FABLES OF UNDISCOVERED CITIES

by

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This thesis is an atlas of new possibilities of urbanism, a storybook which tells us the present and the past, and a personal record of my imaginations and dreams. I believe for many grown-ups, as least for me, a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty about future and about ourselves emerges from time to time. We dress up like adults and learn to talk as adults, but at some point of our lives, when we walk on the street, when worries appears, when failures reach, we shrink back into the little child as we once were. But still, we muster up all of our courage to act as little fighters: to fight for something we believe, for something remote but beautiful. I believe for those little fighters, their world is a little different from the others. And I’m presenting one of them. Thankfully I have the chance to do so.

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ABSTRACT

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Jie Bao

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in
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"Space... The final frontier...
These are the voyages of the Starship Enterprise.
Its continuing mission:
To explore strange new worlds...
To seek out new life; new civilizations...
To boldly go where no one has gone before!"
-- Jean-Luc Picard, Captain, Starship Enterprise; NCC-1701D

Humans have always felt a primordial urge to explore – to blaze new trails, to map
new lands, and to ask profound questions about ourselves. The intangible desire to
explore and challenge the boundaries of what we know and where we have been
make us who we are and what we will become - the voyage of discovery consists
not only in seeking new landscapes, but also in having new eyes: the acquiring
of an external standard of criticism that incites the journey of self-discovery and
self-reflection. By opening a new world, we rediscover the old.
As the discipline of urban design developed, designers engaged disciplines assisted by numerous technologies and applications. We have ambitions to digitize and analyze every corner of our existing world, however, in grasping the world more precisely and effectively, we are giving up the possibility of obscurity and the unknown.

This thesis is a voyage aiming at the exploration of new possibilities of urban entities: the creation of a series of 'undiscovered' dream worlds in order to rediscover the features of the real world we 'think' we inhabit. These alternative dream worlds are designed not only to expose, engage and open our eyes and minds, but also to evoke critical thinking and reflection on existing urban problems and urban structures of our present world. Stories and drawings are used to materialize those fictitious cities. The more convincing and detailed those cities appears, the more observations and analysis could be applied and further developed. And by doing so, readers are invited to start their own adventures in those “undiscovered” territories.

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STRUCTURE OF CHAPTERS

Tracking the very meaning of the origins of cities, a city is a large and permanent human settlement fights for its better survival in Mother Nature. In other words, a city functions as a spider that keeps spinning webs that strengthen human society, manage natural resources, and operate to achieve balance in-between human and nature. Therefore, when it comes to the decomposition and reforming of cities, these three functions of a "city spider" could also be used as three aspects to engage: one from the perspective of natural environment, one from human society itself, and one from the relationship in-between human and society. Consistent with this logic, there are three chapters in this thesis.

Chapter One talks about urban problems from the view of natural elements.

Chapter Two evaluates urban problems that bred from the relationship between human and nature. Or in other words, this chapter digs into urban problems that grow along with technology (which is the collective name of tools that helps human to interact with Mother Nature).

Chapter Three examines urban problems that embedded inside human society itself.

Altogether, this thesis aims to explore in two main directions: the first is the reflection of urban problem itself: is it just
one single problem as it appears now? Or if it has something deep inside that are gradually changing layers of our society and our living status? The second is the reflection of ourselves towards those urban problems. Is our exiting “trouble-shooting” attitude being effective? Are we underestimating the undergoing damage of our present habitant? Which future options do we have and which one should we choose?
CHAPTER I
CITIES OF EXTREME ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS
Before entering Bejog, a traveler might heard hundreds times of the song “three dead men from Bejog”. The main melody is accompanied by chords, and sings like that:

“Three dead men,  
Walking on the street,  
One ask the other,  
Why do you leave?  
Why do you leave?  
Why do you leave?  
For all the reason,  
I cannot breathe,  
For all the places,  
I cannot breathe,  
For all the moment,  
I cannot breathe”

The city broadcasts the song three thousand times during daytime and three thousand times at night, warning all the coming travelers and sending off the runaways, with the sound of flying grit and sand.

