



○ Good morning, on a sunny Friday from Venice, which is a very different day than yesterday, which was a very cloudy and flooded Venice. That was the day when we were originally intended to gather. And I think it was probably more appropriate for the topic of the day. Sulayman, Ghaith, Anthony, and Ajmal have gathered in Venice, convening from various places in the world. In fact, very, very far off places in the world. But places that I think are very relevant to where we are and to the word that's meant to instigate a discussion between us. I'm opening the floor and I think that as an introduction will suffice. I'm opening the floor for the first intervention.

/ I tell you a story?

○ Tell us a story...

/ I tell you a story. It's a story about a tribe of blind people living happily in their land. For them, sky is yellow. The sea is black. Trees are orange. The air also has a color. It's gray. One day, a stranger arrives amongst this tribe. The stranger is not blind. He has only one eye. The stranger sits down and talks to the people and says, "People I've noticed that you regard the sea as black and the sky as orange. Let me tell you. The sea is blue. The sea is sometimes green and the sky is blue. And amongst you are black people, brown people, white people, yellow people. This causes great confusion and mayhem amongst the tribe of the blind. So the elders gather and they grab hold of the man. They put their fingers on his face and they report back and they say, there's something moving. There's something moving in this man's forehead. So they take a stick. And they pop his eye. And then nothing moves on the man's forehead. And everything returns to as it was.

○ And so ends the prophecy.

/ And so ends the story of the stranger.

* So, what's the role of those who see things differently from others around them?

/ To disrupt. To disrupt. And I guess the meaning of that little parable is that to disrupt at great risk to one's sense of self... well-being. What I'm saying is that it seems to me that the prophecy begins with a disruption. A disruption of the status quo or the disruption of structures of power. And if we take on structures of power, then immediately there is conflict.

* But sometimes prophecy is not necessarily aimed at power but rather aimed at otherness. Prophets present another vision of things. And I guess it's of interest to think about. Is it just the otherness that's shocking? When one speaks of some otherness that no one else can see, is that what's really threatening? Or is it really back to the issue of power? Meaning, is that the consistent thing?

/ Seems to me that prophecy is always an extension or it's a radical critique.

Ghaith Abdul Ahad □
Sulayman Al Bassam /
Anthony Fontenot *
Ajmal Maiwandi ○

○ That's the beginning. And then it also has to propose something, an alternative that takes its place. So if we look at prophecy as an awakening, that's where the story of the blind is quite interesting. There's also another story which follows the same logic, but doesn't necessarily talk about a disagreement. Well, it talks about a disagreement. It's the story of a village of the blind, people that cannot see. Whether that means that they're distant or detached from a reality, or whether they cannot agree. In this village, there is uniformity of acceptance that they cannot see, thus there is no contradiction and no difference. An animal is brought into this village. And this animal is a great big animal that makes a lot of noise and the community gathers and picks three elders and they ask the elders to explore, as a kind of reconnaissance, what is this thing that's been brought amongst our midst?

Each of the three elders take their turn. The first approaches this animal and touches it and smells it and comes back and says, I've made up my mind. "It's something which is very big. It's very stable. It's like a tree. It has the width of the trunk of a maple tree that has 300 years of age and it doesn't move at all." The second elder goes down and they want to triangulate the information coming. They won't believe one person, it's an exploration by three. The second one goes down and he also approaches the animal, touches the animal, feels the animal, smells the animal, and comes back and says, "I completely disagree. The animal is actually very slender. It's very fragile. It's very flexible. It's nothing like a tree."

The people are confused. So they say, well, let's allow the third elder to go and make this assessment. And maybe the third will get it right. Or there'll be some consensus between them. The third approaches animal and he also touches it, he smells it, he feels it, he goes around it. And from the parts that he touches, he reports, "Neither is the animal as flexible as a snake, or soft as you describe it, nor is it as solid as you describe it. It's actually very floppy. It's like the wind. There's aspects of it that have the feeling of the sail of a ship." And these three men disagree. And by the nature of their disagreement, the community is left no further or no better than they were before.

The animal they were talking about was an elephant, and they had all approached a different aspect of this elephant. Their combined stories would complete that picture. Their combined stories would be the accurate. But because they cannot agree between themselves and they cannot agree that the thing is more complex than what they imagined as a singular thing, they're left in the same position, again, of disagreement. Seems that don't see the whole picture. Another aspect of prophecy, I think, awakening the ability to see, the ability to interpret.

□ Like Suleiman, I come from a region which is filled with prophets, false prophets, real prophets. And I don't mean only the religious ones who have been telling us stories. But I spent most of the last 15 years watching these petty prophets, commanders, leaders, presidents, you name them, each making a prophecy about a better future, about this eternal glory coming true.

And you watch them kind of not only bring destruction and mayhem, but kind of these prophecies become a banner that will lead people to wars and destruction.

So I wonder why do we have such abundance of prophets in this region? Is it because there's a discrepancy between your life, the realities of your life and what you imagine your life should be. So say you live in the Middle East. You have poverty, you have the destruction around you. But then you've been told that this is the best land, that you are the greatest nation that came to earth. So how do you reconcile these two facts? And I think this is when you have people come out and say, look, if we only go beyond that mountain, if we only attack that nation, if we only do this, things will become better. So maybe you need a prophecy because you need an illusion, you need something to convince you that tomorrow will be better.

/ Do you mean the idea of the enlightened, no the, what is it?

□ The leader, the necessity.

/ The 'leader of necessity'. The leader of, the inspirational leader. I mean, is the inspirational leaders that you mentioned. From Gaddafi to Saddam to others to our day lead people into deeper and deeper misery. Are they prophets or are they are strong men and they are...

□ But the difference between a strong man and a tyrant and a prophet is that those guys. And I don't mean only the big guys, even the smallest militia commander somewhere in a village would see himself as not only a leader, commander, or the 'leader of necessity', but he would sit, and they're always a he. He would sit and pontificate and talks about a future that is green, that is lush, that is coming to you. And they're always for the last, I don't know, 1500, 2000 years, they've always been prophets of doom. Because whatever they talk about, those men, those kind of petty leaders, it's always ushers destruction. If I only invade that country, if I only take that village, things will be better. And as we were talking about, a prophet needs a community that believes in the prophecy. So sometimes I can, I would suggest, I'll use that amongst the people there is a desire for something to come. And here comes someone who would turn that desire into poetry.

○ The prophecies work better. I mean, if we talk about fertile fields or fertile minds for prophecies to take place. I think we said prophecies depict an alternative. They depict an alternative, which is communally acceptable, where a group of people say, "Yes, this is where we want to go." They're based in reality because they negate that reality. And that reality has to do with poverty or famine or conflict or war or disagreement of general proportions. Thus, prophecies are a negation of the existing and a depiction of what's to come. And process that applies to so many aspects of our life today.

/ Just to go back to this, the idea of the inspirational leader. Don't you feel that so much of their momentum is created, is actually building upon the remains of religious structures.

The inspirational leader occupies a position within a structure of belief that is pre-prepared. That has been pre-prepared for centuries by a religious structure, by a patriarchal religious structure. Saddam's 'Qadisiyyah' battle, the recycling of history and their ablation of history. So they recycle elements of history that are useful to a narrative of power. And they ablate and destroy elements of history that are not useful to their narratives of power, but they use a structure of belief that they develop and harness.

□ Sorry to interrupt, just to go back to that point. It is exactly, they use this structure of belief, but how do I convince you... my people, my men, to go on and fight for me and, and destroy everything. Because if you stand and you realize what's going on, you just revolt, you just destroy these structures, the patriarchal structures of belief. What do I do as a prophet, as an inspirational leader, is I tell you of my prophecy of the future that is good for you, the good things that will come, if you follow one, two and three. And that is the secret. And that is the secret why they managed to lead. And again, I mean, from the biggest kind of tyrant dictator to a small petty militia commander in a destroyed street in the middle East, they all speak about that prophecy over there beyond the corner. And that's where it comes from.

* ...It seems to me that there's a fundamental difference between a leader and a prophet. A leader does exactly what we were just discussing. Does a prophet really have that kind of agenda? A leader has a clear agenda and pursues that agenda through various means. It seems to me a prophet, maybe where we started as much more... it doesn't have that kind of agenda of accomplishing some mission, but rather presenting some radically different view of things. I'm not sure if the leader works in that way. These two things may overlap, but it seems to me the prophet has always been one to deliver something that appears to be a completely different narrative. And that destabilizing element seems to be key. How it might get co-opted is another thing, meaning the role of the prophet, the role of the leader, I think, is an interesting one to look at.

○ Co-opted or corrupted. I mean, in the context of divinity, in the context of religion, it's exactly that. A prophet is a means, it's a channel through which a message is passed from the divine to the mundane. But at the same time, I think prophecies require reinvention with time. Prophecies are specific to a moment in time, and that's why they're fertile for that moment, for that moment in history, for that moment of conflict, whatever it might be, specific to a context. And once it grows beyond that context and beyond that time, then it requires other prophets. It requires priests. It requires others to be able to interpret, update and pass on the message. No?

* The other thing that comes to mind is that, I mean, we talked about this in the past, but the idea that throughout history, that early part of history, it's seems that, and I'm referring to the Old Testament. It seemed like this was the fertile field of the prophet. And then we arrive around Newton's period that the paradigm starts to change from prophecy to prediction with silence.

