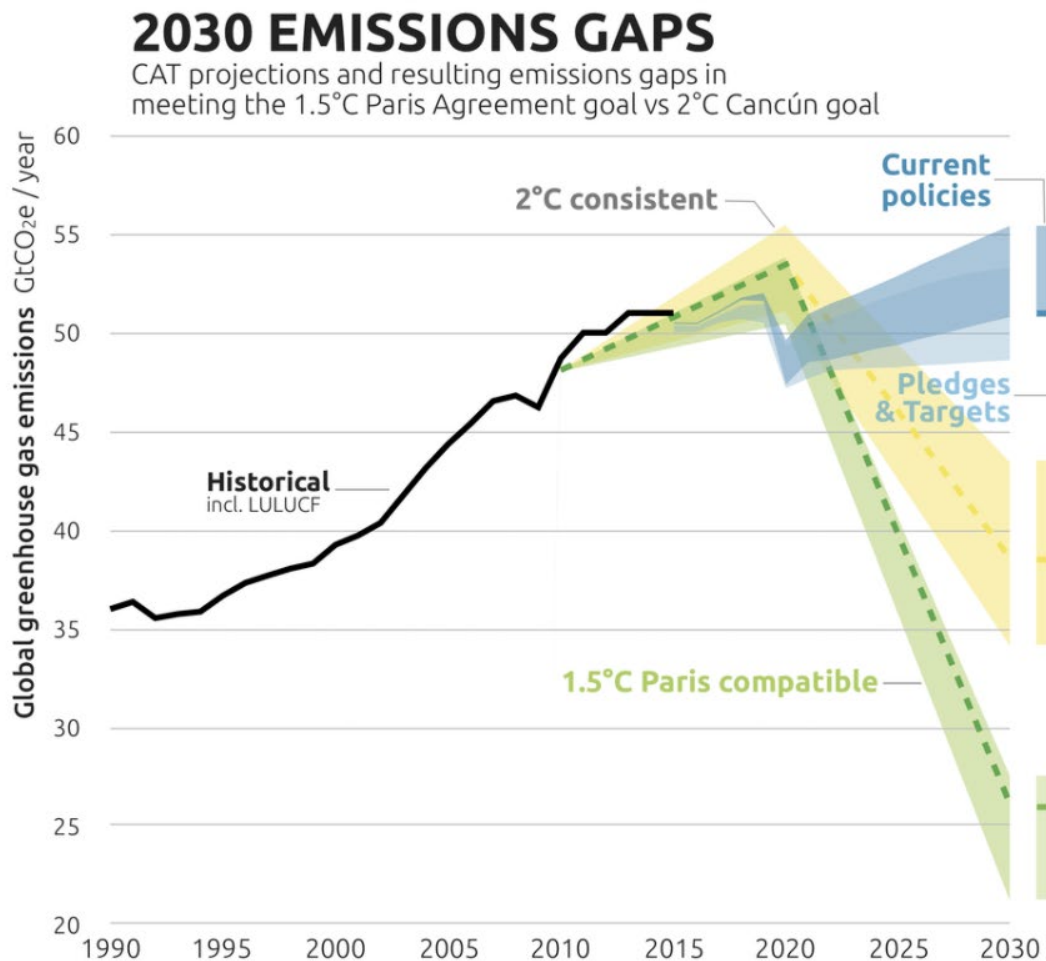
FLOODS



DROUGHT



We're heading in the wrong direction...



The "gap" range results only from uncertainties in the pledge projections. Gaps are calculated against the mean of the benchmark emissions for 1.5°C and 2°C.

Global Temperature Increase By 2100

"Catastrophic"
3–5°

"Prescription for disaster"
2°

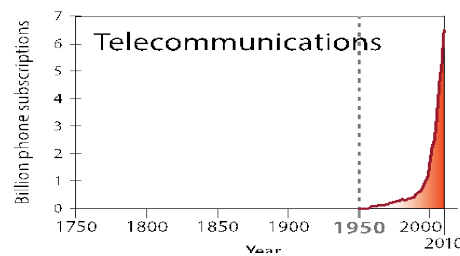
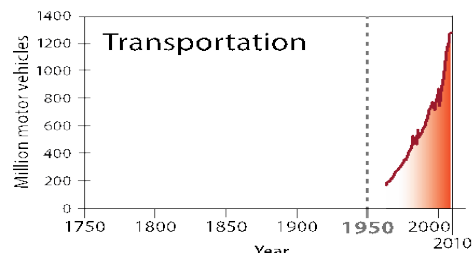
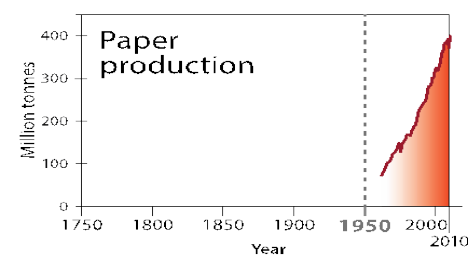
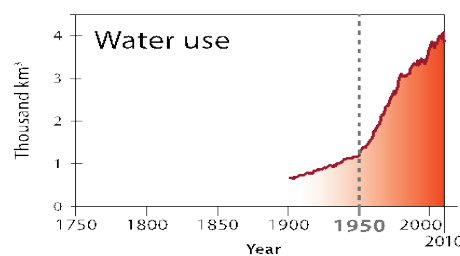
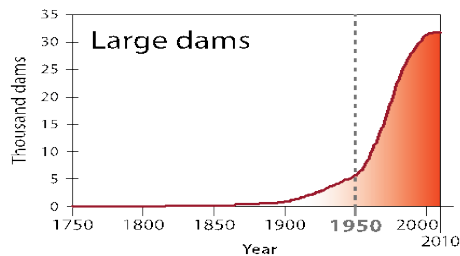
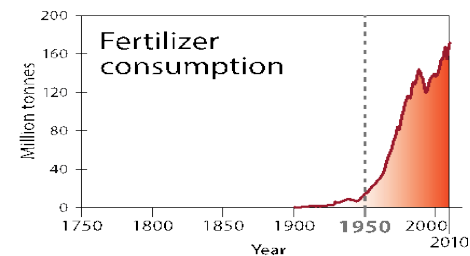
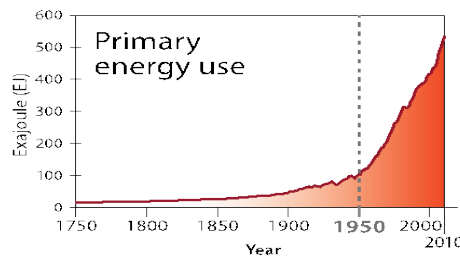
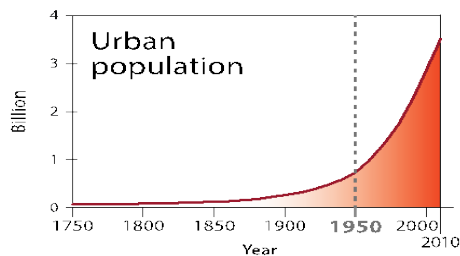
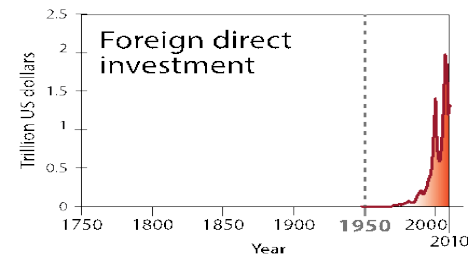
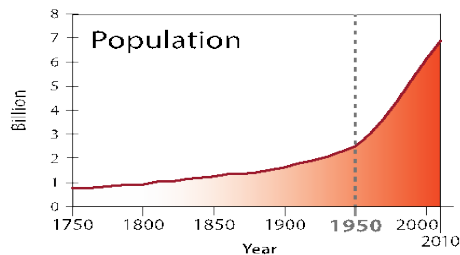
1.5°
"Not a safe target"

Zone of cascading amplifying feedbacks

Our home



The Great Acceleration



Half of all marine life lost in 40 years

An underwater photograph showing several sea turtles swimming in clear blue water. In the foreground, a large sea turtle is swimming towards the camera. Behind it, another sea turtle is swimming upwards. To the right, a third sea turtle is visible, swimming away. Several small blue fish are scattered throughout the scene. The background is a deep blue, suggesting an open ocean environment.

Half of all marine life lost in 40 years: WWF report

The populations of some marine species have declined by 49 per cent in just four decades, according to one of the most extensive surveys of sealife ever compiled.

Rainforests are disappearing

ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST RAINFORESTS COULD BE WIPED OUT BY 2100

Satellite data indicates that the Congo Basin lost an area of forest larger than Bangladesh between 2000 and 2014.

