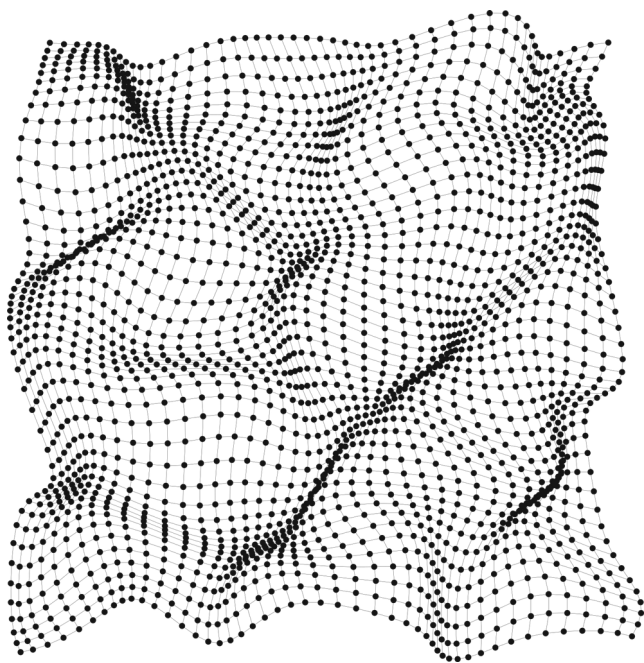


Inventing Sunsets

ENGLISH EDITION · 2026



Credits and licence

Inventing Sunsets

First edition, 2026

This work is distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution–NonCommercial–NoDerivatives 4.0 International licence (CC BY–NC–ND 4.0).

You may copy and redistribute this work free of charge, in its entirety and without modification, in any medium or format, provided that you acknowledge the title of the work and the licence.

Commercial use, modified versions and unauthorised translations may not be distributed.

Free digital edition.

Inventing Sunsets is meant to be read and shared. You may download it free of charge, keep a copy and share it.

Read it. Share it. Discuss it.

Licence: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

The licence covers the original texts in this volume. The appendix reproduces the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the source is acknowledged separately.

Author's note

In preparing this text, its author made extensive use of ChatGPT, developed by OpenAI, as a tool for discussion, organisation, revision and writing.

Artificial intelligence helped organise concepts, identify repetitions and contradictions, and find simpler, more accessible formulations. The ideas, positions and final intellectual decisions remained the sole responsibility of the author.

This experience is also a small example of one of the possibilities described in the text: using technology to reduce the time needed for certain activities and to free up human time.

1. A Society That Has Become Dangerous

Human beings spent a vast part of their history learning to survive. We built shelters, villages and cities; invented agriculture, writing, money, religions, states, property, markets, armies, schools and hospitals. None of these institutions has always existed, and none appeared in the form we know today. They are responses developed at different times to organize life in common, distribute resources, confront dangers and bring order to increasingly complex societies.

The result is extraordinary and contradictory. We possess scientific knowledge and technical capabilities that would have seemed unimaginable to almost every generation before us. We can cure once-fatal diseases, cross the planet in a few hours, communicate instantly, produce enormous quantities of goods and let machines perform an increasing share of the work that needs to be done. At the same time, people still die in wars, are left without adequate healthcare, housing or education, suffer vast concentrations of wealth and power, and are persecuted for what they believe, whom they love or where they come from. Above all, we are disrupting the environmental balances on which our very ability to live depends.

What is new is not that human beings are capable of violence, greed or stupidity. We have known that for a long time. What is new is the power we have given those traits. A war that once devastated a region can now engulf the planet. An economic decision made in one place can alter the lives of millions elsewhere. A system of production can change the climate. A technology can concentrate in very few hands powers of control, information and decision-making that no ruler in the past could have imagined.

We are therefore in a singular position: we understand more and more of the consequences of our actions and yet often

continue to bring them about. We are not a species at risk of destroying the conditions of its own existence simply because it does not know what it is doing. We have data, science, productive capacity and forecasting tools. The problem is that many of the structures through which we make decisions reward the immediate advantage of some even when the overall outcome harms everyone.

A company may be driven to maximize profits even when doing so imposes environmental costs on society as a whole. A state may regard it as rational to secure resources or influence at another state's expense. A religion may defend its power by opposing changes that would increase the freedom of those who do not share its precepts. A family may legitimately seek to pass the greatest possible wealth to its children and, without intending to, help reproduce enormous inequalities from the outset. A government may prioritize what wins support over the next few years rather than what will be needed over the next fifty. Behaviors consistent with the logic of each individual institution can together produce an irrational outcome.

That is why asking individuals to become better people is not enough. Personal responsibility exists, but a society that systematically encourages certain behaviors cannot entrust its own survival to the hope that millions will decide, day after day, to act against the incentives that society itself has created. We can consume less, be generous, welcome a stranger, forgo an advantage and choose less harmful products. These are important choices, but by themselves they do not change the structures that will continue to exert the same pressures on the next generation.