But the question for me is as we move closer and closer to the present, and we rely more and more on science for prediction, what role that original idea of prophecy plays within this scientific paradigm. And now we would look at that as irrational, right? And that certainly can't be part of the scientific paradigm, but what role would that destabilizing 'other presence' play currently, meaning we don't, in fact, if we think of prophets, we probably think of them as discredited figures today. I don't think there are many prophets we look to... Or maybe not, I don't know.

○ Well, in the limited definition of the word, yes. But in a broader definition of the word, and I think we'll come back to this in this discussion of who are the modern prophets? What are they prophesizing about? And which direction are they leading us? What's the future that they're painting. What's our role in that future? How is that being corrupted? Because the word corrupted will also come to pass in this discussion from that original prophecy, from that original intent to it's manifestation today... technological advancement being one prophecy of course.

□ Yeah. And one of the modern prophets, I would say are these fortune tellers on TV and on satellite channels. They're so popular. People are crazy about them and they, and again, I think I can say that it's almost very easy to become a prophet. You can just lay a path in front of you that says, "*Wallah*, I think tomorrow you'll have a very good day. Maybe two days later, it's not going to be so good." And again, a prophet will give the... I mean, this is why they're so popular, this is why people pay thousands of dollars to listen to those people, because they are telling you things that you actually want to believe. So again I go back to each of us. Probably each of us is a tiny little prophet inside and they want to listen to these prophets. And so that's one version of the modern prophet, a false one, of course.

/ What are the messages? Fortune tellers? The star signs, the horoscope writers?

○ The horoscope writers, the gym instructors, those that are telling us how to live better, what to eat, how to eat. I think there's a widespread tendency to preach.

* If we hold on to the original definition, then how does the guy at the gym destabilize things with his prophecy?

○ He works against processed foods, he works against corporations that sell processed foods or genetically manipulated foods, talks about an organic existence...

* But it seems that it just reinforces a larger narrative as opposed to disturbing the narrative with some revelation that comes upon one. Isn't that the rule? That's one rule that we started-

/ Sorry, okay. So if we go back to the idea of disruption, and it's useful that we remember that very clear definition that Max Weber gave distinguishing between the prophet, the disruptor, the innovator, the one who breaks paradigms, and the priest who comes latterly, whose function is to protect the status quo and to defend it.

I mean, the prophet comes often, or at least the prophets whose messages later became widespread... successful. They come in moments of great societal change, great technological change. Either they're part of that change, or they instigate it, or they incorporate those elements of change into their narrative, into their program.

○ The prophet just walked into the room.

/ A prophet walked into the room. I've mentioned this to you, Anthony, that I always find it grounding to think about how the development of the camel saddle and the discovery that a camel could be dressed in a piece of engineering that allowed it to carry up to a thousand pounds of weight that transformed this otherwise clunky figure into the equivalent of a steam train that was able to move goods, merchandise across huge expanses of territory without needing water up to months in the winter, for up to a week in the summer.

It was the development of this technology that was fundamental in the ability of the Mohammedian message to be able to move across territories and expand and was linked to the protection of trade routes. So one of the catalysts of the spread of Islam was the fact that trade, Mohammed himself having been a merchant, the trade became a codified and protected mode of activity. So Islamic traders could have recourse to the judge or the Qadi, and any rupturing of those rules was severely punished. And so the creation of a market, an instrumentalization of the new technology was fundamental to the spread, to the rapid spread, of Islam. I mean, that combined, obviously with military conquests and what have you.

□ So basically we're saying that in a time when each tribe had a prophet, usually that role of the prophet was taken over by the poets, by the seer of the tribe. And this is why when the prophet came with his message, he was accused by his enemies of being nothing but a poet, nothing but a seer, nothing but, he speaks whatever he wants to. And that among all these different people, he managed to spread his message. And it went because there was a vision, because there was a technology attached to it, because I mean, if we're not talking about the divine intervention, so...

/ There's a tension. There's an interesting tension between the idea of the prophet and the poet. I think since the very beginning, there's that tension, you can trace it. So the prophet was the mouthpiece of God. Poet is a craftsman. Craftsman in words. It's the news that inspires poets. And with the Greeks, in the case of the Greeks, it was Apollo who inspired the oracle. Apollo inspires the Pythian prophetesses. They speak in babble, a sacred babble. And their sacred babble, which is kind of incomprehensible, is then taken by a crafty priest who reiterates this babble into an enigmatic formula that can be understood. That's the process of prophecy in ancient Greece. So it's a series of elocutions and then even reinterpretations of elocutions that God has certain enigma that are presented as the speech of the oracle. The poet on the other hand has his muse that inspires his elocution. And so there's a systematic tension between the poet's annunciation and the prophet's annunciation and it led the Greeks to conclude that all poets like all cretins were liars.

* It's also interesting because it raises the question of not just the spoken word, the prophet who speaks, but to interpret what is said, who interprets, how it's interpreted, how it's transmitted, how it's communicated... beyond the prophet. What do you do with the word? And it was interesting when you were explaining that the poet takes that babble and, takes formulates it into something that, I assume, is more translatable than the priest...

/ The priest takes the babble of the prophetesses, his Pythian prophetesses, who enter a kind of trance. They enter into a kind of trance, and they're in a transformed state. They enter into a trance and they speak babble. And then it's the priest that comes to reinterpret this and say, this is what she's saying. This is what she's saying. This is what Apollo inspired her to say. Here is the version.

□ So are you suggesting that each prophet needs a priest and the priest needs a church or an institution to translate the prophecy into instructions, into a roadmap for the community, for the future?

/ I just think this relationship between language and the accessibility and understanding, the transparency of language and the notion of the broadcasting of that, or the dissemination of that is interesting. In the history of Christianity, Luther's unhinging of the enigma of Latin into a language that could be accessed by the people, it was a game changer. It was a game changer for the power structures there. And, interestingly Luther, and one of the reasons for the massive success of his bible was that he spoke a combination of high German and low German...

Stylistically, he had his finger on the pulse, creating a language that could be understood from the mountains to the coasts. It was that stylistic... how to say... skill, that allowed him also to be a best seller. Luther's Bible, if he'd just written in high German, he would've been understood only by a quarter of his readers.

○ So irrespective of the completeness or the lack of completeness of messages, those that remain, those that have impact and effect beyond its own time requires collaborators, requires others to be able to spin it and to make it relevant beyond that initial moment, whether that be in the economics of the time, in the politics of the time, whatever it might be. So collaborators, I think are very much part of whatever messages, whether those messages be of a divine nature or otherwise.

I know it's difficult to separate the prophet from the message, but if one does separate them, the prophet only becomes the means of passing that message, then I think what the next interesting question for me certainly is what are the messages that are being promoted today? What are those messages, what do they indicate, and where are they taking us? Where we are today, all of us, irrespective of class, nationality, boundaries. What's being predicted, what's being sold, what's being advertised?

/ What's happening in Baghdad?

□ A total failure of the prophecies. So the prophets came in 2003 and told us that if we toppled this dictator and we installed this regime, this democracy, then things will be amazing and brilliant. That was the prophecy, and for six...

So for 16 years, they were selling this prophecy, but then that discrepancy that I was talking about, the difference between the prophecy and the reality on the ground became so wide and so huge that we are, not only in Iraq, but in the region of the past decade is the decade of, one, collapse of the prophecy, two, I think, is the emergence of the small prophets, the tiny prophets on a village scale, on a street scale. And you have a massive upheaval now in Iraq.

The new prophets of what's going on in the country, I think, is every single demonstrator in the streets was calling for the destruction of the temple, the destruction of the political status quo, the destruction of the political parties, and the reintroduction of a new system. So, one, you have the failure of one big prophecy. Second, you have the people on the ground, the rebels trying to change the status quo. Early on, we were talking about all the signs of '*nihayat al-zaman*,' the end of time, and I think it's brilliant, whoever wrote these prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, the coming of the *Mahdi*, the end of time, was so brilliant because they are so generic. If you can read them and you can say, "Oh, this will happen in 1258 when the Hulagu came to Baghdad." Or you can see it, "Oh, this happened or it will happen." So this is what's going on. It's always, you have to re-interpretation of a prophecy and the introduction of a new prophecy.

/ Wait a minute. We have to go back a little bit to this because you're saying 2003 came the American led invasion of Iraq, and with it, a prophecy, a recipe, a program.

□ And prophets.

/ And a promise.

□ Prophets from Rumsfeld to a Bolton to all those preachers of a new democratic dawn in Iraq ushered by American power, financed by Iraqi oil. It was a very appealing prophecy. Why? Because it talked about the demise of a dictator and the beginning of a new dawn. It was a beautiful prophecy.

/ Isn't the chaos that you describe, the proliferation of the many prophets, the proliferation of the many prophets, the absence of central...

□ Prophet.

/ ...command, the breakup of a country geographically, along sectarian lines, maybe even along generational lines, isn't that all part of the prophecy? Isn't that part of the Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld prophecy?

□ True, and this is what takes us back to the destruction of the image of the 'leader of necessity', and it creates another prophecy, but then the other prophecy also fails. So you have this dialectic kind of path between one failed prophecy into another failed prophecy. And if we talk about realities on the ground, the fact that one prophecy failed does not make the other prophecy come true. So if one religion's prophet turned out to be a false prophet, the other religion's prophet does not necessarily... I'm not talking about religion, by the way, I'm talking about countries. So the fact that Saddam's images and prophecies and the glory of the future failed does not give credit and turn the prophecies of Rumsfeld into reality. And that's where you have another generation of small prophets or petty prophets. I mean, I think probably the moment when we realize that there is no prophecy, there is no future, this is what you have, maybe that's a good starting point.