MORGAN ERICKSON-DAVIS · JAN 1, 2019



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The Amazon rainforest's worst-case scenario is uncomfortably near

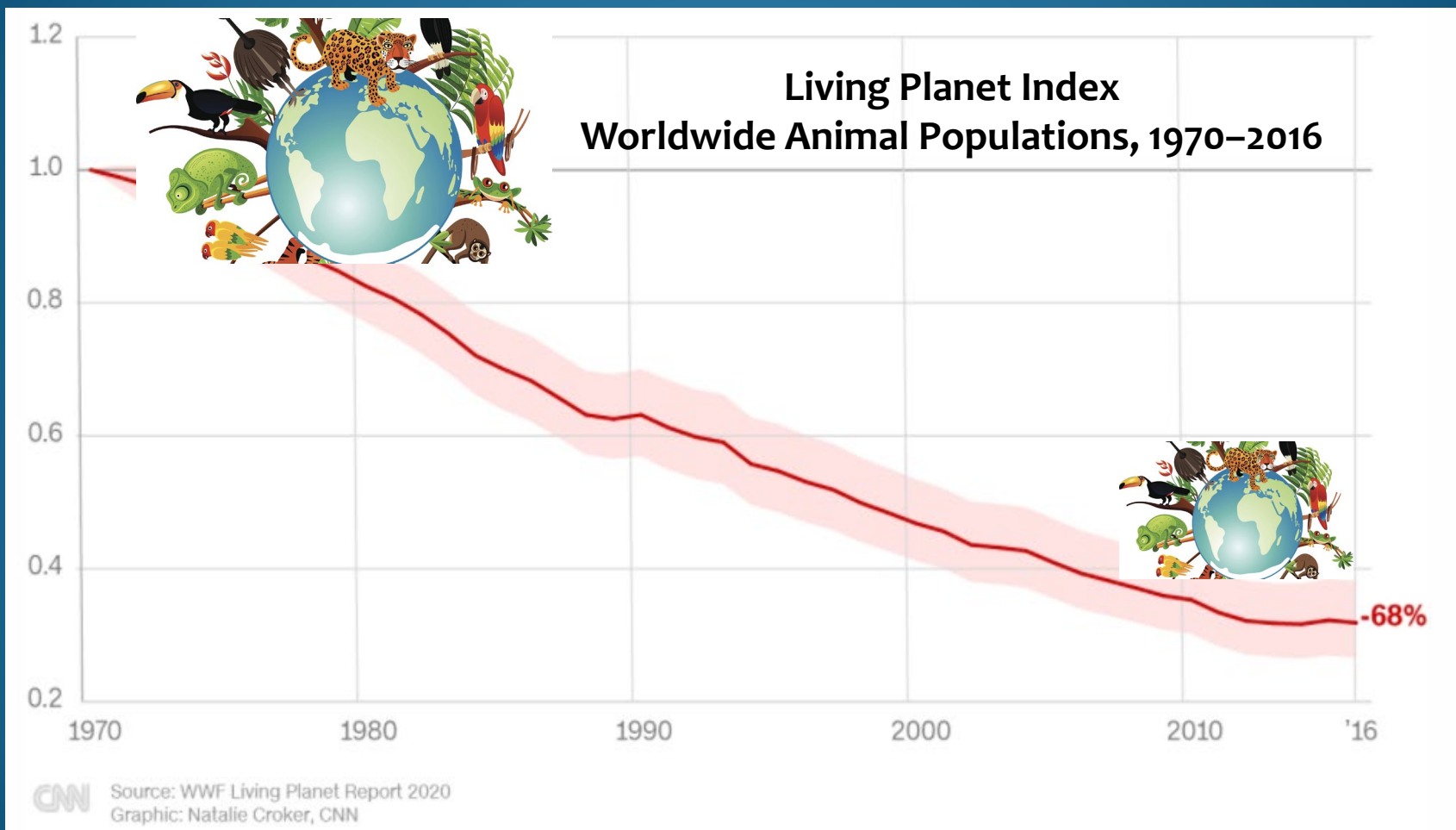
Wildfires and deforestation are pushing the Amazon rainforest toward a dieback scenario: an irreversible cycle of collapse.

By Umair Irfan | Aug 27, 2019, 11:30am EDT

'Chaos, chaos, chaos': a journey through Bolsonaro's Amazon inferno



68% decline in animal populations worldwide



Insect collapse around the world



More than 75 percent decline over 27 years in total flying insect biomass in protected areas

Caspar A. Hallmann , Martin Sorg, Eelke Jongejans, Henk Siepel, Nick Hofland, Heinz Schwan, Werner Stenmans, Andreas Müller, Hubert Sumser, Thomas Hören, Dave Goulson, Hans de Kroon

Published: October 18, 2017 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0185809>

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doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2017.1102
eLife Research article
doi.org/10.1101/185809

Insect collapse: 'We are destroying our life support systems'

Scientist Brad Lister returned to Puerto Rican rainforest after 35 years to find 98% of ground insects had vanished

Insect collapse around the world



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Insect collapse: 'We are at a life support systems'
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California's Monarch Butterflies Hit 'Potentially Catastrophic' Record Low

A discouraging survey of California's monarch butterfly population signals bad news for the at-risk species.

SHARE TWEET



Monarch butterfly. Image: Pixabay

forest after 35

Vast ecological destruction across the board



Vast ecological destruction across the board

5 bn facing water shortage in 2050

A satellite-style image of Earth showing the Americas, with a red lightning bolt graphic pointing to the text '5 bn facing water shortage in 2050'.

