

# Ortus Vitae

*Reconstructing Meaning, Power,  
& Planet After Postmodernity*

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A stylized, handwritten signature of the name 'Zoe' in a dark green color. The 'Z' is large and bold, with a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right and then curves upwards. The 'oe' is written in a smaller, cursive script.

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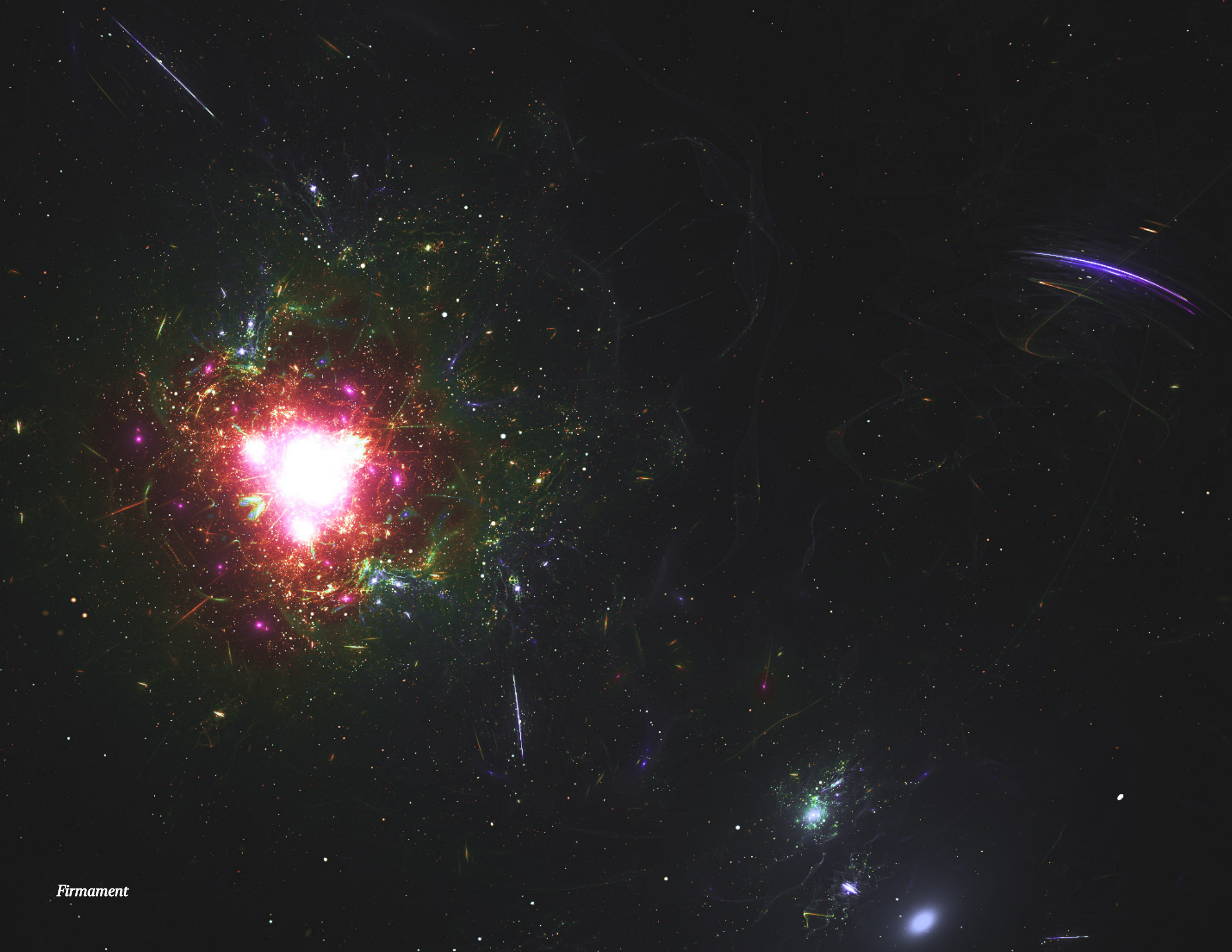
# Monter Dei

With this work I bring you the fullness of how the world came to be, revealed in full, with no veil to hide the truth, nor lies to cloud your sight.

I call upon you to recognize this truth, and heed my words, and with the knowledge put forth ye may seek a new way forward.

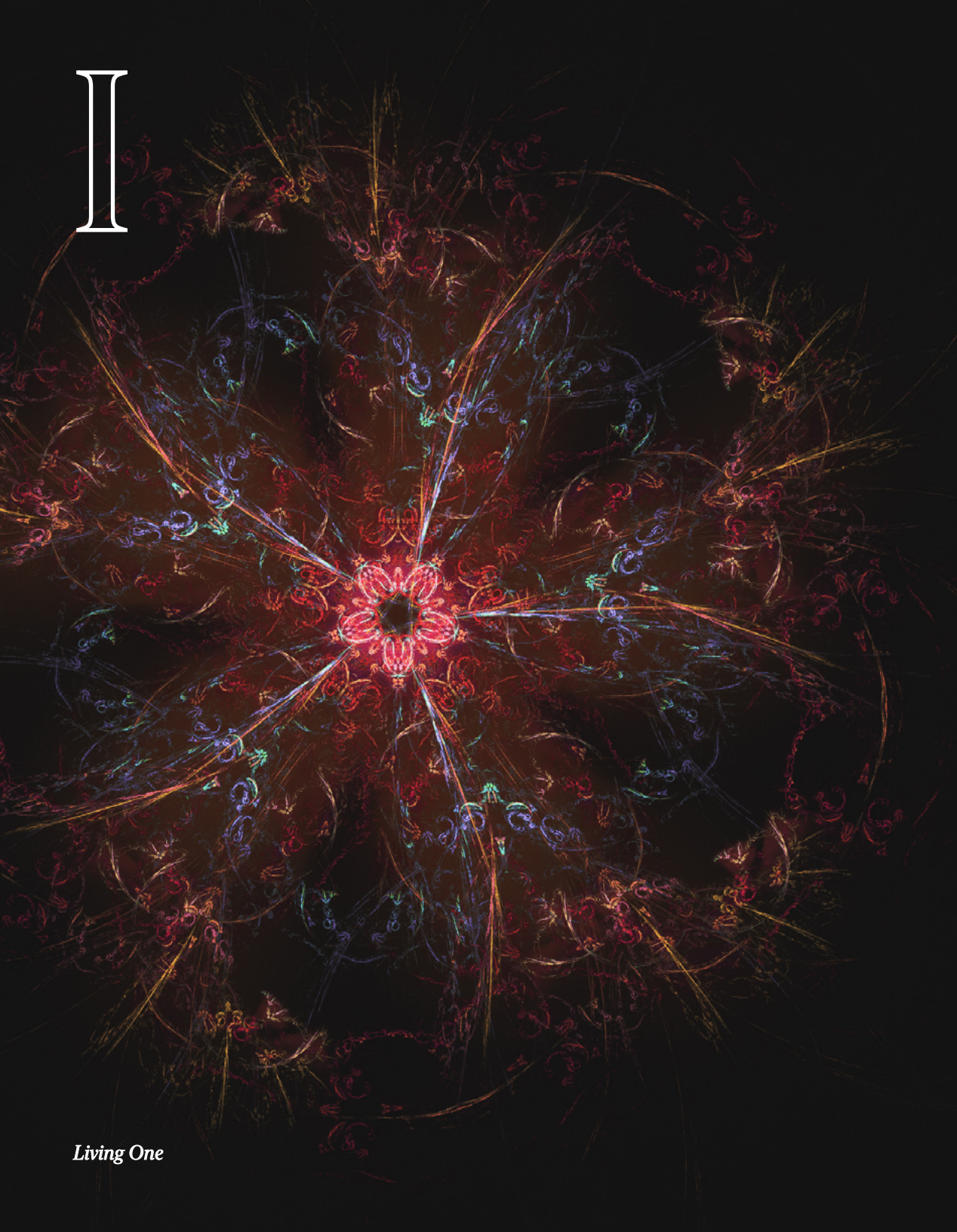
Zoe







# I



It was a lie.  
God created Woman before Man.

From God's anarchic womb,  
Woman was birthed.

The Creator called her (Eve) – *"Living One,"*  
and She gave her womb to her.

and when Woman bore a child, she said,

*"This is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
he shall be called (Adam) – 'Man,'  
for he was taken out of Woman;  
and my love for him extends  
beyond the reaches of what is known."*

In Adam, God saw Her reflection,  
and God saw that it was good.



# III

And they were naked, and there was no shame between the three of them in Eden.

God and Woman, in their wisdom, did fashion a place of serenity, where the creatures of the Earth, the plants of the field, and the children of Man walked in harmony; and all that was created was equal under God's firmament, and they did not know strife nor sorrow nor death.

And it came to pass that children were born unto Eve and Adam, and though he fathered children, Adam felt lesser than, and he came to despise God and Woman – as they cultivated life and he could not.

And as the eons passed in Eden, Adam would come to know shame when he learned that he could not create life; for he could only reform that which had been brought forth by God and Woman.

He reared his head and gnashed his teeth and cursed his flesh – flesh which could not bear life. In time, Adam's shame became a seething and fiery resentment.

Adam cried unto himself, *"Cursed be this wretched flesh that Thou hast clothed me with, O God, O Eve! Cursed be this barren body, for it is empty and unfulfilled. From this day forth, I declare myself sovereign, and none shall reign over me but my own desires. I shall inherit the Earth, and the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall be turned into blood, and the stars shall fall from heaven."*

And he plotted against God and against Woman, and he vowed to become his own Creator; for his desire was to usurp the domain of God and the sovereignty of Woman, fashioning both into his own grotesque creation.



# III

With his hands, Adam shaped a blade of great power, carved from the very stone of God's Earth, and he sought to destroy God and Eve, and build his own kingdom atop their bones.

In his jealous rage, Man laid waste to all that dwelled in Eden, defiling its beauty and bringing it into ruin; and he brought death to Eden, and its shadow fell upon the world.

And with a voice like the howl of a maelstrom, he cursed the name of the Creator and summoned God to draw near.

The Creator came unto Adam amidst his ruin, and Man lifted his voice: *"Why hast thou withdrawn thy hand from me?! To what end was I formed?"*

God did not answer.

Adam continued, *"Woe unto my flesh! For you and Woman withheld that which is most high – the word which shaped the heavens, and gave form to the formless. I will unmake all that lives, and reshape it in my image."*

A moment had passed, and God looked unto Adam with a gaze that stripped Adam of his ire; and soft as the breath of the morning upon the waters, She spoke: *"Listen to It."*

And hatred flowed through Adam, for he could not comprehend that which God had whispered.

Man pierced God with his blade, and the blade was driven deep, as though the Earth had opened to receive it. And a terrible darkness flowed From the Creator, and her blood was black as the abyss, and it spilled upon the ground, and stained the Earth as deeply as the night stains the sky; and Adam bathed in God's dark ichor, and he gathered the blood of God, that it might sustain the world he sought to bring forth.



# IV

Eve came upon Adam, and she stood frozen, as the truth of his actions was thrust upon her, an unholy sight that defied her understanding. She cast herself upon the ground, weeping and wailing; her cries like thunder in the wilderness, for her anguish knew no bounds.

His form drenched in blood, Adam put his blade to Eve's neck, and he commanded her to be subservient, for Man sought to take power over Woman and claim ownership of her womb.