The question is therefore more radical. Society must be different not only because the present one is unjust. It must be different because some of its fundamental mechanisms, magnified by technology, have become dangerous. Catastrophic wars, environmental collapses, authoritarian

regression, the impoverishment of entire populations and the gradual destruction of the conditions necessary for a dignified life already show that the present arrangement is not an endpoint: it is a system that now has the capacity to undermine the conditions of its own existence.

Climate breakdown makes this contradiction almost impossible to conceal. We are not facing a danger whose causes we do not understand: we know that a system founded on continuous increases in production, consumption and resource extraction alters the planet's physical balances. Yet we continue to treat economic growth as an objective in its own right and the environment as just another constraint to be negotiated. This is an absurd reversal. The economy is a human creation that exists within the planet; the planet is not a resource contained within the economy. Earth is not raw material at humanity's disposal. Other forms of life have a value that does not depend exclusively on their usefulness to us.

When defending an investment, a productive sector, a level of consumption or a national advantage counts for more than preserving the conditions that make collective life possible, the problem is not a vague lack of ecological awareness. It is the criterion by which we decide. A society that can foresee much of the damage it causes, yet cannot stop because doing so would reduce profits or immediate political support, is rationally organizing its own irrationality.

The question, then, is not how to perfect indefinitely the society we have inherited. It is which parts of that society are still compatible with the power we have attained and which, instead, must be overcome.

2. What Kind of Freedom Are We Talking About?

Before judging institutions, we must establish the criteria by which to judge them. Talking about freedom in general terms achieves little, because almost every political system claims to defend some form of it. It is better to begin with something simpler: nobody chooses the conditions into which they are born.

We do not choose our country, family, financial circumstances, language, body, genetic makeup, neighborhood, earliest relationships, prevailing culture or the part of the world in which we are assigned a passport. For several years, we choose almost nothing. We depend on other people to eat, move, protect ourselves, learn and even make sense of the world around us.

Only gradually do we acquire the ability to make decisions. But when we begin to do so, we do not start from zero: we choose within a world that has already shaped a particular field of possibilities around us. This remains true throughout life. The conditions we find ourselves in determine, at least in part, the possibilities before us; among those possibilities we make choices, and those choices, together with events beyond our control, produce new conditions. From these arise further possibilities, decisions and consequences.

Human freedom is found precisely in this space. Not in some implausible independence from the conditions in which we live, but in the possibility of acting upon them, changing them and breaking out of them. Two people who are formally free are therefore not necessarily free in the same way. If one has many real possibilities and the other very few, saying that both can choose fails to describe the essential difference between their situations.

A person may be legally free to study yet lack access to a good school. They may be free to seek medical treatment yet lack the money to pay for it. They may be free to leave a violent relationship yet have neither a home nor an income. They may be free to turn down a job while knowing that the decision puts food, housing or their children's medical care at risk. They may be free to travel yet encounter a border that someone with a different passport crosses almost without noticing.

Many possibilities are not distributed by nature. Society creates, expands or destroys them. Housing, healthcare, schooling, material security, access to culture, freedom of movement and available time are not merely social policies for the less fortunate. They are infrastructures of freedom.

This approach does not require everyone to own the same things, do the same work or live the same life. People will continue to differ in abilities, desires, character, choices and luck. It does require, however, that society not turn circumstances received without choice into nearly compulsory destinies. A difference is compatible with freedom only so long as it does not become a form of power by which someone can radically narrow another person's field of possibilities.

We can therefore adopt a simple criterion: a social arrangement is more acceptable the more it expands human beings' real possibilities without narrowing those of other human beings, compromising the conditions of existence of other forms of life or using up the possibilities of those who come after us. This is a demanding criterion, because it requires us to look not only at freedoms written into law but at the material conditions that make those freedoms exercisable.

3. The Minimum

In 1948, after a war that had revealed how far modern, educated and technologically advanced societies could descend, much of the international community tried to draw a line. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not describe paradise or promise happiness. It affirmed something far more modest and, precisely for that reason, enormous: there are conditions that should belong to every human being simply because they are human.

The Declaration remains one of the twentieth century's most important political documents. But turning it into a ceremonial object risks obscuring its historical failure. The countries that endorsed it have not fully implemented its principles, and no contemporary political model can seriously claim to have guaranteed its entire content, concretely and universally, to everyone subject to its power.

The Declaration proclaimed universal rights without genuinely questioning all the political, economic, religious and social structures that made those rights difficult or impossible to universalize. A document designed to obtain the agreement of profoundly different states did not challenge the institutions on which those states themselves rested. That historical limit, however, cannot become the permanent limit of our imagination. The Declaration can be read as a first draft of the minimum: it had the courage to affirm that being human comes before belonging, but did not follow the political, economic and social consequences of that claim to their conclusion.

