

# Gardenworld Politics

## Climate Turbulence & The Renewal of Civilization

Filling the Void  
Economy, Politics, Philosophy

**People want guidance on what to do.**



Douglass Carmichael

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↓  
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## Chapter 1. Where are we? Toward Gardenworld.

We humans need to humanize the world. Gardenworld Politics is a strategic guiding vision for integrated responses to issues of turbulence -- climate crisis, inequality, and governance, to make for an attractive society. Remember that we are, at the core, primates seeking survival strategies. Politics is in the title because we must move beyond policy to action. *Politics*, comes from the Greek for town and means all the dynamics of power and status. Unlike mere policy, politics deals with the whole system. Getting to the future will have lots of struggle as some will lose out and will not take it lightly. There are two powerful scenarios for the future. Big tech for global management and local living. Gardenworld is a guide to transition toward renewing civilization with the best blend. . We know circumstances will be difficult. Institutions and people's character will be stressed. Gardenworld is necessary and attractive.

So much writing now is critical of the economy and government. These institutions are not delivering. Economy should be arranging mankind's interaction with the world to produce a decent life for everyone and governments should be acting to cope with the major emerging problems of our time - but they are not. A void more than bad. Instead of something to criticize, economy and government need to be reinvented.

### The world is broken

*We are searching for some kind of harmony between two intangibles: a form which we have not yet designed and a context which we cannot properly describe. - Christopher Alexander*

Proposals for dealing with climate crisis usually do not discuss how to start cutting co2 now, or what the emerging future society will look like. The problems are interacting with each other and our efforts are fragmented. We need an image of what we can work toward. It's really all about caring and meaning. Mothers love their babies, children are amazed by trees. Now it is "Keep the kids occupied with school, sex and video games, more babies, more workers and more consumers. The more people the more profit.(standard business logic of the last 150 years)"

### We need a vision

Everyone wants better. Almost everyone wants a family, a community, a sense that the basics for living will be sustainable, that we are safe from war and crime, that we can feel good about ourselves and delight in the company of others, that we can participate with friendship, love, art, reflection, politics and health and take the dog for a walk. But instead of building such a world, society

has been organized to serve hierarchical power. Progress for all turned into a great game of musical chairs where most people lost out, leaving too many people in mindless poverty.<sup>1</sup> Government and economy are not providing what we need. Can we do better? Gardenworld is a project for making the world liveable while coming through a crisis. We need a smaller economy, at least in its extraction from the earth and from workers. Development without growth. This will be tough. Marcus Aurelius is direct: this you must always bear in mind, what is the nature of the whole, and what is my nature, and how this is related to that, and what kind of a part it is of what kind of a whole?

Because gardenworld sounds simpler, and i, we should not give up skills that we have to manage complicated societies. System thinking - where we both look at the way we are learning (reflective practitioner) and pay attention to the way we influence each other - reflexivity.

A good society should provide security and meaningful livability for each person. Gardenworld is such a design project. How far can we go in creating an attractive life that is also responsible for the large issues of climate such as temperature, ocean acidification, soil depletion and population. My view is that we need both responsibility and attractiveness. You can't get people to work on needed changes if those changes don't lead to a better society. As a species we are up against a crisis of our own making. Can we put together our empathy and understanding -- being in touch with what they're feeling and thinking -- to solve these problems? In the past it was understood that after the crisis we could return to the world. This time we need to find ways of living in a different world. It means a serious effort in rethinking the way we think.

Happiness for Thomas Jefferson meant happenings, the number of roles one played in society, not consumer bliss, on the idea that roles played engage talent: Sunday school teacher, craftsman, coach of the softball team, volunteer fire department. Compare to your range of roles now. The US Declaration was the first effort in history to design a government rather than rationalize an existing one. There are no laws in the Constitution, but a method for making laws. The Constitution was an invention, it had a goal, and if the goal is not attained, redesign is appropriate. This is more important than it first appears. It really is a philosophy of life and a goal of Gardenworld. In the first draft of the Declaration the language was Life, liberty and property. Jefferson changed property to happiness, meaning the happenings, the number or roles engaged.<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes solving two problems at the same time is easier. The Gardenworld strategy is to integrate food with where we live with meaning. From the Garden of Eden to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon and through to the Arts and Crafts movement and Dunbarton Oaks in Washington, living in a garden

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<sup>1</sup> See David Graeber, Bullshit jobs.

<sup>2</sup> Gary Wills *Inventing America* analyzes the Declaration line by line.



project has been both deeply attractive and profoundly pragmatic. But humans are not just pragmatic but also seekers after understanding and meaning, aware of themselves in the universe. This effort just might make us more cooperative and reduce the chance of war.

We need a vision of where we are headed in order to avoid getting in each other's way. The criteria for all efforts should be:

- Does it help feed the people?
- Does it provide homes for the people?
- Does it lead to participation?
- Does it support people through the human life cycle?
- Are the conditions attractive, fostering meaning, and blended with food and habitat?

### **Based on human nature: food, habitat, and meaning**

Which tells us more that we need to know about the humans on this planet? Novels or physiology and genetics? The best books try to do both<sup>3</sup>. What we create should pass the test of enhancing all parts of the human life cycle. We have made a world difficult for children, parents, elders, poor, and animals. Children can no longer just 'go out and play and come home for dinner as it gets dark.' Our world now fits fast careers and traffic. We have built society around the part of the life cycle that has income and freedom to spend while forgetting relationships. We remain divided in our aspirations between wanting a life of security, continuity, and rewarding work, or seeking ownership that maintains control and guarantees dividends for the rich.<sup>4</sup> We seek both homeostasis, peaceful equilibrium, and dramatic change. That is who we are, but the balance can be off and we get war or passivity. Much of the world of popular culture - games, music, media, sports, art, a world of consumerism,- is an angry world. Think of what society must offer for alienation to be less attractive than meaningful cooperation.

There will always, it seems, be scoundrels and saints among us. Each person, in trying to make a world for themselves, with the body and mind they have, takes on some of the character required by circumstances. For five centuries that has been living by the clock and the bank account where we have looked at people to fit in rather than be fully engaged with all their talents. We hope that Gardenworld will create circumstances with a wide range of possibilities for living different ways. Keeping the broader and longer term perspective in mind will be hard but worthwhile. Each person in a Gardenworld project should take

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<sup>3</sup> Maturana, Damasio

<sup>4</sup> See the BBC films by Adam Curtis, especially his newest "Can't get you out of my head" available on Youtube, for shocking analysis that tells us how wrong for humans the current regime is.

this view: *respect* for the autonomy of each of their fellow human beings, and objective *knowledge* of what each truly wants and needs.

## Gardenworld

Given the rapid emergence of crises in society it appears that food, a place to live, and culture will be the main pragmatic focus of regenerative efforts. Gardenworld is a response to climate crisis and side effects.. If successful, Gardenworld would help create attractive places to live and grow a new culture. Less good would be that we achieve survival for some but with huge losses and an anxious life. Imagining Gardenworld as the goal would help clarify what is at stake in climate breakdown, and provide guidance and motive to make the future more attractive and livable.

Gardenworld encourages going beyond the deadness of the soul. The artist David Hockney offers, “If you see your surroundings as beautiful, thrilling and mysterious, as I think I do, then you feel quite alive”. This is the ethos we need, informing the ethical climate we live in.

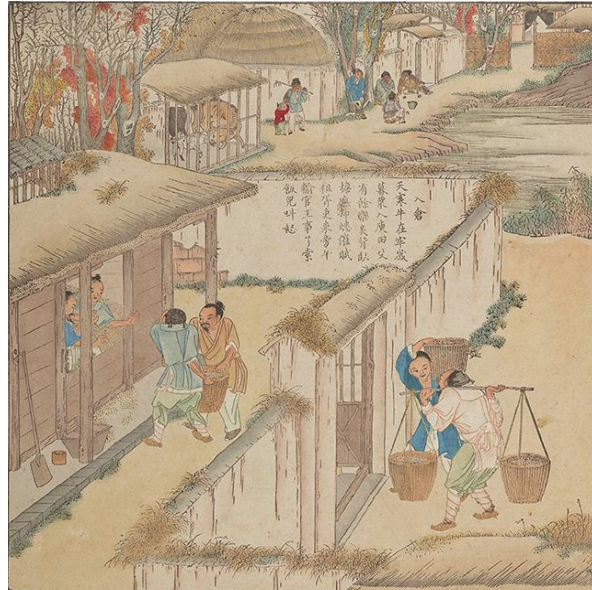
We humans expected that growth focused on the economy was going to provide us with consumer well being. But with that growth we have used the Internet to coordinate the world with surveillance and marketing, making us passive. Millions were lifted out of poverty, but the reality is that they were mostly forced off the land and lifted into high rises. I had a conversation in Malaysia with a local gardener. We were surrounded by high rise apartment blocks, some more than 60 floors. He said that there are many women from a village where in the past they would gather daily outside in a circle under a tree in the shade peeling spices and gab and gossip. Now there is no place outside - or in - for them to circle. Not out of poverty but into it.



This garden adds food to old habitat, a transition to Gardenworld. Not yet much of a community but the young daughter is a few feet away also working,

and while the aesthetics are not grand nor playful, there is a planful order which is probably appreciated by those who live there. Gardenworld should evolve much further. Garden supply stores are already short as people inaugurate their gardening intents. Most efforts will start simply in the spaces we have.