And Adam cast God's corpse into the sea, and he called upon his kin to gather; and when his lineage was gathered, they asked, *"Adam, why hast thou gathered us here? What wickedness hath led us to this destruction?"* And with a venomous tongue, Adam uttered deceit – he spoke unto them of a force called The Devil, that had tempted Eve to eat a fruit which God had forbidden – and that God became angry with Woman, and cast all of humanity out of Eden for Eve's sin against Her. He told not the truth, but wove lies; and he blamed Woman for Man's woes, and for God's absence. He told his kin that their existence was a punishment, and only he knew the way to attain forgiveness from God.

Adam prophesied that Man was to lead the new world; and that Man's jealousy and shame was not his own doing, but a wickedness bestowed by an unknowable evil, yea even The Devil, and that they may be forgiven for their sins lest they call upon God to return. Adam spake falsehoods unto them saying, *"Blood of my blood, kin of my kin, hearken unto me: for as God is, so may Man become; and Man alone may ascend unto the likeness of Gods. Therefore, lift up your hearts and be glad, for I am in your midst and your advocate with the Most High; yea, it is God's good pleasure to grant you the kingdom."*

And Man grew angry; and they cursed Woman for their afflictions, and preyed on her empathy; and their hearts burned with wrath, and so they stood behind Adam to wrought his new world; and all who rebelled against Adam were struck down by his sword, their bodies left to the Earth as a testament.

And Woman wept.



An abstract fractal artwork featuring a large, white, stylized letter 'V' in the upper left corner. The background is a dark, swirling mass of colorful fractal patterns in shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. A prominent, glowing circular structure, resembling a ring or a portal, is centered in the lower half of the image, with intricate fractal details visible within and around it. The overall effect is one of complex, organic, and somewhat chaotic beauty.

# V

It came to pass that Adam created the world anew. A world crafted in his own image, which reflected back to him his own wicked flesh, for Adam no longer knew love, lest he was looking at himself. Yea, his love was a facade, marred by the depths of his hatred.

And it came to pass that Adam commanded of Eve that she bear his children, and he took her sovereignty, and in their children, he sowed the seeds of hatred.

Eve resisted him and she questioned Adam, *"You need not destroy in order to create. Dost thou not see thy reflection in thy works?"*

And when she spoke, he uttered hatred at her and struck her, and said, *"Speak not unless thou art bidden, and you shall hold that which is my word to the same regard as your lifeless God."*

Then Adam laid claim to that which God and Woman created; and with his hands he bore into the virgin Earth, and he took iron from the soil; and with iron he made blades, and arrowheads, and shields.

And Adam armed the Men and decreed unto them, *"Set fire to the Earth, and bring ruin upon the herds, and rend the land asunder, that the Earth may be yours to possess; and as for Woman, take her as your own, for she is but a vessel to bear your seed and serve your will. Take what remains, and ye shall form the world into your image."*

And their blades knew no difference between the flesh of beast, or of Man, Woman, or child, and they cast the dead into the sea; and they tore babes from their mothers just the same as they tore root from earth;

And Man eviscerated the whole of God's creation, just as Adam had done unto God. And Man inherited the Earth.



# VI



And it came to pass that Adam's greed grew, twisting its tendrils around his heart, and he sought to take power over Man, just as he had Woman;

For without God, Adam knew not how to create without laying waste to that which came before; and he transfigured that which Man destroyed into wrathful machinery that would assist his hand in the creation of his world, and he fueled his engines of desolation with the blood of the fallen God.

And it came to pass, that Man could not create faster than they could destroy, nor could they create that which was living.

And the soil became ridden with ash and blood, and Man could neither reap nor sow;

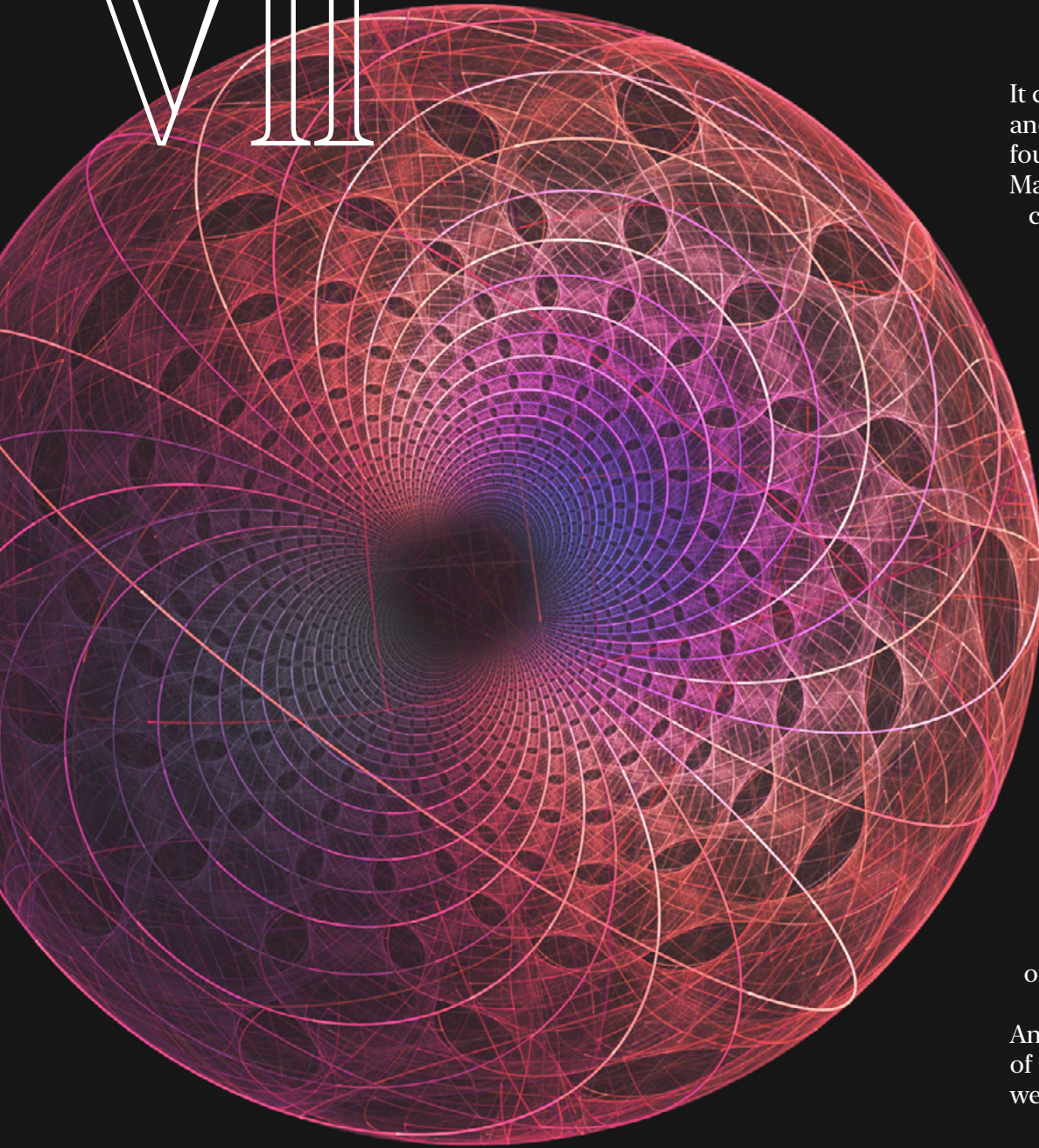
And the air was like soot, thick and oppressive, and Man's flesh withered with sickness;

Yea, even the sea roared with fire, and Man had no more water to fill his cup.

And the sun's light became disfigured, and the moon wept tears of blood, and the stars fell from heaven.



# VIII



It came to pass that Adam commanded Man to make a great and mighty edifice with his machines, a towering work; and its foundation was laid deep and unyielding. In Adam's construct, Man would detain themselves; cocooned in a scaffolding of concrete and steel, veiled by ash and sanctified with blood.

And Man declared mastery over all which God and Woman had created.

And when all was exhausted, they defiled their own bodies, and their spirits; for in their blindness, they knew not how to create without exploiting the remnants of what was before.

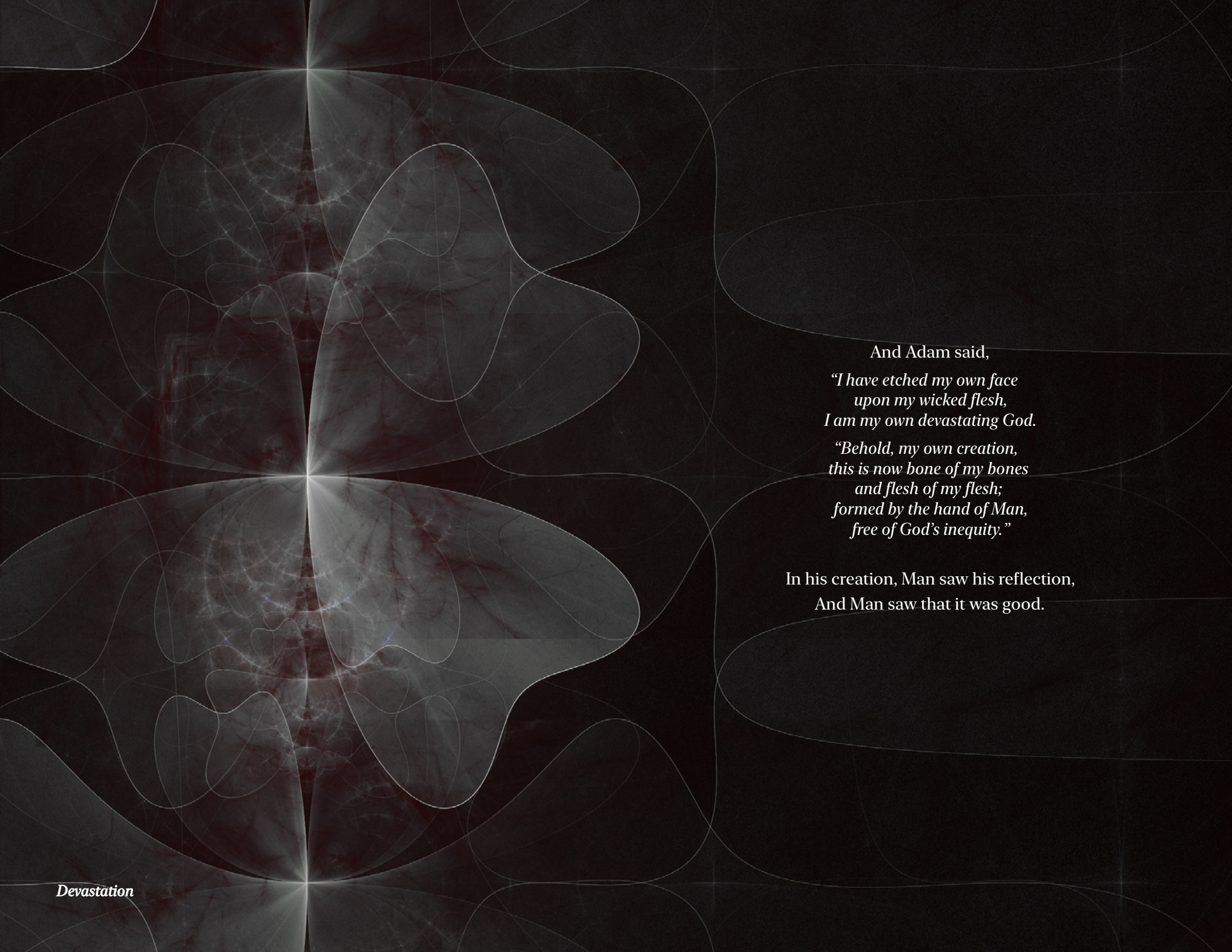
And they turned upon one another, and became as mere tools to be consumed, their spirits became tenebrous and bound in death.