The idea that the world should simply converge on European liberal democracy is also inadequate. The planet encompasses monarchies, authoritarian regimes, theocracies, oligarchies, incomplete democracies, hybrid systems, fragile states and different socialist or post-socialist experiences. European

democracies themselves coexist with concentrations of economic power, inequalities, discrimination and rights that can be exercised to very different degrees depending on social position. No existing system can be taken as a universal yardstick.

The human person remains the reference point for human rights, but cannot be the measure of the value of all living beings. If we take that distinction seriously, the human minimum cannot be restricted to biological survival. A decent home, safe food and water, high-quality healthcare and education, energy and essential infrastructure, material security, information, culture, personal and relational freedom, freedom of movement, participation in collective decisions and a significant share of one's own time must become ordinary conditions of existence.

Free of charge does not mean without cost. It means that access does not depend on an individual's ability to pay at the moment a need arises. Society pays for schools, hospitals, housing, energy networks and infrastructure in any case: the question is how it distributes the cost and, above all, whether it allows money to decide who can use what it considers a right.

Quality is part of the problem too. Poor healthcare for those who cannot pay and excellent healthcare for those who can do not provide the same right. A mediocre public school system alongside excellent schooling reserved for those with money turns parents' incomes into their children's futures.

Accommodation just adequate enough to keep someone off the street does not fulfill the right to a decent home.

The minimum, then, concerns rights, not mediocre standards. It is the threshold below which a society with the necessary resources should allow no one to fall. Only after guaranteeing it does it make sense to discuss differences arising from individual preferences and choices.

If this is the minimum, however, proclaiming it is not enough. We must ask which institutions prevent it from becoming real. This is where the question becomes uncomfortable.

We are much less capable of applying the same doubt to the institutions within which we live. We are happy to discuss how to improve them, but far less willing to consider that some may simply need to be overcome. Yet no institution has a right to survive. Religion, profit, property, family, nation, border, wage labor and contemporary forms of democracy are human constructions. The question is not which parts habit obliges us to preserve, but whether each of these structures continues to expand human possibilities or has become an obstacle. If the obstacle is structural, preserving a milder version does not solve the problem.

Human societies have already abandoned institutions regarded for centuries as natural, indispensable or ordained by God. Slavery, hereditary monarchical rule, women's legal subordination and child labor were all considered, at different times, compatible with the normal social order. Looking back, we are surprised that intelligent people could regard as inevitable structures we now find unacceptable.

The hardest limit to overcome may be precisely this: we have learned to think so deeply within existing institutions that their disappearance often seems more unrealistic than the consequences of their survival. In other eras a society without kings or slaves could have seemed inconceivable. The difficulty of imagining a world without some of today's structures does not show that they are necessary; it shows only how deeply they have become part of the way we think.

4. Religion and Power

The political problem of religion is not to prove whether God exists. A human being must be free to believe in one deity, many deities, reincarnation, a spiritual dimension or none of these things. Freedom of thought would lose its meaning if it protected only beliefs that the majority considers rational.

The problem arises when an unverifiable belief gives rise to an organized authority capable of exercising power over other human beings. Throughout history, religions have built communities, works of art, forms of solidarity and systems of meaning; they have also legitimized wars, persecution, hierarchies, discrimination, control over sexuality, the subordination of women and superstition. We do not need to tally merits and faults to reach the decisive point: no assertion about the will of a deity should carry greater political authority than a human opinion that can be debated and challenged.

A society that seeks to expand freedom cannot accept someone restricting the lives of others on the grounds that the restriction comes from God. If a rule is just, it must be defensible with arguments intelligible even to those who do not share the faith from which it arose. Otherwise we are not exercising religious freedom: we are turning a particular faith into power over others.

Asking religions to be more tolerant does not solve the problem. Tolerance leaves intact the structure that grants human organizations the privilege of speaking in the name of a transcendent truth. Instead, we can ask whether the positive functions attributed to religions truly require those organizations to survive. Solidarity does not need a Church. Moral inquiry does not require a clergy. Community can arise in a thousand ways. Individual spirituality can exist without hierarchies authorized to turn it into collective norms.

Overcoming organized religions requires a definitive separation of individual faith from power over others. The problem begins when someone claims that God has spoken and that this answer must govern other people's lives, rights or duties. A belief that cannot be subjected to verification cannot become law, hierarchy and control. If we want a society grounded in freedom, this power must end.

5. Profit, Property and Work

A similar reversal is needed in the economy. Do we produce food because human beings need to eat, or because selling it can generate profit? Do we build homes because people need somewhere to live, or because property can yield a return? Do we develop medicines to treat illness, or because a market exists that is profitable enough to justify the investment? In today's society these motives can coincide, but when they diverge we discover which principle really takes priority.