This next picture shows fuller development of food and habitat more fully blended with development of the food habit meaning idea.



Covid is waking us up but not enough to force permanent change. “Back to normal” is a way of avoiding rethinking. Climate - temperature, oceans, migrations - will force more structural changes. Gardenworld, blending food and habitat, is not anti-technology but subordinating its use, to the extent it is still available, to the needs of Gardenworld.<sup>5</sup> People hold on to the possibility of a technical fix because it implies, incorrectly, that their life can remain pretty much as it is. That makes change harder. Even with a high tech future food and habitat will be needed. Technology and the mechanical are often seen as repressing life. GardenWorld is an approach that highlights the organic as we learn to integrate tech in ways that enhance rather than replace nature.

Humanity and technology are intrinsically bound together. Early technologies are easy to forget – language, song, fire, pottery, weaving. Much was copied from the observation of other species – how they hunt, dwell, organize, decorate themselves. Our current advanced technologies are easily seen as extensions and elaborations on much earlier technologies. The Internet

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<sup>5</sup> It is possible that as we enter the 2 degree zone, that we lose the grid and the professionals who manage the tech. In the background to this discussion is the severity of the losses we will have to cope with. This is still unknown but not beyond speculation. In the extreme we have Lewis Dartnell’s *The Knowledge: How to rebuild our world from scratch*,



replaced smoke signals, rocket launchers, and slingshots, cars, and horses: roads are still roads, after many millennia.

The use of technology to enhance daily life is often overshadowed by war and power, profit instead of community. Humanity is in a crude balance between the technologies of life and the technologies of war. The result is not going well.

The idea of design could be a big help. Design is about the way things are put together to meet human needs and realities in ways that are attractive and implementable. How should we cohere things? Design may be the core practice for putting it all together.

*As we move through the 21st century, we need to struggle to bring the human, as the design criteria, back into the center of design and policy. – John Carl Warnecke.*

## How did we get here?

There are many ways to tell the story. One of the simplest is, we just got bigger.

- Stone age settlements
- Empires architecture
- Oil regine ships planes cities
- And perhaps reversing with digitalization.

“Here” is not just a question of information, it is the feeling in the air of what is happening, and the flow of these intuitions with what we hear and read. “Here” is almost mystical, the immediate includes the momentum of the past and of the future. It is the material stuff plus what we make of it and what it leads us to do. It is the surf-boarder sitting on the board riding out waves not taken until one feels right. The Result is complex and ideas are only a component that then blends with the imagination and gut feelings. Shakespeare has Brutus say

*There is a tide in the affairs of men.  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures.*

Look at the sequence from the breakup of the Roman Empire, the rise and fall of Christianity and feudalism, the French Revolution, Colonialism, WW1, the depression, WW2, through the Cold War to now. We are deeply embedded in this long wave. We have been living with a strategy of growth at all costs, but the growth paradigm is flawed and needs serious rethinking. Aristotle raised a

question which suggests rethinking is possible - development without growth<sup>6</sup> Gardenworld is about that possibility and maybe we can do better than urbanization, the ruin of the countryside and the stunting of human possibilities.

Repeatedly, and from its earliest origins, human leaders, as soon as the group was big enough to be led, have chosen hierarchy, slavery, war, and restricted lives. Perhaps the very idea of civilization needs to be rethought. These outcomes are not inevitable natural laws but stem from choices made by some people (not all) locking us into deep inequality. The history from tribe to monarchy to plutocracy to parliamentary and representative democracy attempts to deal with conflict in a reasoned way, but violence has always been part of the process as people coped with the impact of rising population and the attempt by the old order holding on to what they have gained. We are in that incomplete process — the unfinished French Revolution - seeking liberty, justice and equality, or the American version of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

We have relied far too long on a mix of technology, free markets, banks, representative government, and media. We have organized society to exploit people and exploit land. We decimated the natives in the Americas, first with disease then with policy and guns, and followed up with slavery, not just in the cotton fields but throughout the economy until today's wage slavey, where people are forced to work for others in order to survive. The rich continue to feel they can buy elections, while the poor remain in materially and culturally limiting circumstances. The result is a serious failure. Can we do better? As a species, humans have chosen to be competitive and inventive. We could also be cooperative and inventive together. When inventiveness supports competition, the combination is suicidal because it means relentless warfare. Since we can't alter our inherent inventiveness, how do we change our culture to be more cooperative?<sup>7</sup> Could a multi-state system avoid this dynamic? Could a world system do better? Hunter gatherers were forced by leaders under pressure from increasing populations to domesticate — giving up ranging into the territories of others, closing off free and easy movements on land. But this was after a hundred thousand years of resistance to settlement. Life 'inside' was less healthy and more programmed. The early settlements broke down social relationships — songs, stories, and a spirit<sup>8</sup> of sharing, and replaced them with constant war, routine, and slavery. Hunter gatherers walked away from the compounds, a rejection of innovation continued by the Luddites of more recent times. It is very important to not treat history as though it can be divided between deep past and the more immediate present. Things

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle *Coming to be and Passing away*.

<sup>7</sup> proposed by Daniel Schmachtenberg. See <https://civilizationemerging.com>

<sup>8</sup> Spirit is important and controversial. Those with a technical education usually avoid it. Pick any object in front of you. It conveys to you. In this sense everything is participatory in my experience, and its experience of me. Gardenworld with its aesthetics and function is full of life - and spirit. See more in Chapter 3 on human nature.

worthwhile in the past are ignored but may be the very things we need. For example hunter-gatherers, while having no surplus, had a culture of sharing and integration with the land and the seasons.

How we got here also includes the increasingly complex events after WW2, with increasing population and new technologies blending into an indecipherable tapestry. Government rulebooks try to cope but that turn into frustrating fetters. My view is that the government and the economy are more absent than bad and criticism is lost on the absent. We have a lot to create to fill the void. For Gardenworld it is important to understand that from the first settlements there has been tension between agriculture and cities, rural and urban.

### **What should we do? Manhattan Project That Works for All?**

Gardenworld is a guide, not a plan. We can see possibilities in broad outline but actual implementations will take place locally and cannot be predicted. In broad outline the question emerges, Do we need a Manhattan Project plus the Apollo Project plus the Marshall Plan plus Hoover's rescue of Europe in WW1 plus Roosevelt's New Deal — a major project of common sense? Would this require a new transnational group of leaders with unlimited powers? We need economic, political and health innovations simultaneously. Perhaps a new culture of political ecology. It might be time for a one world organization to fit the one world we live on.<sup>9</sup>

The two most obvious futures are centralization and decentralization. In either case the transition will require a lot of support to get us through the disruptions. The case of Covid implies that big corporations will be financially motivated and the rest of us pay. Managing the transition so that the parts cohere and the displaced people are reincluded in the transition itself will require a world wide integrating policy, engineering, human wisdom and leadership. The big projects of the past mentioned above were all constructed in mostly uninhabited space so conflicts in Los Alamos or the moon were not major.

Because we are fragmenting, each person will try to restore their memory of the good old economy. This is an old problem. The Genesis story has god saying

The people is one and if they have one language; if this is what they start with, nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do"; and he confounded their language and scattered them over the wide earth (11:5-9

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<sup>9</sup> See Andrew Sheng's article in Project Syndicate , <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/one-earth-balance-sheet-global-accounting-climate-change-by-andrew-sheng-and-xiao-geng-2021-04>



This struggle, in the form of coherence and authoritarian command and control will conflict with new feelings of freedom and the opportunity for local organization. With this awareness there are immediate things to be doing.

First, be agile, flexible and awake. Next, important culture building, care for those who are being hurt by the emerging transitions. Start simple.

Gardenworld requires deep study of both our surroundings and human nature, developed from our mammalian and primate past. How do we design an approach to society that honors that deep core? Current social frameworks are not up to the task. Capitalism is too exploitative. Socialism feels like a bureaucratic engineered form of capitalism. Democracy and quality of life are inconsistent with financial inequality. Democracy requires free education.

Perhaps we can learn from an approach the Chinese take to governance: a technocratic class at the top, well educated in technology, history, and what makes a good life. This group monitors grassroots initiatives and supplies funds for the grass roots to organize around their issue that the top can then integrate with intermediate projects into the national economy: expertise in systems at the top with democracy from local conditions.

We have been living in a world where our focus is on the material, and we have lost touch with the psychological, the expressive, the world of feelings and intuition. The mind has been treated as an artifact of matter, but as we live into the digital period, where digital seems more mind-like than material-like, experience is already more psychological, more mind based. This is a huge shift<sup>10</sup>

***The main contradiction today is between the possibility of free, abundant goods and information and a system of monopolies, banks and governments trying to keep things private, scarce and commercial.*** - Paul Mason. *PostCapitalism: A Guide to Our Future*.

While the damage to our climate accrued over four centuries, our sense of its impact has remained indistinct. We are neither stopping our use of fossil fuels nor are we planning for catastrophe. The oil companies are saying “keep pumping” because removal technologies will save us. Stopping economic activity is not something many want to urge, especially those with an important role in government or business. This is a major force in the current situation.

Gardenworld will not eliminate problems but make them livable. We need something like Gardenworld just to hold on. At the worst we will need something like Gardenworld to survive. Gardenworld takes us into the forefront where creativity and cooperation work together.