Vast ecological destruction across the board

5 bn facing water shortage in 2050

The Sixth Great Extinction of species



Vast ecological destruction across the board

5 bn facing water shortage in 2050

The Sixth Great Extinction of species

Annihilation of coral reefs worldwide



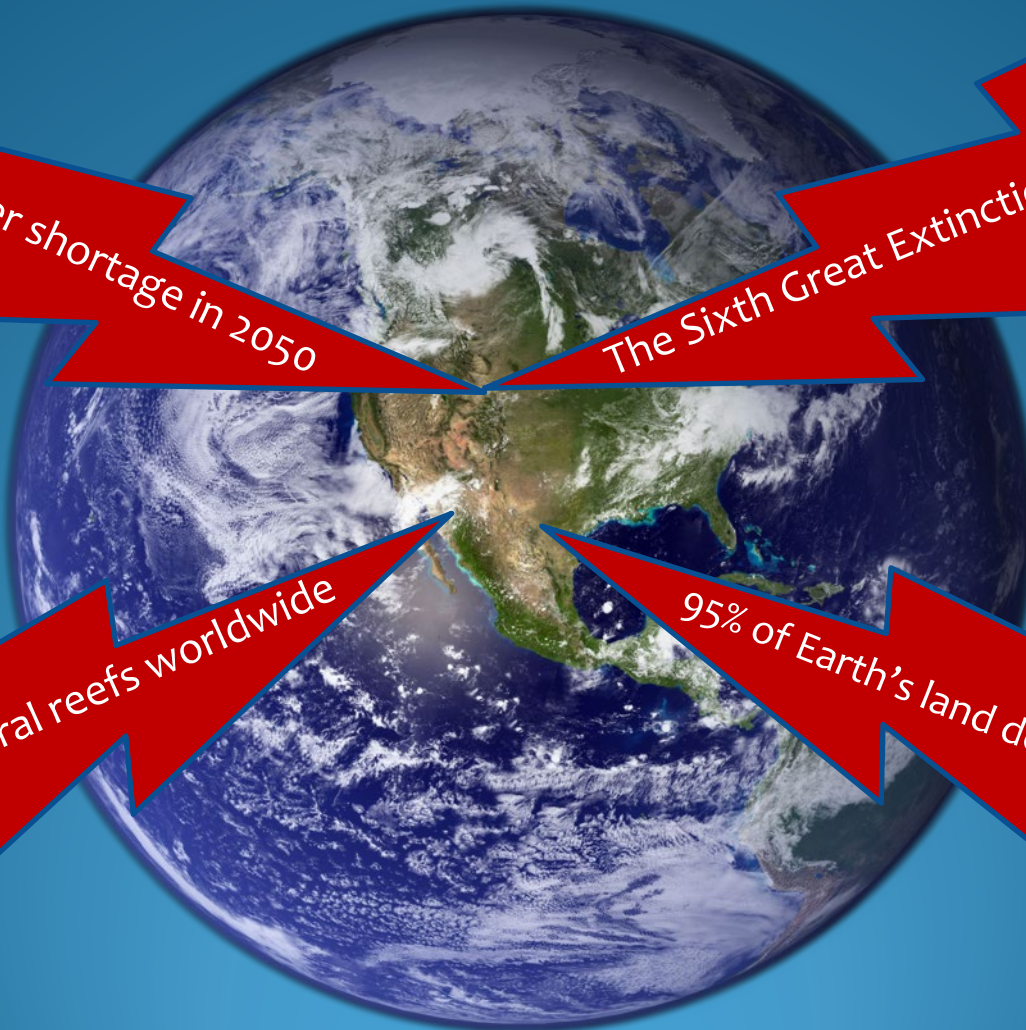
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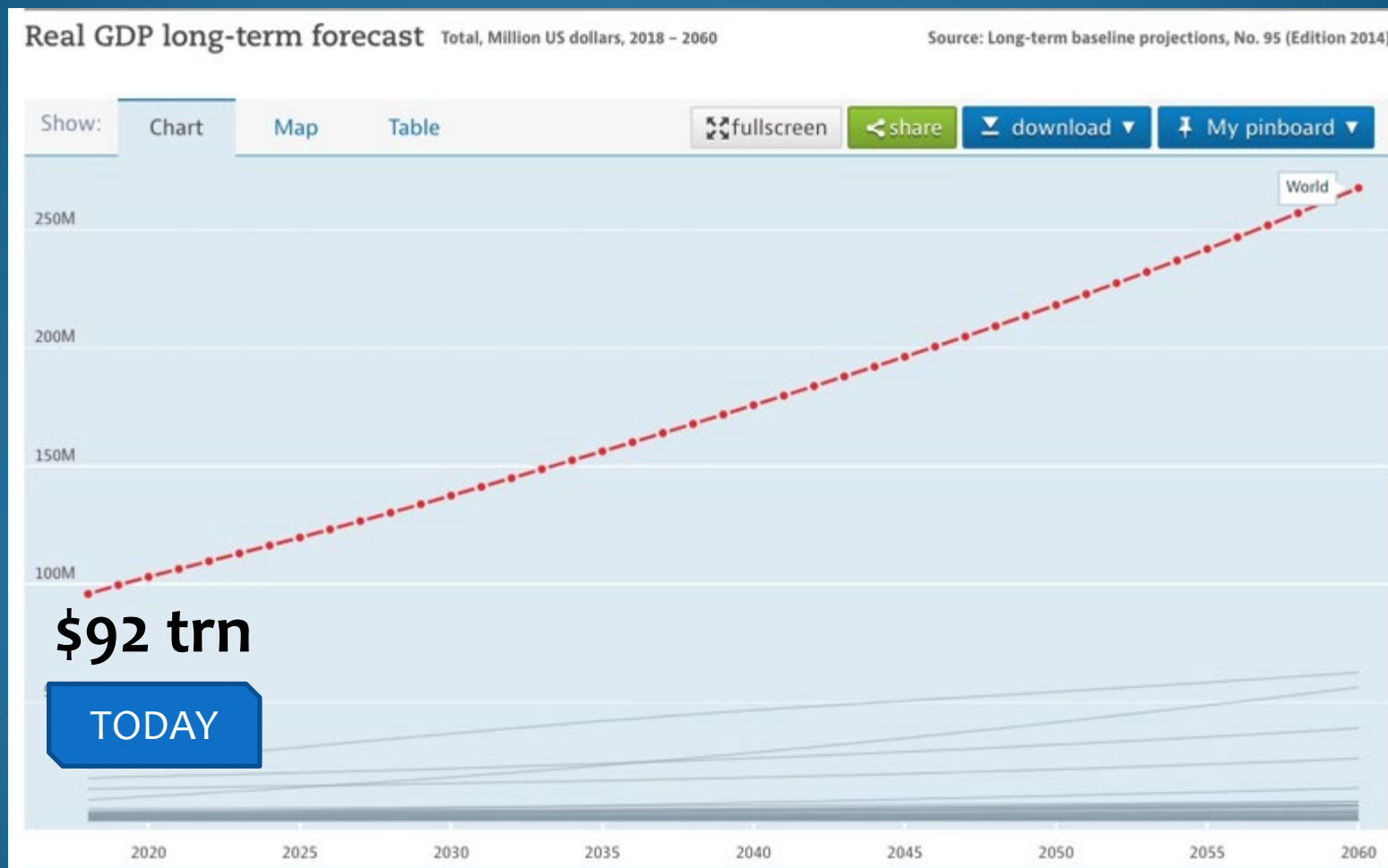
95% of Earth's land degraded by 2050



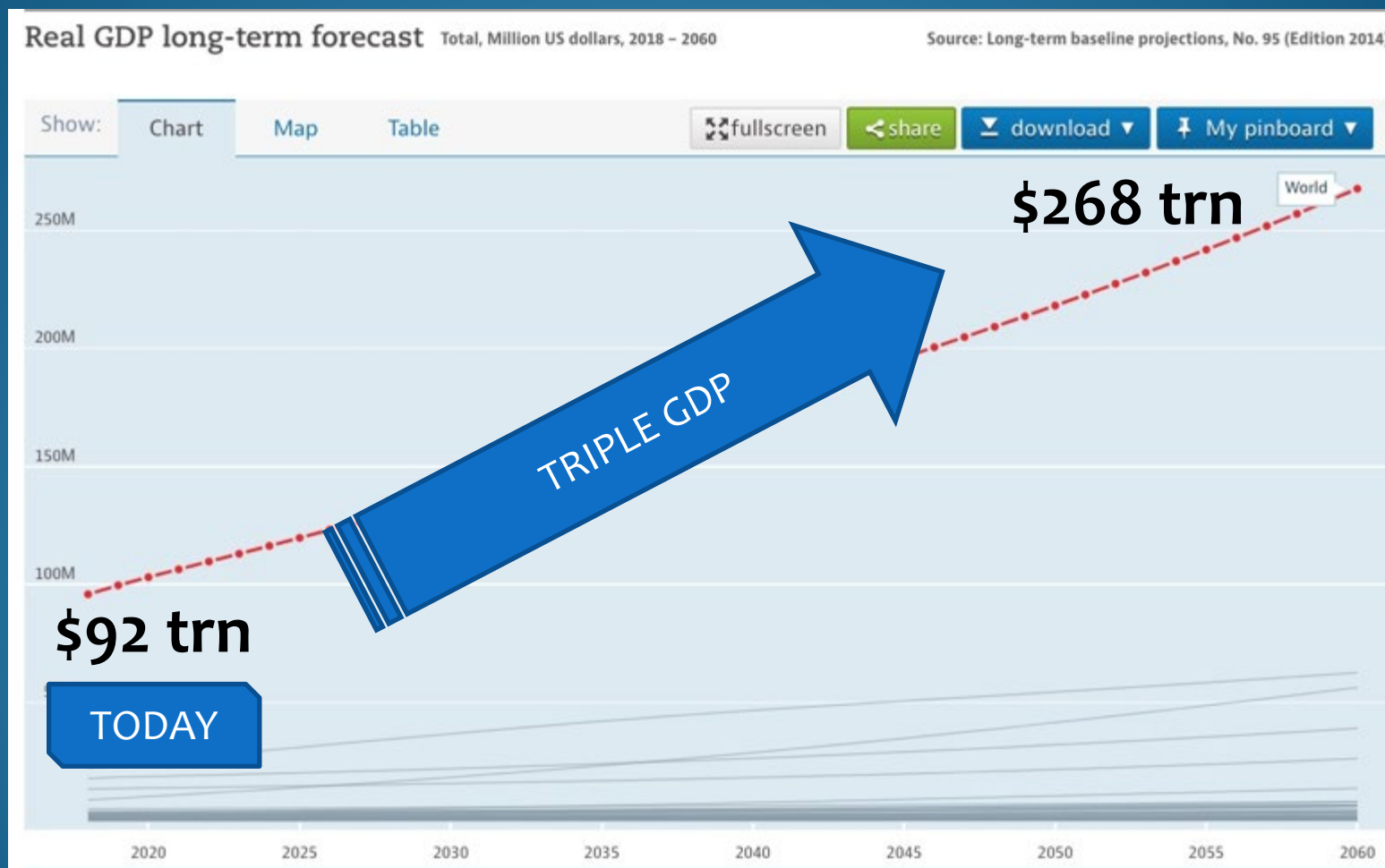
By 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish



Global production today at \$92 trillion

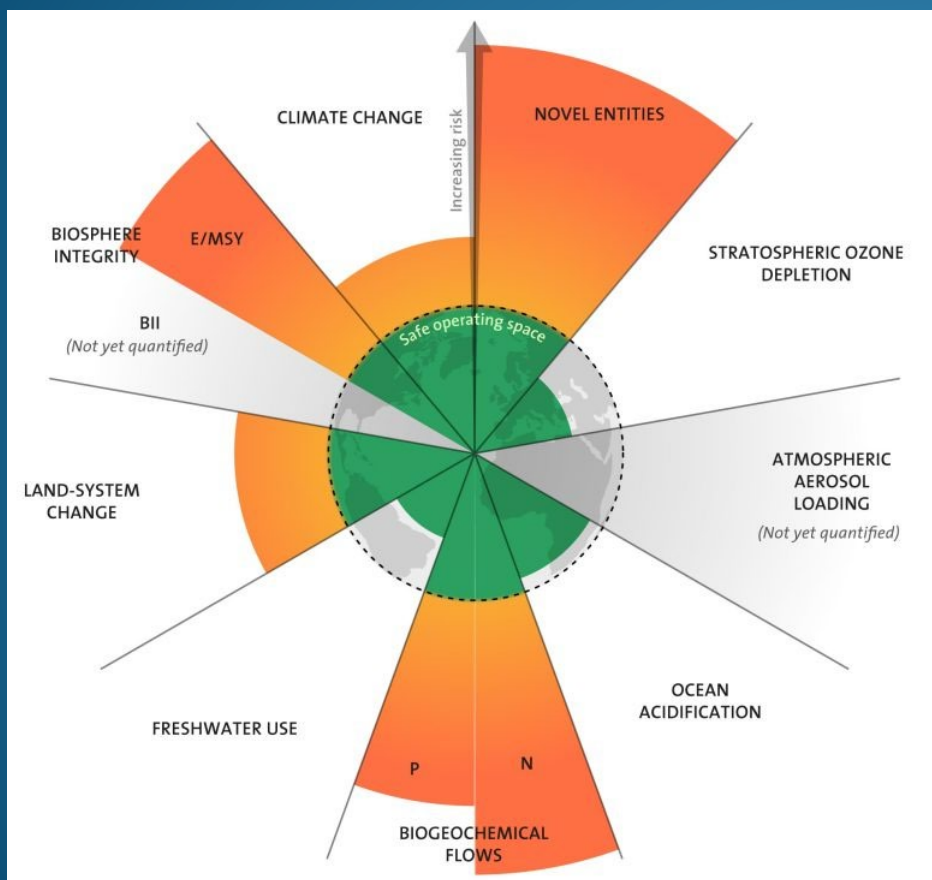


Global production projected to triple by 2060



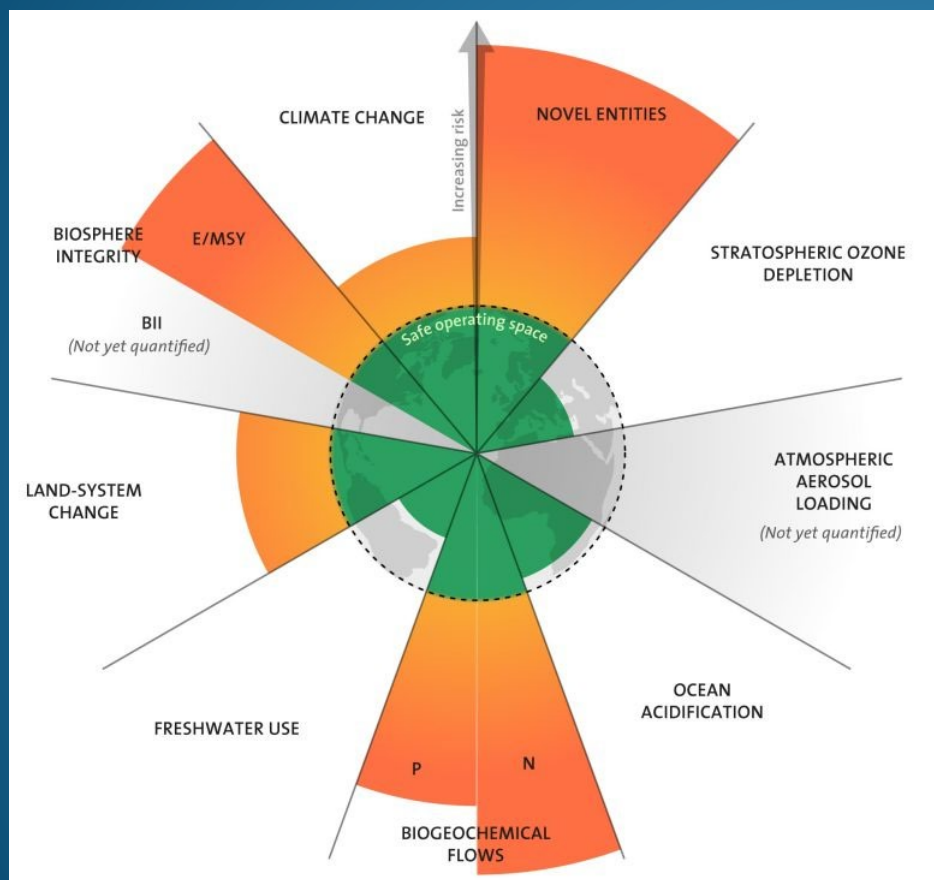
We're rapidly heading for a precipice

PLANETARY BOUNDARIES



We're rapidly heading for a precipice

PLANETARY BOUNDARIES



World Scientists' Warning to Humanity: A Second Notice

“Facing widespread misery and catastrophic biodiversity loss. . .
Soon it will be too late to shift course
away from our failing trajectory.”

– *BioScience*, December 2017

Professor Hans Schellnhuber

“If we continue down the present
path "there is a very big risk that
we will end our civilisation...”

– Director Emeritus, Potsdam Institute

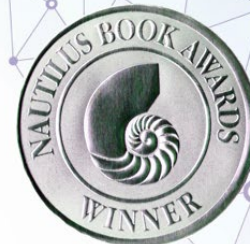
UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon

It is a global suicide pact.”

– World Economic Forum, 2011

How Did We Get Here?

JEREMY
LENT



THE PATTERNING INSTINCT

A Cultural History
of Humanity's Search
for Meaning

Foreword by FRITJOF CAPRA

Culture shapes values
Values shape history

Culture shapes values

Values shape history

Our values will shape the future

The Riddle of Admiral Zheng He and Christopher Columbus



In 1405 Admiral Zheng He set sail from China

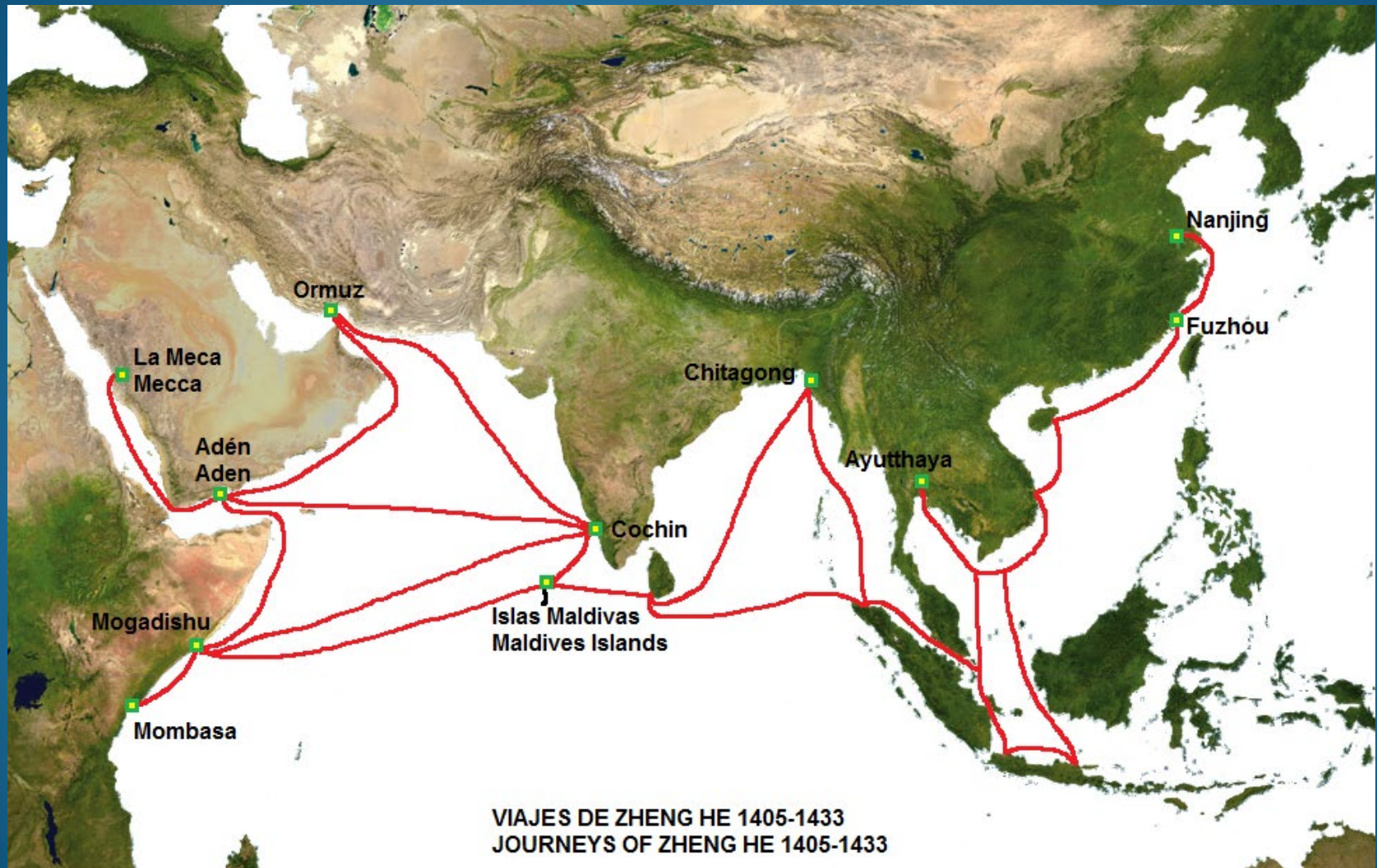


The greatest armada in history

- 27,000 men in over 300 ships
- Classes of ships:
 - Troop and horse transports
 - Patrol boats
 - Men-of-war
 - Freshwater tankers
- 7 long voyages over 28 years



Admiral Zheng's extensive reach



In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail from Spain



- 90 men
- Three threadbare boats: *Santa Maria*, *Pinta* and *Niña*
- Rudder broke after 3 days at sea

Zheng He's boats dwarfed those of Columbus



The Riddle:

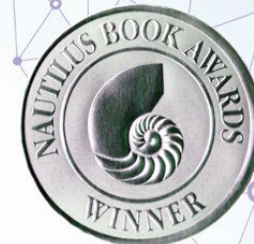
Why did Columbus transform the
entire world?