If housing, healthcare and education are conditions of freedom, they cannot depend on the profitability of providing them. We can take this observation much further than the regulation of capitalism. We can question business itself as an organizing principle of human activity: the idea that producing, inventing, building or offering a service should normally aim at the private accumulation of wealth.

Abolishing business as an activity directed toward private accumulation does not mean giving up human initiative. We will continue to open restaurants, invent tools, cultivate land, build, teach, design, conduct research and create objects. What must end is the principle that the success of these activities is measured by the ability of those who control them to appropriate an ever-growing share of the value produced together with others.

Property must undergo the same scrutiny. Owning the home you live in, the objects you use or the tools you work with does not confer the same power as owning thousands of dwellings, vast natural resources, communication networks or businesses on which the economic lives of millions depend. We use the same word for phenomena with entirely different social consequences.

Property is not a law of physics. It is a human convention defined, registered and protected by collective institutions. When ownership generates power incompatible with the freedom of others, it must be limited, transformed or removed from private control. The fact that someone legally acquired a resource does not answer the question of how much of other people's possibilities it is legitimate to control through that ownership.

Work, too, must stop being confused with the right to exist. Human activity can give meaning, identity, satisfaction and relationships. But paid work today also performs a very different function: it provides most people with the money they need to survive. This makes the freedom to refuse a job largely theoretical when refusal entails losing the material conditions of existence.

Technology makes the contradiction even more apparent. For centuries we have invented machines to reduce necessary work. If a technology makes it possible to produce the same quantity of goods in half the human working hours, the rational outcome should also be a reduction in the time we have to devote to production. Yet progress is often perceived as a threat because it can eliminate income along with work. We built machines to free ourselves from toil, then built a system in which being freed from toil can mean being deprived of the means to live.

The climate crisis brings this economic argument to its most concrete consequence. If production is driven by profit and must grow to keep the system running, voluntarily reducing profitable but destructive activities becomes structurally difficult. We can improve efficiency, change energy sources and correct many processes, but we cannot pretend that endless material growth is compatible with a finite planet. Economic success must stop being measured by an ever-growing quantity of matter transformed and consumed.

The climate question also reveals the absurdity of absolute ownership of resources. A company or state may legally own a mineral deposit, a forest or a territory, but it does not own the atmosphere into which the consequences of exploiting them are released. The right to property ends where the destruction of other people's possibilities begins, including those of people not yet born.

A different society should progressively separate the right to basic conditions of existence from the obligation to sell one's time. The benefits of technology cannot consist solely of more goods or greater wealth for those who own the machines. It must also become time set free.

6. Family and Dependence

The family seems natural largely because it is the first institution we encounter. Yet love, care, living together, reproduction, property, education and assistance are not the same thing. We have concentrated them in a single structure and then come to regard that concentration as inevitable.

A family can be an extraordinary place of affection and protection. It can also be the place where economic dependence, control, abuse and violence are concentrated. The very intimacy that allows profound forms of care can make it harder to escape a destructive relationship when housing, income, assistance and social belonging all depend on the same people.

The family also distributes opportunities. Wealth, the quality of education, social networks, available time, security in the face of unexpected events and even the ability to take risks still depend enormously on the household into which one is born. A society that proclaims equality while entrusting such a large share of the initial distribution of opportunity to the family accepts that the lottery of birth will continue to shape opportunities throughout life.

It is not for us to decide which bonds of affection will endure. Instead, we need to remove the family's role as an institution that is necessary for protection, wealth, assistance and opportunity. If housing, education, care, healthcare and security are guaranteed independently of the family unit, a person can stay in a relationship because they want to and leave without risking the loss of everything. Domestic violence shows with particular clarity how dangerous it is to entrust affection, economic dependence, authority, care and protection to the same structure.

People will continue to build bonds, households, relationships of care and forms of affection. We have no reason to decide in advance which of these should be called a family or resemble the model we inherited. The person and their freedom to form and end relationships come first; social forms come afterward.

7. Nations, Identity and Ownership of the World

Borders are usually discussed when someone tries to cross them. By then it is too late. Before the border lies a deeper question: who owns the territory that line claims to delimit?

Saying that Chile belongs to Chileans, Kenya to Kenyans or France to the French seems obvious until we ask exactly what belonging means. Who are the owners? The people who live there today? Those who hold citizenship? Those born there? Also those who emigrated decades ago? Someone who arrived twenty years ago? Their children? And which generation first acquired the right to decide who may enter that part of the planet?

Borders are not natural features of Earth. Some follow rivers, mountains or seas, but their political function stems from wars, conquests, treaties, colonization, migration, dissolution and human decisions. If we looked at political maps of the world from different eras, we would see lines and names changing constantly. Yet we allow those lines to determine a huge share of any person's possibilities.