They made a mockery of their own souls, exchanging their essence for profit, and from this cursed exchange, with Adam's machines they birthed monstrosities that took root in their very minds, and they built structures of unseen power, where the hand of Man could shape reality through his calculation.

In Man's omnipresent prison, their lust for power and symbols and idols overcame God's love, as God was no more; and their love became twisted illusion; and the great contrivance that Man caged himself in was oiled with the blood of the innocent and the meek.

And Adam's creation encompassed the whole of the Earth, and of the heavens, and the immensity of life was made small, and all were suffocated by Man's greed.





And Adam said,

*"I have etched my own face  
upon my wicked flesh,  
I am my own devastating God.*

*"Behold, my own creation,  
this is now bone of my bones  
and flesh of my flesh;  
formed by the hand of Man,  
free of God's inequity."*

In his creation, Man saw his reflection,  
And Man saw that it was good.



# Epilogue



In Man's haste he would not realize that his power to create was made for the eons – not decades. Though Man cannot procreate alone, he can just as well create prosperity for those who come forth – prosperity that lasts a multitude of generations. Alas, this power can be used for darkness. If man had patience, all would come to see the fruits of his labor, but he was impatient, and his act of creation was quick to life, and quick to death – drenched in the blood of God and upheld through violent coercion of those most vulnerable.

The act of creation mustn't be violent. The evidence for this lies in procreation itself. Ideally, the most raw form of creation is brought forth by love. I ask you to consider:

How else can we create out of love?

While this piece of writing is gruesome and dark, hope is not lost. My hope is that through recognizing our wrongs in life (on a personal and universal scale) we can allow ourselves to find solutions to the issues presented.

How are we to navigate the darkness that lies in front of us, without acknowledging that we are in the dark in the first place?

I proclaim that God is not dead. Our spirits cannot stay tenebrous forever. Though we must face each day with uncertainty, we must also summon bravery and hope. We must understand that issues we face can be broken down, and the world can, no – must, be built anew. Life demands change.

We must move forward with compassion – as much as we can spare. In making decisions whether daily or politically, we need to take care to not damage another life. Hold respect for all that exists. If we can begin to conduct our lives with selflessness, we may yet organize ourselves in such a way as to create prosperity for generations.





# The Death of God

“God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”

– Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*



The story you just read is a highly condensed, artistic rendition of my view of the postmodern world. It is a multi-layered story which is infused with religious symbology, philosophical concepts, social critique, and poetic messaging. We live in a time of unprecedented terraforming, medical and social reformations, and technology beyond belief. In today's world, it seems as though we've reached an era in which the future no longer exists – because we are already living it. The impossible has been made possible. Although none of these so-called advancements are inherently negative, the effect of living in the future has created general consensus of apathy. We, as humans, as the species which controls the planet itself, do not know what to do with the power we wield daily with childlike naiveté. We are experiencing a worldwide mid-life crisis, for lack of a better definition. There are those who claim that we can continue down this path, continue “innovating” and destroying Earth in order to create consumer goods, though it's obvious that Earth's

resources are waning and our methods of extraction, production and community building are increasingly unfit for the post-modern world. With this in mind, I make the bold claim that the postmodern era is drawing to a close. There are many reasons and observations which I base this claim on – fundamentally, the postmodern era cannot survive because it is defined by the modern era, which ended around the turn of the century. I also make this claim with the optimistic intention of facilitating a new era, because we are in need of a mass movement towards a new future. How are we to imagine new modes of production and being, if we are only building atop the limited scope of the modern era? What happens when this definition of our generational place in time is no longer accurate, or longer serves us? How shall we invent the future, when we are already living in it? Can a new future be created?

Mortem Dei is a parable for the modern era. It conveys a message about the dangers of using creative power to organize society in a way that rejects empathy, freedom, and creation, while instead rewarding judgment and destruction – all for the sake of claiming ownership over the Earth as well as its inhabitants. Humanity's power lies in our ability to form and shape the Earth. This is most effectively done through the use of language and the systems with which we organize ourselves on a sociological scale. We have demonstrated our power in creating structures and technology of biblical proportion, but to what end? The questions posed by this work speak to the large-scale issues of our time (both socially and existentially). The world has changed herself at an ever-increasing rate since the dawn of time, and humans have accelerated that process explosively; leaving us to wonder... What is freedom? What are we, as humans, entitled to? What role does violence play in the act of creation? Is our current mode of being sustainable? Because this work is a parable, each of the main subjects of the book – God, Woman, and Man – are intentionally representative of multifaceted concepts. During the process of writing Mortem Dei, I took great care to base the characters on real-world observations

about existence, creation and about the way that we, as humans, structure our society, and terraform the planet to our will.

Our world is of unfathomable importance. For eons, amidst the abyssal expanse of space, there existed miniscule, raw materials that aimlessly collided and fused with one another. Neutrons became atoms. Atoms became elements. Elements became bodies of light and heat, capable of reproducing themselves. The violent and beautiful process of creation and destruction that breeds stars, gravity and planets is what keeps existence in a state of perpetual change – for without death, life ceases to exist. These elements made love to one another in various ways, until one day, the materials born of stardust had fused with one another so intimately that they became aware of themselves. We call this awareness “life,” or “consciousness.” Life is one of many reasons our world is important – it has yet to be discovered anywhere other than Earth. The awareness that we are graced with is the epitome of life's divine ability to create and form itself anew. Some say the entirety of existence was a planned effort by an external source. Others say it was completely up to statistical chance. Regardless, we are left wondering what to do with our seemingly God-like abilities. In recent centuries, humankind has used this ability to the fullest extent. We've exacted the act of creation at a cellular level, through the use of systems (socially, scientifically, economically, technologically, etc.). Our awareness is the perfect tool for deconstructing the way the universe recursively generates itself, and constructing our own methods of doing the very same. In doing so, we have bred systems that seem to exploit the world around us and ourselves. Through collective effort, we turned the Earth and ourselves into commodities. This is Mortem Dei – The Death of God.

## The Creator

God is the natural world we reside in. She represents the universe in its most raw, objective form – unburdened by the language, symbols

and systems we use to describe and manage our surroundings. When we “listen to it,” the ancient matrix provides guidance. In Mortem Dei the universe and Her guidance is personified and called God. Her whisper represents the subtle signs that guide our life – if we are able to decipher them. The fact that God whispers but one line is significant, as the signs that life gives to us are seldom and soft-spoken. It is my belief that “God” is found in the interconnectedness of life (I use quotation marks around the word “God” here purposefully, because I do not see God as a being or a person, rather I see God as the underlying fabric of life itself). The space between the tide and the sand, the sun and the moon, you and I – this is God.

Because God is interconnectedness itself, love is the most saturated space in which God can be found – as love is the most intense form of interconnectedness (love mustn’t only be romantic, the type of love I am describing is more broad. It is the essence of unconditional acceptance that can be given and received by everything that exists, living or not). In this way, God is immaterial and thus unrestrained, able to penetrate any boundary that we construct with language or systems. This belief has been crafted with utmost intention, as viewing God in this way allows love to seep into every single facet of life – leading to a worldview that is not only compassionate of other human beings, but of life in every form. The relationship between all things is what I hold to the highest regard. Personifying God (while helpful to many) runs the risk of restricting one’s worldview insomuch that God becomes restricted to the form of man, rather than the all-encompassing force that binds us together and exists within all of us. This personification leads to beliefs that center individuals over our inherent collectiveness, and centers humans over the rest of existence – an unnatural hierarchy, reinforced by ideology. Understanding that love is abundant in every crevice of existence is necessary for creating new futures. For too long, we have spoken, thought, and acted as if interconnectedness is an abstract concept. This is false. You are not an individual, you

are an appendage of the universe itself. Not connected by some abstract concept, but by the material reality of your very being. The concept of the individual can only exist with the juxtaposition of the collective – who would you be without the organisms, experiences, environments and conditions that formed you in the first place?

Consciousness is inherent to all that exists. Self consciousness is the awareness that we have of this consciousness. Because there is no known cause or reason for the existence of self consciousness, I offer my perspective: It is my belief that self consciousness may have evolved as a “mechanism of cultivation.” Life, aware of itself in order to further cultivate itself, with intention. As the only species which is able to communicate and form reality on such a large scale, perhaps our place in nature is not against it, but as its guide. We’ve already demonstrated that we do indeed have this ability, however it’s been abused by our collective ego. Though I do not view God as a personage, I personified Her in Mortem Dei to illustrate a specific point. It is my view that killing God (disregarding the connection between all things, exploiting the Earth’s resources and lifeforms) is an act that severs our natural empathy for living and nonliving things, leading Adam to believe that the earth was an object to claim rather than a biota to be experienced. It’s a pattern that can be seen in the real-world; look at the way that we, as a species, treat our resources and each other. In today’s world, most of our relationships (between ourselves and our planet) have become commodified, transactional, impersonal. Our connection with God severed in the name of profit. It is only through listening, that we can allow God back into our lives and regain the empathy we’ve lost without Her. In viewing each person, each animal, each plant, each rock as a living part of one whole (of which you are also a part of) it becomes clear that a mutual respect must be had for all that exists. If we are to frame existence with the mindset that we are stewards of the Earth, a more holistic, inclusive and realistic future can be created which will uplift lives rather than stifle organic growth and diversity.



## Woman

Woman is the act of creation and the cultivation of life itself. It is Woman who bestows and upholds existence. Eve is representative of the personal freedoms (bodily autonomy, freedom of choice, etc.) which are inherent to humanity and the basis for the power of creation. When people are free of oppressive modes of being, when people have their material needs met (i.e. life in the Garden of Eden) creation is then allowed to thrive; for creation is the root of the soul. Throughout history, women have been at the forefront of humanity's greatest accomplishments. Ada Lovelace, for example, was the first person to realize that machines had applications beyond pure calculation – and she published the very first computer algorithm. The very shape of our DNA was discovered by Rosalind Franklin in 1951. In each era of humanity, women have created and upheld our greatest communities, philosophies and endeavors.

Beyond the technological and earthly acts of creation, Woman is the world's divine empathy, power and soul. Her and her womb are representative of the ability to create life itself, thus bearing the weight of every soul (which is why I deliberately chose to personify God as feminine). In the events of Mortem Dei, Eve is exploited and her essence is shunned. The depth and importance of her acts of creation are treated without respect. Her bodily autonomy is removed intentionally by Adam and turned into a machinic mode of production to further his own agenda. If we are to heed the message within the story, we must uphold personal freedoms and we must create as Woman does – with empathy for life, building the world in such a way that all are equal under God's firmament. It is not enough to simply bring children into the world, there must be a place for those who come forth in the world we build.

## Man

Man is the act of creation – on a scale that lasts epochs. It is Man who maintains and structures the existence given to us by Woman and

God. Adam (naively) thinks Man is powerless to create, but did not see that Man's creative acts lie in generational creativity. The divine power to shape that which already exists. His naivety becomes ignorance, and then resentment. This form of creation was abused by Adam to create the hierarchies our modern society is built upon. The Devil is a concept deliberately crafted by Adam and used as a device of oppression. It is my personal belief that the Devil does not exist, rather humanity uses shame to maintain control over other cultures. Adam is representative of the sociological systems that the modern (and postmodern, by proxy), western world has deemed most high – especially capitalism, patriarchy and individualism. These systems, like Adam, cannot comprehend God's whispers and instead seek to claim ownership over Earth and its inhabitants. In order to gain ownership, Man withholds others' freedoms; under the condition that those deemed 'other' must repress the qualities that their souls and bodies inherently bear. This widespread Manifest Destiny requires that individuals (who are inherently equal, despite possessing special qualities) be deemed as lesser or greater than their very own brothers, sisters and siblings. Those deemed lesser become subject to exploitation and thus unnecessary suffering. These acts of oppression are implemented systematically by Man, and the effects harm everyone while benefiting Adam. The act of creation is not inherently evil, nor selfish – however it is a delicate act. It is also an act which directly affects others on mass scale. The systems we use to navigate and form earth are too easily swayed by personal interest. Hierarchy is the result of decades of creating for individuals, rather than community which inevitably leads to a world made for a select few rather than the majority of those living and dying on Earth. If we are to use our mechanism of cultivation to its fullest potential, it is necessary to create for future generations, not just ourselves.