The Riddle:

Why did Columbus transform the
entire world?

Why not Zheng He?

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LENT

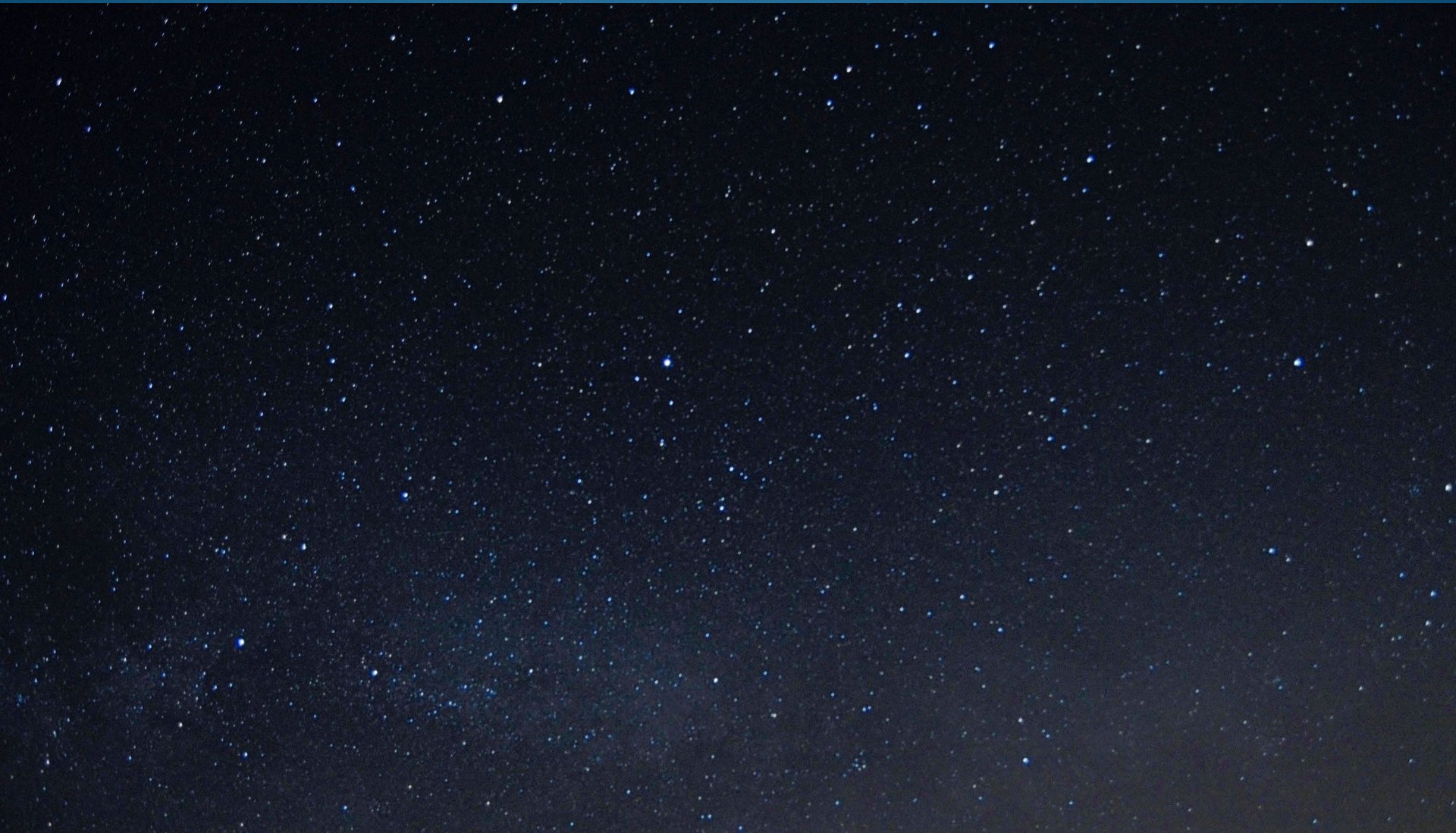


THE PATTERNING INSTINCT

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Aldebaran

Regulus

Alphard

Pollux

Castor

Sol
Procyon
Luyten's Star

Alhena

Sirius

Betelgeuse

Saiph

Anilam
Alnitak

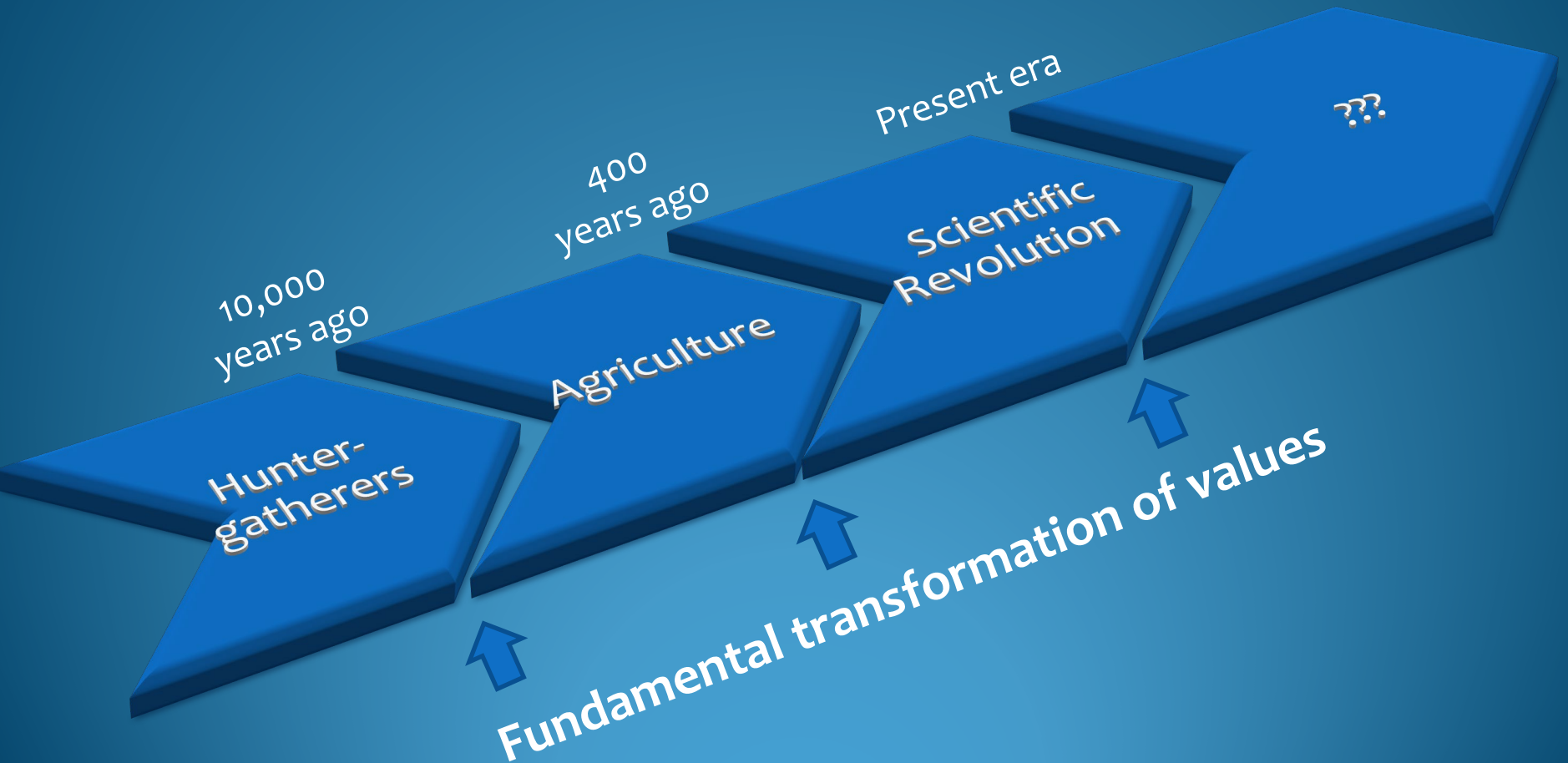
Bellatrix

Rigel

Ainath

Historical Patterns

Great transitions in human history



Shifts in root metaphors of Nature



Hunter-gatherers

“Nature is . . . a giving parent”

