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Occupy Climate Change (OCC!)

Creative story entry



FORMAS



Paris 2200

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Alice goes out from her home, still half asleep, to go to the hospital. She walks along the underground streets to take the metro. In fact, Paris is a below ground city that revolves around shops, homes and a free public transit network for residents. The earth surface is mostly reserved for green spaces like parks, forest and natural reserves. People used going up during their free time to enjoy fresh air and perform outside activities. On this national day, June 15, 2200, streets are deserted. One hundred years ago, the third world war was ending. This one have lasted 50 years, dividing the world population by 3, from 9 billion to 3 billion. Since then, population growth has resumed but minds and societies have changed a lot. After fifteen minutes of metro, she takes a big elevator to regain the surface of the earth, she is now close from the hospital. It's only 9 am but it is already over 35°C, a normal temperature for a month of June in Paris. Hospitals are among the last buildings to be on the surface of the earth. The only buildings that are commonly build on surface are named "flosbluidings".

This type of huge ecological buildings has a flower shape and stands several hundred meters above the ground. They can be divided in three parts that are assimilated as roots, stem and petals. Roots represent an extensive pipe system, sunk into the ground, which recover waste water from the city and bring it into the stem of the edifice. In this part, the water incurs a biological treatment, using different types of plants and micro-organisms, before being redistributed to the population by the roots again. Regarding petals, this part spreads over several kilometers and is used for agricultural purposes. In fact, greenhouses, field of culture, orchards are found there and feed the city. Furthermore, these ecological buildings have been designed to shelter a maximum of vegetation in order to capture most of the carbon dioxide released by human activities. That's why, from outside view, these buildings look like giant flowers. A dozen of these flosbuilding stand through the city because their development have revolutionized the management of Paris. Another development that has greatly improved its handling is the development of the underground city. Indeed, it allows the inhabitants to benefit from geothermal energy during winter and to protect themselves from the hot weather and dangerous rays of the sun during summer. At Alice's time, summer is particularly harsh because temperatures are unsustainable; most people stay underground and wait until autumn to do surface activities again. The only people living on the surface are farmers, pastoralists and some artistic and political figures. Life's rules on the surface are very strict because governments all around the world are working to preserve and protect the biodiversity left by years of war and environmental conflicts. Mistakes in environmental management of past generations have almost destroyed everything on earth and the new political priority is to create a city that works in harmony with the environment.

Alice stare at her little sister dozing on her hospital bed. She has lived there for more than one year now. Unfortunately, Emma has an extremely rare degenerative disease and needs important daily care. She has been diagnosed just after her twelfth birthday and since, her state does not stop to decrease despite several attempted treatments. Alice is well aware that Emma doesn't have more living time left, doctors have informed her, but she is her only family and she can't face the reality. She has done incalculable number of researches on this disease, she also has contacted many different doctors in order to find a cure. The main issue is that this disease is so rare that no treatment research have been undertaken in the world. However, this disease used to be cured very easily a hundred years before. During her researches on the subject and her various meetings with doctors, Alice has met someone who has talked to her about a yellow flower containing a molecule healing the disease. This plant used to growth in the Amazonian forest but disappeared before the third world war due to deforestation and climate change. This is not the only living creature which disappeared during this time, almost half of the biodiversity has died out. Causes were various: pollution, ocean acidification, overexploitation... Human from years 2000 have destroyed most of the ecosystems. That's one of the main reasons that pushed the world in a war particularly violent in 2050.

Alice is completely desperate after this visit. Before falling asleep, she looks at a sketch of the little yellow flower, the only cure for her sister, this only cure that is not on earth anymore. This night, her sleep is particularly restless. Her dreams are a mix between various memories with her sister when they were children. Then, she sees herself in the Amazonian forest, looking for the flower, but whenever she find one and pick it, the flower instantly disappears in her hand.

Alice wakes up with a start, completely disoriented. Her head is spinning and her heart is beating really hard. She attempts to take a breath but her dream is still impregnated in her head and she doesn't realized that she is not in her home anymore. She is in a bed, wrapped in white sheets, all the walls around her are white. Gradually, she understands that she is in hospital, but this one looks very archaic according to her. Devices next to her bed seem to come from another time; she has never seen such weird apparatus. Suddenly, a nurse appears and comes in the room, her nurse's coat is extremely dated and she says to Alice:

- You are finally awake! How do you feel?

- What am I doing here?

- Don't you remember anything? This is not surprising, you must suffer from a slight amnesia but the memory should return little by little. Do you remember who you are?