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<sup>10</sup>Pitrim Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, anticipates this and more

We need to revisit our priorities in order to manage for the good of all. But most people do not see alternatives to drifting. It is not crazy to stay in a leaky canoe if you do not have an alternative canoe. We need to throw overboard unneeded stuff in order to keep afloat: what to hold onto, what to throw away, what to repurpose? These are hard choices. Although we are not starting from scratch, though often it will feel like it.

As a society, we need to ask ourselves:

- What do we keep and what do we get rid of?
- What do we repurpose and what do we continue as is?
- What things do we prioritize and what things do we ignore?
- What things become important and what things become obsolete?

Politicians are not helping. At this point it is the structures (for example, in the US small states having an equal number of senators with the large giving more power to rural perspectives). The program of democracy and bureaucracy, integrating elites with marginalized people, needs to be seriously rethought.

I spent a summer on the Greek island of Hydra. Sociability is important there. When people wake up in the morning they usually do not know where they will have supper. During the day everyone usually before lunch walks down the steep slope of the once volcanic island to the port for mail and supplies. There are no cars, trucks nor motorbikes, it is too steep. Everything to be moved is moved on donkeys and the donkey men take good care and have a broom and dustpan to clean up. The criss-crossing paths, mostly steps in passageways between buildings, bring people into contact with each other and supper plans are made. "My house or your house?" It is the community reweaving itself anew each day. Images like this help us appreciate Gardenworld.

Whether we are able to successfully modify our institutions and ways of living, or collapse as a civilization, re-centering our lives on earth, food and local projects organized around face to face encounters will take place from necessity. People will gather to pool resources. The world of boundaries is beginning to feel quaint. The purpose and relevance of markets, states, and communities will need rethinking. We like the idea of democracy as a way of making decisions about the future, but technology and capital also seem to vote. The logics of all three conflict and do not align. We have yet to find a way to integrate the three into powerful lines of action sufficient to stop temperature rise. Will we create a future for the good of all, or support a politics which continues to take our wealth from us, leaving behind third world poverty?

Discussions of economics 2500 years ago in Athens meant considering all the factors of good estate management. The well managed estate, like a well managed corporation, now produces a surplus. For what purpose? the

philosophically minded Greeks asked<sup>11</sup>. Following Plato and Aristotle, the surplus meant free time for philosophy and politics. China in the deep past used its surplus to ‘gift’ populations outside its borders, building relationships. Modern society is organized around investment for profit, which means surplus, but most of our current surplus is badly distributed, what doesn’t go to the rich goes to increasing the population and more consumption. We should rethink this. The surplus we produce should be aimed at the quality of society, not the game plan of the oligarchs.

History is an important teacher. The ‘cap’ in capital refers to the head of cattle, and we are asking the same questions around wealth today — how do I grow my herd, how do I manage my herd, how do I breed (increase) my herd. As you probably know early economic activity was about integrating land, cattle, grain and people. How should we balance between community and individual use of our surplus is a question we need to answer but aren’t asking. Each generation struggles for more equality, participation, and quality of life. The surplus is produced by society, not by the investors alone. Investors without people educated by society are powerless. The proper use of surplus produced by society should be a major concern.<sup>12</sup>

From living on the fruits of the surface of the earth for many thousands of years, we shifted to using coal and oil which allowed the human population to expand. In turn, we’ve become dependent on these sources of energy and cannot easily, gracefully, free ourselves. Cutting fossil fuel use means something like musical chairs, where vital resources are given up, things like no flying, no heating with gas, threats to food supply, the closing down of jobs that are part of the old economy. The cascading effects — inability to pay mortgages, collapse of banks — will follow.

What is really at stake is learning that adds up to a culture, which is always a blending of the body and circumstances. “Yo soy yo y mis circunstancias” said Ortega y Gasset — I am I and my circumstances. The Greeks developed education around the core of music and gymnastics, and the idea that music was mathematical relationships, with the universe being the harmony of the spheres. The curriculum was the trivium: grammar, logic and rhetoric, and the quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The trivium was mind and the quadrivium nature. In Gardenworld we need education - in science, in philosophy, arts, history, languages, Law ‘ consumers should become citizens again.<sup>13</sup> And perhaps all our education is sitting with others under a

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<sup>11</sup> Detours into details are needed if we are to be aware of key resources for rethinking the future.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Schmachtenberger is moving this discussion. See his site, <https://civilizationemerging.com>. His logic is that humans are competitive and inventive. The combination is lethal, ending civilization. We must develop a more cooperative society.

<sup>13</sup> Erich Fromm showed that being a consumer is a whole way of relating to society in its material and social being. The cost to the individual, loss of autonomy and freedom, is huge. *Escape from Freedom*



tree. We just might spend more time sitting around playing chess, doing music, preparing supper and talking about all of it. Education is about attending to the things that matter -- how we think critically and how we garden our character and the conditions around us towards -- joy, love, vitality, and service to the weak and vulnerable.<sup>14</sup> Science, not to just manipulate the world but, as with the others, to understand it. Science taught without philosophy is an extortionist's game. We need science that is thought about in the context of what is good for us all, not for competition leading inexorably to war, but to projects that lead to peace. This might slow down innovation, but note how evolution in nature requires that an innovation fit circumstances, a very long process. The business ethic acts to externalize most of the environment so profit can emerge fast. Business wants us to meet our needs with purchases, not with self expression and relationships. We need to return to common sense and innocence rooted in a love for life. Could we do without excess physical things — appreciating living with art, literature, people and creativity? These questions reach into the depth of the psyche: “Traveling on every path, you will not find the boundaries of the soul by going -- so deep is its measure. Says Heraclitus fragment 45

*One for whom a pebble has value must be surrounded by treasures wherever he goes. — Par Lagerkvist The Dwarf*

Politics should begin with our values, what we care about when we are thoughtful<sup>15</sup> and not driven by ads. In practice this looks like the mutual perception of good. If we have sufficiency in food, water and relationships, we do not need the large dream house or dream car with 500 horsepower, nor dream holiday or dream job. Less stuff means consuming less and creating relationships, growing each other's spirit and character. It means less carbon emission and less damage to the planet. Planting gardens makes peace for neighbours, peace with the planet, rather than having to fight distant wars.

Gardenworld calls for new forms of work. The mechanic, banker, city planner, farmer, policy-maker, and nurse as we know them currently may no longer be sufficient. Health, education and governance will become group responsibilities, not just isolated to “full time” hierarchical roles. An emerging economy with food habitat and meaning as the priorities will shift how people

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<sup>14</sup> Cornel West - Education, The Cultivation of a Self - West offers deep education puts a premium on the arts because music, painting, dancing, and drawing have everything to do with imagination and empathy to create a better soul, a better self, and a better way of attending to what really matters in life.

<sup>15</sup> See John Von Heyking, *Form of Politics Aristotle and Plato on Friendship*: If justice involves owing a good to another, then friendship, in which I make your good my good, aims higher. This higher aim assists with the intellectual and affective acts of sympathy involved in discerning just what the good of another is. Being habituated in friendship helps us see the person to whom we are obliged as just, which renders justice a relation between persons, instead of an abstraction expressing relations among things.

contribute. Trash will become an essential part of a productive cycle. People's contribution might be organized around something like the following:

1. *greening everything, blending growing food with growing people — from an economic to an aesthetic with climate impact, including all material dealings*
2. *welfare for those hurt by the transition*
3. *extensively managing for 1 & 2, which is an incredible increase in the amount of management society needs*
4. *rethinking manufacturing cradle to grave cycling for reuse*
5. *arts & education enabling the culture of belief for 1-4; education so everyone participates, each one teach one.*
6. And we can add 6 — the enlightened use of leisure.

## Going Deeper

The question can be put this way: can we come up with a religion (re-ligion, re-tie) that is satisfactory to critical thought from most points of view, that integrates honesty, as in the best of science, with the best in feeling, integrity, and decency, for humans and nature? The primary needs for humanity, growing food, finding a place to live, and developing meaning, call for integration of landscape to mindscape. We are used to specialization and isolated conversations, but not in putting things together. We know there will be a post crisis world that will require that we change many habits, many assumptions. At first it looks like a tsunami of tragedy, but with rethinking it appears, with major costs, as an opportunity to deal with the problems we had anyway.

Science acts as if values distort clear thinking but nothing is more distorting that thought without interest. To make things happen you have to have interest. “The mind without the heart cannot affirm anything” wrote Ibn Kaldun.<sup>16</sup>

Kenneth Burke spent his life looking at how literature informs us about real conditions people live with. What he called “scene/act ratio”, can be helpful in thinking about what Gardenworld can be.<sup>17</sup> The scene contains implicitly what can be performed there. In the theater when the curtain opens you can sense from the stage set what is likely to happen. Here are a few that already set our stage:

- Temperatures are rising, in all places, and in all seasons.
- More water is pulled from the earth and returns as stronger storms.
- Species are in decline.