/ So, what's the consensus? What is the consensus there? Is this a source of hope, you're saying, what we see today in Baghdad, what we see today in Beirut, what we see today even outside the parliament in Kuwait? Are we revisiting a moment of the surge in desire for dignity that was the...

□ Of course.

/ ...the banner of the so-called 'Arab Spring'? Are these sources of hope?

□ Of course it's sources of hope. There is an amazing moment of hope. Why? Because we are at the moment of the destruction of the temple. Always, there is a hope of a better future when the temple is shaken, destroyed, the powers are destroyed. Now, what comes later is where...

* What follows, as we know, is the void, right?

If you destroy everything, you have a void. However that void gets filled, it's both promising and incredibly tenuous, right?

□ Tell us, tell us, you've been talking about this, tell us about the flood. Tell us about the great flood of Louisiana.

* We were talking about this the other day. And I think it's important because with hope, with the idea that something else comes, brings upon the kind of destruction of what's there. But there's this overwhelming void and how that void gets filled, obviously, is crucial. And keeping one's eye on some imagined future, and without occupying that stuff, I think it almost sets itself up for kind of failure.

□ So after the floods in Louisiana, was there a hope of a better future? Did prophets come to the land and talk of a better reconstruction, a better future for the land, and how did these prophecies turn out?

* Well, in the case of New Orleans, following the destruction of the Hurricane Katrina and the flood, the shock of the events was devastating.

In fact, 80% of the city was flooded and, for some time, remained under water. In addition, many of the public institutions, particularly public schools, were intentionally gutted. What followed was not a spontaneous emergence of prophecies, but rather a network of prophets, otherwise known as powerful real estate developers, that had been speaking and organizing at a national level. So, the destruction of public institutions and the putting in places of neoliberal policy allowed for a completely new kind of city to emerge. And again, it was in the void following the destruction that these new things happen. This thesis was put forth in *The Shock Doctrine* (2007) by Naomi Klein, otherwise known as the theory of “disaster capitalism.”

It could have very well gone a completely different way. Radically different things could have filled that void, but what filled the void instead was a rather regressive kind of policy pushed forth by those who had been waiting for an opportunity. In the case of Iraq, following the invasion, it was a similar kind of void that created the opportunity to put in place some new vision, right?

○ I think that’s because it’s prescribed. It’s the same in Afghanistan. The premise is that things that work elsewhere will work for you, in the same way that they worked elsewhere, with the same speed. So new ideas are required to fill the void. If those ideas are local interpretations of other ideas, mutations of other ideas, they tend to graft and the graft takes. Where they’re direct impositions, whether it’s free-market commercialism... I mean, one of the things that moves into the voids very quickly is *laissez-faire* economics are big corporations and the IMF.

And what they tend to do is they apply the same formulas, irrespective of the specificity of the place, of the people, of what they need at that particular moment, the loans and the infrastructure projects... While as an initial intervention to fill the void, I think it is required, of course, who doesn’t want education? Who doesn’t want roads and bridges or hospitals? Of course, we want. But how do they manifest themselves as physical tools in a society that needs to fill its own aspirations, its own ideas of what it wants to be and where it wants to go. That cannot be cut and paste from one place to another.

□ So we’re talking, since the beginning, about our false prophets and failed prophecies and the leader as the prophet of his days and his time, but there are true prophets. I mean, art is true prophecy. I mean, artists are the true prophets of our time. They are the people who would come at one point and draw or say or shoot something, and that, their vision becomes a reality. Can we consider the artist a prophet?

/ I’m interested in developing some things around that, but I want to just go back a second because we’re not finished with this question of the void. So it seems to me that we are in a moment of civilizational development where there is only one voice. That is the voice of capital. Wherever the void, wherever the rupture, enter *deus ex machina*, capital. Is that sustainable? How far can we go having this being the only protean, magical solution to the voids that surround us?

It's not just anecdotic, but the Lebanese street protests of the last few weeks, the straw that broke the camel's back was the decision to tax WhatsApp messages, right?

* If we go back in time to the debates following World War II, there were two strong models that were at stake, the market and capitalism versus socialism. The later model has largely fallen by the wayside. How many people still believe in the model of socialism? Models? So by default, you end up with the market as the unilateral, homogeneous model. What's interesting is to me, is that if we go back to where we started and ask, if there is only one vision, one voice, then who begins to disrupt? Who begins to deliver some other vision?

/ Well, we're also in a moment where that protean force of capital is in the process of metamorphosis. It's in the process of metamorphosis, through technology. And the interface of capital and technology, I would say is, is the prophetic book of the next 50 years.

* I'm more interested in thinking about who is the prophet that is going to interrupt that continuum. Regardless of all of these technological mutations, it doesn't interrupt the market, right? They advance the market.

/ It advances the market inside your skull.

* Inside...

/ Your skull.

* Right.

/ I mean, your skull is the new market.

* Well, prophets-

/ The territories of your brain.

O And that's how corrosive it has become. The false prophecy of the market is that it gives you things that you need and you cannot live without, things that extend your life, things that extend your beauty, things that make life comfortable and that enable you to do things that otherwise would have been considered magic some years back. That's the fallacy, that's the hook that incorporates you.

At the same time, I think that the next prophet will arise in these conditions. The conditions of the exploitative market economy are... we see it. We see it in the environment, we see it in where we're headed, we see it in change, we see it in so many levels. Prophets will emerge when necessity requires them to emerge. And whether they be people who advocate for a total destruction of the status quo, or whether they depict alternatives, other ways of being, of existing that are more sustainable to us, that are more equitable and just for the billions that live in poverty, those are conditions, and the conditions are ripe.

/ The Chinese Communist Party regularly updates its public facing documents in terms of the relationship of state technology and society and the future. We have two models today working in the world, right? We have a Chinese Communist party model that says, in its documentation, technology is to be used to help predict movements in society and ensure social wellbeing. This is the authoritarian model. And if you are a Uighur Muslim in China, very difficult for you to escape the surveillance state. In Silicon Valley, we have other proponents of the liberating powers of technology to enable the magic that you're saying I don't know, for example food delivery at any hour, whatever, buy stuff. But it is equally omnipresent. It is equally pervasive.

So it seems beyond doubt to me that the frontiers of technology into our civilization today are the defining parameters of our moment. And the question is how to create spaces outside of that net. Is there the possibility of the new? And can that come from within, or must it come from without? And if it's to come from without, that's the question. Can the new come from within?

□ Which is exactly what you're doing now, you're sitting, and you're prophesizing about a scenario that is going to... I mean, you or what this room is doing here is not very different for a tent somewhere in the middle of a desert somewhere, where people realize that there is a failure in the society, something is not right. Whatever is happening is not going to work eventually there. So they start prophesizing a doomsday if another path is not taken, that is a prophet. Sulayman I declare you a prophet.

/ God forbid! Please, please, please.

□ This is the role of a prophet as a society changer. This is what an artist, a writer, a thinker is doing.

/ *Con permesso...* I read you a little section from this beautiful address that John Cocteau made in his last film appearance. He made this in, I think it was '64, '63-'64. He made an address to the year 2000. John Cocteau says to himself in the most humble sense, I mean in the most humble way possible, says, "I am a prophet." So in his address, it's beautiful, and you must watch it, he says, "I predict anti-gravitation. St. Augustine was not wrong, since Tokyo is not the other side of us, and we are not the other side of Tokyo. There is no upside down and downside up. If Burkhard Heim suspects that one shouldn't fly, but fall, he may be right."

"By now," he says, speaking to the year 2000, "you may have discovered, like the ancient Incas, some gold or unknown metal, which seems light but is in fact very heavy. And that instead of rising, you, young people who I am addressing in the future, are in fact falling. Here, indeed, is the problem. These days, we are ripping things up from the earth with very expensive machines that cost a lot of money and are prone to accidents. I don't know what's going on for you now, but I hope your youth is not straddling contradictions as our youth is today, back in 64. We remain apprentice robots. I hope you have not become robots, but that you have become very humanized." End of quote.

□ What a false prophet.

/ Are we? Do we remain? Let's respond to Cocteau's question. Do we remain apprentice robots? Are we better apprentice robots today, or are we more humanized?

○ Well, the more we move up, the more we advance, the more we're bound to the things that help us advance, no? We're bound to our phones, to our cameras, to technology in general. So, are we more liberated than people were a hundred years ago, or are we less liberated? And do we consider that liberation? Do we consider it in terms of our outreach, our access to information, our ability to communicate simultaneously across the world? That may very well be the case. There might be aspects of liberation that's built into aspects of subjugation. Technology, how it keeps track of us, where we are, where we're not. These are all, I think, issues. So the answer to that question, I'm afraid, in my opinion, my humble opinion, is that we're less advanced than we were.

/ Less human?

○ Less human than we were. I think so. I took a leap there. I don't know, it's a hypothesis, so I'm glad or happy to be questioned.

* What's interesting to me is, again, the constant of a kind of resistance; he's speaking in the 1960s, clearly he's speaking in a moment during which this kind of resistance is present. And then the question becomes, is it really these small incremental moves that should be seen as the model? Or is it the big eruptions, the big, massive changes? And those are the two models that we're left with, right? You have the French Revolution on the one hand, you have the British kind of incremental change on the other, right?

/ Well, that was civil war.

* Well, I'm just saying that we can abstract those two models. And I think it gets to a point, even in the 1960s, the optimism of what would be replaced by these efforts and to what degree this other thing actually does, in fact, replace a former system. You follow what I mean? I mean, to what degree is just kind of... All we're hoping for are slow, incremental changes that's a kind of constant or some large eruption?