- Yes I remember very well, I just do not understand what I'm doing here.

- A man found you on the ground in a street two days ago, he first thought that you had been assaulted and then, when he wanted to help you, he realized that you were delirious and that you were burning with fever. That's why he contacted the emergency. We were forced to administer you powerful

tranquilizers to calm you down.

- I am sorry but I'll have to leave, I have to go to work, I have to go see my sister ...

- No, I'm sorry but you cannot leave for now, I am waiting the results of your last exams, you could call your sister later in the day if you want.

- No, I feel good, I don't understand, I fell asleep at home and I woke up here, all of this have no sense. Can I know in which hospital are we?

- You are at Saint Antoine Hospital in Paris. Don't worry, as I told you, you must have a little amnesia.

Alice has never heard of this hospital before while she knows all hospitals in the city. Then she starts to understand that something crazy has happened. While the nurse was leaving the room, Alice asked her:

- Excuse me madam, what day is it?

- We are 18 June.

- Which year?

The nurse looked at her with a strange look and finally answer: 2020.

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While she is leaving the hospital, Alice is completely disoriented and lost, she doesn't recognize Paris at all. She walks along a street, her eyes wide opened, marveling. She still doesn't realize what is going on under her sight. An open pit city with various kinds of buildings appears in front of her. Everything is gray and tarred. There are many people outside, hurrying and speaking loudly, so many back and forth in all directions. Cars circulate on roads and honk. She has never seen a running car before this day. As a matter of fact, in her world, cars have been banned in downtown since a long time ago and, gradually, their use has declined until completely disappear. People no longer see the value of them with a very developed and free transport network at their disposal. Moreover, in her time, no one have to move to go shopping or work. Most people work from home and go to their workplace through holograms.

Progressively she began to feel eyes on her. Indeed, people were turning around on her path and staring at her. She started to understand that her look were arousing curiosity. She wears a close-fitting black suit, made from recycled fabric, protecting from the sun's rays. If at her time this outfit is the most innocuous, it's obvious that in 2020 people have never seen such getup.

Then, she noticed that Paris's streets are particularly dirty, but people around her do not seem to pay attention. The Parisians of 2200 don't have the same behavior as those of 2020. In fact, where she comes from, people are very respectful of nature and the environment. From an early age, children are sensitized by the preservation of the city which had to be completely rebuilt at the end of the war. Everyone recycle their waste and the vast majority of them are biodegradables. In addition, every citizen is involved in the management of the city because everyone must give some of their free time to take

care of parks, forests, vegetable gardens and clean the underground streets. This law has made possible, for every individual, to feel worry and find a place in this urban metabolism.

Suddenly, Alice came to her senses and realized that the odds are in her favor. In fact, her travel through the time is a chance to save her sister because in 2020 the Amazonian forest and the healing flower are still on earth. That's why, she starts to have hope again but she knows that she had no time to loose. She has to get the plant and, then, find a way to return at her time.

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Almost two months have passed since Alice have fallen through time, but, the day for her journey for the Amazonian forest has finally arrived. She handled to gather enough money to take a plane for Brazil and she is looking forward to find the healing flower very soon. It was hard for her to find a place to sleep without money and with her unusual outfit, but finally she has managed to adapt herself to this new world and has found a job. Indeed, a rich old lady, who could no longer take care of her house and was seeking a little company, has crossed Alice's pathway and has decided to hire her as a housekeeper in exchange for a roof and a small salary. She wasn't used to pay for food because in her city basic food such as vegetables, fruits, cereals and especially water, are considered as common goods that belong to all the residents of the city and so they are free. The redistribution is managed by local administration, and the amount given is calculated specifically for each family. Obviously if people want more or various type of aliments they can buy it on internet and be delivered by drone but no one is starving. However, Alice knows that her world isn't perfect. The worst things are the environmental laws which are extremely strict. The surface of the earth, sheltering green spaces, is constantly monitored by guards and drones and those who break the established rules take a big risk. Degrade the environment is considered as a worse act than murder. In fact, anyone who is caught breaking a law is directly imprisoned and judged. Minors get years of imprisonment and hard labor, but adults are stripped of their citizenship and banished from the city. This is what have happened to her parents, and since, Alice lives alone with her sister. She has no idea what they may have become, but she assumes they are dead. That's what everyone say, because surviving outside the city is impossible. The truth is that no one but the government knows what is beyond the borders. In fact, nobody has the right to cross them. It's said that behind borders there is nothing, the nuclear weapons of past wars having devastated three quarters of the planet, no more vegetation can grow. Only about twenty cities across the world, like Paris, have managed to recreate a livable and peaceful environment.