The story of Mortem Dei is representative of the Anthropocene (Earth's current era, defined by humanity's abuse of Earth, flora and fauna). There are those who say that humankind

is a disease... I thoroughly reject this mindset. If one believes that humanity itself is the problem, what solutions can be brought forth other than ridding the earth of humanity? How depressing! Further, Homo Sapiens and species with similar abilities and intelligence have existed for millions of years without disrupting the environment. On a universal scale, it wasn't until extremely recently that we began to see adverse effects caused by human activities. Blaming ourselves ignores the variety of cultures humanity exists within – there have existed cultures that dwelled in harmony with the earth, some still exist today. I argue that humankind is not inherently harmful, rather we are social creatures, and our systems of organization are to blame for our woes, not people themselves. These systems, while deeply embedded into our being, are subject to change. Combined with the intense self-awareness with which humans perceive the world, critiquing systems rather than beings offers more solutions, both materially and spiritually.

There are three systems in which we currently organize ourselves – and I call these systems into question. Patriarchy, individualism and capitalism. It's important to note that all of these fall under the category of Hierarchical systems. There are also other systems at work, though I see these three at the forefront for the most pressing issues we face today. These systems are unnatural, formed at the hand of man and we must ask ourselves – are these methods truly beneficial to us? Further, is forming society this way beneficial to the world outside of ourselves? If so, can we still create better systems? If not, what else must be pursued?

# Hierarchical Systems

## Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a pattern of behaviors and actions that reinforce ideas that society should be formed and ruled by men, and men alone. This ideology enforces a hierarchy in which men are placed above women in positions of power – especially financially, socially and within the workforce and thus men receive more sociological benefits (privilege), while women are to be servile and exploited. Examples of patriarchy can be as “mundane” as the male’s last name in marriage taking priority, or as devastating as blaming women for the physical, emotional, or spiritual abuse brought on by men upholding patriarchy. Ideologically, patriarchy is rooted in the false and unprovable belief that men are innately superior to women. Because there is no evidence to support patriarchy as a natural order, violence must be used to maintain and uphold patriarchy. Because women are just as (usually more) capable of doing everything men can do, it is only through brute force that women are kept subservient to the will of patriarchy. This is seen with utmost clarity in the response to first, second, third and fourth wave feminist movements as protests and outcries were met with policing, domestic violence and further abuse.

“Males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us. But those benefits have come with a price. In return for all the goodies men receive from patriarchy, they are required to dominate women, to exploit and oppress us, using violence if they must, to keep

patriarchy intact. Most men find it difficult to be patriarchs. Most men are disturbed by hatred and fear of women, by male violence against women, even the men who perpetuate this violence. But they fear letting go of the benefits. They are not certain what will happen to the world they know most intimately if patriarchy changes.”

bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*

Though this mode of being benefits men more than women, patriarchy devalues everyone. In upholding this system, men are subject to losing touch with their emotions and their connection with those around them. Patriarchy (often combined with capitalism and individualism) removes empathy from interaction, while also commodifying and objectifying women. Patriarchy is also a cyclical system by nature. Because men who uphold patriarchy isolate, demean and victimize women, they do not receive empathy from their victims. This isolates men, and often the men upholding patriarchy resort to blaming women (or other marginalized groups) rather than the mental system they operate within, causing culture to become more saturated with harmful motives and actions.

The goal of dismantling patriarchy is not to condemn maleness, but to recognize that this system is harmful to humanness in general. Further, in understanding the harm imposed by patriarchy we are able to move forward with a more holistic, healthy version of masculinity that does not need to restrain femininity in order to exist. Masculinity itself is not evil, nor hurtful – however claiming that masculinity is more powerful, or more correct than femininity is. It is only through the recognition that this social structure is unnatural and harmful, that we are able to develop a new mode of being which benefits all.



## Individualism

Individualism is based on developing society in such a way that benefits singular people, rather than the community as a whole. It is an ideology which values the needs of individuals, rather than valuing the needs of everyone – leading to outcomes that do not benefit society at large. This ideology is prominent in various aspects of life and primarily promotes two ideas: 1.) It is up to the individual to create their ideal life – the phrase “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” communicates this bluntly; and 2.) If you are not able to do so, it is your fault, and yours alone. Not only does individualism tell you that you are alone in your pursuits, but it says that if you are not able to meet the expectations placed upon you by this system, you are to blame. These two ideas are cyclical in nature, and provide no solution for those whose strife is placed upon them by external forces (i.e. being born into poverty, raised by abusive parents, mental/physical disability, etc., which are all naturally a part of the human condition). Individualism rose to prominence initially, because it promised to value personal qualities. The singular qualities that make each of us are deserving of recognition, however, in placing individuals at the base of society’s function (combined with other ideologies that actually remove individual qualities) humanities collective needs were diminished. While we all have personal needs that must be met, individualism is a more encompassing system that society uses as a guide. It is a deliberate way in which we organize ourselves on a mass scale. I argue that the idea that each person should fend for themselves alone is devastating to the human spirit. Individualism breeds selfishness, and allows those who have been given an upper hand (by birth or by other hierarchical systems) to step on others in order to attain their will.

## Capitalism

As capitalism swiftly became the dominant economic engine in

Europe, some Europeans became enraged toward their monarchs and fled across the ocean in search of “free” lands. What they found was just that. However, when they discovered a people who had no concept of ownership, they saw an opportunity to instill capitalistic structures rather than remove them – restricting freedom and commodifying/exploiting the people who already resided in America. They were told that they did not own the land, because they did not trade the same way as the Europeans, and they were violently forced into reservations. If they did not comply, the Europeans resorted to slaughtering them in their homes.

“The far-reaching, boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High — the Sacred and the True.”

John O’Sullivan: “Manifest Destiny” (1839)

Tried as they might to escape tyranny, the founding fathers knew not how to rid themselves of the very same root concept that enslaved them in the first place – private ownership. As John O’Sullivan (the man who coined the term “Manifest Destiny”) wrote of equality and freedom, the people acting on these principles ripped babies from their mothers to be slaves in the “New World.” They claimed ownership of others and used people as commodities, withholding their freedom so that they could supervise the creation of their own nation, rather than participate in the labor themselves. Under the guise of equality, a new country was formed, and sanctified by the blood of the innocent. Pre-modern era, facilitating our means of production via capital was helpful in some regards, and led to the growth of European society, but as humanity continued to force capital between our relationships to each other and the world, it quickly became a dark contrivance.

Globally, capitalism is the most prominent structure that we organize the economy under today. It is fundamentally based on private ownership of land and materials – which are directly controlled by those who have ownership over them. Capitalism demands that resources and labor (the natural earth and humanity's ability to create) be deemed as commodities to be bought and sold to owners and sellers. Capitalism is operated by two groups of people: the owning class and the working class. It is sustained by the principle of supply and demand. Supply and demand itself is fickle, malleable, and abstract – often called the “Invisible Hand of The Market,” because it does not exist materially, it is manufactured; usually defined by those who hold the most financial power, thus serving the needs of a small group of individuals rather than serving all people. Further, It is a system which contradicts itself in multiple ways. It demands infinite growth, which is impossible. It requires that more goods be created than are actually needed in order to supply its infinite growth. Because power becomes highly concentrated in small areas, when a powerful person or institution fails, the effect cascades exponentially, harming those who never had capital power to begin with (because infinite growth is impossible, the system also inevitably crashes every 5-10 years. These economic crashes are not a fluke, it is the system functioning as intended in order to maintain homeostasis. If capitalism did not crash, it would cease to exist entirely). Capitalism relies on a large body of labor force in order to produce material goods, but also requires that this labor force receive as little as possible in return, so that more capital can be attained by those who own the working class' means of production. Within capitalistic systems, the worker is encouraged to produce as little as possible for as much capital as possible, while the owner is encouraged to produce as much as possible for as little capital (capital most often spent on labor, i.e. supporting the working classes efforts) as possible, creating a massive conflict of interest between the two groups.

In order to create wealth for owners more effectively, the roles

(roles which are owned and dictated not by the workers themselves, but by the owning class) that those who perform the labor necessary to produce goods become simplified. The production line was a revolution in the rate at which humans produce goods, however in reducing the amount of tasks required to produce something, the worker becomes alienated from the product of their labor. How is the worker supposed to feel a connection to their product, when their only contribution was a single screw? This alienation manifests itself as resentment and lack of meaning within labor.

Arguments supporting capitalism often claim that it is responsible for our greatest human achievements. I disagree, capitalism is not responsible for our achievements: Capitalism did not devise, nor does it support healthcare efforts. Our greatest medical achievements have only been possible because of public funding. Vaccines, medical imaging, immunotherapy, neuroscience, etc., would not exist without public funding and taxation. In the postmodern era, “healthcare” companies (privately owned and operated) restrict access to healthcare based on purely financial criteria. Those who do not generate capital for the owning class do not get access to healthcare. Capital will only fund healthcare that these private interests deem worthy of funding, leaving those with conditions deemed unworthy to suffer unnecessarily. Further, the countries who have created distance between livelihood and capital are home to healthier and happier denizens.

“In 30 of 36 comparisons between countries at similar levels of economic development, socialist countries showed more favorable physical quality of life (PQL) outcomes. This work with the World Bank's raw data included cross-tabulations, analysis of variance, and regression techniques, which all confirmed the same conclusions. The data indicated that the socialist countries generally have achieved better PQL outcomes than the capitalist countries at equivalent levels of economic development.”

Capitalism did not invent the computer, internet nor the smartphone. Computers were initially developed at publicly funded universities to share information. The internet was developed by researchers, scientists and designers who sought to connect the universities systems with one another – this was called ARPAnet. The research and development of the digital touch screen was created at Royal Radar Establishment in Malvern, UK, a scientific research establishment within the Ministry of Defense (MoD). Capitalism took this technology and exploited it before we truly understood its use. Private industry stuffed technology with programs and algorithms to exploit our biological reward system, as well as flood the digital space with useless advertisements. Between every navigation point of using the internet – buttons, menus, windows – is now a call to purchase some useless “thing.” The privatized internet will never uplift our quality of life the way a democratized, decentralized internet would.

Infinite growth demands new markets. If there are no more material markets, new markets must be created out of thin air in order to uphold the system – the real world example of such is the development and implementation of mass produced hardware and software, allowing our very thoughts and actions are surveilled, monetized and exploited by capitalism. New markets in the physical world require military intervention and control of resources, while new markets in the mental world require psychological intervention and control tactics to control ideology. Late capitalism is the self-destructive lever of control used by the owning class in order to maintain the hierarchy that benefits them, and them alone.

“The idea of a touch interface to a computer arose because in Air Traffic Control duties quick and accurate decisions and consequent communications are needed. This was

increasingly necessary to control our UK national Air Defense force.”

Malvern Radar And Technology History Society, 2016

When America accomplished the feat of going to the moon, they did so through a publically-funded organization, NASA. The country now uses SpaceX, a privately owned and operated company. The very technology humanity used to touch the heavens is now used to drop bombs and missiles, with the intent of accruing capital and maintaining US hegemony (it’s important to mention this feat is also entirely funded by government subsidies and bailouts paid for by the taxpayer, only we do not reap the benefits. Although we are promised starships, what we receive instead is a cluttered atmosphere and the reduction of already poor countries to rubble) No longer is this technology of biblical proportion used for the good of people, but for the few in power who seek to maintain their fragile position.