□ I have a question...

* Mm-hmm (affirmative).

□ ...to kind of follow what Ajmal was saying. Is a prophet right in one period and then wrong in another? So do we judge a prophet or prophecy eternally, or is it time limited? I mean, the paragraph you read is totally... I don't think it's right in 2000, but does it have a time limit? A certain prophecy is fulfilled, say, 600 AD, but then it becomes false in, say, 2000 AD.

So how do we judge the time limit of a prophecy, or is a prophecy an often ended warranty, I throw a prophecy here in this room, and then it stays?

○ I think it's in the reverberations.

/ The quote that says, I don't know, that is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism. So I put it to you again, you keep dodging this question, gentlemen, do we need to contemplate or even wish for civilizational melt down, collapse in order to be able to correct where we are heading? I'm playing the role of deep pessimist. I'm saying to you that where we are heading bodes ill and that Cocteau's question here of, "I hope you have not become robots, but you have become more humanized," actually today, we're in 2019, I think that the way we are heading is bad fast, and every day it gets faster. And every day we get more locked into the bad fast apprentice robot movement.

Certainly, if you listened to the Greta Thunberg discourses... There is an example of a young prophetess, perhaps. And she says to the UN, "Don't give me any more of you. I don't want anymore of you. We can't have any more of you. We have to make rupture with you." That's us, by the way, we're the dying species.

* But I think it's an interesting question. Can we imagine? Or it appears easier to imagine the end, total destruction, than it is to imagine the alternative. The idea of having some alternative. In fact, it's actually quite-

Wait, wait. It's quite interesting because right now, we're able to articulate what we don't want, meaning globally, more than we are able to articulate what we do want, meaning as something to put forward, right?

○ It's a duality. I mean, there has to be an end that requires a salvation. There has to be an end that we're going towards, that requires people to come up with ways to avoid that end. So I think the duality of all of this is, for me, quite apparent. Okay, I don't want to stray into the area of the divine or religion, or spiritual or moral, but at the same time, I think it's a continuity. I mean, maybe it's not the best of examples, but ship don't sail in a straight line. What they tend to do is go off a bit to the right and then correct its direction back a bit to the left, and in the long term-

/ Sorry, you are making an apologist's argument, for what I'm saying we're locked into-

○ A battle...

/ I am saying we're locked into a barren, dehumanized mode of development. And at this point, I don't see how we'd break out of that, either the combination of authoritarian control through technology, or capitalist frenzy through aided by technology. I see those as the two positions of a potential future, and I don't see third way at this point in time.

* That's crucial.

○ If I were to respond to that, a third position or a third way would require people to accept and understand the first two positions. It means, in some sense, that by leaps and bounds, there have been stages of human progress that have come at a cost. Human progress meaning that we're more in touch with each other, closer with each other, and that we're able to do things that were simply unimaginable 10, 20, 30 years ago. It's a reality and the downside is the impacts it has on us, the impact it has on our interaction with each other, and the impact that it has on the environment. I don't think it's black or white. It certainly isn't something that can be negated. There are good things I would argue.

And then there are bad things. I think that if we allow the market or politics to figure out what the bad things are, they're simply too interested in themselves, and for them, the bad things don't matter. So I would say the prophets, if there are any, prophets on both sides, if there are two sides, advocate their own messages, but the prophet from the side of averting disaster, averting catastrophe, averting the end of the world, global warming, whatever that would be, Greta Thunberg, I think their role is to be heard, to speak, and to garner reactions.

* But I think more fundamentally, it's the question you just raised. If, in fact, the paradigm, as you were suggesting, if the paradigm is one of, "Progress and catastrophe are two sides of the same coin," as Hannah Arendt put it, then it means how do you move beyond that kind of paradigm? Or are we doomed to be in that paradigm and just continue to work with that? It seems that that's really what's at stake, even the awareness that that's where we are, with technology, with the development of more and more sophisticated things, there's a dark underside that comes with that.

○ It's because of the way that it's being done, in my opinion, to a large extent-

* I don't know.

○ It's not necessarily that technology is-

* I don't know if it's inherent or not.

○ Bad per se.

* Is my question...

○ And I'm responding to that... I don't think that technology is bad per se. I think increasing your profit margins to the point where people live in poverty, and exploiting the environment to the point that you give your shareholders massive windfalls, I think that's where the exaggeration comes in.

□ I want to kind of put things in historical context, always.

I mean, think of four people sitting in a tent, sometime in, I don't know, some desert somewhere between Switzerland and Paris, and they're debating the misfortunes of their time. They're talking about one empire controlling another, they're talking about diseases and deforestation, and whatnot. And they're talking about the end of times, you know, 2000 years ago, and then suddenly someone comes and says, "Well, we can't do so and so and so." So yes, things aren't doomed as they are now, but without prophets, without Greta, without, call them prophets, call them leaders, call them anything, things won't change, but things do change, because we know throughout history that things change. I mean, whether they will change on time or whether it will bring misery, I mean, yesterday we were walking in Venice and we were slouching through water in kind of a tiny little flood.

And then Anthony tell us of one-meter rise in sea level is nothing compared. And then we saw the effect yesterday of what, 15 centimeters? So this is a prophet, here's a prophet, a scientist, talking about the future and it is there, and he's prophesizing that. And are we humans kind of ignorant sitting there rejecting the modern prophets, rejecting the scientists? So we're talking about the false prophets, but then, there are real prophets, prophets who are talking about things that are happening in front of our eyes, and we reject and reject. So yes, I agree with you guys, but at the same time, I think throughout history, some humans could manage to change the course of history if we-

/ So, question, then. You're saying that progress will lead us through, that you measure our ability to navigate through the future as a civilization, that you think that there's a good chance that we can make it.

□ What? I'm not saying this. I'm not assuming to say this, nor I want to sound like one of those guys who say, "Oh, progress will come through technology," but what I'm saying is, it's not... I mean, we've been through these crises before throughout our history, and maybe not as drastic as this one, but there's always been a crisis, and we can sit, or we can change. So what I'm arguing is for Greta to lead the army of believers...

/ What I'm trying to get at is that your notion of alterity, the idea that, again, that something new can emerge, what I'm trying to say to you, is that the space of alterity is being radically-reduced every day. And-

* The space of what?

/ Of alterity. Of alterity, of otherness. Going back to this idea of the disruption, of the source of the disruption, is there anywhere that we can imagine that is off the grid, off the controlled mechanism, that 'where' might be the source of alternatives.

* So, what's interesting to me is this notion that technology would aid us. I think it is naïve.

□ Yes.

/ Nefarious. I think it's nefarious!

* Wait, wait, wait, no, but wait!

□ No one's arguing for that.

* Historically, it has been naïve to assume that. In fact, let's pick one example, let's look at civil rights in the US, just how to move forward with trying to achieve civil rights for blacks in America. And if you look at that as a movement, so much was at stake and it's persisted slowly, and I think by looking at the ways that movement has arrived at some relative success, I mean, the idea of progress, the idea of tech had nothing to do with it, right? It required a completely different...

○ I would argue the reverse. I would say that alienation, the other, are the foundations of discrimination... that we are different from each other. And I think technology has shown us that we're not so different from each other. It's given us access to the other. It's shown us, whether it be the internet, TV, satellite imagery.

* Whether it be fake news?

○ Whether it'd be the simultaneous projection of cinema, black cinema, of sport, of song, of creative endeavors, like music. I think those things have contributed to us understanding each other better. Now, is technology a solution to our problems? No, of course not. But, it's also a tool. It's how you use that tool, you could use it to disseminate, spread fake news and alternative realities and, you know, that's also okay.

* Yeah, I'm all for tools.

□ But what I'm saying is, I'm not arguing that technology will bring us to this solution, I'm going back to this whole notion of prophecy, of we are in time of great upheaval, we are going through phenomenal change which will lead into a disaster if we continue this course of existence, being who we are. Then there are prophets. False prophets, real prophets, prophets of doom, prophets of change, and something. I think just despairing, sitting in a tent and despairing, will not lead us out of this. And this is to go back to your point, Sulayman, what's happening now, a decade after civil wars, you would argue that a nation, say Iraq, or Lebanon, both nations have been through civil wars, both nations have been broken and destroyed.

And yet people are going to the streets, calling, with the huge risk of another round of fighting a civil war, calling for a change, because the status quo cannot be maintained, and this is a prophecy. It is not a single man or a single woman or a poet or something, but a group of people. A prophecy as a general feeling, unconscious feeling amongst the nation. They want to change, and change is what we always-

/ So you're saying revolution?

□ Carries a tiny little prophecy with it. It aspires for something.

Shaking the temple.

○ The basis of all prophecy has to be change. It cannot be anything else, otherwise, prophecies don't work. They falter, they fizzle. I think aspects of prophecy that are also interesting not only undermining the current status quo, whatever condition, but also propose an alternative, and that alternative then can be pure in its essence, but then has to be evolved by others.

/ I want to ask you a question as well. I'm interested, why don't you tell us a little bit about how you work with the past in your work in Kabul, how the past influences your practice?

○ Well, in our part of the world, our pasts are very important for us, whether they be in our identities, in our legacies or the legacies of our forefathers, or in the physical manifestations of how we dress and intangible culture or our monuments, and in those remnants of time. We don't talk about it in terms of 200 or 300 or even a thousand years, we refer to four or five, 6,000 years of history. So, in the context of where I work, an understanding of where we've come from is very important to take stock of or to deal with where we are today.