ROOT METAPHOR

Nature is a giving parent



ROOT METAPHOR

Nature is a giving parent

All living beings are family



ROOT METAPHOR

Nature is a giving parent

All living beings are family

We all have an intimate relationship with spirits



ROOT METAPHOR

Nature is a giving parent

All living beings are family

We all have an intimate relationship with spirits



We can trust Nature to meet our needs

ROOT METAPHOR

Nature is a giving parent

All living beings are family

We all have an intimate relationship with spirits

We can trust Nature to meet our needs

Everything is connected



ROOT METAPHOR

Nature is a giving parent

All living beings are family

We all have an intimate relationship with spirits

We can trust Nature to meet our needs

Everything is connected

The natural world has intrinsic value



Shifts in root metaphors of Nature

10,000
years ago

Hunter-
gatherers

Agriculture

“A hierarchy of the gods”

“Nature is . . . a giving parent”

Agriculture and separation



Agriculture and separation



**Humans separate
from Nature**

**Humans separate
from other
humans**

ROOT METAPHOR

Hierarchy of the gods



ROOT METAPHOR

Hierarchy of the gods

Intrinsic value of wealth,
possessions, and power



ROOT METAPHOR

Hierarchy of the gods

Intrinsic value of wealth,
possessions, and power

Can't trust the gods:
need for worship,
sacrifice and
priesthood



ROOT METAPHOR

Hierarchy of the gods

Intrinsic value of wealth,
possessions, and power

Can't trust the gods:
need for worship,
sacrifice and
priesthood

Respect the hierarchy—and the patriarchy



The rise of the patriarchy

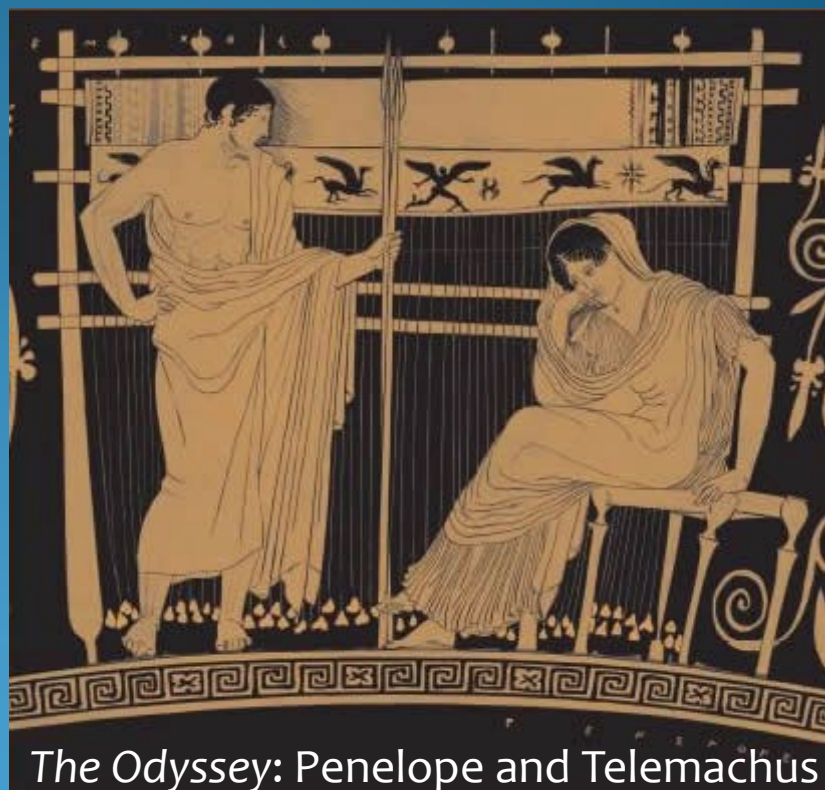
Women become

- Property of the male
- Objectified sexually
- Excluded from power
- Silenced in the public sphere

The rise of the patriarchy

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The Odyssey: Penelope and Telemachus

Source: *Women & Power: A Manifesto* by Mary Beard

The rise of the patriarchy

Women become

- Property of the male
- Objectified sexually
- Excluded from power
- Silenced in the public sphere

“Mother, go back to your quarters. Speech will be the business of men.”



The Odyssey: Penelope and Telemachus

Source: *Women & Power: A Manifesto* by Mary Beard

Hierarchy of the gods



Shared by early civilizations throughout the world

Aztec
Maya

Inca

Mesopotamia
Egypt

India

China



Two unprecedented patterns of meaning



Two unprecedented patterns of meaning



An interconnected cosmos of yin and yang



Pondering the Tao



鶴袖野老多自諫
避人處鳥不喧啼

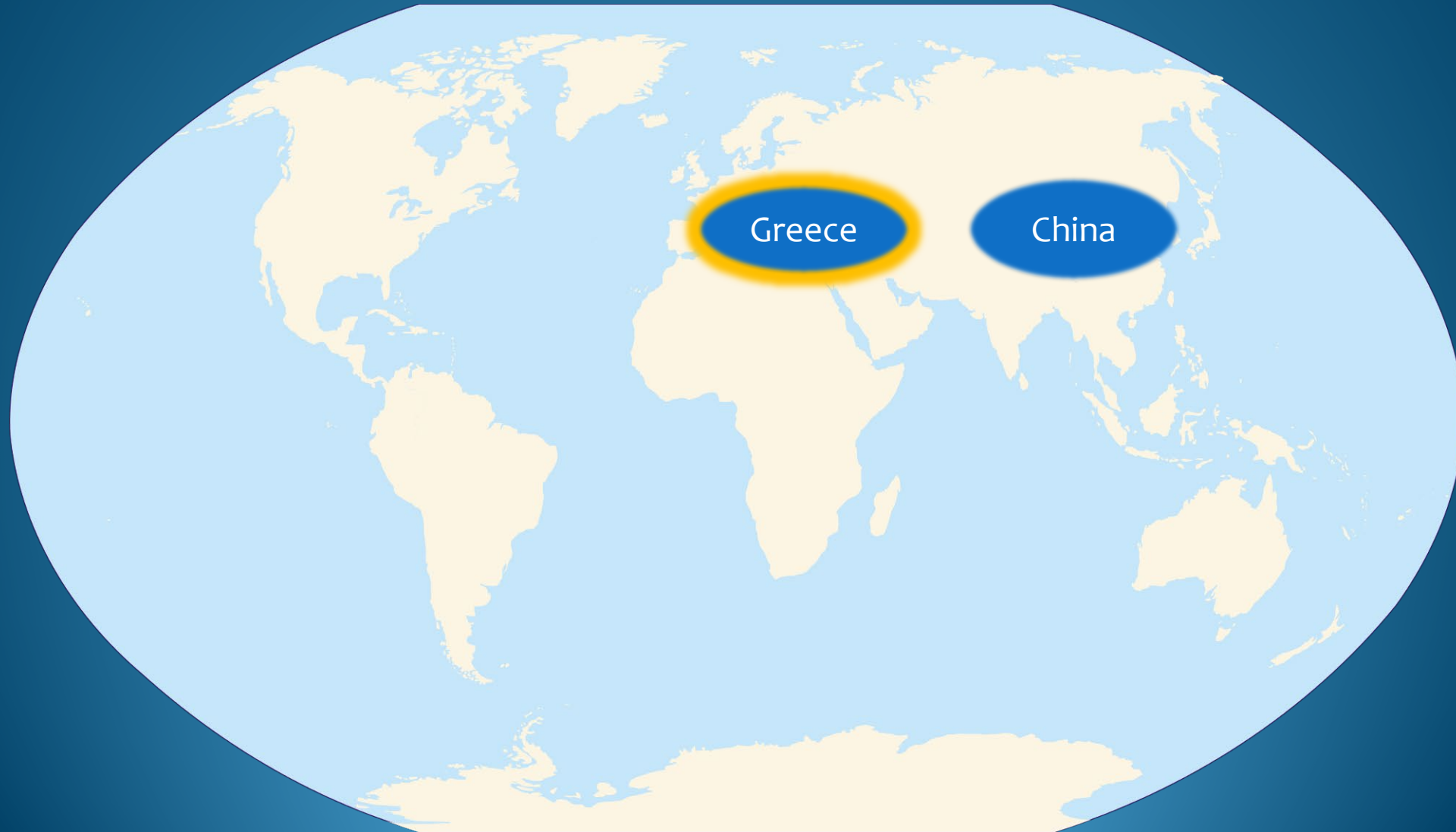
Harmonic web of life



Traditional Chinese values

- Ultimate goal to **find harmony** within the cosmic network
- **Resonate in balance** with the forces of *yin* and *yang*
- Harmony arises **through integration**
 - Different parts of an individual
 - Individual within society
 - Humanity and the natural world