When the plane takes off, Alice admires the view of the old Paris with a twinge in the heart because she knows that in a few years this city is going to be completely destroyed by the war. Moreover, she still doesn't know how to come back to her time and she is worried about her sister. She has no idea if her condition has become worse and feels extremely bad that she couldn't have a chance to warn her about her travel through time. But now, her only goal, is to save Emma's life, and for that she'll do anything.

Reflexive part

First of all, the main difference between both city is the presence of nature. In 2200, Paris is a green city, nature is present everywhere on the earth surface. The main point it's what I have called « flosbuilding » because it's a human built, providing water and food for the inhabitant, but nevertheless, it's completely covered with vegetation and has crops fields installed on the roofs. That's why this building makes intermesh between the human and non human world and that reminds with the *transcorporality* concept which supports the idea that the substance of the human is ultimately inseparable from the non-human environment. This building serves habitants needs, through food production and the cleaning of water, and it hosts abundant vegetation. There is no division between nature and society. In addition, this vegetation allows people to have a better quality of air and to absorb some of the carbon dioxide produced by human activities.

Secondly, there are parks, forest, natural reserves scattered everywhere on the city's surface, and people, who live underground, just have to take lifts and get on to benefit from these natural spaces. They can easily switch as much as they want between city and nature because both are linked. All these natural spaces are controlled and monitored by the government which want everything in a particular way and both nature and human must comply with established laws. Human are implicated in the creation of many ecosystem and that it's part of the *conservation and control thesis*. Indeed, the new Paris has a « hegemonic governmentality » which means that the control of resources and landscapes not belong to producers group but to the centralized power of the government in order to preserve sustainability. The government wants to create « wilderness » spaces with faunal diversity and control access. That's why the whole city is monitored by guards and drones to keep everything in order. Besides, a wide range of laws have been established and everyone has to follow them, otherwise, they take the risk to be banished.

Otherwise, there are strict boundaries in the city. Paris stops at a specific moment and there is a net delimitation between the city and the rest of the world. More than that, there is an important contrast between the luxuriant vegetation of the rebuilt city and the rest of the world where nothing can growth. This fact remind with the concept of « territorialization » of conservation space. In the course we have seen that bounded spaces poorly match with the ecosystem functions and flows of diverse natural element, but, in this city, the government use it to scare people and remind them what can happen if they degrade the environment. In this sense, government force people to stay into the city and to obey rules.

Then, the heart of the city is underground for energetic and health reasons. Because of global warming, temperature during summer can easily reach 50°C and it has been no longer possible to live under sun's rays. That's why the main of the city has been rebuilt underground. This allows people to be protect from heat. Furthermore, this city implanted in the ground allows to have access to geothermic energy

which is a way to get a warm city during winter. This underground city hosts all of the houses, shops, corporate headquarters, streets and a public transport. The last one is very well developed and allows everyone to move from a city's side to another easily and for free. This is why this city has no longer cars.

Another point is that people's behavior have completely changed in 200 years. People are educated in a environmental preservation spirit and everyone has to give some of their free time to take care of the city. For example, take care of common vegetable garden or park. Thus, the city and the nature become values in there own right for citizens and that's why they start to protect them. This way of thinking is named *Environmentality*, which corresponds to a decentralization of authority with the promulgation of local responsibilities, leading to a system of self-governance.

Citizens become « environmental subjects », that means that there is a transformation of people's attitudes about the city and themselves. This allows the government to make people think and act like they want about the environment.

Finally, raw food and water are free because they are consider as *common properties*. This theory rests on the understanding that resources, like water and food, are traditionally managed as collective supplies. Food is produced inside buildings thank to robots who work in fields and these non transform aliments are then distribute to all families, according to their needs, in order to avoid starvation. This distribution is handle by the centralized power of the government which provide rules of use to maintain subsistence and renewal.

To sum up, the city of Paris working in 2200 is link to various concept and thesis belonging to Political Ecology courses. Firstly, there is the concept of transcoporality, with the idea that human and non-human are intermeshed. Secondly, the creation of a wilderness world inside the city by the government remind to the conservation and control thesis. Then, the strict boundaries of the city are connected to the concept of « territorialization » and space conservation. Another concept is « environmentality » and the creation of environmental subjects with the education of the citizens to take care of the environment. Finally, the last one is the common properties with the free distribution of water and food to the citizens because they are consider as collective resources.