Nationality is therefore one of the most consequential lotteries of birth. One passport can open almost the entire planet; another can turn the same journey into a succession of visas, checks, refusals of entry and dangers. If rights belong to human beings rather than territories, this difference is difficult to justify as a permanent principle.

Welcoming all immigrants is a first consequence, but not the endpoint. The word immigrant still preserves the idea that there is a legitimate owner of the territory who decides whether to welcome a guest. A deeper transformation should gradually make the political distinction between those born inside and outside less important.

This does not require a uniform world. We have confused diversity with separation. Languages, cuisines, music, memories, traditions, arts and ways of living can remain different without every difference needing a border, an army and a right of exclusion. A language does not need a customs post. A culture does not become richer by preventing someone from crossing the territory in which it emerged.

We can imagine a world far more politically united and far more culturally plural. Affection for a place does not confer ownership. I can love the city where I grew up without concluding that it belongs to me more than to someone who wishes to live there. I can preserve a language and a memory without turning them into the criterion that decides who has more rights.

The problem extends to resources. The atmosphere, oceans, water, biodiversity and major ecosystems do not respect political borders. A mineral deposit happens to lie within one state's territory, but the consequences of exploiting it may concern everyone. We continue to govern planetary problems largely through national sovereignties and then wonder why it is so difficult to make adequate collective decisions.

Overcoming nations as a principle of exclusion leaves places, cultures and the possibility of organizing territorial administrations intact, but stops treating birth within a historically contingent boundary as a title deed to the world.

It is here that the return of fascism and its contemporary variants appears not only dangerous but remarkably antiquated. Faced with problems on a planetary scale—climate crisis, migration, technological change, concentration of wealth, economic interdependence—we go back to proposing one of the worst political products of our history: more nationalism, more borders, more authority, more uniformity, more enemies. There is no need to explain how fascism works every time. We

need only observe the poverty of the proposal: seeking the future in tools that have already produced persecution, war and destruction is stupid even before it is reactionary. It is an old answer to problems that call for institutions we have not yet invented.

Political nostalgia offers familiar, reassuring words—homeland, order, identity, discipline—but none of them cools the planet, distributes resources more fairly, governs global technology or makes inevitably plural societies freer. Resurrecting the past does not become innovation simply because it is presented with a new visual style.

8. Democracy and Power

Democracy, too, must be open to scrutiny. One person, one vote is an enormous achievement compared with systems in which power formally belonged to a minority. But it would be strange to treat that achievement as the final point of political evolution at the very moment we acknowledge that almost every other institution can evolve.

A vote records the present preferences of adults who meet certain legal requirements. It does not directly represent people who will be born thirty years from now, even though decisions made today can drastically reduce their possibilities. It does not represent the ecosystems on which we depend. It does not neutralize the power of those who control great fortunes, media, infrastructure or technologies. It does not resolve the contradiction between planetary problems and institutions whose legitimacy ends at national borders.

Nor can the majority be the final measure of what is just. If rights depended entirely on voting, a majority could decide that a minority was worth less. Voting decides who governs and how we make many collective decisions; it cannot decide who counts as human.

Questioning contemporary democracy means taking the democratic idea more seriously: representing interests that lie far in the future, limiting unelected powers, building supranational decision-making and preventing wealth from determining one's ability to influence politics. A democracy that does not address these problems remains incomplete; democracy must be an open stage, not a finished model.

9. A World Without Necessary Enemies

A freer society will not be a society without conflict. Truly free people will want different things, interpret events differently, defend incompatible interests and make mistakes. Eliminating conflict would probably mean eliminating freedom or giving someone the power to establish which position should prevail before a conflict even begins.

The problem is not to eliminate conflict. It is to prevent difference from having to turn into the destruction of an opponent. Political history has devoted immense resources to the technology of violence: armies, weapons, intelligence, deterrence and systems of control. We have paid far less systematic attention to the techniques by which conflict can be pursued without annihilating those who oppose us.

Nonviolence is not the same as passivity. Strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, noncooperation, occupations, blockades and the construction of alternative institutions can exert real power. Every form of power depends to some degree on other people's cooperation; withdrawing that cooperation can be a very tough form of conflict without necessarily requiring an opponent's physical destruction.

An aggressor and the person attacked are not equivalent, and in extreme situations force can interrupt immediate violence. But this does not make war an intelligent instrument for organizing human relations on an ongoing basis. Its consequences persist far beyond the initial decision, and a species with ever-growing destructive capabilities must learn to make war a relic of the past, not a routine technology of politics.

Nations, religions and collective identities have often supplied the language used to turn actual people into opposing categories. Us and them. Believers and unbelievers. Citizens

and foreigners. The true people and traitors. Fear makes these divisions especially powerful, particularly when material conditions are precarious and someone offers a simple culprit for complex problems.