/ Keep going. I mean, tell me more about the relationship with the material past, with tangible modes of making stuff.

○ It's an act, and it's an act that, again, binds you to the place and binds you to others, and there's a communalism to it, the basis of Islam is communal prayer, communal worship, community exchange and interaction. So Afghanistan is very much grounded in that context, and things get done by communities using the materiality of the place, making do with what they've got... and the ingenuity, and resilience of that population, despite the past 40 years of turbulent history, are things that we work with, and that we use.

/ So that's what leads you, for instance, to work with rammed-earth technology.

○ For example, it's actually a very old way of working. And in fact, in the current context, it's very sustainable as a material and there's a move back in that direction. I think one has to filter out nostalgia and romanticism, because there's a lot of that with respect to our region, whether it be 19th century or 20th century. The point being that it's about re-interpretation and where that re-interpretation is done. And it's about conscious decisions of how you want to engage with the bigger world and what aspects of that world are relevant to you. Homogeneity is certainly not something that many Afghans want. They want to retain certain aspects of their own identity, culture, and others, they're happy to update.

/ So how does that work with them, let's say, the making of a window.

When you renovate ancient buildings or historic buildings, do you ever open new windows, or do you only take the apertures that are there and...

□ What gives, Suleman? So if he doesn't open a new window, you're suggesting he is rejecting a prophecy in the future. If he keeps old windows, you are putting him in a trap.

/ No, no, not at all. Not at all. No, no, no.

□ Answer the question.

/ No, I'm actually very interested in just the physical materiality of this stuff.

○ No, there's an answer. And architecture is the basis of answers. The architecture of today is not the architecture of the past. There's difference to it. And technology, materiality and aspiration have a big role. So irrespective of the fact that architecture and the construction industry is one of the main culprits of global warming and the world standing on the brink, it's about how you use a building and practicality. If you use a building in the same way that it was used 600 years ago, then there isn't much need for change, but if you use a building for a different purpose, and today something happens within that didn't happen there 300 years ago, that requires an intervention.

Selectively, with old buildings, one needs to kind of encapsulate the spirit of architecture without change. There's a deliberate decision on what to retain, what not to retain and for what purpose. Some of it is technical, some of it is aspirational, but it's a re-interpretation of a statement, whether that statement rises to the level of prophecy is a different issue.

/ Sorry, I'm going to keep going for this a little bit, because you take building techniques, carpentry techniques, maybe even irrigation techniques, I don't know, from past masters or from past modes of making, how do you do that? How do you avoid amnesia? Given the context, we're talking about Kabul, we're talking about Afghanistan, we're talking about a country that has been ripped to hell by war endlessly for the last 50 years. So how does that work? How does that process work?

○ There's an analogy in conservation, which I think applies here. War destroys. With destruction, there's debris, and mixed into this debris you've got elements of who you are and new material. You've got traces of depleted plutonium that was used in its destruction. The first action is to clean the site. To find the source of what remains of the buildings, sometimes the foundation, sometimes the walls. Next the decision of what you want to retain and what you don't need anymore, followed by what to make new.

□ Can I tell you just one story? So once upon a time, I was in Mogadishu in Somalia almost a decade ago. It was during the last round of famine.

Somalia, again, another country destroyed by wars, destroyed by false prophets. I was walking in a neighborhood called the Hamar Weyne. Hamar Weyne is like one of old Mogadishu, that's where the Arab traders live, where the Indians came, and where the Italians, you have these old, beautiful symbols of architecture from white Italian villas to all the Arabic houses, but then the war came and destroyed everything, and the people fled.

And what happened, in a decade, nature took over that part of town, because it was the front line, and I've seen that in Iraq, and I've seen in other places, the moment human beings disappear, the moment war comes, suddenly, you realize that nature comes back, so the old comes back. And then at the same time, as I was walking in between these kind of trees and shrubs, I see this pattern under the sand, and I just like start kicking. And it's an old marble tile floor that had belonged to a Villa that doesn't exist anymore. The prophecy collapsed, temple collapsed, nature took over, and then you have only the traces. Then in the future, someone else would build and things will happen, and this is just to kind of talk about what Ajmal was saying, is you looking for what is left of the old...

○ That's still relevant today.

/ I am interested in ruins and how ruins might provide templates for a notion of regeneration. That's why I'm asking you about that work, and your story speaks to that.

○ But there's also the other aspect of it. When those things were built at the time they were built, they were, I would say representational of both the aspirations and technologies of that time, with the highest levels of creativity. And we are now in a different time, the demographics are different, the populations are different, the way people live and exist are different. So applying technologies that existed hundreds of years ago, or methods or forms or typologies may not necessarily work. There is a process of reinvention and that reinvention means reinterpretation, and I think it applies to everything, including prophecies.

/ So you two are both architects. I'm interested also, let's talk a little bit. What's prophetic architecture in the field of architecture? I mean, to go back to Cocteau, he complains, in that movie I was telling you about, he complains about the thing called, he calls it Esperanto architecture. He says, "I hope that you guys aren't still living in Esperanto architecture, where they coup you up in barracks of buildings and call them homes."

* So, the first answer to your question, what is prophetic architecture in the 20th century? It consisted of a powerful visionary master plan, but that approach has largely bitten the dust so hard that no one wants to touch it anymore. The first half of the 20th century was filled with visionary plans of the future and there was an enthusiasm for the role that visionary architects might play. That approach has been largely condemned as a form of central design, an approach in which a central planner would be in control of an entire city.

The vision of creating a city based on a single mind has been largely discredited since the 1960s. In that sense, 'prophetic architecture' has achieved a pretty bad reputation. But it may be worthwhile to consider what role might prophetic architects play today and how might they avoid falling into the same traps of the past. Is there another role for prophetic architecture beside the one that was played out in the 20th century?

/ You remember, sorry, go on.

□ No, no, no. Just kind of to follow up what Anthony says. Ajmal was saying that each prophecy has a time limit. And probably when, kind of Le Corbusier and Mies van der Rohe and the whole kind of Weimar Republic Bauhaus were talking in the 1920s about a central planning, massive building, massive reconstruction of the 1950s that turned into the vertical slums of today. That was a prophecy that had the time limit and it failed miserably. So, I mean, I apologize, but architects are the worst of prophets. They always fail in their prophecies. The ones who try to generalize, the ones who want to talk about a single idea, a single modular to solve. I mean, from da Vinci till today, we have a history of failed art-

/ Today, I mean, we are in an era of the star architect. I mean, today there-

□ When was an architect not a star?

/ But today there's a few of them that can be named on one hand, there's not a project in the Gulf that takes place without one of the star architects signing it off. It's as if those-

□ The hand of the divine touching it, exactly as you're saying.

/ Unless Jean Nouvel has made it, it's like it's not valid for use. I really don't understand.

□ And in Iraq, and unless Zaha Hadid has not blessed it, it's not a building.

/ There was the unmade plans of Frank Lloyd Wright in Baghdad. Did you ever come across these?

□ Yes.

/ He made a whole series of plans for the university on the island.

□ The university was built much later, this is where I studied. Yes, they were his actual plans, and they were lovely, but again, if you see his sketches, if you see his prophecies of the city, on how the city will evolve, compared to the reality today on the ground, I mean, I don't think there's a worse false prophet than Frank Lloyd Wright in Iraq.

/ You mean, that his plans were misinterpreted?

□ No, I mean his vision was very wrong because he presumed the city will have green spaces, a city will grow gently. He did not foresee, and who would have foreseen that? The Wars, the destructions, their civil war, the migration from the South, from the areas where there was a front-line with Iran during the millions of people who migrated into Baghdad. And Baghdad is a city dying today out of... and obviously, if you see the prophecy of Frank Lloyd Wright compared to the reality of the ground, I mean, I would love to live in that city, but it doesn't exist. Because reality moved so quickly that proved his prophecies false.

/ So there are two very different models we're discussing here. One of the... for instance, Frank Lloyd Wright's plans for Baghdad or the Jaen Nouvel approach to implanting structures into the Gulf, for instance, today, the Louvre in Abu Dhabi, Alula that's being designed as an eco-center in Saudi Arabia, centered around the Nabataean civilization.

* What's the different models?

/ The different model is for instance, the work that Ajmal has made.

□ Exactly, exactly-

/ Where the relationship with civilizational knowledge is deeply anti-global, in the sense that it's rooted in what the technique, the skillset, the craft of that particular geography, those particular contingencies, led to very different models. And I feel that part of our quandary today, I mean, certainly in the Gulf for instance, is our inability, of fear. And there's a kind of philosophical cowardice *vis-a-vis* accumulated local knowledge.

□ Sometimes I worry, and I'm afraid, if you travel a desert between Iraq and Syria, you see all deserted palaces built by the Umayyad and Abbasid *khalif's*, because that was the hunting ground, that there used to be lots of water and lots of wild live.

/ Lions.

□ Lions, gazelles, and what naught. And so they build these complexes, massive, and it left to... They became atlatl.

/ Ruins.

□ Ruins. Ruins today, because they were visions of an un-sustained reality. You are a King and you build your own palace in the desert to go hunting, and then once you're toppled, once your vision is destroyed, once there is a revolution, the palace stays as ruins. I mean, let's speak about Saddam's architecture, I mean-

/ No, let's not speak about Saddam's architecture.

□ No, no, but these massive, gigantic spaceships, like mosques and palaces, they were all turned into kind of...

/ I agree with you on one level. The best architecture for the desert is the tent, right?