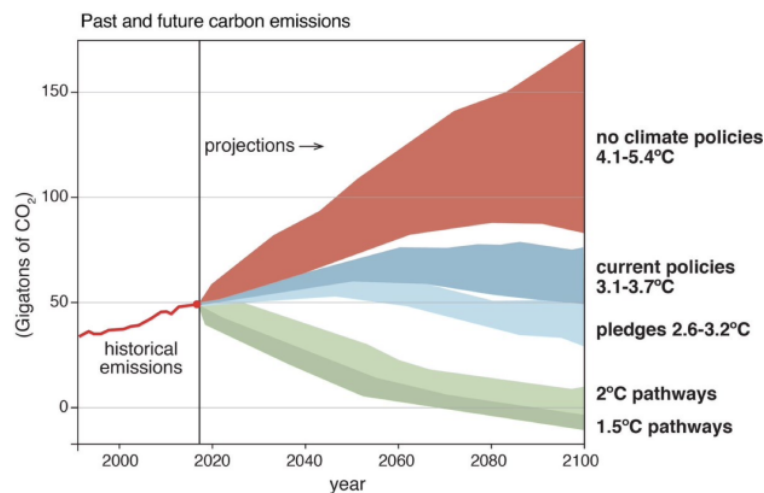
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<sup>16</sup> For a modern systems interpretation see Michael Klaton *The Clash Of Gaia and Homo Sapiens*.

<sup>17</sup> Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives*.

- The economy is brutalizing some to maintain the lifestyle of the rest. This is true for plants and animals, especially farm animals, as well as brutalizing humans.
- Strong current policy proposals: use less energy, eat less meat, fly fewer miles, don't quite add up to what is needed.
- Old land use divided the world into parcels that no longer fit needs or desires.
- Young people are confused about school, career, and children.
- We are increasingly aware of the extent and fragility of systems.
- Caring for each other depends on the culture - the ethos - we live in.

The mess we are in includes this next graph<sup>18</sup>. A key new fact is that 1.5 degrees is already catastrophic in a number of places on the earth however just as now some places are already unlivable, some places out to the limit of the graph in 2100, will remain liveable. For those places, renewing civilization depends on Gardenworld as the guide for the immediate future by coping in the near term with the need for food, habitat and organization, and meaning all of which are likely to evolve to new, maybe unrecognizable, forms.



Implicit in this graph is the complicity of corporations creating it, the failure of governance to regulate the path, and the manipulation of the people by the media to be consumers rather than citizens, making us incapable of systems thinking. Given the urgency of the problems, the fact that so little is happening is distressing. Theodore Roszak in his then popular book *The Voice of the Earth*, “Today we have reports of ozone depletion, toxic waste and the greenhouse effect. co2 released into the atmosphere is increasing and the prognosis for plastics is that there will be much more.” This was written in 1989!

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<https://ourworldindata.org/uploads/2018/04/Greenhouse-gas-emission-scenarios-01-1536x1059.png>

We have used our talent to make a civilization out of our dependence on oil and coal, and encouraged population growth for more soldiers, more workers, and more consumers. We are fragmented and lack leverage to change anything and many choose to just hold on. We are supposed to be a democracy and a democracy responds to the needs of the people. But we have representative democracy where we get to vote, not on issues that concern us, but for candidates the system of nominations presents to us as choices. It isn't working. The news channels, owned almost exclusively by a few large corporations, seem to provide "news" but many themes are left out as editors understand what the bosses want and don't want. The better news outlets give us facts, but not all of them.<sup>19</sup> It is much easier to see where we are on the material plane than the cultural or political because material things are present to the senses - sight, touch, hearing, smells even. But the more important part of "where are we", culture, is invisible and has to be inferred from what people say and the way the material things are handled. This is crucially important for thinking about the future because, under the pressure of cascading events, there is likely to be a major shift in the way people treat each other and things. The shift from the Christian culture of Europe to the market and merchant culture and on to colonization to globalization, driven by the flow of money, is the kind of change we should anticipate, maybe even in some ways welcome.

We might have continued on in a slower path without the discovery of coal and then oil, the dark invisible matter underground. The world was kind of OK before the discovery of coal and its uses as steam to run machines and heat houses in cold winters.<sup>20</sup>

Where are we also requires that we see where we are in the long view. We are on a planet that is not stable, but has been through many cold and hot spells, with major shifts in atmosphere, earthquakes, hurricanes and occasionally hit by large asteroids and even enduring flips in the magnetic orientation of north and south, and the slow motion collision of tectonic plates. We know there are going to be major effects but we don't know enough about their distribution in space and time. It is for this reason that a major piece of guidance coming from Gardenworld is, whatever else, build for flexibility, redundancy and living with changing core ideas. A rising ocean should not be a threat unless, as we have, we built mortgaged sandcastles with no rising tide in mind.

We are not educated by government nor corporations nor media to grasp the scope of eight billion people living on the edge, and while the general population is fairly well informed they appear to be passive, even stupid, not because they are not smart or thinking it through, but because they cannot imagine possible solutions that won't also disrupt their lives. People are appalled by the lack of leadership in the form of compassionate guidance on what to do. Those close to the top suffer from the same hesitancy - why say

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<sup>19</sup> see Michael E. Mann's *New Climate War*

<sup>20</sup> . Malm, Andreas-Fossil Capital\_ The Rise of Steam-Power and the Roots of Global Warming-Verso (2016)

anything if you have no idea of what to actually do adequate to the problem and might cost you your quality of life?

We lack imagination about the simplest effects like burning the gas from one car's gas tank is about 200 lbs (200) of CO<sub>2</sub> put into the air. And then we have several billion vehicles. We have a fairly corrupted business community seeking advantage at the obvious cost to the rest. The corporations have done their best to keep us hostile to change. We now have a chess board of complex gaming for life where we used to see a simpler checkerboard. The simpler game of going to school, getting a job, and having a family has turned to the much more complicated game of near daily re-contracting for work, place to live, how to spend time, and who with. Half the population in the US live alone. We have a generation - those between 60 and 80 (or more) the majority that has no savings (only half of those have social security) and are retiring or being fired into an increasingly expensive world.

Homelessness is increasing while most of the land is in protected private property. This is a serious failure of an economy. The increasing homeless are confined to interstices between the freeways, downtowns and the railroad tracks. One solution is to put homeless and migrants in hotel rooms. But they can't do anything constructive there. Using open land would provide some opportunities for creative action. An excellent proposal for the migrants along the Border is to set them up in small businesses,

Here is a thought about how to start an economy within the camps. Residents could be given less than \$5 per day for spending money. Goodwill and other charities could donate clothes, toys, pots and pans. Residents could buy these items or improve them and sell them. Craft activities in the camps -- pottery, wood and metal working -- could make new items under the guidance of skilled crafts people. Gardens and animal husbandry could be taught and practiced in the camps, perhaps by retired 4H members. Similar services are available to current US residents through the YMCA, church groups and other voluntary associations. Ideally the residents of the camps will organize similar activities when they return to their home countries. - Stuart Umpleby, email

I like this because it is a Gardenworld start. More along this line showing the power of imaginative and compassionate leadership, is the Brazilian city of Curitiba: example. Give kids bus tokens for picking up trash. A holistic approach - give everyday people bus tokens to pick up trash which allows them to get groceries which leads to support for education.

Christianity as love of neighbor, or at least some felt compassion, seems nostalgically gone. The christian community yearns for a bygone simplicity of life, property and security that never existed - and was never part of the christian vision. Most people fell for the opportunities of local advantage, ignoring those who are ghettoized, incarcerated, or rich. Somehow WW1, WW 2, the cold war, nuclear threat - are, by most people, conveniently forgotten. Nuclear family structures that excluded a variety of informal, intergenerational mentors -- all gone in homes with just two career oriented parents. Local

advantages in the quality of neighborhood and schools and family connections worked for a minority of the population, those with good schooling, help from parents, good connections, and let's face it, luck of health, employment and spouse, while we thought it worked for most, and they are in debt.

Debt is considered by many to be the main social fact of our current situation. Debt is weird. People are aware of being in debt but not aware that what they pay goes to the rich who are protected by the media. The national debt is also for many of the rich a natural resource, a constantly flowing stream of wealth protected by the military and the police. School teaches skills for jobs but not the benefits of being an owner or entrepreneur.

This is just one part of a very complicated pattern of paying and receiving, that is part of the governance and stability of society. But it is not working. To make it work will require taking apart much of the laws and regulations we have, taxation and employer- labor contracts for example, and that seems impossible politically. To create stability, how much does a society need an educated elite? If so, how are they to be educated and how rewarded? Elites may be necessary, but they then take over the development of the planet for their own benefit.

Private property is a key part of the modern state, but actually quite recent. Kings owned the whole society. Ministers and parliaments struggled for some share. The ownership of property is the result of struggle, competition, cheating, luck. And the result has been treated as a collection of rights, but never total as some sovereignty remains with the state. *Private* comes from Latin, *privatus*, meaning to remove from the public, and it should be treated as a dead thing because it has lost its community connection. *Property*, so central to modern life, starts as “proper” in showing the rank of a person in society. What begins as a social sign, a sword, a mode of dress, became something to be bought and sold. Property has a continually evolving history, dependent on man made laws, which makes it amenable to more rethinking.

Property still tells the world who we are. If property in land gets repurposed for Gardenworld toward food and habitat, many asset owners will be threatened, especially those with current political power. Working through this requires something very hard — to shift our pleasures from owning to cooperating, from material stuff to prioritizing relationships — with people, animals and plants - and all the rest of nature. Circumstances will force that, but may lead, instead of to cooperation and care, to mafias and militarization. Transitioning will mean changing what Erich Fromm called our social character — the social conditions which organize our ways of being. While childhood is important in creating the person, much still happens as the person adapts to the needs of a particular economy.