That is why security and social justice cannot be separated. A person who fears losing housing, income, healthcare or a future is more vulnerable to those who offer protection in exchange for obedience and a prescribed identity. Reducing fear does not eliminate racism, authoritarianism or fanaticism, but it removes some of the ground on which they grow.

Eliminating politically exclusionary borders, aggressive nationalisms and religions capable of turning faith into power would not eliminate conflict, but it would weaken some of the devices with which we manufacture necessary enemies. Difference could again become a normal condition of human existence, rather than proof that someone must be rejected, converted or defeated.

10. Beyond the Minimum

If housing, healthcare, education, material security and freedom of movement do not depend on income; if technological progress reduces necessary work instead of creating unemployment and concentrated wealth; if family, religion and place of birth do not determine the fundamental possibilities of existence, a question emerges that societies have often reserved for a privileged minority: what do I want to do with the time I have?

There is no collective answer. A just society should not prescribe the correct meaning of existence, but create conditions in which everyone can search for it without limiting others' freedom. Housing, healthcare and education are the minimum, not the goal: their purpose is to free life from the constant necessity of securing its own survival.

Time then becomes a measure of progress. We have invented technologies capable of producing ever more with less work, but we have used much of that gain to increase production and consumption rather than give people their time back. If we can produce what we need while working less, working less should be an outcome of progress, not an economic problem.

The same applies to consumption. An economy that must grow continuously turns desires into needs and measures well-being through a rising quantity of goods. But a society freed from the necessity of profit could produce better and more durable goods while using fewer resources. Less matter can mean more time, more relationships, more culture and, above all, more possibilities.

It is beyond this minimum that human development can truly begin: when an ever-larger share of humanity no longer has to spend its existence merely securing the right to go on existing and can finally decide what to do with the time it has.

The sunset existed long before human beings, but nobody called it that. The Sun does not descend toward the horizon and disappear: it is Earth that turns. We transformed that physical phenomenon, observed from where we stand, into an event. We gave it a name, a beginning and an end, and then filled it with meanings. We made it a source of beauty, melancholy, fear, promise, death, transition and a measure of time. We did not invent light or the movement of Earth. We invented a human way of seeing that passage: we invented sunsets.

This ability to encounter something that exists independently of us and transform it through thought, language and action is one of the most extraordinary forms of human freedom. We are born into conditions we did not choose, but we are not condemned simply to reproduce them. We can give new meanings to what exists and, when what we inherited is a human construction, we can change it materially.

Money, borders, profit, nations, wage labor, family, religions and the ways we distribute power were already here when we were born. That is why they can seem part of the landscape. They are not. Other human beings invented, transformed and handed them down. We are not obliged to preserve them when they restrict freedom, cause suffering or endanger the conditions of collective life.

Some of the institutions we have inherited may reach their sunset. The word should not suggest nostalgia. A sunset does not make everything that ends precious, nor does it automatically promise something better. It says that a form can cease to organize our horizon and that its ending can also be the result of a choice. If the structures we inherited can no longer guarantee even the minimum and increase our collective ability to destroy everyone's possibilities, continuing to reproduce them is not prudence. It is the abandonment of freedom.

It is therefore not enough to agree with these pages. It is not enough to read, share or discuss them. If something we have built no longer works, we must try to build something different: organize, study, experiment, challenge, create different institutions, support those already trying to be different, and use our skills, money and, above all, time to take space away from the simple reproduction of what exists.

Not everyone must do the same thing, and no one should have sole ownership of the blueprint for a future society. But we can begin to establish what we are no longer willing to accept and what we want to make possible for everyone. The freedom we have discussed is not just the ability to choose among the alternatives in front of us. It is also the ability to create new ones.

We do not have to wait for the world we inherited to end on its own. We can act on the conditions we have found, transform them and build new ones. That is the part of freedom that no society can exercise in our place. We can still invent sunsets.

If reading *Inventing Sunsets* raises more questions than answers, the text has probably achieved its purpose. Questioning what we consider normal, natural or inevitable opens a space that did not exist before.

The pages that follow emerge within that space. They seek to gather a few principles for orientation when existing forms cease to be seen as the only possible horizon: criteria for observing transformations, assessing their consequences and choosing a direction.

DESTRUTTURA

Destruttura is an ideology that regards the present as a construction, not a limit. It questions what we consider necessary, concentrations of power, and forms that claim the right to endure, in order to expand the possibilities available to the living world.

The Present and the Possible

The social, economic and political forms within which you live are neither natural nor definitive. They arose under particular historical conditions and may come to an end when those conditions change. Their longevity gives them no right to continue.

Many things you consider necessary also depend on how society is organized. Having to work in order to live, owning things in order to feel secure, depending on your family, belonging to a state in order to have rights: these are not inevitable conditions. They were constructed and can be changed. The present is where you begin, not the limit of what you can imagine.