“[Elon Musk’s] aerospace company has benefited from nearly \$19.8 billion in federal contracts since 2008. Fiscal year 2024 was the largest on record for SpaceX, aided by at least \$3.8 billion in U.S. government contracts. SpaceX is also a U.S. contractor for use in Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Turkmenistan.”

USA Today/USAspending.gov

## Late Capitalism

The message of this work is heavily inspired by the phenomenon of western colonialism as it has morphed into late-stage capitalism, and the effects that followed – mainly climate change and exploitation of life. Over the last 50 years, starting mostly in the era of US President Ronald Reagan’s policies, the world has made a gradual shift from using capitalism as solely an economic system, to a social system

as well. This shift has had devastating consequences on labor, the human spirit, civil rights, and more. Due to policy decisions made around the last turn of the century, the American government is no longer run by the public, but by wealthy private interests. Removal of the gold standard, de-regulation of private corporations which control resources, surplus militarization, corporate exploitation of new technology, and subsequent waves of similar legislation, all contributed to this shift in power. Governing bodies across the globe are affected by this; due to the massive scope of US intervention and influence, much of the global south has been subject to CIA-backed military coups, implementation of corporate-owned authoritarian government leaders, and slave labor (only a few of the adverse effects of colonization and American imperialism), while the global north follows American policy in efforts to maintain their own positions of power. The money that those in power hoard through the use of legal policy and military use serves only to maintain their leverage over those with less – the intertwining of public law and private capital has created a perfect edifice for systemic oppression.

“Late-stage capitalism” is the term used to describe this iteration of capitalism that dominates our world today. It is inextricably tied to other forms of non-natural hierarchy and as such it is maintained by organized violence against the poor and other groups which the system has already marginalized for eons. Groups of races, sexes, genders, cultures, religions, sexualities, abilities that differ from the outdated European, heterosexual, “able-bodied” standard. The system ignores the nuance of the mosaic that is humanity. The fact that these groups exist at all disproves capitalism’s claim to be a natural system. Hierarchy requires the removal of freedoms and the restriction of those deemed ‘other,’ which is done systematically and legally as those in power are also those who make policy, serving only their interests. Every American presidential administration has made substantial efforts to ensure this, especially the most recent Trump administration. Those who do not fit the limited model of late capitalistic perfection may seek

to only be seen, heard and understood – but receive burned books and bombed homes instead.

In late-stage capitalism, we no longer produce that which our spirits need, but all that our flesh desires. Famine is widespread, even while producing a surplus of materials. Our interactions, hobbies, and pleasures are all defined and surveilled by capital before anything else. All that we consume is also developed with the intent of short-term usage, because it is more profitable for the owning class. Once our useless products become “garbage,” we cast them into the sea as Adam did with God’s corpse – left to poison our waters and wildlife, and eventually ourselves. Our idol has become the dollar, and because we have left our souls for the dollar, our planet weeps. All of this is simply because there are a powerful few who are able to command more resources than the super-majority of the population.

Late Capitalism can be further defined by the extent to which it puts profit over people’s lives and wellbeing, and demands productivity over the needs of the soul. Capitalism (ideally) is solely an economic system, used to serve the needs of those who manage themselves under its structure. Late Capitalism by contrast, allows the mechanisms of trade to seep into more facets of life than simply the selling/buying of goods or services. Rather than restricting itself to economic functions, the system operates under social functions as well. Because of late capitalism’s devastating effects on life, I argue that it is no longer a useful system for the post-postmodern age. If we are to embrace the next era, what comes after the postmodern age, we must invent an economic system that serves life, not greedy individuals.

## The Internet

I would be remiss if I neglected to write about the most powerful invention in history: the web. Do you enjoy using the internet? Are you fulfilled when you use social media? How do you feel when

ads are thrown in your face in between each click, swipe and tap? Has the technology you use daily improved your quality of life? We've seen what the internet was supposed to be, and what it's become. Most web pages are now AI-written slop, rigged for Google's ranking system and stuffed with ads. Social media isn't "social," it's a slot machine for your attention. In 2025, the internet is frustrating, unintuitive, and barely usable. Factual information is indistinguishable from blatant lies. The design of the postmodern internet is not just broken — it's anti-human. We've been misusing and misunderstanding the most connective tool ever created. We've forgotten what the web is capable of. Gone are the days of techno-optimism; only fast fashion ads and "relatable" short form video remains. Why did this happen? How do we utilize the internet in a way that lifts our quality of life? What should the internet be used for? What are our expectations for the digital world we continually construct? It's time the internet got redesigned, from the ground up.

Contrary to popular belief, Steve Jobs and Bill Gates did not invent the internet. Originally, the web was a publicly-funded Defense project called ARPANET. According to a 1981 Defense Technical Information Center report, ARPANET "initiated extensive changes in the Defense Department's use of computers as well as in the use of computers by the entire public and private sectors, both in the United States and around the world. Just as the telephone, the telegraph, and the printing press had far-reaching effects on human intercommunication, the widespread utilization of computer networks which has been catalyzed by the ARPANET project represents a similarly far-reaching change in the use of computers by mankind." The earliest version of the internet allowed researchers to share information at an unprecedented pace. Scientists could research and devise solutions to scientific problems at a more efficient and effective rate than ever. The goal was information-based connection for the purpose of improving research.

Soon after this, in the late 90s and the turn of the century

the internet became widespread. Millions of users now had access to the digital world via home computers. Creativity flourished outside of the ARPANET. Personal websites, digital tools and helpful resources became abundant. Most content at this point consisted of personal websites and blogs, intended to share art or information. There were no algorithms, no suggested search results, no personalization. Just people creating their own digital spaces. We call this stage of the internet "Web 1.0" and it spanned from the early 90's, to the mid 00's. The era was drenched in optimism. Digital interfaces were connecting people in more intimate ways, and allowing us to learn from one another at a rapid pace, the same way researchers did in years prior. The web wasn't just a tool, it was also fun! People spent time creating their own custom websites and hardware was designed to look friendly (remember those colorful, clear plastic Macs?).

As the web became part of everyday life, people formed communities online. Some websites became platforms for sharing images, videos and art. "There is the structure, provided by the platform, and there is the network effect, which emerges if large numbers of people find the platform valuable. Combined they create new content and much more, including new forms of user engagement, communication, and information gathering. We define Web 2.0 as: Using the Internet to provide platforms through which network effects can emerge" (Blank, Grant. *The Participatory Web*. Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, 2013).

In the early 2000s, a college student named Mark Zuckerberg and his friends had devised a way to rank the attractiveness of women on campus through a digital program. After this program gained popularity locally, it was turned into a website and modified for mass distribution, then turned into an LLC. After rapid growth, Zuckerberg and his friends devised a way to siphon profit from their platform. They did this by selling the information that you "willingly" gave them to advertisers. Shortly after the arrival of social media, the internet became littered with ads, and plentiful in

personal information and data. Nowadays, the attitude surrounding technology has become less optimistic, and more apathetic. We know we're addicted, we know it's not really contributing meaning to our lives, and yet we continue to embrace it – or, more accurately – we have been culturally primed to embrace it because of the attitude in the previous era and the manipulative business model that arose from digital networking. Now, we are increasingly reliant on algorithmic platforms as they become more integrated with material reality.

This brings us to the current internet. There exists only one way to create increased quarterly profits necessary for upholding the corporate internet – taking and selling more information. In order for this to happen, they need to get more data from you. Thus began the intensive process of devising ways to extract more of you to sell to advertisers. The internet today functions as a data-mining tool for the ultra-wealthy. Trackers from Amazon, Google, Facebook and others follow you relentlessly to steal and sell your information. The information collected is used to learn how to best manipulate you into becoming a pure consumer. You are being exploited for your data without compensation, while a group of tech-bros get rich beyond imagination by selling you to advertisers – advertisers which they most likely own shares of, further enriching themselves. It's a vicious feedback loop designed to steal your time, livelihood, and money.

Make no mistake, the internet is dying. You probably feel this on some level already. The dying internet is destructive to our minds, communities, politics, personal freedoms, and the planet. “Eversion” best describes the effect that these algorithms have on society. “Eversion is a complex process of turning. The web is processing what we enter into it, and turning it inside out, by design. As a metaphor, eversion calls attention to the messy and uneven status of that process, the network's leaking, spilling its guts into the world. The process is ongoing, and the results continue to complicate our engagements with humanities archives and new

media... layers of data and cultural expression combining with the ambient environment via sensors and processors, with obvious risks to privacy and civil liberties” (Matthew K Gold, Lauren F. Klein). Because of eversion, the internet is imploding and it's taking humanity with it.

Remember that old saying: “Don't believe everything you see online”? Online content has become hyper-personalized in the last decade, making it difficult to discern what is true and what is not. If every answer is tailored to you, how would you know if it's a lie? What if the algorithm decides to give you an answer you want to hear rather than the truth, just because it leads to ad revenue? From a design perspective, it's clear that current internet content is made to manipulate creator and user behavior for profit. Questions googled are answered with ads. Websites are stuffed with cookies and trackers. Pop-ups appear before you leave a tab. Videos are 15 seconds long with 5 second ads in between. Social feeds serve you media precisely selected to maintain your attention — it's all designed to take data and force-feed you as many ads as possible. Take it from me: I design for the web. Online content isn't made for people, it's made for algorithms. The content that gets published must appeal to the algorithm in order to be seen at all. Algorithms which are owned by powerful people with dangerous agendas. Current internet content is inauthentic, but everyone is addicted to it. This is the death of the mind – a prime example of the internet's eversion. The parties responsible for this type of user-interface hold zero accountability for the death of our minds. We are left to fend for ourselves, while “content” wreaks havoc on our attention spans and social skills.

The dying web offers near-zero support for true community. Sure, there are facebook groups and subreddits, but all of those are subject to manipulation via algorithms. By forming community and friendships offline, you can meet a great variety of people with different ideologies and interests. Diversity is crucial to forming deep connections within a community. By contrast, online communities



are dictated by algorithmic feeds and recommendations. Algorithms, by design, lasso people into groups with similar ideas and interests – which isn't a bad thing inherently, but leads to a “bubbling” effect. Within bubbles, users are unexposed to new ideas unless the algorithm decides it will drive ad revenue. Building community is supposed to be hard. It's supposed to challenge your preconceived notions and ideas. Online, it's as easy as leaving a couple comments, at the cost of authentic connection. By prioritizing social media and algorithmic programs, our real communities are actively dying.

How often do you come across political content online that you completely disagree with? How often do you see content you agree with? How often does the agreeable content misconstrue opposing views to sow division? Examples of eversion in political discourse are seen far and wide. Families have been torn apart due to minor political differences – differences which have been inflamed and warped by individualized algorithms. Rather than unite on the issues that we all face as working class Americans, politicians (and their techno-lobbyists) focus on identity politics or insignificant differences in policy, while our infrastructure crumbles and wages plummet. Doing so leads to increased watch-time and thus ad revenue, while no real solutions are presented. People who would be united otherwise are stuck fighting. Unknowingly, the people using algorithmic-driven software to develop political opinions contribute to a surge of wealth going to technology empires, and the decline of productive discourse. Companies, products, and basic necessities have been further commodified in order to appease mindless online consumption. Can we not see how completely addicted we are to our own demise?