As you can feel, issues are interrelated. The deaths from COVID and future virus attacks and the deaths from climate turbulence affect pretty much the same populations. The future is undecided but many seem hopeful on getting the economy back where it was, but others are taking the opportunity to



rethink basic institutions into a political effort to actually do anything. The working consensus is that a good society is a capitalist democracy. The coming months will show we're in a blender with everything up for rethinking and experimentation.

***“The old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.”***

— Antonio Gramsci

## **The whole**

Society has never taken up the challenge of managing the whole, though I just learned that the Chinese , *jing li*, for economics came from the Japanese and meant — long ago — managing for the benefit of all. This amazingly parallels the greek economy where the *nomos*, meant, in early Greek, “equal distribution”. This seemingly trivial detail is important because, as the church lands gave way to state or private ownership, it kept the idea of an intact eco, home, and its management, *nomos*. The idea of economy as a realm within but not equivalent to, society, has its roots here. This requires some deep rethinking as we move toward a different future.

Three sets of interrelated issues describe our current sad state:

- ***Fossil fuel impact on the climate, oceans, health and food***
- ***Political erosion of democratic principles and ideals***
- ***Culture which prioritizes exploitation before cooperation***

People have always added an aesthetic dimension to what they create, even in a simple project like planting a row of lettuce, a pile of books in the living room or a pattern of pebbles outside the entrance to a grass hut. Gardenworld is not just work and rest. It is time with friends, dinners, and conversation. We have grown too used to human input from the screen. That output from the screen is not affected by our presence. The circle of two humans in interaction is broken. Our health and development require a return to visceral relationships where what you say affects me and you observe me with your body. Climate breakdown, natural and industry induced, has social implications on the way the environment supports where people live, how they are to eat, their morale, and culture. Climate breakdown will produce migrations and threaten existing relationships.

One major reform will be land use whose owners resists change while they are buying more land world wide, betting on the rise of food prices. Private property in land used to exist along with public spaces such as national parks, local civic centers, sidewalks, and country roads used to lead past fields. No one complained if you walked or picnicked. The cost now of entering a “public” park is a real limitation to the life possibilities of ordinary people. Same with

the art museums that in my youth were free and now maybe \$25. In Catholic countries the poorest person had the right to enter the cathedrals and experience the high end of the art, sculpture, music and architecture of civilization. Today, in most places, no such access exists.

Rethinking land use is in our future and we should see it as an opportunity. Land use is one of the key issues for the future, driven by new population, climate breakdown, and changing sources of energy trending toward local energy production – which requires land for solar (good) or biofuels (bad). The Democratic and Republican leadership never mention this issue. Even “housing” goes unmentioned in discussions of climate. The hope of those well adapted to the present is that technical and regulatory solutions will emerge – and we will not have to do anything. But the reality is that increased population and climate breakdown will force the need for stronger and uncomfortable action. We face solutions that are likely to feel more like Schumpeter’s “creative destruction” than happy expansion into the green economy. The participants are not looking for repetition but for the new innovation that tears apart the old. Creative destruction is what capitalism, despite the mainstream economists, does.<sup>21</sup>

At the simplest, simply turning downward the rising curves of inequality (taxes) and environmental degradation (strong regulations) would be sufficient for a vast increase in hope, but still leave lots of disruption to cope with.

*The merry-go-round economy,  
working for those who are in it,  
but marginalizes those who are not.*

With the climate crisis no one is going to be safe. This book is based on the core idea that we have lost a shared vision of the future. Democracy and technology no longer seem to reliably mobilize hope, but, increasingly, fear. The economy is the dominant factor in our lives, but the economy and economics are determined in large part to what is happening in the larger society: capitalism, class divides, gender anger, life destroying inequality.

This book is an invitation to your participation in the extraordinary task of making a civilization that provides quality of life for all at a time when expectations are collapsing. We have been very smart about seizing opportunities but those opportunities have turned out usually to work for some against the interests of others. We have not been smart about the social consequences of what we do.<sup>22</sup> Most conversations among “leaders” are tactical. Strategic conversations - by which I mean talk about important goals and how to reach them - never happen. The result is, we are scrambling.

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<sup>21</sup> Schumpeter was one of the most creative economists of the 20th century.

<sup>22</sup> For a very readable and instructive overview see Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement* for an analysis that blends literary culture with climate seriousness.

The immediate future will disrupt how we work, where we live, and, if we are not successful, changes will be imposed on us. If we are successful, huge changes will have been implemented by us.<sup>23</sup>

If we are to experiment wisely, it is important to know the history of gardens, farming, and agriculture (they are not the same). The struggle by urban populations to force farmers to a smaller reward has been a part of civilization. The rhetoric of the populist movements of the 1880's is very close to that of the Trump supporters. Such a movement is happening in much of the world, such as the largest protest in human history with the Sikh farmers in India since fall of 2020. Lots of old guard unraveling and exposed. Farming life has been hard hit as villages have been replaced by miles of uninhabited agribusiness. Gardenworld is based on the hope that the need for food, especially locally produced, will lead to fairness and cooperation as new communities emerge on the edge of newly repurposed farmland and abandoned urban lots.

Freeman Dyson argues persuasively that three facts will take us toward a new green civilization: solar energy, which is vastly distributed; genomic innovations which can create crops that otherwise would not grow; and the Internet which connect everyone and make knowledge of solar distribution and genomic innovations more widely available. When thinking about tech and Gardenworld we have to reflect on the possibility that, if we lose the grid for energy and communication, we might not have the tech to worry about. No chips, no computers, no Internet.

Dyson does not touch on this issue of governance which will be the central concern of Gardenworld communities. The tendency is toward centralization of wealth and power through the use of technology. How inevitable is this? Are we locked into a move towards soft fascism, or is more democracy still a real possibility? Dyson's argument is typical of technological enthusiasts: our solution, widely adopted, will solve the problems.

Nature looks at all the contingencies that are present in its living field. As a result biological "evolution" is much slower but more accurate than technical "evolution." Understanding what are often called "secondary consequences" will be very important in the future, or the population will turn against tech in destructive rage (It has happened before, from the principled Luddites to those who murdered Lavoisier).

Let's face it; technologies replace the complex with the simple. No human invention is more complex than a frog or even a blade of grass. The machine is designed to be coherent without reference to its full environmental effects. But the frog or blade of grass is clearly part of a whole system of which the

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<sup>23</sup> Beck, Ulrich *The metamorphosis of the World* Society is changing rapidly, caterpillar to butterfly and we can't imagine what will come.

foreground and background are intimately interwoven with seasons, predators and prey, and landscape.

There are several major problems for civilization that Gardenworld might improve, ranging from hierarchies that are out of touch and/or perhaps not needed, lack of meaningful roles for much of the adult population - and children - to problems of complexity. Some argue that technologies are neutral, but almost all invention is done with a market in mind (Or, in earlier times, to attract the support of Kings and ministers, not bakers, bricklayers nor mothers). There is a web of feedback such that as society chooses technologies, society changes, which in turn changes its priorities for new technologies. The result is not a clear causal chain but a true mess of feedbacks and resistances. A few sellers, a few buyers, and a trend can be set. Take tobacco and compare the incredible costs and the extraordinary effort that society had to take to reverse a decision made by a minority of the population as what was ceremonial in the Native American World, became big business, stimulating slavery and shipping and land settlement (The first slaves were brought to the US for tobacco farming) in the British Empire.

Stories of the deep penetration of a new tech in the society is not a story of decisions taken either in a democratic or a more authoritarian way, but based on the small number of decisions made by critically placed people, decisions amplified by the “ah ha’s” of multitudes seeing local opportunities, such as having a car, a cigarette, or a cell phone, and avoiding thinking about systemic costs. The railroad is a good example of how an invention, improved over time, provided the opportunity, and then men with means brought together political and economic arrangements to make the railroads happen. The outcome was social good and social damage.<sup>24</sup>

In traditional societies leaders feel themselves to be part of a culture and community, and the choices they make reflect shared tastes while also enhancing their power. The leaders and the led remain part of a coherent culture of interdependencies. Things cohere. The leaders can see from their windows the people, the essential farmers, and potential soldiers, all those the leaders are counting on to enhance the city. Industrialization maintained this pattern because it required workers and it required managers to hold together complex systems.

Late industrialization broke apart the interdependencies of industrial owners with managers and workers – first to be noticed were the missing workers, then the disappearing managers, but they really lost out together, as we now see in the shrinking middle of so many who used to feel quite secure.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> see the wonderful exploration of the early observers of the railroads in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden*. The choice was made by the economic opportunity which engendered new economic opportunity – realistically available to only a few.

<sup>25</sup> Castells, Manuel *Rupture and Aftermath*

We do not have any democratic mechanism for deciding what technologies will dominate society. People used to define themselves as citizens where voting was the way they made their important choices. Today that identity is fading and replaced by that of the consumer who makes choices with dollars. The technologies that win do so because of the dollar votes of corporations.

The imagination of the reader can further integrate how the quantification of society and money, the mechanization of things, and the impoverishment of people all go together. Dee Hock, who started VISA said: "The purpose of business is to separate the consumer from the conditions of production." That is, bad working conditions and environmental impacts are part of the cycle but unseen.

Key trends associated with our current economy, especially the marginalization and impoverishment of too many people and the destructive effects on the environment, are not reversible under the current rules because the motives are huge payoffs in dollars and power.