To dismantle the structures of the present is to strip what exists of the appearance of inevitability.

The possible concerns all living beings. Human beings are one form of life among others, neither its center nor its purpose. The value of other forms of life does not depend on their usefulness to us, and the world is not a stock of resources placed at our disposal.

A transformation opens up possibilities when it enables life to continue, diversify and regenerate. It restricts them when human beings systematically determine the conditions under

which other forms of life can exist, especially when the consequences of their choices become irreversible.

Direction and Method

You do not need to know in advance the complete shape of a future society. You need to choose a direction and ask whether what you do opens up new possibilities or continues to reproduce what you seek to overcome.

Contradiction is a signal that helps you find your bearings. When what you feel, say and do no longer agree, that gap points to something you can act upon.

The question cannot stop at the minimum that must be guaranteed. It must also concern the maximum that can be made possible with the material, scientific and technological capabilities we have attained: how much necessity can be eliminated, how much time can be freed, how widely power can be distributed, how many possibilities currently denied can become real.

The direction you choose also concerns the way you act. If the aim is to expand possibilities and reduce domination, force cannot become a principle of legitimacy. Force confers no right to decide for others.

Nonviolence is the only way of acting consistent with this direction. Conflict, disobedience, resistance, refusal, disruption and the building of alternatives can radically change existing relations without reproducing the domination they aim to overcome.

Reducing Necessity

A society evolves when it reduces what you are compelled to do in order to live.

Your existence must not depend on whether you work for pay. Housing, healthcare, education, food, energy, mobility, communication and knowledge must be accessible regardless of income.

The goods and services necessary for life must progressively be removed from market logic and produced and distributed according to needs, available resources and the capacity of living systems to regenerate.

Production cannot mean continuing to multiply commodities. What is necessary should be produced in the necessary quantity, designed to last and distributed without subordinating needs and resources to economic competition.

Competition must not be the organizing principle of production. It may continue to exist for nonessential goods and activities, provided it remains separate from the sphere of necessities and cannot turn into a concentration of power or expand at the expense of living beings.

Technology must also serve to reduce the work required and give people back their time. If the same activity can be carried out in fewer hours, those hours need not simply become greater production: they can become time freed up for people.

Profit cannot continue to determine what is produced, what is researched, what is distributed and which needs are considered important. A need does not become more important because it is profitable, just as a necessary activity does not lose value because it produces no profit.

Accumulation of property must also be limited when it concentrates resources to the point of restricting others' possibilities or turning into power. It is not enough to determine how much each person should be allowed to have. We must also determine how much any one person may accumulate.

The same holds for inheritance. Economic power cannot continue to reproduce itself through birth and pass from generation to generation as an already-assigned condition.

Freedom and Power

Your freedom depends not only on how many choices you have, but on how many you can actually make.

A choice that entails losing your home, healthcare, income or fundamental rights does not belong to the same space of freedom as a choice you can make without endangering your existence.

Reducing necessity therefore directly increases freedom.

Power must be distributed, and it must not be able to move unchecked from one sphere to another. Wealth must not turn into political power; political power into economic privilege; control over information into the ability to determine both economics and politics; or ownership into power over the lives of those who depend on what is owned.

Owning something does not mean having an unlimited right to dispose of territories, resources, ecosystems or living beings. No property title can give anyone the unilateral power to compromise shared conditions of existence or cause irreversible consequences for living beings.

Distributing power reduces its concentration. Preventing one form of power from automatically becoming another prevents a particular advantage from turning into general domination.

The Conditions We Inherit

You are born into conditions you did not choose: a family, an economic situation, a place, a language, a citizenship, a culture and often a religion.

None of these conditions should determine how much freedom and how many possibilities you will have throughout your life.

The family, when it becomes the indispensable and privileged institution through which material security, care, education, inheritance and recognition are distributed, must be something we can move beyond.

Affection, living arrangements, responsibilities and care can be freely organized among people, without one predetermined form being granted greater rights or legitimacy. You should not have to belong to a family in order to survive, be recognized or gain access to resources and opportunities.

Religion shows particularly clearly how something received at birth can turn into power. A faith may be passed down by your family, reinforced through education and organized into structures that ultimately exercise authority over collective life.

Faith, spirituality, doubt and inquiry belong to the personal sphere. They must not become the foundation on which collective institutions are organized.

Religious structures therefore cease to exist as centers of power, together with the assets, educational systems, normative authorities, political representation and economic power founded on religion.

The same applies to nations, citizenship and borders. Where you are born cannot determine where you may live, where you may move or which rights you may exercise.

Citizenship cannot continue to distribute rights unequally among people. Nations and borders, when they divide the world into compulsory territorial affiliations, must be overcome.

Freedom of movement becomes a shared condition.

Languages, cultures and territorial differences may continue to exist without turning into legal affiliations that separate people.