Two unprecedented patterns of meaning



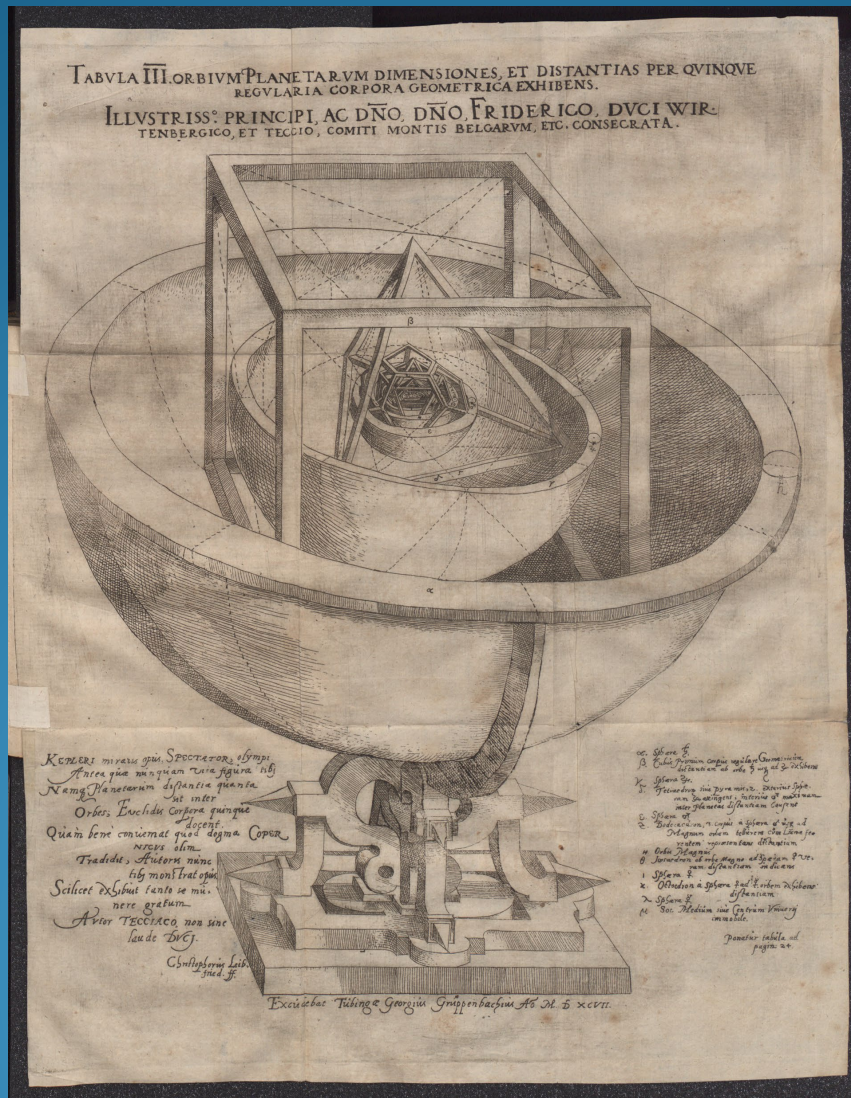
Dualism: split cosmos, split human



Christian Rationalism



Nature's perfect geometry



God as the great clockmaker



Scientific Revolution: Nature is a machine



=



The conquest of nature



“establish and extend the **power of dominion** of the human race itself over the universe”

“render ourselves the **masters and possessors of nature**”

Francis Bacon, prophet of the scientific age

Conquering nature... and other continents



Columbus' journal arriving in the Bahamas

“Of anything they have, if you ask them for it, they never say no; rather they invite the person to share it, and show as much love as if they were giving their hearts.”



The Arawak (Taino)

Columbus' journal arriving in the Bahamas



“They would make fine servants. Should your Majesties command it, all the inhabitants could be taken away to Castile [Spain], or made slaves on the island. With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.”

The racist ideology of white supremacy



Genocide of Indigenous people in North and South America wiped out 99% of population

12 million Africans enslaved and transported to the Americas



The Riddle:

Why did Columbus transform the
entire world?

Why not Zheng He?

Underlying cause: cognitive



Unthinkable for Admiral Zheng to have conquered and enslaved the societies he visited with his armada

Underlying cause: cognitive



Unthinkable for Admiral Zheng to have conquered and enslaved the societies he visited with his armada

Unthinkable for Columbus to have traded with the indigenous people of the New World and brought emissaries back to Spain as ambassadors



The greatest inequality in history

Wealthiest 26 billionaires...



The greatest inequality in history

Wealthiest 26 billionaires...



... Half the world's population



4 billion people

Ransacking the natural world



Modern Cultural Patterns

Modern worldview based on separation





CNNMONEY NOW

MEASURING THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY



6:37 AM ET

We are all separate
from each other

CNNMONEY NOW

MEASURING THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

CNN

6:37 AM ET



We are all separate
from each other

We are all selfish

CNNMONEY NOW

MEASURING THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY

CNN

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We are all separate
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Nature is a
machine

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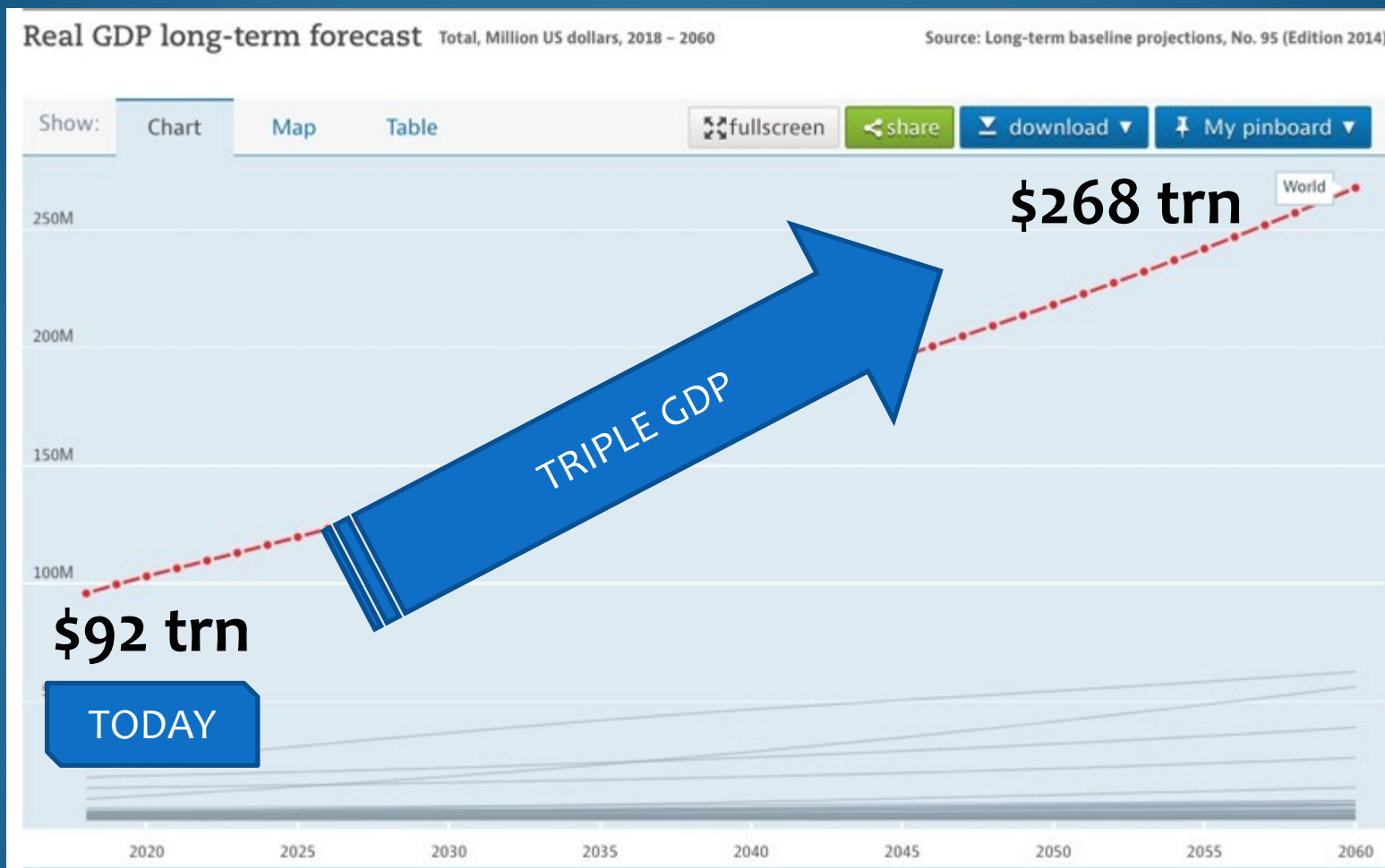
CNNMONEY NOW