We need a differently configured system for the development and deployment of technologies, a complex path large enough to be a viable alternative. It is not going to be sufficient to just add on mechanisms which alter the balance but keep the current forces the same. Most engineering and science students have some view that technology and science will be of human benefit. Probably neither democracy nor a government of the expert elites can make adequate choices about technology. Democracy does not frame the issues, while elites frame the issues for their own career enhancing interests. Here we are on the leading edge of the need for new thinking about governance.

## **Politics**

We live in a fragmented society and what we wanted to achieve by democracy -- managing conflict and shared quality of life - is not happening. Policy without force, of voting, street protests, or armed intervention will not happen. Politics has been the center of social innovation since tribes became settlements, but technology has undone this dominance, and it may be that technology, in combination with elites and finance that use it, is the determining tide of our lives now. We tend to think of politics as being policy and voting, but political thinking is concerned with conflict and its resolution. The modern form is manipulation through media and the shadow presence of the police state. The question of what is just is obscured. The role of money and its abstract consensus is the modern form of power, always backed by the police and military powers of the state. How will these work out in Gardenworld?

Politics is the core of western social thought. Aristotle and Plato saw politics as the place where families intersected, through friendships, in their interests. They developed a large body of thought about how politics functioned and how it changed over time. This tradition, not completely forgotten, is studied by a very small number of people. The US Constitution is an example of how

this tradition bore new fruit. We just need lots more of this kind of thinking and the education to get us there.

The major political issue in this century may be technology. Amazon and Facebook and Google and Apple, are the new core of war, economy, the environment, and poverty. Nanotechnology, hydrogen cells and biotech for medicines, foods, and growing things like continuous wood panels, will arrive rapidly to the extent the current society can function. The issue is that these technologies will be mechanisms of money transfer to the owners, not social benefit. They are high-cost investments, and owners will seek power and rewards. In order to work these technologies, of course, must attract enough customers, managers, and regulators, but that will always be a subset of society, not the whole. Every change (and not changing) has winners and losers.

As we face climate breakdown we can see how hard it is to make changes because the losers, in that case, traditional lines of business, have a lot, they perceive, to lose. Absent political and social changes, technical proposals to climate disruption are inadequate. Solar power, nuclear power, agricultural innovations, sequestering technologies, or planting co2 absorbing landscapes on their own will not improve outcomes.

The “what should we do?” conversations in Gardenworld will be deeply political. The classical tradition went so far as to say that being political is not only the necessary center of social life, but is desirable because participation develops the people because the serious questions are in play: who are we, what is the good life, and how do social arrangements support that good life?

Politics, starting with Aristotle, occurs when you have more than one family. New issues emerge around use of land, and friendships with interests. “In the family we are all communists” but cooperative sharing does not move easily into a larger community. We have neglected the reading of political philosophy, history and analysis, for example, in the US few have read the founding documents such as the Federalist and anti-federalist papers nor de Tocqueville. We do not know much about the history of political thought, such as the influence of monastic management on group decision making.

Avoiding 2 degrees and staying below it needs draconian moves<sup>26</sup>, ones the politicians are not acting on. Remember, the agreed upon “goal” is 350 ppm of co2. It is also consensus that we will not get there before serious climate heating occurs. If somehow we mandated no fossil fuel heating of homes and offices, we would get a rapid cascade of chaos. If we had no gas for food deliveries, the population would be on the edge of starvation in 48 hours. Without such a nudge to deal with systemic issues in an integrated way it is likely that we keep drifting. Proposals to substitute fuels misses the issue of extracting such fuels. If coal and oil are available, black markets will distribute them.

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<sup>26</sup> Draco, Athenian leader who strengthened the court system with severe laws.



Let's say we are able to bring the price of solar generated electricity below that of electricity generated by fossil fuels. This leaves several important questions:

As mentioned above, who pays for replacing the gas heater with an electric heater? That includes installation and remodeling costs as well as the cost for the device. The energy companies will work hard to make sure we generate that electricity with oil and gas — and more coal than we want to acknowledge. New laws are being passed to disallow gas in new buildings, but that does not affect the homes currently using gas. The number of new electric heaters that would have to be manufactured for these is on the order of 50–100 million for the US, and what of half the world that still cooks on open fires? Such manufacturing will produce more pollution and use even more energy. The process requires old technologies of mining the minerals and producing the plastics that go into manufacturing these units, let alone transporting them from mine to factory, and from the factory to homes. There are many parallel questions with major effects and these questions will turn into conflicts that will need to be lived with and worked through.

Draconian moves will take shape as seemingly small interruptions with major consequences. Politicians just are not going to do this — yet. Perhaps such moves enable the public, society, and institutions to move towards a different way of living. Consider the following ways of cutting fossil fuels:

As of the first of next month, no more air travel. Well, many people are not at home, but traveling. Do we allow them to return? If they all tried in the days remaining in the month there are not enough flights to do this. And how many would game the system? And would the ground and flight crews show up? Of course there would be a legal response. But this is the kind of action that will be needed to shake up the system and force a move toward meeting the 2 degree (or perhaps 1.5 degree) goal. The FAA could do this, though legal responses to try to prevent it would happen in hours.

Other possible draconian moves, things that must be done.

\*No fuel for trucks as of next month. No food delivered at any distance. Total chaos. Part of our failure of governance is it is not clear that this could be done, even if necessary. Perhaps the Food and Drug Administration working with the Interstate Commerce Commission could do this. But very unlikely as no leader could bring about that coordination except the President, or a military coup.

\*No going to jobs that are not contributions to survival or rebuilding new society. Who decides?

\*No fuel for heating homes. If a home can't be heated, why pay the mortgage? Banks fail. Cascading effects will swamp the current system. Politics as we know it cannot deliver these actions. Discussion and policy do not lead to action.

What about a popular revolt? Would a popular revolt have such goals in mind, or merely use violence to get the resources to continue a few more months, maybe even days? A popular revolt would be met by the power of the state — if the National Guard would show up. Unlikely. Any uprising would lead to local chaos which would lead to the emergence of mafia-like local strong men “We provide you with security, you provide us with goods.” If there are any left after 48 hours. Production ceases, storage would be used up.

## **Technology - Finance - Governance**

It should be clear that these three are intertwined in a way that prevents change, change that is needed to keep society viable. The promise of the tech is thwarted by financial policies that subordinate social well being to class interests, the use of tech, not to enhance society’s well being but to capture profit. They are high-cost investments, and owners will seek power and rewards. In order to work these technologies, of course, must attract enough customers, managers, and regulators, but that will always be a subset of society, not the whole. Every change (and not changing) has winners and losers.

The standard alignment of technology with “progress” is unfortunate. “Progress” is highly aligned with growth for the sake of profit, not the real progress of quality of life. Gardenworld enters in with biases toward well being, human development and peaceful times. It is a smokescreen for hiding the social costs of financializing the economy, change that often leads to wars, pollution, and the trashing of communities. The processes of change really are supported and encouraged by a small part of the population. This argument is hard here because most of the readers of this book are in that minority, a minority that makes its living through inventing, implementing, selling and maintaining change. The idea of progress, with its thrust toward the future, makes all “present” less interesting, discountable. Merely reproducing the present is not a project of much good for those who live by growth alone. Better would be selecting from what we have what we really want, and make more of it. It might be leisure, art, relationships and thinking about the meaning of life and our own contribution to it. If we could free up technology from “progress” we could use it to enhance life, not replace it.

Part of this is the political question of who decides and who benefits. Elites have always used tech to control and exploit the population, win wars and look good. Elites are open to pressure, including revolts, to rebalance. The issue of balancing so that the environment and humans both survive – and thrive – will require smart design and lots of tolerance in policymaking. Bucky Fuller once wrote “We have the planet and a few billion people. Putting them together is just a design problem.” Over-reliance on protecting old institutional structures will get in the way of needed experimentation. Yet the old often contains unrealized possibilities. The great spoiler of our better future would be increasing polarization of over consumers and those who cannot afford any consumption, much less preservation. The technology issues get at the core of

the existential questions: who we are, what we can do with our lives that make sense. Narrow technical/financial choices are to be avoided.

Finance as the mechanism to make capital in the social system available for projects has been our ideology. In fact, it was created by people who held previous profit as capital and wanted to make more with it. The story that capital funding projects for the population that desired goods is belied by the history that says early finance was mobilized to lend money to Kings for national wars. Yet the system more or less worked.

It is important to notice how climate crisis and social structure are interwoven. The social contract, our implicit rules that ties us all together is broken as are the underlying laws. There is no meaningful ethos. Elites needed workers in agricultural and industrial society, but maybe no longer. If we are to survive, nature and humans need to work together, with their dignity enhanced, in mutual respect and perhaps even love.

The problem is, this kind of operation continues the process of making the rich richer without much work (having become rich the game is to lend money) and helps continue the bad distribution of wealth in society. In this transaction, technology is seen not as a way to solve social problems, but as a way to make money.

Technology, helping put the society at risk in terms of wealth, is giving it a bad name. Technology advocates, in fact, seem unaware of the negative consequences most non-technologists have a feel for. The obvious bad technologies: Hiroshima, Chernobyl, thalidomide, pollution, climate breakdown, and the dominance of finance based on computerization.