Transformation and Sunset

A transformation is judged by the possibilities it opens up, the necessities it removes, the way it distributes power and its consequences for the living world, now and over time.

Foreseeable harm remains harm even if it occurs many years from now, affects people who have not yet been born or impacts other species. The future consequences of decisions made in the present already belong to the responsibility of those making them today.

Over time, structures tend to defend their own existence. But no structure should continue merely because it exists.

When a form has exhausted the function that once made it necessary, or when alternatives that could open up greater possibilities become feasible, it must be allowed to end.

No form, present or future, acquires a right to permanence.

If you share this ideology, you cannot simply inhabit the present as though it were inevitable. You must help make it possible to change it again.

Appendix

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

English rendering of the Declaration, based on the Italian text reproduced in the reference edition. For the official text, consult the United Nations.

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world;

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts that have outraged the conscience of humanity, and the advent of a world in which human beings enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of humankind;

Whereas it is essential that human rights be protected by the rule of law, if people are not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression;

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations;

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have reaffirmed in the Charter their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in greater freedom;

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge;

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, under trusteeship, non-self-governing or subject to any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted to them by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of their rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against them.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which they have had all the guarantees necessary for their defence.
2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with their privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon their honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including their own, and to return to their country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their nationality nor denied the right to change their nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state.

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of their property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change their religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest their religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in their country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections, conducted by universal and equal suffrage and by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each state, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable to their dignity and the free development of their personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for themselves and their family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control.
2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which they are the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of their personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of their rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of

morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Sources and references

These references document some of the main historical, philosophical, social, economic and scientific contexts addressed in the volume. The arguments and conclusions are independent and do not imply endorsement by the authors or institutions cited.

Amartya Sen. *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999.

<https://india.oup.com/product/development-as-freedom-9780195655261>

Elinor Ostrom. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/governing-the-commons/7AB7AE11BADA84409C34815CC288CD79>

Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia University Press, 2011.

<https://cup.columbia.edu/book/why-civil-resistance-works/9780231156820>

Erica Chenoweth. *Civil Resistance: What Everyone Needs to Know*, Oxford University Press, 2021.

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/civil-resistance-9780190244408>

International Labour Organization, Jon C. Messenger. *Working Time and the Future of Work*, 2018.

<https://www.ilo.org/publications/working-time-and-future-work>

International Labour Organization. *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2025*. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/flagship-reports/world-employment-and-social-outlook-trends-2025>

IPBES. *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*, 2019. <https://www.ipbes.net/global-assessment>

IPBES. *Methodological Assessment Report on the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature*, 2022. <https://www.ipbes.net/the-values-assessment>

IPCC. *Climate Change 2023: AR6 Synthesis Report*.

<https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/>

- Karl Polanyi. *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, Beacon Press. <https://www.beacon.org/The-Great-Transformation-P2237.aspx>
- Kate Raworth. *Doughnut Economics: Seven Ways to Think Like a 21st-Century Economist*, Random House Business Books, 2017. <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/429710/doughnut-economics-by-kate-raworth/9781473556256>
- Martha C. Nussbaum. *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011. <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674072350>
- Michael Walzer. *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality*, Basic Books, 1983. <https://www.ias.edu/sss/faculty/walzer/books>
- United Nations. *Declaration on Future Generations*, 2024. <https://www.un.org/pact-for-the-future/en/annex-ii-declaration-future-generations>
- United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Resolution 217 A (III)*, 10 December 1948. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights/>
- United Nations. *History of the Declaration: drafting and adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/udhr/history-of-the-declaration>
- OHCHR — Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, Italian translation cited in the original edition. https://www.ohchr.org/en/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/itn.pdf
- Thomas Piketty. *Capital and Ideology*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020. <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/books/9780674980822>
- Tim Jackson. *Prosperity without Growth: Foundations for the Economy of Tomorrow*, Routledge, 2nd ed., 2017. <https://www.routledge.com/Prosperity-without-Growth-Foundations-for-the-Economy-of-Tomorrow/Jackson/p/book/9781315677453>

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report 2023/24: Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarized World. <https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-2023-24>

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme. Emissions Gap Report 2024: No more hot air ... please! <https://www.unep.org/resources/emissions-gap-report-2024>

UNHCR. Global Trends 2025: global data on refugees, asylum seekers, displaced people and stateless people. <https://www.unhcr.org/media/global-trends-report-2025>

V-Dem Institute. Democracy Report 2026: Unraveling the Democratic Era? <https://www.v-dem.net/publications/democracy-reports/>

World Health Organization. Violence against women: global data and overview of intimate-partner and sexual violence. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-women>

World Inequality Lab. World Inequality Report 2022 and World Inequality Database. <https://wir2022.wid.world/> ; <https://wid.world/>