□ No. I mean, both of us are agreeing that what Ajmal is doing is being a prophecy that is close to the earth, close to reality, close to the people who are living there, and a sustainable prophecy.

/ Well, it's a process, right?

You know, Jean-Luc Godard's film, *Alphaville*? It's like a sci-fi movie where books are contraband and all books are controlled by the state and then books and words disappeared from circulation. So they're centrally controlled and then there's the group of beautiful rebels who have their own stash of stuff and resurrect the lost words and the lost books and circulate them...

The amnesia, I say again, amnesia... I mentioned to you yesterday, the example of the Chinese Wikipedia, that you can look up the history of every year and the Chinese equivalent of Wikipedia gives you the definition of it, and it tells you what happened in such and such year but 1989, the year of Tiananmen Square doesn't exist on the Chinese Wikipedia. It doesn't exist, it's Alphaville. 1989 is Alphaville.

* In Turkey, one is not allowed access to Wikipedia.

/ But wait, you don't have to go to Turkey. What was it that your supreme leader said yesterday or a few days ago? Trump said the Kurds didn't even help us on the D-Day? So-

□ We'll all have to go back to fly-

/ What I'm saying is that this notion of systematic amnesia in a connected world... Never was it easier to make the idea of the ellipsis, the hiatus, the gap more significant, more impactful than in a connected world.

○ The challenges are bigger for both prophets and fake prophets alike to build a community around them. And I think technology to an extent has made that challenge greater because more people have access to information. And in that sense are less likely to be convinced but, at the same time, the propagation of fake news, the propagation of multiple 'scientific' positions contrary to others' findings. The establishment of doubt, preaching to the converted, in connection to the self-interest of groups. I think prophets in this day and age, whether they be the ones you've just mentioned or others, are essentially fighting over a population beyond borders. A population which is much larger-

/ Wait a minute, who said there are prophets today. You guys are sort of saying the prophets, the prophets, the prophets... Aren't we in need of a new religion?

□ No, but if we take people like Orwell and others, and Orwell of course built on the prophecies of others, like we and others, and he predicted, prophesized a society not very far from the one we're living in today. And, at one point we thought Orwell's prophecies, especially in 1984, were false prophecies. *Tamam*, because the Soviet Union collapsed, that kind of authoritarian societies no longer exists, but look where we are today. This is exactly what you're telling us about, about the Chinese society, about the way they use information technology to achieve all what Orwell was talking about in the 1940s. And he was talking about different a part of the world and he was talking about different political system, but we are there, we're taught the supreme leader of Anthony, he is a character from-

/ A.k.a. Donald Trump.

□ This is exactly where we are, this is exactly... An is Orwell a false prophet? Of course not. So prophecies do exist.

○ Prophecies and prophets do exist and they're depicting their messages as we speak in this bunker today; they're depicting realities that we may or may not agree with completely or partially, but they exist and, as far as I'm concerned, there is a battle over the soul of humanity. And that battle is being played out in different ways, whether it's local, regional or global. Is the message comprehensive... to some extent, yes. When it comes to economics, it is comprehensive. It's very clear how the world exists in this sense, the complexions and the varieties have changed. Economics is the same in Afghanistan. The way it's being practiced might be different, but the economics is the same in Afghanistan, as it is in Los Angeles.

/ I want to hear from you a little bit, Anthony, about the prophetic architecture and what it means to live in a world, to live in an aquatic world.

* Well, whether that's prophetic architecture or not, is open for debate. The difference between a visionary architecture and urbanism that was put forth in the early 20th century and a kind of, in your terms, aquatic or floating architecture being proposed today, is that the later is born out of necessity to deal with sea level rise, the very condition that we're seeing right now in Venice. All data indicates that an inevitable sea-level rise will continue. And as that happens, given that the majority of the largest cities in the world are located along coastlines, it means, obviously, that an enormous number of people will be affected. Floating cities is simply one way of thinking about how we might address such issues.

I'm not sure if it is correct to identify that response as visionary or prophetic architecture. It can be seen as a practical adaptation to a given circumstance.

Some of the most interesting solutions, without a doubt, that are currently being developed are occurring in Southeast Asia, in places like Bangladesh and Vietnam, and many other places in that region. Those are the areas where flooding and sea-level rise is being experienced in a direct way, and they're reacting to these changes in intelligent ways. But I don't think it comes with the baggage of visionary urbanism and prophecy, like in the 1920s and 1930s, in the way architects would have been more inclined to respond.

I don't know if it's a matter of rethinking what that means, but I don't think it comes with that great proclamation of what the future must be. It's more a reaction to what is, and I don't know if that says something of a kind of model, as opposed to some more abstract vision of the future, as opposed to a reaction and to some degrees, I wonder if the model we were discussing about Afghanistan, the working model, to what degree is it just a kind of almost practical reaction to what is given, that is forging innovation without a doubt. And I would call the things that are going on innovations, extraordinary innovations, but I'm not sure if they have the visionary role attached to them. That would be my take, but maybe we must rethink what vision is.

/ I'm curious. The influence of Hellenistic art in the Oxus Valley, do you deal with relics and things that have the remains of that syncretism of that meeting of Hellenistic craft with Hindu and Buddhist influences? Do you have objects like that, that you work with?

○ Not specifically, but the country, the morphology, the people, the demographics and the diversity are exemplary of a meeting of multiple cultures and belief systems, channeled by the Silk Road, which ran through parts of Afghanistan.

/ To here, to Venice.

○ All the way to Venice. Maybe the last time the known world was as globally connected as it is today, with the exception of impositions of the 16th to the 20th centuries, when that area was the center of exchange, commerce, trade, and diversity. From that perspective, with relation to where we stand today, there are repetitive cycles of influence that are not necessarily tracked or incrementalized by one or 100 lifetimes. There is a change in the cycle again, with the emergence of East Asia and with it, the re-emergence of all of the central Asian countries. It's inevitable that this happens.

/ I mean, I'm talking about these civilizational, the intermeshing of civilizational history in a way as a counterpoint to where we are today in terms of everything we were saying about the interconnectivity and the openness of our societies, the juggernaut of the single market, et cetera. I question whether we are in fact more open today than we were, whether we are more open to the possibility of syncretic thinking and making than we were in previous times. And also, I think that part of our ability to navigate the future is really very intimately linked to our ability to sound the past.

□ Permission to throw-

/ *Con permesso...*

□ Isn't going back to an old method of architecture that's very harmonious for this society, isn't that like a failure of a prophecy? So isn't that kind of going back to the tent, we failed. That this has been a failure. So let's go back to the old way of using timber in something or is that... so, what Ajmal is doing in restoring old architecture, is that a failure of a prophecy from a Soviet perspective? Of course it is, because they came to Kabul and they wanted to reconstruct concrete, construct concrete cities, or is that a belief in the society and is that the way forward? So, sometimes we always talk about prophecy about something new, something emerging, something fantastic, but maybe going back is-

○ I think it has to do with, and I'll use these words only once, harmony and balance, harmony and balance, well, that's twice, between context, people, and the specificities of a region. What I see in Dubai and across the Middle East at the moment, could be described as impositions. Those impositions may make life more sustainable, or comfortable, (an argument by some), and easier to live in those harsh environments. But rather than advocating a return to the ways we lived centuries ago, which was sustainable to a large extent within those specific environments, there is a cause and need for people to reinterpret what we know today, how we build, to cater to slightly different aspirations. You can't detach aspirations from the built environment, you cannot tell a child in Afghanistan that your aspiration is to be simply a farmer.

/ "And, lo". Let me quote you some Ezequiel. "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument-"

○ Four times.

/ "For they hear thy words, but they do them not."

○ So, that means what? Revolution.

/ Yeah.

○ That means more forceful imposition-

/ Yeah, come on. "*Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita.*" Come on. It's like, no, no, no, no. No. We are not addressing the urgencies. We are not. We are falling into a consensus around stuff.

I blow the ram's horn and say that what we saw yesterday, with our plastic moon boots that we bought for €10 from China, walking through three feet of water in Venice, surrounded by what looked like winter stormtroopers off the cruise ship for a few hours in this sinking city.

○ Being documented every meter, through iPhones and technologies and facial recognition systems, right?

/ That we are on... the precipice. We are on the precipice and we have no consensus. We have no valid consensus. We are in need of a new religion. We are in need of prophets. And you will reply.

* Beware!

/ That that is an invitation!

* Beware of false prophets.

/ I say the age of disenchantment has reached its apogee. That for all the Twitters and the Facebooks and the angels, these heraldic angels of this moment, we are at the very apex of an age of disenchantment and we consume amnesia.

□ Oh, we live in amnesia. It's a system. I mean, amnesia is... So we'll come tomorrow to talk about amnesia. Anyhow, answer Anthony.

* One thing that does come up about our time, and I wonder if it's different and it's been talked about maybe since the Arab spring, this idea of the leaderless movement, as opposed to the leader. As opposed to the prophet. That there's some collective intelligence that's out there, that can do certain things, but it kind of rises and falls, right? Like swarms. And I just wondered, to what degree that's something we need to grapple with? To what degree is it necessary to have those figures, individuals? To what degree can these kind of larger bodies serve some kind of way of moving forward? Right now, maybe it's back to what we were talking about earlier, some of the most impressive things has been just protests. Not much has been gained without constant protest, right? I mean, if we look back at gains, any gains just laid on the table, what gains have just been granted? Oh, you want your rights? Oh, here you go! It's use, it comes with incredible persistence, right?

○ The small font.

* What's that?