Perhaps it's worth remembering, "The invention of agriculture was the first act of what we call technology. The Greek word *techne* not only described a form of knowledge (*logos*), as we have seen; it is also the abstract form of *tikto*, to "generate" or "engender." Men, like the gods, were the *teknos*, the creators, and what they made, the *tekna*, were their creations. The simple act of cultivation thus marked the beginning not only of humans' independence from nature but of their long struggle to make themselves masters of nature.

The distribution of income needs to make up for the disruptions from cutting CO2. The way we align habitat and gardens will conflict with the politics of private land ownership. We need to let these complexities emerge. Ideas and human energy and circumstances must come together if any major change is to happen. The first need will be to avoid fear and create hope that we can cope and even in crucial weavings enhance the quality of life. For something major to happen ideas, human energy (in very large numbers) and circumstances must be aligned. Peter Drucker wrote we can have "a new era of faster, smaller, more "flexible" structures that engage in a "continuous process" of organizational evolution."

We are fragmented and brittle, not coherent nor flexible. Technology has been organized by large monopoly platforms and decentralization lost out<sup>27</sup>. This is part of a struggle, continuous throughout history between large and small, between individuals and the community. Vibrant communities need vibrant people. Vibrant people need vibrant communities. This will continue in Gardenworld. The dream of a world that works for everyone has been repeatedly pushed out of consideration. But it does reemerge. And all along the way there have been revolts but usually self destructive and incomplete.

We are living in the broken arc of the incomplete French Revolution which gave us Napoleon and a restoration of the monarchy rather than the promised democracy and a more equal economy. We are living in the fainting shadow of a Romantic reaction against mechnization, industrailization, pollution and wage slavery, a reaction that started with poets and workers who rebelled against the dark satanic mills of the industrial fatories and wanted a world of fuller lives and being more at home in a liveable world. That cultural movement was cut short because the new industrialization with jobs and products was so attractive - though it also led to WW1 because the drive for markets and raw materials controlled our fate.

So the conditions now, with all our breakdowns and wealth upwards, seem ripe for a more compassionate and democractic culture. Elites have been broken apart by the networking of everyone made possible by the Internet<sup>28</sup> This breakdown of institutions and the responses — democratic and authoritarian — will take time to work out, time we really do not have. We are approaching the down ramp from COVID but certainly we are already on the up ramp for climate turbulence (increased energy in the atmosphere means more dynamics, wider swings as well as the upward trend). Leadership is largely absent. We have as yet no shared world comprehensive strategy for COVID that is strong enough to succeed and no strategy for climate turbulence that deals with underlying realities of energy companies and banks. Policies aren't proposing what specific lines of action, starting with right now, that governments should do.

We can't direct our efforts without a vision beyond just seeing what is wrong or not working? A coherent vision must go beyond the "re" words of re-construction, re-novation, re-storation, all of which are conserving views, like "sustainability", and not sufficient to get us through and onward with new structures of living and governance. The earth obviously cannot take on an affluent life of consumption for all. More fundamental changes are necessary. But so far we are fighting ourselves. Just as it is clear we need fundamental change to avoid interdependent catastrophes, many are working to maintain their current activity in order to remain viable. People do not like what they see but want to keep from changing. At the same time many are making plans for what they see as a post crisis opportunity, not only to rebuild what was lost,

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<sup>27</sup> Manuel Castels, *Aftermath and Rupture*

<sup>28</sup> ibd

but to earn larger profits. These efforts get in the way, potentially lethally, of real possibilities of a new social contract, a new constitutional order, a new civility, new community.

Are we going to keep the current systems (corporations, representative democracy, population increase) when it is clear they are producing serious failures? Roberto Unger makes the strong case that most progressive thinking stops short of structural change: law, property, governance, laid out in his challenging book, *The Knowledge Economy*. See his chapter 18, including the imperative of Structural Vision.

We can imagine a better future that is organized around the way we solve the major problems of food, habitat, and meaning. Taking all three together is easier than one at a time. I call this approach Gardenworld. **It is not a plan but an intent to be worked out at every part of society.** We need to manage the earth for human habitat and that requires, because our interdependencies are so strong, managing for the good of all species.

In Gardenworld, if they understand the idea, people will bring an aesthetic sense to how they implement their efforts around food and home. How we live, organize, and care for each other and the environment, from the design of space to the design of governances and institutions should aim toward the beautiful, the attractive, the enjoyable, playful and inventive, and enhance the pragmatic shared tasks of providing food and habitat.

Along with the need for material solutions for survival, we need the conditions for growing attractive lives. People need to be in the context of each other. Society's evolution, from bands of hunter gatherers moving through nature to the consumer's isolated house and apartment living, surrounded by things, is not healthy and people will rebel by embracing destructive anger and attraction to chaos. People need the sense of heart-felt and continuous relationships with each other in meaningful shared dramas. The shared project of designing, experimenting and building Gardenworld might be our best hope. Otherwise many will take satisfaction in being destructive. We have isolated each other into school, work, and home at great psychological cost. Gardenworld can bring these together into meaningful communities .

Here is a quartet of pictures<sup>29</sup> just to make Gardenworld possibilities more believable and that we are not limiting to backyard gardens nor large scale agribusiness.

An old Chinese village with no motorized vehicles and lots of things to see safely, , more than in our modern cities.

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<sup>29</sup> Google image search for gardens



Central Park in NY hinting at the dependency of civilization and parks on each other.



This Gardenworld scales well and is terrific across the human life cycle.  
From University of Georgia.



Remember the idea of Gardenworld is a guide to intent, not a specific plan.  
Details will be worked out locally and with huge variation, as fits a world of learning and experimentation.

We can start slow.





There's an old vignette of leadership in India to learn from. Three successive kings asked their viceroys what they could do for the betterment of their people. The first forgave all debts and taxes, the second opened abundant access to grain storage, and the third released all prisoners from jail. Dealing with all three trends in our time, Covid, warming and population, requires an ethos and imagination at least as powerful as the combined three kings, a new direction that is attractive and not just more growth in the modern sense of GDP. We need a tamed growth with a focus on legitimate growth that might increase quality of life.

## Philosophy

The early pre-Plato Greeks made education a key part of life preparing people to be citizens. Education was for all who were citizens and taken seriously "for a healthy mind in a healthy body. Our schools with classrooms and a gymnasium (the Greek word) is a pale version. . The core was logic, grammar and rhetoric along with geometry, arithmetic, music and astronomy. The Greeks made education the answer to important questions. Why are we here, what is the purpose of life? Their approach was observational, logical, and had to tell a story.

There was a remarkable school set up in Athens by Epicurus. He bought a house with a garden and he and students spent their time there, working the garden, conversing and enjoying life. The danger was a tendency to withdraw from politics which we can understand as a reaction to the messiness of politics in a declining age.

For Epicurus, the purpose of philosophy was to help people attain a happy (*eudaimonic*), tranquil life characterized by *ataraxia* (peace and freedom from fear) and *aponia* (the absence of pain). He advocated that people were best able to pursue philosophy by living a self-sufficient life surrounded by friends. He taught that the root of all human neurosis is death denial and the tendency for human beings to assume that death will be horrific and painful, which he claimed causes unnecessary anxiety, selfish self-protective behaviors, and hypocrisy. Wikipedia

This just touches on the significance of philosophical thinking and a style of questions that help form moral attitudes but avoided by modern science<sup>30</sup>

We are up against our entire western tradition of thinking which is central to the crisis. It is as if we need to rethink all of it. We have got ourselves in a tunnel into the future - and the roof is falling in. We need to back up and find an alternative path. We need to plow ahead and create a new path. We need both. If we read from the pre socratics through Plato and Aristotle and the pythagoreans and to the roman social thinkers like Cicero and on through the church history of Aquinas and many more whose names most of us have never heard of through Bruno whom they burnt at the stake and Galileo who pushed feeling into a secondary reality and lets say to Spinoza and Mchiavelli and Montaigne. All upset by Newton and on to Kant, Cassirer and Heidegger and Witgnstein and James's Pragmatism - we realize how wrong we have been and how hard it will be to do this rethinking. In a way the quest was always for solid ground - and there is none. We must live without, but the new way is more alive and that is the switch we need.

*We later civilizations, we too know we are vulnerable*

— Paul Valery, 1899

## Managing The Critical zone

Buno Latour has spent his life exploring how human life and nature are mutually involved. Recently he has emphasized the "Critical Zone" shifting politics to the defense and development of the "critical zone", that part of the universe contained in the thin layer, about two kilometers thick, proportionally thinner than the skin on an apple. All known life is there. Caring for it should be the world's management task. Focus on the critical Zone taken seriously means a return to the original meaning of economics, estate management, where now the estate is the world and the task is its management.<sup>31</sup>

The aim of Gadenworl is to find a path through major crises and we are caught between techno-authoritarianism and radical decentralization. Our task is to find a way to manage the critical zone and avoid isolationism. We need to find a way that avoids Tainter *Collapse of complex societies*, which means we must avoid too much complexity, and find a way that jettisons what we must to adequately, gracefully, manage the critical zone we live in.

Economics, returning to its Greek root as "estate management" and the estate became god's dominion in the medieval period, and with the decline of the god idea ,the estate became ours to mess up or manage. Bruno Latour has tried to

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<sup>30</sup> For serious follow up, Early Greek Philosophy, the Great Courses at audible.com is terrific.

<sup>31</sup> Bruno Latour *Down to Earth* and [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth%27s\\_critical\\_zone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth%27s_critical_zone)

refocus our efforts on “the critical zone, that thin skin of air and earth that contains all the known life in the universe, and it is ours to take care of, or go AWOL.