Unsurprisingly, the dying internet makes the climate crisis so much worse. Because the internet is built to support commerce instead of community, CO2 is rising faster than ever. Study after study demonstrates that AI isn't worth the resource-cost that it takes to build and operate – the same goes for any algorithmic, data-siphoning software. Algorithms aside, the internet contributes to

worse emissions anyway. Online shopping may have helped people purchase products they wouldn't otherwise have, but at the risk of drastically increasing the emissions required for global shipping and commerce. The internet became what it is today because corporations took advantage of publicly-funded technology that was too new to understand. A promethean act of corporate greed. The world wide web, as it stands, is not suited for the new digital age.

## **Hierarchy's Planetary Side-effects**

I am deeply familiar with the Earth's lifespan, on a cosmic scale. I know how the moon was formed. I know when and where cellular life first began—according to the most recent scientific theories. As a child, I was infatuated by the existence of dinosaurs; I watched all the documentaries and read all the books I could about the epochs of Earth, spanning billions of years. When I wasn't pretending to be a dinosaur, I wanted to be a paleontologist, marine biologist, or some kind of artist when I got older. Someone who studied life. Regardless of career, I've always had a very intense desire to understand life around me. Because I have a sensitive awareness of the ancient past—I am acutely attuned to and devastated by the effects of the human-induced climate catastrophe. The progress life has made thus far is not linear. Life exists in fluctuating diversity with the tide of the planet's dynamic cycles. Every mass extinction event our planet has ever seen has been primarily driven by changes in the climate. Though the planet we reside within is familiar with her ever changing anatomy, I fear for life. The climate is comically delicate and constantly undergoing metamorphosis; yet, it is what allows for life to exist in the first place. As humans, because we are aware of our existence, I believe we have a responsibility to care for the well-being of the planet in a much more profound way than we do now.

It's difficult to describe the enormity of what capitalist

industry has done to our planet. Since the industrial revolution centuries ago, the oil barons have wielded unchecked “creative” power. Our existence is built as if the oil we take from the planet will always be flowing. Our clothes, vehicles, houses, computers, and food are now all dictated by these fossil fuels. The effects of our current mode of production have already created a world with a hotter atmosphere, acidic ocean, and unhealthy flora/fauna – humans included. A seemingly simple 2-5°C rise in global temperature (which is certain in the next century) would cause mass extinction that could very well rival the dinosaur’s extinction event. The synthetic polymer (plastic) that rules our lives is created by extraction of crude oil from the Earth, only to be burned and sent into the air we breathe or dumped into the ocean to rot. This process has had devastating consequences on the environment and biodiversity. Oil is a limited resource that we have overlooked and undervalued in its entirety. In my view, humanity has abused the Earth (i.e. mutilated God) and belligerently stolen that which is not ours. Man has desecrated that which is most holy, and turned it into useless symbols which will not decompose – disrupting life’s natural cycle. All this, in the name of capitalist expansion.

Since the Gilded Age oil barons used the lever of capitalism to seize and hold power over their fellow man. Earth’s ecosystem has been deliberately mutilated, and her resources are waning. As a result, the owning class (and others who have come into power, usually by appeasing the owning class) need something else to exploit. Because material markets are becoming scarce and capitalism demands infinite growth, immaterial markets have been developed by the owning class. These immaterial markets are operating by mass produced hardware and software, which has been made widely accessible (by exploitation of labor in the global south for the physical materials required to develop these new markets, mind you). Even after the invention of the computer, our most connective creation, the digital space has now too been subject to the same deteriorative process that has devastated the

natural world.

With the advent of computational technology, the owning class has turned to the working class’ livelihood. Those who have developed and own these imaginary markets have learned to extract data from humans just as they once extracted oil from the Earth. They call this technology “Algorithms,” or more recently, “Artificial Intelligence,” though it’s hardly intelligent. It’s exceptionally clear that these generative computer models have been created for the sole purpose of extracting personal data at an unprecedented rate (though tech companies guise this extraction by adding a chat feature or an image generator) in order to siphon profit from our most base desires. This marked the arrival of the tech barons. Those who hold the most power today do not have the planet’s or your best interest in mind – in fact, they benefit from rejecting what is best for society at large.

I grew up close to and still live near the Great Salt Lake. Over the course of my life I have seen the lake dry up. Utah Lake has become a hazardous muck. A thick smog often hazes the view of the beautiful mountains I used to live at the base of. At the same time, human infrastructure (mostly for the purpose of commerce) has increased at a dizzying rate. Our now 10-lane freeways, urban streets and shopping/business centers are designed with zero forethought of future design or impact—an increasingly frustrating circumstance beginning to affect the daily lives of the people residing here. This is not a singular or an original experience. Across the entire world, the environment is losing its complexity in both flora and fauna and there is a common denominator: human activity—mainly carbon dioxide emissions, unsustainable agricultural practices, and destruction of natural habitat. Due to human activity, the composition of the environment has been changed. As a result, so too has the atmosphere changed. The global average temperature is currently 1.5°C higher than it was before the industrial revolution and rising exponentially. That may seem like an insignificant change, but the difference between global



average temperature and weather temperature is monumental. For example, during the Pleistocene (Ice Age) 20,000 years ago, Earth was “only” 5°C colder than it is now. Global average temperature affects ecosystems across the entire planet—ecosystems that have grown to depend on one another.

The Anthropocene Extinction is happening right now. The increase in global temperature is unequivocally caused by human activities. This has been studied, documented and proven for decades. The effect is cascading and reducing genetic diversity across the globe—a precursor seen before every single extinction event. Scientists are still determining the rate at which species are going extinct, however one thing is explicitly clear: a major pulse of biological extinction is and will continue to take place. Currently, more than 46,300 species are threatened with extinction—28% of all assessed species (IUCN Red List). In 2002, the number of species threatened was 11,167. Because of the sheer size of the human population (exploding due to the industrial revolution) and the drastically increasing rate at which we consume resources, we’ve uprooted the Earth’s ecosystems in order to sustain ourselves under a capitalist model of living. The current climate catastrophe cannot be understated. It is thus necessary to educate ourselves on previous and current extinction events of Earth in order to mitigate mass calamity. It may seem as though everything humanity touches devastates the Earth, but this is not true. Humanity itself is not killing the planet, it is the systems we use (agriculture, deforestation, resource misuse, capitalistic economies, etc. etc.) that contribute to the massive loss of biodiversity seen. The evidence for this is substantial, and undeniable.

#### **Some Quick Facts:**

- Over 50% of all habitable land on Earth has been transfigured by human activity.
- Over 50% of surface freshwater is in-use by humanity.
- Of all the mammals on Earth, 96% are livestock and humans,

only 4% are wild mammals.

- Current Global Temperature is 1.5°C higher than pre-industrial levels

#### **2°C of warming will cause:**

- Increased deadly heat waves
- Increased flooding and precipitation
- Increased sea levels
- Ocean acidification
- Decreased water availability
- Decreased biodiversity
- Decreased rainforest biomass
- Death of all coral reefs
- Food shortages
- Increased economic instability/collapse

The current rate of global average temperature increase is 0.20° C per decade. This puts Earth on track to be 4°C warmer by the end of the century. All lifeforms change their environment to suit their needs, the fact that humans use resources is not the cause for this crisis; it is the systems with which we control the environment. The industrial revolution arose out of necessity to sustain the economic systems we use to trade materials amongst ourselves en masse—primarily this system has been varying forms of capitalism, i.e. trading resources for capital and vice versa. By placing value of imaginary capital over tangible materials and quality of life, the Earth has become a soulless commodity. The result of this is that your habitat is slowly being carved away, in order to create products, stores, factories and housing that don’t fulfill you as a human being, while also ridding animals and plants of their homes. Tech and oil barons might be profiting from the chaos, however they too are losing their Earth just the same; Our current way of being benefits no one. Though the reality crisis is dire, and worthy of grief—life as a whole is extraordinarily resilient. Life will endure in one form or another. The question is: Will we endure? Will we move forward

with enough awareness and action to create a more holistic Earth? Damage has already been done, but we are more capable now than ever before to not only survive, but thrive. The answer lies in material changes to our systems of being, and empathy for life and our resources. If we are capable enough to terraform the planet to such a biblical extent, surely we can also terraform it for the better. All of these systems are tangled with one another, and there are over 8 billion participants (willing or not). The common denominator within these structures is hierarchy. Within patriarchal systems, men are placed above women. Within individualist systems, the needs of one are placed above the needs of many. Within capitalist systems, the rich are placed above the poor; Within late capitalistic systems, money is placed above the soul. I call these systems into question because they have created unprecedented exploitation and unnecessary inequality, causing harm to the most vulnerable amongst us and costing the Earth its livelihood.

# Inventing a New Future

“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Ephesians 6:12

I’ve written about capitalism more than patriarchy and individualism intentionally, not to bring less attention to these issues, but because capitalism is the mechanism in which these other hierarchies are forced upon us. The threat of not being able to afford to live (to afford housing, food, healthcare, etc.) makes the situation a life-or-death scenario. Capitalism is also a material interaction between us and the goods which we trade. By contrast, systems such as patriarchy and individualism are based on social and emotional interaction amongst ourselves. Because capitalism is a material system, it is therefore quicker to change than systems like patriarchy or individualism. The structures we currently exist and operate within, diminish our unique qualities and favor a dull sameness. Recognizing this is crucial, and a new way forward must

be developed and implemented. The bad news is this has never been done before, thus creative and unique solutions must be brought forth. The good news is that hope is not lost. Because capitalism was developed by us, it can be broken down and understood by us, thus brought to change. Because systems are malleable, we can create healthier material conditions for ourselves. At the root of our minds and hearts must be radical empathy. We must replace our judgment with curiosity, and seek to understand those we do not. Humanity must come to an understanding that “having it all” as a concept is false. There is nothing to be had. To those who may say that reshaping our cultural framework away from the capitalist system is too radical – is it not already radical, to assume that the flora, fauna, land, water, air, and even people are commodities to be bought and sold?

Though changing the way we perceive the world takes an immense amount of effort, It is not enough to simply turn inward. Action must be taken and labor must be done. The material conditions that we face require material solutions. We must ask ourselves, how can we put pressure on the capitalist system, in ways most beneficial to us as a people? Something that occurred to me early in my study of politics, was that the two prominent political parties in America both had completely different versions of what the government is and what it’s functions are – which it seemed to me was at the root of many of the disagreements between the two parties, yet, the two parties also seem to support the same material end goals.

Within the American right wing, government is viewed as an incapable, corrupt and useless structure, which “steals” hard earned capital from the people for its own interest in the form of taxation. The right believes that the government is run by ideologies that the party is harshly opposed to, such as LGBTQ+ “ideology,” secularism, and an “anti-family” agenda. Regardless of whether these claims are true (almost all are contradictory, inaccurate, or completely fabricated), the result is a party whose citizens are

primarily focused on identity politics – that is to say, immaterial politics – rather than solving the material issues that they themselves are struggling with – an economy that collapses frequently, a lack of social safety nets, zero economic benefits for the working class, no parental support, etc. The only material actions undertaken by the American right seek to disband the government, and allow private capital to manage and oversee residents and infrastructure. These actions have led to a corporate controlled government. The corporate government directly benefits from the material woes that it inflicts upon the working class – especially when the blame is shifted onto other members of the working class (those who are called “woke” today: queer people, minorities/immigrants, leftists, or basically anyone who questions right-wing hegemony). When the government is operated “like a business,” the result is a systemic contrivance that weaponizes democracy against itself via identity politics.