○ It comes with conditions, it comes with attachments,

* It's seldom ever broken.

/ You're saying that it comes through violence.

* Well, not necessarily violence. The civil rights movement wasn't necessarily violent. They achieved something. Violence was directed at it, but it didn't employ violence. It just persisted in its demand for something and, again, that collective demand. But, again, often times they were the leaders, right? Associated with that.

□ What was it? Permission again? In Italian?

How did you say permission?

/ *Con permesso*

□ *Con permesso*

So if we talk about a prophecy as a change, as the world to change, as a vision, *tamam*, we talked about false prophets. We talked about prophets associated with religion. I think here at this moment in history, we have two interpretations of the prophecy, the prophecy by the scientist, the artist, which is the new prophet of our age.

We don't need someone telling us about the day after, but we need someone to tell us how we can live in 20 years, how your children will grow up in this world. One. And the other sign of prophecy that Anthony was talking about, which we have seen all, is the protest movement as one, trying to change, two, trying to implement a vision. Leaderless, yes, but... uncoherent, yes, has no poetry, yes, but a society completely becoming a prophet for itself, trying to usher in your day. And this is what we, again, to go back to the beginning, this is what we see in the protest movement today in Iraq and Chile, and even in Venice and Catalonia and other places, it's a protest movement that is trying to achieve a self, a prophecy of some sort. And that's, I think very, very important that we've moved away from the traditional religious kind of see a prophet into the scientist, the artists and the protest movement.

/ Death.

○ Imminent...

/ Death is today regarded by some as a disease.

○ Rather than the natural end to things...

/ A disease meaning can be cured, much money, much thought that's being invested into projects like Elon Musk's Neuralink.

This brings us to this question of the transhumanists, whereby this fusion of technology that was science fiction, ala William Gibson.

* I think it still is science fiction.

/ It is still science fiction but it is no longer something that you can call cyber punk.

* It's now tangible science fiction.

/ It's not cyber punk. This is mainstream. This is talked to you by mainstream.

○ Is it more fiction than what was being predicted 50, 60, 80 years ago about where we'd be today? Maybe not.

/ No, going back to *Brave New World* or *1984* or these things. No, it's not. Today, this is... I'm talking to you about a field of investment and a field of technological development. Now, it's really not very far away that, maybe it's even happening. Couples, expecting couples can say, well, there's an Alzheimer gene in my child, let's snip that out. Actually, my child would be better if it had brown eyes or blue eyes or green eyes. These are options that are elite options, but they will increasingly become options.

□ And they're so scary that we still look at them as if they are prophecies from the Old Testament of chariots of gods or something, because we cannot comprehend the impact of these things on our society. So we're still looking at these prophecies as-

/ It's still technology. Technology in the phrase of the... Is the technology stuff that doesn't work? But from the moment that it works, it's no longer technology, it's a reality.

○ Something you need.

/ It's a part of the-

○ Your existence.

/ It's a part of the framework. So death is a disease, is the contention of many. But now, we're already in an overpopulated world. We're already pushing the resources of the world to its very limits that, on top of that, we create longevity in the resource extraction paradigm, leads us to a very difficult scenario whereby there are those that can afford life. And there are those that can afford only shorter lives.

○ There's that and access to information however, aside from the environment, it doesn't affect the lives of the vast majority of people living on this planet who have to figure out how they make one meal extend into a second meal. How they live from one day to the next day, how they find water or food. And that is on the opposite spectrum when we talk about moving forward, in fact, the vast majority of people are left behind.

/ Two stream. We have a two stream future, right? We have those that are going to live for 150 years. And those that are going to live for 14. We return to labor relations that are not extraneous or outside of the path of men, through civilization.

○ Just the basic premise, sorry, just to add this is a line to what Sulayman is saying, we talk about death and the few that want to extend their lives, so that they can have more of what they've already had. But the vast majority of people, in poorer parts of the world, would probably wish for an early end to their suffering and misery.

○ They want an end to this kind of low level of existence. I think that's a spectrum to speak about as well. I think if you were to offer a young boy in the slums of Bombay or another 50 years to be poor and to be miserable and to have an empty stomach, I think he'd...-

/ Make me poor and shoot me.

* Yeah, I think I would say the scenario is just the extremes, right? That's all it is. I mean, the extremes of one end of that spectrum, of someone concerned about having the ability to not just do a facelift but live forever.

/ My question is, are we entering into a kind of techno Roman empire where we have citizens and slaves? Is that our future?

□ Worse than that because your slaves won't be humans anymore. So you will be detached totally from the need to slaves. So if we look at the Roman empire, the Assyrian empire and all these empires that were built on slave power, they needed humans. So they needed the slaves to be able to function, to build those powers but imagine this society you're describing, we'll not need slaves anymore because if they achieve this immortality you're talking about, they will also achieve AI and robotics to such an extent, it will divorce them from the need to others. So it will create this absolute two tier system between the elite, because always throughout the history, the elite always needed the masses, the labor, the thing, and this, that need created the conditions for revolutions to topple that. But imagine if you separate them.

/ And labor is no longer human.

□ Labor is no longer human.

/ So what do you do? Here's the question? I mean, this is what I want to provoke you.

□ Yes, sir.

/ So, you have those that have access to the Musk project, the Neuralink or its equivalent, who are the super humans. You have the robot. Well, the automated workforce that even today cleans your house on remote control. What'd you do with the remainder of the human population?

□ That is the reality.

/ But what do you do?

□ The reality will continue to live. They will suffer. But the reality exists with the remainder, not with that supreme, semi human beings with their-

/ So those, you mean they are the Popes of the story and they live in another world?

□ And the revolution will continue. Sorry.

* It's interesting. In the 1960s, there was a belief that along with developments in robotics and artificial intelligence, that machines would do more and more of the work and this in turn would allow for us, the general population, to have more and more leisure time. So there was this fantasy about leisure, which was never properly thought through or further analyzed, which said that with the inevitable mechanization of labor, everyone would have more leisure time. Is that really the case? If we think about the present, in many ways, we have arrived at a place in which the opposite of leisure now dominates. Of the actual...

/ Well, he can consume. So hence the assault on sleep, 24/7, what have you. They can continue to be useful appendages of a network of consumption. But at the point where resources are finite and water is a source of conflict. What happens then to... Look, faceless death, all right. So let's say death is the disease that can be treated as they will have it. And then faceless death being what today is experienced in Yemen. What today is...drones and so on. This is the new phase.

○ The ultimate act of dehumanization, of differentiating between those that matter, and those that don't matter. There was this amazing phrase in the 70's and 80's, 'trickle-down economics'. And I think the future is about trickle-down technology. It's about those that are privileged enough.

/ Trickle-down genetics?

○ Trickle-down genetics, trickle-down humanity.

□ I disagree with both of you.

/ Good.

□ I think... We started talking about why a prophet comes into a society because a prophet, he/she recognizes a discrepancy in that society between the needs of the society and the projection of what's going on. So she/he prophesizes a change of course. Now, what you are talking about is definitely... allow me to prophesize, would definitely lead to a fundamental revolution, upheaval, because that trickle-down economics never worked, didn't work. And that trickle-down technology is not working, will never work. So it will lead into a tiny aristocracy. What did you call it? Roman robotics? Robo... Exactly. So that pocket of Caligula, would exist. And because they are separated from the masses, from the real masses, and there where you will have the upheavals, the revolutions, the thing that will attempt to top of that. That is the course of history. The revolution of the oppressed. And it's always as inevitable as the day and night. I mean, this morning, we were reading the signs of the end of times. This morning, we're reading kind of-

/ Global commerce being one. Very tall buildings, an obscenity-

□ An obscenity as precursors for the re-emergence of the coming of the Christ, the reemergence of the Mahdi or whatnot. And there's this fear. The fear of what we're going through. And we need the savior, we need the something... but Caligula is never existed. Could never prolong their-

/ Porn is a form of prophecy.

* What is?

/ Porn.

* Why is that?

/ Porn as transgressive content has always led technological development. So, if you look back at how the... Do you remember Betamax? Betamax videos?

○ Betamax?

/ Yeah, it was essentially developed as a mode of distribution in porn. Development in photography was mostly led by the influx of revenue, through the distribution of erotic photos. What today is, pay as you go, or whatever subscription websites, pioneered by porn.

* But why is it prophecy?

□ It guarantees satisfaction...

/ They say it's at the vanguard of great technological development. But today porn is omnipresent.

* For sure.

/ Porn, it is a commodity of the era and it's like the plastic boots we were wearing yesterday.

○ A necessity.

/ A minor sign, according to the coming of the hour-

□ Coming of the hour-

/ Coming of the hour minus. I know-

□ Let's talk about the artist as a prophet.

○ I think culture. Arts and culture. And what its relationship is to-

* That's the typical understanding of the artist, right? And it may be correct, but I'm just pointing out that the artist is the one who bears some message, by creating something new. I wonder whether the artists still has that role, and that's being very generous to the artist, right?

□ Yeah. I think it still is.

○ The basis of what they do, of what artists do, I presume, is to be able to have a kind of detached view of everything that happens around them, whether it be for the purpose of beauty, or whether it be for the purpose of thought or exposure. To have time to consider issues, I think most artists fall into that category of people with the time and ability to consider the issues that are relevant.

From that perspective, I think that they are not necessarily prophets, but people who reveal contradictions, who work with contradiction, and reveal the realities of the time. Sometimes promoting and sometimes working against it. And let's not forget the four of us are sitting in this room at the instigation an artist. It is a project to put us together to think. It's a project that's put many other people together to think about issues that are relevant. So from that perspective, it is a liberating act. It's an act of freedom in this context, not to say that artists cannot be bound by the realities of the world...