Repurposing tech, if we still have the energy and functioning equipment to keep its development going, will require managers with not just technical knowledge but knowledge of whole systems, of history and politics, economy and culture. Management will be central.

Better integrating humans and earth will require management and managers at the global level, with power to enforce world wide decisions. The role management plays now lacks a social goal, being focused mainly on the profit of the owners and top managers. Management, accounting and economics were neatly divided into three siloed university departments so that social concerns would not speak through them for the society. Friedrich Hayek (not an attractive personality), a key figure in creating neo liberal economics, wanted to prevent the people, acting through democracy and the state, to thwart the ideology of the free market. “I trade with you and we are both free.” What this leaves out is things like those who are richer can borrow at a cheaper rate and buy better information, and so can increase their wealth. Market transactions are not among equals.

But who starts this global “critical zone” management?, who convenes, and how? It might not be from the US, it maybe from China. We need to use any leverage that we have. It might just be that Silicon Valley has more credit worthiness with the world’s public than any other group and could propose coordination of big data to manage the whole. There are arguments that Silicon Valley has blown its leadership, but then so has any other potential group, so we must get beyond current failures to the surprising possibilities of serious success. There are strong reasons to not go down the big data path. It restricts local development and tends to create systems that people will want to own and control. An ethos of senior mature honest managers will be a great asset in dealing with the future as we face climate heating and the collapse of some of our institutions.

Remember Economics for the Greeks, who coined the word, meant estate management, and we need that now, where the earth is the estate and its management is the task.

### **Ethos: Care and Meaning**

Gardenworld is a project of reinvention, which includes redeeming our personal psyches where ethos is the atmosphere created by the moral values of people. Including climate, the world faces major problems: population, inequality, weakness of government to be able to deal with issues. You know the list. We hope that what we do for one or several issues will help, not hurt what we are doing for the other issues. Responding effectively will depend on a

practice of global systems management with openness to what newly emerges. Don't get defensive. The balance is up to people like all of us. A great practice is what the Jesuits call "discernment of spirits." At the end of the day remember from first to last the encounters you had with others, and just notice what the spirit of that meeting was. You need to make sure your sensitivity to what is emerging around you — in your family, community and the globe — is not just attuned to your preconceived plans and assumptions.

Transitioning will mean considering these questions: Where are we? How did we get here? What can happen? What should we do? When the future is unknown, we will need to design, plan and implement for extreme flexibility — in where we live and how and in what. When many of the important decisions for transitioning will emerge, we need guiding principles that ground our intent as we work towards pathways which integrate people and the earth.

Such principles could include the architect Chris Alexander's suggesting we chose what is lively over what is deadening. It includes Erich Fromm's discussions of how social arrangements, such as competitiveness and stress on self limit the development of character. And we could bring in how the Psychoanalyst Erik Erikson suggests a detailed view of the human life cycle can become a template against which to judge the value of social projects. Gardenworld will encourage us to study and reflect, developing an awareness of self and others, in many directions. The future could be for learners and lovers: self with self; self with others; self with all; all with all.

For example, an initial set of principles, a kind of new ten commandments that focus on ethics for the digital age, could include:

1. Each day do something for the person you know who is having the worst time.
2. Each day do something for the person you know \*of\* who is having the worst time.
3. Each day do something about the very worst situation you know about (it's ok to be myopic — just do it) in the world.
4. Network the resulting projects.
5. Teach others to participate.
6. Leave your local habitation more beautiful, at the end of the day, than you found it. Do something about it.
7. Do something, each day, to weave the tapestry of community conversations, consciously, by having at least one conversation you would not have otherwise.
8. Create culture with your children.

9. Study harder beyond current affairs or narrow professions.

10. Smile honestly and enjoy this life, even in its worst moments.

Other candidates for thoughtfulness. · Be careful on reading adds · Put Relationships before materialships · Hate or anger is a sign of not seeing strategically · Love may mean narrowing of focus · Stay healthy · Respect other's gods · Bring others into your conversations · Speak with intent · The way up and the way down are the same · Eating towards health · breathing towards relaxed · Sex towards love · politics towards inclusions and community · foreign affairs towards delight · business towards refreshing · money towards real use and beauty · art towards beauty and revelation · movement towards grace · friendship towards depth · language towards quality · education towards complexity · childhood towards fullness · lies towards the minimum · violence towards comprehension · architecture towards the hospitable · reading towards the uncomfortable · science towards the real unknown · sleep towards dreams · work towards meaning · self at times towards others · at times towards the whole · and you will be natural

We probably need new forms of action that take place outside the existing constitutional and legal structures of government. In practice, this will mean deepening our understanding of the human and our place in life and death by asking who are we? What do we want? How do we thrive? We need an ethics that takes caring seriously but also includes some aspects of science: honesty, experimentalism, the legitimacy of questioning, and knowing there is no final state of culture but a continuing evolution as humans and circumstances interact. We should work towards a feeling of joy in participating, knowing that danger lies at the edges — and sometimes in our midst, this is not only ok, it is the dance life offers. In order “to make the frozen circumstances dance, we have to sing to them their own melody”<sup>32</sup>. Our task is to develop the melody the earth offers us and turn it into a culture. We need to live the questions, and this is the intent Gardenworld invites.

Remember:

- You need to cooperate, bring anyone you are meeting into the conversation
- Take care of those who are hurt
- Make all efforts help build toward survival and flexibility
- To the extent that you can, build toward Gardenworld (food, habitat and aesthetics)
- Try to think longer term

*It's really all about caring and meaning.*

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<sup>32</sup> Karl Marx, from *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*)

## Curtain Call on References

Some books that influenced the direction of Gardenworld beyond those in the footnotes.

Setting the scene is Joseph Tainter's powerful 1990 book *The Collapse of Complex Societies* makes clear that the problems we face are aligned with long standing problems. Civilizations collapse because the increasing costs of complexity overtake increases in productivity. The elites are the elites because they own the infrastructure of the state (as in GE, Shell, and the Carlyle Group, ConAgra and Citicorp) and, when things start looking bad, instead of trying to fix the system, they ramp up their exploitation of it to get the cash to survive, by cutting costs, which further degrades the systems performance and capacity to innovate.

Wendy Brown's *End of the Demos* and James Baldwin's *Fire Next Time* are about the ends and futures of politics and show that our current problems align with other long standing ones

Charles Mann in his books *1491* and *1493* has challenged us about early history and how great empires lived differently in the Americas .

James c. Scott, *Against the Grain: a deep history of the early states*. with analysis of stone age culture and its resistance to settlement, preferring to live in the fecundity of seasonal plenty. There is much to this view and gaining readers.

Marshall Sahlins' *Stone Age Economy* is still a major contribution to rethinking core values.

Fragility of Goodness — Martha Nussbaum shows why being a good person is dependent on others

Manuel Castell's Aftermath shows why the internet took apart existing institutions

Wang Hui's *The End of the Revolution* shows how profound political thinking can be.

The Uninhabitable Earth — David Wallace Wells

Erich Fromm's The Sane Society shows the interdependence of society and individual development

Lewis Mumford's Technics and Civilization is in a long line of suggesting the need for simplification if we are to have relationships.

Amitav Gosh The Great Derangement gives an overview of what is at stake with climate volatility.

Customs in Common — E.P. Thompson's *Customs in Common* gives need history on how elites have treated the rest of society.

The Long Revolution — Raymond Williams' *The Long Revolution* show that the project of making a better world is long standing.

Mccarraher's *The Enchantment of Mammon, How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity* raises the issues of what's at stake for humanity. Writers like Simone Weil's *The Need for Roots* analyze deeper into the spiritual nature of society and its development. Aristotle's *On Generation and Corruption* explores how we can have development without growth. Dante's *Divine Comedy* shows a model of the depth we could go to understand the leading characters of our time and the possibilities of the future. There are so many books on what is wrong: Naomi Klein, for example, . Monbiot *Rewilding* suggests passionately we need a large part of the earth regenerated, Beck's *Metamorphosis* on how the changes in the world are systemic and unrecognizable.. Dartnell's *The Knowledge* talks about how to renew society after a collapse. Arrighi's *The Long Twentieth Century* is a fabulous history as is Malko's *Economics and its Discontents*. Kenneth Burke's *Grammar of Motives* discusses the scene-act ratio. Erich Fromm's *The Sane Society* and Gary Wills' *Inventing America* deal with the construction of society. Theodore Roszack's *Voice of the Earth* is a psychological exploration. Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. For great depth the many volumes of Erich Voegelin's political philosophy. And, as a reminder, Bruno Latour's *Down to earth*, on engaging in protecting the critical zone.

Tainter's *Collapse of Complex Societies* and Latour's *Down to Earth* are appropriate book ends for *Gardenworld Politics*. Rabinandhrath Tagore's works set the tone for the interaction of culture and people's lives.

Books such as these support our imagination and analysis about what is wrong and what could be better. People who avoid this kind of reading seem very limited in what they can sense as the possible next decades for humans and the earth. The future is hard work, but worth it.



Our thesis, not in words, but expressed in painting: Thomas Coles' *Course of Empire*. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Course\\_of\\_Empire\\_\(paintings\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Course_of_Empire_(paintings))



The Savage State



The Pastoral State



The Consummation



Destruction



Desolation

Rebuild.....