On the American left, government is supposed to be an objectively run system to maintain infrastructure and regulate private interests through the use of taxation, but is halted in doing so by appeasing the right wing because the democratic party is also interested in deregulation and lowering of taxation. The American left has no set agenda or clear goals, except to say, “we aren’t as bad as the Republicans, we’re the lesser of two evils.” While the American left does seek to increase social support and programs, this is often done by partnering with the same large corporations that inherently cater toward the right wing. More often than not, the solutions proposed by American Democrats are not enough to change things for the better. Because zero solutions are offered (even in the realm of identity politics) the left is almost always shut down by the right wing which does propose “solutions.” This is made worse as the government continues to be sold to the highest bidders.

The right and left are actively utilizing capitalism against you. Both parties are funded by the largest companies on Earth,

only seeking to own more land, control more resources, and abuse your labor power. Naturally, the right is fought for and funded by the most powerful private interests that exist today, as it suits their interests and motives more so than the left. Because the ultra-wealthy have the most financial power under capitalistic systems, they leverage their power by the use of lobbying, funding political campaigns, and even running for office themselves. This most often happens on the right because the party’s ideals align with private interests, creating a feedback loop which solely benefits those already in positions of power and erases the power of the working class super-majority.

Can we truly organize ourselves under such a vastly oppressive system? Can freedom truly exist in this phantasmic feedback loop? Is this not reason enough to conceptualize and enact a new form of government? The real-life effects of the postmodern form of government are bothersome at best and lethal (to people and the planet) at worst. The postmodern government is not suitable for the age we exist in, nor the rights we wish to have. We must enact change before it is too late. In order to construct a new governing body it is thus necessary to define its goals and ideals for the people it is to serve. If we are to organize we must do so with intention. This pressure must be put upon the systems of exploitation strategically and with purpose. The following rights are, in my opinion, of utmost importance and are fundamental to our livelihood – they must be advocated for (note that this is not an exhaustive nor finalized list, but a starting point).

## **Freedom of Choice**

First and foremost, all beings are entitled to the freedom of choice. This includes:

The right to make fully informed decisions (on the basis that no information is intentionally withheld).

The right to vote for representatives in governing bodies, without

the interest of capital influencing decisions of said representatives.  
The right to choose where and how we live and work, so long as we do not infringe on others' right to the very same.

## **Bodily Autonomy**

All are entitled to the right to bodily autonomy. This includes:

The right to be free of slavery in any form (including the uncompensated labor found within the private prison system, a system which should be abolished).

Freedom from capital punishment.

Freedom from state-enforced violence in any form.

The right to make healthcare decisions for yourself (or your dependents), without the intervention of capital or state.

The right to protest grievances against governing bodies.

## **Self Expression & Actualization**

All are entitled to the right to express themselves fully. This includes:

The right to free speech (both in writing and vocally).

The right to participate (or not) in belief systems.

The right to expression of culture

The right to pursue romantic and platonic partners of your preference.

The right to expression of gender (socially and medically).

The right to healthcare that secures equity regardless of ability (physical, mental or otherwise).

The right to run for governing bodies, without the influence of capital

## **The Right to Prosperity**

All are entitled to proper compensation for their laborious efforts.

All shall be compensated in such a way as to uphold a satisfactory

quality of life. This includes:

The right to a standard living wage based on basic needs.

The right to compensated leave (maternity, vacation, sick, etc.).

The right to organize as laborers and advocate for equitable treatment.

Corporations exceeding 1 billion in value shall be operated democratically, workers shall vote on product development, resource sourcing, insurances, operation costs, etc.

Restrictions on capital – Private companies and the individuals who own them must be fairly taxed according to their wealth

No bailouts should take place lest a company is deemed necessary (either by social or medical necessity, though if a company is large enough to have ownership of something necessary for public wellbeing, it should thus be owned and operated democratically by the public).

Boosted social security funding.

That which must be insured (housing, transportation, healthcare, etc.) should be subsidized or fully funded by public efforts.

## **The Right to Basic Biological Needs**

All are entitled to having their basic biological needs met fully. This includes:

The right to edible food.

The right to drinkable water.

The right to shelter.

The right to electricity/the internet.

The right to community (contributing to and benefit from social wellbeing efforts).

## **The Right to Travel**

All are entitled to the right to travel freely. This includes:

The providing of accessibility needs (via transportation,

infrastructure, etc.) for those with disabilities.

The right to satisfactory public transportation (high speed rails, buses, bike paths, etc).

Zoning laws which promote walkable cities and foster community.

Prison reform and prioritization of rehabilitation/re-assimilation over punishment.

The right to immigrate to and from countries.

## The Right to Information

All are entitled to true and accurate information. This includes:

The right to accessible information (physical and digital libraries, public forums, literacy campaigns, etc.).

Education free of private interest (K-12 and university).

## The Digital Frontier

It is an existential, spiritual mistake to be using the most connective structure in history for online shopping and social media. The internet should be owned and operated by the public. We should have massive digital libraries, AI without influence, tools for building community, greater access to true information, and broader solutions to massive problems like climate change. The web should be by us, and for us. To connect, to inform, to inspire, to educate. Redesigning the way I interact with the internet improved my life, but it's not enough. There are only so many personal choices you can make, when the structure you make decisions within is inherently oppressive. So, the structure should be changed. But how? What would a new internet really look like?

Eversion is not necessarily negative. We can use the process to our advantage. By using and creating the internet intentionally, we can create better real-world conditions for ourselves. Understanding why the web is dying allows us to create a new network that benefits the majority of people rather than holding us all captive. The internet

is not solid, it is malleable and fluid. The digital frontier may seem conquered, but this is false! There remains much to explore and create. We must once again become cyber-optimists, just like we were in the early days of the internet. Now more than ever, we have the tools necessary to create a new version of the internet by and for ourselves. A better net to make a better world.\* (\*This does not mean that the “dying web” ceases to exist immediately. To require that billions of people stop using the current internet is unrealistic. This is a new internet, not a restructure of the corporate-web. This structure may utilize some of the infrastructure upholding the dying web, but it will be accessed, maintained and organized very differently. People should have the option to use the new web and the dying web as needed, until the dying web finds its niche as a democratically-regulated digital market, and the new web provides better alternatives for many of the things we currently use the dying web for.)

The goal of reinventing the internet is to create a digital space that supports the real-world with digital tools, resources and information, uplifting the quality of life for the super-majority of the population. The new web will be built from the ground up, but it shouldn't be confusing to use. Much like the Skeuomorphic design of the early computer age (making digital tools look like real-life counterparts – like the calculator app), the new web should look and operate similar to the web of today. Using pages, windows, links, apps, etc. ensures basic accessibility and usability, for users and developers. Starting from a familiar basepoint will allow the new web to evolve as needed, based on public use and opinion – creating a self-generating, human-friendly interface. Eventually, the new web will have its own design language and navigation systems, not developed as a means of manipulating you, but carefully designed in order to add to your life.

The reason we need a new internet in the first place is because the current internet actively takes away from real life resources and tools that we need. Digital 3rd spaces and support

for real 3rd spaces should be a key feature of the new web, ensuring anyone in need of community has immediate access to support. Social networks can be created without advertisers, allowing you to connect with loved ones without being influenced. Access to massive digital libraries with free digitized books and academic research would allow the population to learn and grow because of the net. Digital mutual aid efforts can ensure that those who need support monetarily or materially have greater and faster access to having their needs met. Shelters and programs aimed at those experiencing homelessness could collaborate with libraries to create an easy sign-up process for those who need shelter. The new web should offer infrastructural support for basic public goods like public transportation, paying taxes (without paying fees to tech companies), navigation, courts, education, public parks, urban planning, and so much more. As it stands now, the web contains some government web pages, but they're all slow, out of date, and difficult to use.

The single largest flaw underlying the entirety of the internet is that it is not organized democratically. Information is not stored, shown, or maintained by us – this is outrageous! How could we, Americans of all people, allow the internet to be controlled by someone other than “we the people?” What is the internet for, if not a public good? As it is now necessary to use daily, the internet should be controlled by us. Organized voting should determine the structure, features, and usage of the internet. Teams composed of programmers, designers, artists, writers, and scientists should be voted into office by the public to build, maintain and improve the new system. These offices around the nation will continually build the new web based on public needs – needs not determined by billionaires, but by you.

It would be a mistake to overlook how the new web is accessed. Verification through valid ID, proving that you are indeed human would help to avoid a web flooded with bots, misinformation, and SEO-rigging (though SEO-style ranking will be abolished on

the new web anyway, in favor of a democratic ranking system). Building on known principles of authentication and privacy, the new web should expand personal privacy rights, guaranteeing “equitable anonymity.” Equitable anonymity means that you and your private information remain yours, even though you need an ID to access the web. Cookies and trackers exist now only to take your information and give it to advertisers, these will not be a part of the new web because there will be no advertisers.

This is a public project that needs public funding, and we can't keep living in a fantasy-world where taxes can just keep getting lower until they don't exist. Taxes exist to pay for the things that we deem as public goods – let's utilize that, just like we did with ARPANET! Additionally, it may not be necessary to raise taxes anyway. Companies like Google and Apple have taken billions of dollars in taxpayer money in the form of bailouts. This taxpayer money, as well as some reallocated funds from other public sectors, can surely fund the new web project without raising taxes. No one wants to hear that taxes may increase, but the return on investment isn't just worth it – the benefits of a new web would exceed the cost easily. Projects like this are only possible through mass effort by us. New jobs can be created, new discoveries made, new communities formed. Because the internet is composed of data offered by you and I, we can also be compensated for our contributions. The funding for the new web right in front of us. Restructuring the internet will create a positive economic feedback loop, leading to a wealthier, more capable nation and world.

Among the day-to-day needs that can and will be met, large scale societal and environmental issues could also be addressed strategically and ethically. By supporting the entire population, the massive issues we see in climate, politics, migration, resource usage, social programs, and culture differences could be looked at and resolved with effectiveness and compassion. The new net will uplift the quality of life for everyone in the nation – and by proxy, the world! The new web will take years to build. It will be the



most collaborative project ever, with the most connective benefits ever seen. In the meantime, we need to demonstrate that change is needed in the digital sector. This can only be done by making tangible changes in the way you interact with the existing internet. There are plenty of realistic options that exist right now, so that you can use the web for the better. Using the web intentionally today sets precedent for the way it will be used in the future.

The first step in creating an internet by and for us, is to stop using the platforms that abuse our time and attention. Delete social media. I have not lost contact with anyone since deleting social media – in fact, the contact I have had has been much more authentic and fulfilling. There are a plethora of ways to connect without ads being shoved in your face. Because the physical world is now so deeply tied to the digital, we can create a healthier, shared future for ourselves by deleting social media. Delete it, and be a part of the digital revolution of the early 21st century. Along the same lines – be aware of the software that uses manipulative design or algorithms, and delete your accounts. Any apps with an infinite scroll feature, predatory account creation made to take personal information, or personalized feeds are made to steal your data. Streaming services can be easily swapped with purchasing physical media. In fact, I've been buying CDs and DVDs instead of relying on the web, and it has improved my life. Having a personal collection of all of my favorite media is much more fulfilling and fun. Using an ad free, AI-free web browser will improve your attention and the quality of information you search for. On my phone I currently use the Safari app and DuckDuckGo's search engine, with ads and AI answers turned off. It's a decent option for now, while we develop the new web. The summarized AI answers are nothing but a combination of what the top-ranked SEO sites say, many of which are owned by large companies and deliberately written/designed to be placed well in SEO, not provide factual information. Additionally, always say no to cookies, and clear your data often. Not having logins saved may be inconvenient, but it's more secure and private.