/ Well, we spoke about the spaces for freedom, and whether there are any spaces that one can imagine for freedom. And I think that the role of art and literature in that is significant in terms of the creation of the possibility of freedom. So just to go back to that excerpt, Cocteau talks about himself as if he's colonized by a spirit. As if the spirit occupies and allows him to know parts of his being. And I think in that sense, there is a space of great liberty beyond the idea of the sovereignty of the individual.

Plus the poet occupied by the muse, sovereign, the poet occupied by the muse is occupied by the muse. The poet is part of the continuum. That is not unrelated to his past, its past, her past, her present and the future. And in fact, is dispossessed in a way. But now we return back to the idea of divine babble. What is the divine babble? Is it inspired by the oleander leaves? The fumes of the oleander that force them into the divine state on the epilepsy? And there is a release from the tyranny of individual sovereignty.

○ But are we being entertained? Are we being distracted? Or are we being led to think? And if I could maybe turn that wonderful magnetic looking glass that you've had on us for a couple of hours now back onto you, Sulayman, and ask you, as a director, as a writer, as person who directly creates art, creates time, - What do you have to say about what you do and why do you do it? Why do you write? Why do you put on theater?

□ And I would add another line, as a theater director, how do you prophesize the final product? How do you see it happening? Do you see it in your head? Do you have a vision? Tell us.

○ What's relevant for you?

/ There is parallel time. It's a parallel. It's the opportunity to create a parallel time. A little bit like this bunker puts us in a parallel time. It's an opening to plural events, to a plurality that... We haven't discussed the roles of shamans and mind altering drugs. Those elements of prophecy that allow for the connection with parallel things. Most of our talk has been based on the linear, thinking about futures, about presence, past presence and futures. And so theater, in its rapacious ephemerality, it relates to the ephemeral with the relation of a lover, which is rapacious for the ephemeral. For the time-space coordin is the moment of performance-

○ And the content, what drives the content?

/ The content is driven, in my case, by desire to also engage other, let's say, reality, civilizational histories, texts. I'm engaged in a cycle of reworking antique texts at this moment. Texts from Sumerian, *The Lamentation for the First City*. That's the first lamentation for the idea of a civic entity. But it was destroyed for unknown reasons, or by climate change, or by a tsunami or by an invading army. Destroyed two times, in fact. Once by natural catastrophe, then again, by the axes of the Elamites. And so-

○ In your selection of that-

/ But that those broken remnants of past civilizations, that are inevitably fractured, that are inevitably incomplete, and then their beauty coalesces in completeness.

□ So basically it's a double prophecy. So an artist 3,000 years ago, 5,000 years ago, wrote a lamentation. That was-

/ Or a priest.

□ Or a priest, could have wrote a lamentation, which was a vision to something that had happened. And then you come later, I don't know many thousands of years-

/ And use it as an echo box for Syria today, for Europe today.

□ Fascinating, fascinating. So that's the artist as a prophet to what is happening and what's going to happen.

/ Or the reconstitution of a ripped drum. Drums are beautiful objects.

They need a certain shape, and they need a frame, and they need a certain depth to be able to create echoes and to be able to do their function, which is the most basic function of percussion, of rhythm. And in a way, the work on these antique texts is about kind of creating new drums somehow.

○ So it's not so different from, for example, what I do, which is to look into our past and to find moments that are relevant for our present and our future. Whatever they may be, however they may be reinterpreted. From that perspective, I would say that you and I are not so different.

□ I think both of you are the poets of the tribe. The only prophet here is Antony because he is the person who is always talking about what will happen in the future. Both of you are the seeds of a tribe, the poets, the drummers of the tribe.

/ Antony, take over. Come on, tell us.

□ Because, seriously, apart from joking, I see reality as it is and I write it. Ajmal goes back into history and the past and reconstructs a window cell and a wall to achieve. Sulayman... a poet reminds us and tell us... He could be a prophet. He's pretty close to a prophet. But the poets have always been.

/ Liars.

□ But Sulayman takes the reality and turns it into a performance. A function leads us into the future. Amongst us, you're the only person who deals with science, and who deals with the impact of a certain event on a society, and how will that transform into the future.

* That's true, I mean, it-

□ The humbleness.

* It means in terms of current research, for sure. And looking at this kind of phenomenon of the floating cities, floating architecture. But again, it's based on a reaction more than some vision. It's a reaction to certain circumstances. And it's an inevitable move forward-

○ Accepting the inevitable, yeah.

* Yeah, there is some moving forward without a doubt-

□ So as the designated prophet amongst us here, tell us about the next 10 years. How can we... We are desperate for a prophet, desperate for a savior. Tell us what, for the next 10 years, what do we do for these floating cities? Because apart from Ajmal, I was lucky to not to have all that sea close to him. We all live very close to the sea.

* A, I refuse to play the role of the prophet.

○ Which is what exactly a good profit would do. So let's get beyond that, keep going.

* What is most interesting is that it raises the question of the collective in architecture but not the old versions of architecture, not the visions of the future. But right now, the collective energy that is occurring in places like Vietnam and Bangladesh as well as other places around the world is crucial. For me, it has been a matter of trying to connect the dots between these various regions more than anything else. I've been trying to find a collective intelligence in how people are actually responding to sea level rise. And I think it is a new form of collectiveness.

In fact, my role in this project has really been to identify particular project and then put people in touch with each other. Most of us operate in our own little silos. But the ability to connect people and ideas around the planet has opened up a whole new strategy and approach to research. If we can identify successful project, however small they may be, and connect them with other successful project, then we can begin to build something larger and more ambitious. Then the question becomes how might we added this to this, or how might we take it to the next level? This was all based on observing and documenting existing an experimental project that are actually going on at the moment. I think it is one of the only ways I see as a way to move forward. It's not about starting from scratch but rather starting from what is actually working and then continuing to further develop it.

□ Prophets always connected the dots. All the prophets of ancient times, they always connected the dots and moved forward.

○ Well, there's the thesis, there's the antithesis. Antithesis, which is those that refuse the hypothesis or the thesis and say, "No, this is not the way to do it." And then there's that category of people that move beyond that and say, "Look, if this is the reality, if this is where we're headed, if this is the future, here's what how we need to live it. Here's how we need to address it. Here's how we need to make it more sustainable. Here's how we need to make it more equitable, more humane."

* And what's interesting to me about it is that there is extraordinary innovation that gives us a completely different view of how to move forward. But I don't think it's necessarily coming from someone's intention to offer a vision. The vision is almost a collective intelligence that demonstrates how to move forward, more than a proclamation of what needs to be done.

Or something like this.

○ Which is interesting.

/ Sacred disease, meaning-

○ Running out of time.

/ Meaning the sacred disease has descended upon us.

* There's little doubt of that.

○ Too little time.

* In fact, I don't know if you guys saw this, but last week there were new maps that were released to the world, did you all see that? They were published in scientific journals. The maps indicated that the sea level rise that many were predicting had in fact fallen short of the actual conditions. In fact, these new maps demonstrated that sea level rise is going to be much, much worse than anticipated. So now territories of the globe that we thought would not be affected were now going to be greatly affected. So, the predictions, if you will, are much, much greater than we even imagined. It is quite overwhelming to consider. In terms of adapting cities to these new conditions, even if one wanted to react, how can coastal cities possibly address the multiple issue that come with sea level rise and endemic flooding? Most cities don't even have a budget to redevelop and put in place new forms of infrastructure. Even if they had a plan, which most cities do not, they don't have a budget to implement it.

/ It's all a little bit leftist and consensual what we're discussing. So I have to say this because-

□ I should not sit in a council of leftists.

/ The council of leftists is convened because, what you describe there just now, leads to paradigm change and-

○ Radical.

/ And in that moment, I will say, here comes the possibility of the new religion or that possibility. Because at that moment in time, radical action becomes neither an option, nor a luxury. It becomes a necessity. And the radical action takes place across the spectrum. From those that will say, we want none of you. And those that will say, we need this earth.

○ All of you.

/ With, or without you.

○ But all predictions are, with us knowing what we know, is that there would have to be radical change across the board in the imminent future, to stave off that future. And whether that type of radical change can happen, from all indications the U.S. is pulling out of the Paris Environmental Accords very soon. That will become the reality. Others will follow suit.

I highly doubt that the radical change, or the will and fortitude for radical change, exists at politicized levels. So that reality that scientists hypothesis, in 50 years and whether it's a two meter or one and a half meter rise, is inevitable. And with it, geographies and territories will change, the composition that exists today will be very different. A hundred and something million in Bangladesh will be beneath water, unless they learn very quickly how to survive with water. They're going to have to move to a different area, maybe West into India or maybe North. Parts of the world that were never occupiable, territories that were never sustainable, will have to become sustainable to address the migration, large numbers of humanity will perish, or not.

* There's an interesting situation occurring in Bangladesh among farmers, many who are landless farmers. In the era of sea level rise, the landless farmer is quite interesting because with the floods that have started happening in Bangladesh, farmers have been forced to adapt to by creating floating farms. If land was a prerequisite for farmers in the past, what does it mean today when land is no longer required to be a farmer. Who owns the water? The shift from land-based farming to floating farms opens up a whole new way of thinking about future of farming.

/ Whitman. And should we end with Whitman?

“Whoever degrades another degrades me. Whatever is done or said returns at last to me. Through me the afflatus surging and surging. Through me the current and index.”