**EVERYTHING IS MEANINGLESS: FILL IT WITH
CONSUMERISM**

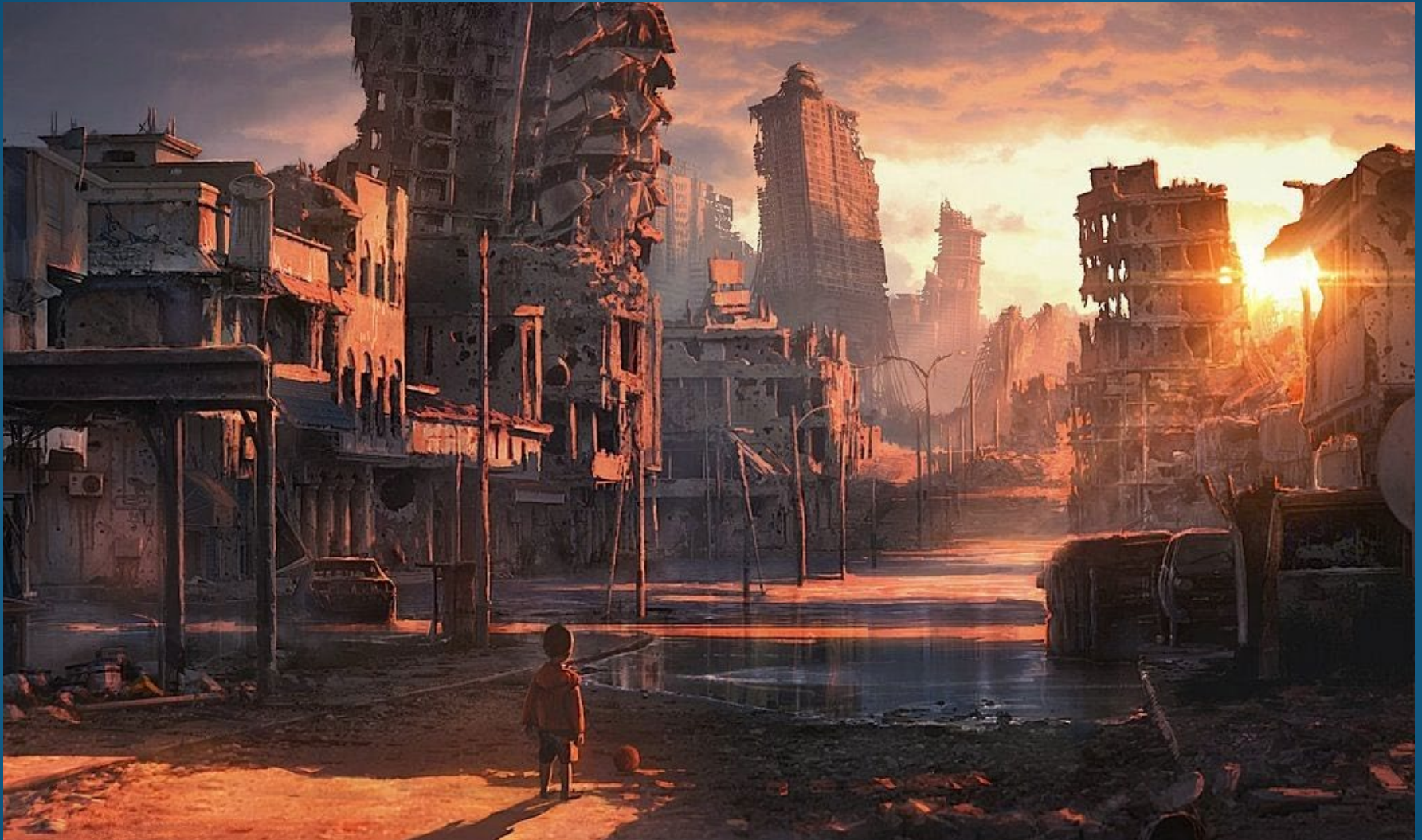
CNN

6:37 AM ET

Global production projected to triple by 2060



Is our civilization headed for collapse?



Three Scenarios

Global Civilization Trajectory

High
SOCIETAL
COMPLEXITY



Low

1600

TIME

Present

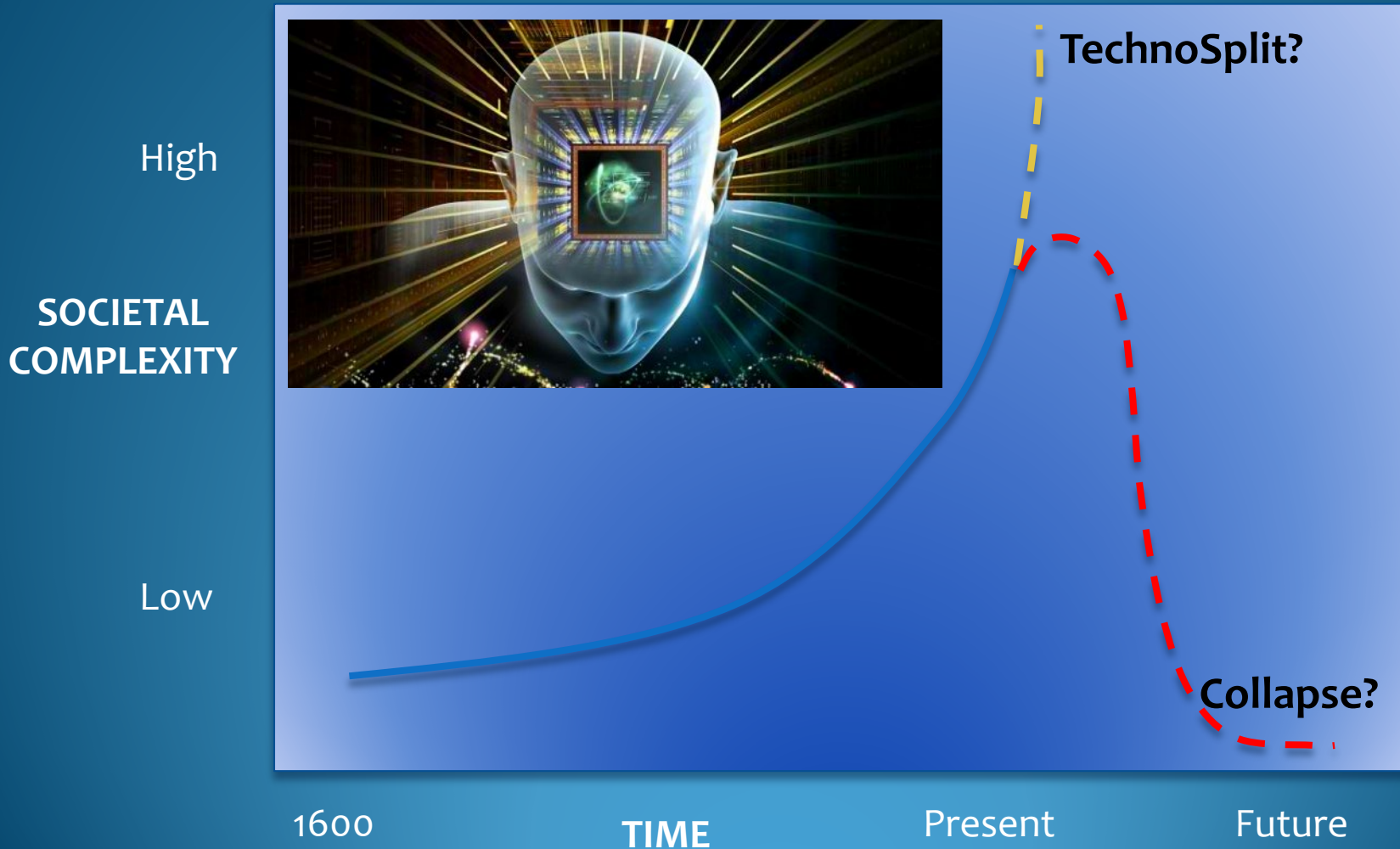
Future

Collapse?



Three Scenarios

Global Civilization Trajectory



Three Scenarios

Global Civilization Trajectory

High
SOCIETAL
COMPLEXITY

Low



Sustainable
Flourishing?

1600

TIME

Present

Future

For reflection

Has there been a time in your life when you became aware of implicit assumptions in your own worldview?

If so, what were they?

And how did they change?