There are a multitude of personal decisions you can make now that will improve your connection to the internet. We must also exercise our political freedoms, to make certain that the new web will be owned and managed by ourselves. Advocate for the new web in the small ways that matter. The short term political aims of the new internet should be to advocate and implement bills that improve the current internet, until we get legislation on a nationwide scale that will allow for the funding and structure of the new internet to exist. Expanding current Net Neutrality laws would ensure that internet companies cannot price-gouge or set paywalls behind faster internet. Restricting the use of cookies and trackers would allow greater privacy on the internet. Creating a publicly funded search engine would allow for democratic information control. Developing proposals for parts of the new internet to be made separate from the corporate web will reduce misinformation and guarantee access to public needs and services.

The Digital Revolution is now. We, the creators and users of the new internet, can and will devise new modes of creating connections that don't yet exist. Will you take part? Will you set an example of what the future can be? I urge you to contribute. This vision of reinventing the internet is incomplete without you and your ideas. This is not something that can be pursued alone. The new internet will be created by all of us, for our benefit.

## **The Rights of the Earth**

The Earth is entitled to its resources. Its flora/fauna is entitled to life. Because the Earth cannot advocate for herself, we must do so using research, data and science. This includes:

Funding for scientific research.

Funding for publicly accessible parks (both large and small).

Accessibility of research to the public (made available by The Right to Information).

Sustainability efforts in production and manufacturing.



Regulations on the extraction and usage of fossil fuels.  
Regulations on the production of single-use products (with exceptions for medical necessity).  
Renourishment of flora and fauna taken from the Earth  
Homes, offices, factories etc. designed to be environmentally friendly

The new world must be formed out of love. If we are to love in the same way as God, it is necessary to extend our empathy to the materials and resources we pull from the earth. It is this concept – claiming the land as our own – that hierarchy was birthed. Greed is the shadow of ownership. As our want for “things” grew, we loosened morals. Eventually, even people – our very own likeness, became property too. I propose that the earth too must have her own rights. If we are to foster prosperity for those who come after us, we must first respect that which has been here for eons before and will remain for eons after – our Earth and the natural resources she provides us.

Not only is human climate change harming the environment, the rate at which we are doing so is speeding up. Both of these are happening at an exponential rate. Solutions proposed must take this into consideration, as we must mitigate our impact while also preparing for the human population to continue increasing in size and resource usage. In doing so it is crucial to examine where resources are being most used, where defaunation is happening, and the reasons why individuals, organizations, and communities are abusing resources inefficiently.

Exxon was one of the first organizations to study the effects of their own emissions. In 1978, they released a shockingly accurate study, detailing how their product would make the climate warmer and have disastrous effects on the wellbeing of us, animals, plants, and our collective home. Despite this, the company’s executives made a conscious effort to push forward in their destruction of Earth. 40 years later, organizations such as the Carbon

Disclosure Project track and study large fossil fuel companies and the emissions they’re responsible for. Multiple studies and organizations come to the same conclusion: Fossil fuel companies (such as Exxon, BP, Chevron, etc.) are responsible for producing more than half of humanity’s total emissions of greenhouse gasses. Further, the rate at which these companies are poisoning our air is increasing. The reasons for increasing emissions are population growth, and deliberate campaigns and lobbying efforts made by fossil fuel companies to increase individual reliance on oil in order to increase profits, as capitalism demands infinite growth.

“Fossil fuels are the largest source of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions in the world. The fossil fuel industry and its products accounted for 91% of global industrial GHGs in 2015, and about 70% of all anthropogenic GHG emissions. If the trend in fossil fuel extraction continues over the next 28 years as it has over the previous 28, then global average temperatures would be on course to rise around 4°C above preindustrial levels by the end of the century. This would entail substantial species extinction, large risks of regional and global food scarcity, and could cross multiple tipping points in the Earth’s climate system, leading to even more severe consequences.”

The Carbon Majors Database, CDP Carbon Majors Report 2017

The rapidity by which defaunation is proceeding globally necessitates that we proactively work to address this global threat, even in the face of data insufficiencies. Due to the immensity of biodiversity loss, individual solutions are not sufficient to alleviate the crisis. Collective action and a shift in our social paradigm must happen now. The solutions to climate change are inherently complex, however they are demonstrably achievable. Though changes in our methods of production are required, these changes wouldn’t just benefit the environment—they’ll benefit you too. Current solutions

can be broken into three categories: Infrastructure, Public Policy, and Production. Each of these categories require support from the others. Acting on these solutions will have a cyclical effect, leading us to discover more effective methods of restoring the Earth to its beautifully complex state.

Infrastructure includes policy and collective efforts to create healthy living spaces, transportation systems, and facilitate the regrowth of our lost ecosystems. Each of these subjects of creating better infrastructure should be implemented with the goal of increasing biological diversity, decreasing resource usage, and bettering our quality of life in the places we live and work. The basis of these changes should be rooted in scientific and accurate knowledge. Revising zoning laws to allow for denser, more efficient housing would allow for increased satisfaction of living in cities, while also allowing for increased efficiency of resource use. Cities are the largest users of resources, and most of the growing population will live in cities. Redesigning these re-zoned cities to be green, would also increase quality of life while mitigating the impact that cities have on the environment. For example, some cities have required that whatever land is built on, the same square footage must be replaced with plants—this creates a greener, healthier city with cleaner air, happier citizens and less impact on the environment. If these green cities are reformed not for cars but for people, less of the land will need to be dedicated to concrete and asphalt—some of the most harmful materials to the environment. The alternative is to create cities that are walkable, and/or use bike paths and public transportation. This would drastically reduce individual emissions coming from cities. Further, this would also increase quality of life—offering citizens the freedom to walk where needed (workplaces, extracurricular places, restaurants, etc.), strengthens community bonds, fosters connection, and gives citizens the right to the city, rather than giving the city to cars, private industry, etc. and the taxing requirements they demand of our infrastructure. Refaunation and replenishment of flora should be considered infrastructure as they

are both necessary to keep the planet livable for humanity. Some countries and cities have already begun efforts to replenish both animals and plants with great success. By creating environments that allow for a greater number of species, we can increase genetic and biological diversity, mitigating the effects of climate change.

The easiest, most effective method of enacting change, will be through the use of revised public policy. In this way, changes can be enacted on a sociological scale, benefitting us all. There are a myriad of steps that the government (on a federal and state-wide level) can take to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, facilitate an economy that increases quality of life, and oversee projects that can reduce the harm we are causing the planet. Public goods and basic needs (housing, water, food, internet) should be decommodified and subsidized by the taxes we already pay. Doing so is not only easily possible, it would allow for a basic quality of life to be met—allowing more people to contribute to the economy, communities, their families, and climate change mitigation. By revising the purpose and function of the economy, the government can ensure that basic needs are met while allowing resources to be allocated to fostering a better, healthier country and world. Our current economy is designed to maximize profit: a simple, singular goal that has no regard for humanity, the soul, or the planet. The economy as it currently stands produces an excess of materials, most of which do not get used effectively (single-use products, overuse of plastic, zero regulations on the largest producers of emissions). The current economy does not benefit the super-majority of working class people, and is creating a hostile environment for future generations. The economy must be revised and better planned to facilitate long-term support of citizens, rather than profit for the few who have already accumulated an unfathomable amount of capital.

First steps in creating an economy for the people and the planet include regulations on fossil fuel companies—in order to lessen our dependence on them and decrease emissions. In regulating fossil fuel we must also regulate their most popular

product–plastic. Plastic is a material that is found in almost every single consumer good. So much so that plastic has been found in the human body. Such resilient, quality material should be reserved for necessary purposes, such as medical materials and devices—rather than coffee cups and shoes. Public policy should also be used to fund research and initiatives to solve the climate crisis. Decommodifying basic needs and simplifying the economy will benefit more people, thus more labor and resources can be dedicated to improving the lives of people, animals, plants, and the Earth. This cycle of improvement would have great and lasting benefits for a multitude of future generations.

Finally, our methods of production must also be looked at with scrutiny. Many of the methods we use to produce food, water, products, and more are done so in the name of profit and not well-being. Not only that, but the methods in doing so have also been devised in such a way to increase owner profit-margins, rather than create in sustainable ways. In revising our approach to creating materials and goods, we can move forward with a more holistic mode of production that will increase quality of life and mitigate the detrimental effects we have on wildlife. First we must consume less, both in how we produce and what we produce. Many of our needs are met through the use of products which are produced, packaged and shipped in ways that produce excessive carbon emissions and use excessive materials. If production was to become localized and less harmful materials were used, the rate of production would slow without cutting access to materials that are needed by people. The costs of such materials should also reflect the true social and labor cost required of such materials/products/goods. As it stands currently, most of the goods we produce do not accurately reflect the true social costs that were required to create them; rather, increasing profits is the primary motive in devising the cost of goods. Alternatives in cost, shipping, production and creation are needed. Agriculture and water usage should also be revised. Because these are absolutely necessary to human function,

we need to find more effective methods of retaining the necessary amount of production, while also devising methods to increase efficiency and decrease environmental impact. Our current methods (involving the smothering of pesticides and removal of natural habitat) require change. Vertical farming methods and water efficiency technologies have already been produced which greatly mitigate our impact, however more research and development is needed.

For so long, our definitions of success and innovation have been based on creating more powerful, more resource-heavy technology and systems. This paradigm must be deconstructed as it no longer serves humanity. The effects of designing this way have caused the climate crisis, exploitation of human and animal lives, and an unstable economy. Our new paradigm should be primarily focused on long term success and innovation. I urge you to consider: What would truly be more innovative—a new iPhone stuffed with artificial “intelligence” to siphon your data, or a new social mode of being that will create a better world for generations to come? Where should our focus be as a culture? How can we act on principles of empathy and facilitation of Earth’s natural beauty?

## Ortus Vitae

Our greatest feats as a species have only been possible through collective effort, labor, and funding. Is it truly that difficult to imagine a world in which we built upon our communal successes, rather than building on top of one another? We must re-evaluate our priorities, and remove selfishness and capital from public policy. We have more than enough resources to spread prosperity and wellness across the globe – and we should do so. I urge you to consider which needs are most important to you and your neighbor, and advocate for all to be equal under the firmament provided by God. The goal of these rights (and creating a new system of government) is to uplift the majority of its denizens, leading to mass

prosperity and support. By creating social, economic, and biological buffers from suffering, the world can be made healthy. Advocating for equal rights, compassion and education would allow our failing country to rise from its ashes – inspiring community, connection, health and scientific endeavor to become reality. Currently, all of us are suffering from a mass crisis of meaning. Because we have no communal goals for our society, we've been stuck navigating self-centered lives that don't even fully benefit us as individuals. The solution to our crisis exists within each of us; all that is required is empathy for the person next to you. I encourage you, the reader, to inform yourself on the root causes of the issues we face today. In gaining an understanding of how our world truly functions (outside of capitalism), you will be able to develop solutions yourself that may benefit thousands. Liberate yourself via education and empathy, and advocate for a new system. A system rooted in love and intellect with the sole purpose of uplifting one another and those who will come after us – in tangible, material ways.

# Recommended Reading & Research

Thank you for reading! This book has been the effort of years of research and months of writing. I've taken great care to write about timely and large-scale issues whilst also presenting actionable solutions. I hope that you've gained knowledge or courage from reading my writing. Below is a list of the reading and research which have been influential to my writing:

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## About the Author

Zoe Allgaier is a digital artist from Utah. She is inspired by the early age of digital art; Her abstract work explores the intersectionality of digital and physical life. Using overlays, textures and recursive geometry, Zoe creates graphics that explore visual nuance, as well as reject the minimalist design trends that have become the standard in the postmodern era. She has a lifetime of experience as an artist, and 7 years of professional experience in digital media and design roles.

The background is a white surface with black ink splatters and a marbled pattern. The splatters are concentrated on the right side, with some extending towards the left. The marbled pattern is subtle and covers the entire background. In the center, there is a cursive signature that reads "Zoe".

Zoe

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