In the language of Bejog, there are thirty three nouns of fogs, each describing different form of fogs during different time period. For most of the time, thick layer of fog cuts the way of sunshine and eliminates photosynthesis: that’s why one can’t see any trees or grass grows in Bejog. The last wild tree was reserved and labeled
in the city museum and was surrounded by primary school students every weekend. In the center of city stands the grand cathedral. No one alive knows the real inside of the building. Only dying people have the permission to enter in the second door, and take off their helmet, for the last and first real breath. Praying people kneel around the core of the cathedral – sometimes they hear birds singing, or the sound of the movement of a snake, but no one knows what these sound means, since they never listened to a bird singing, or a snake moving.

Every space of Bejog is carefully sealed. Sidewalks are wrapped with curved glass- es; elevated corridor connects every existing buildings in the city; buildings are either covered with glass case or decorated with fake windows that never open. Fresh air is continuously pumped into these sealed places by huge tubes throughout the city. Since no one would ever walk on the street, there’s no need to dig and hide all these infrastructure: pipelines and electrical wires becomes the dominant of roads and streets.

Some rumors claim that the inhabitants in Bejog are all cold-hearted and unsocial- able people. At times it is true: one should never expect a hug or check kiss from a local resident. But it is never because of the lack of good manner: on the opposite, it’s a carefully considerate act since any close physical contact might cause the collision of helmets. And for Bejogers, helmets are important part of body and perhaps the most delicate one: any tiny gap of a helmet could result in severe disease or complete malfunction of lungs. As a result, no killer could find a job in Bejog since killing a person there is too easy and no killer of self-respect would deign to break one’s helmet by any means.

When a man trying to describe this richest city in the world, he could only describe his view of 5 meters. No one could ever know the whole picture of this giant city. For five travelers coming back, each holding one piece of puzzle of the city, there
Figure 1-2. Bejoger body structure
are $5 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2 \times 1 = 120$ different possible figures of the Bejog. This huge monster secretly grows in the dark, with its hundreds of tentacles drilling into ground and for every decade show up at a glance.
Figure 1-3. Sealed airways connecting buildings in Bejog
Figure 1-4. Pipelines connecting buildings
Figure 1-5. Air purifying machines keep pumping fresh air into new community
Figure 1-6. New communities formed, infrastructures are occupying streets and roads.
Figure 1-7. Former public spaces face the problem of ownership of air
Figure 1-8. "City" became a vague concept, except fragmented pieces.
Figure 1-9. New form of religion formed, where breathe becomes a ceremony.
A star proves the presence of itself by appearing as a large golden disk in the daytime sky, or by twinkling as pinpoints of light during night, or by dragging planets whirling around. A place proves its presence by printing guidebooks with local sceneries and unique restaurants, or by showing up at the end of weather broadcast, or by being written in a book as part of someone’s memory. Norland can do none of this. It is a place that can never prove its existence. A place that disappears from any form of maps.

Norland can be reached in two ways: by helicopter or by camel. Roads are too narrow for cars to drive. Motorcycle might be able for one-way travel but it’s too fast and too uncontrollable: one slight offset would bring the rider and its vehicle into the deepest hole with endless darkness. Only riding with a living creature of more than four legs could barely manage the rugged ridges and the unspeakable loneliness and fear along the journey.

From satellite imagery, the place is a land without a land. Hundreds of massive holes gnawing the ground, randomly leaving narrow roads extending to nowhere: roads might be connected to each other, but for most of the time, with three hours’ camel drive, one might find itself at the center of the largest hole he has ever seen, with no way forward, and with hundreds of meters downward.

A man who is travelling inside the city and does not yet have an insider guiding can never find his way correctly. He might be amazed by local people’s magical skill of identifying two doors that looks strictly the same. Yet behind every magic in the mundane sits the most simple and profound fact. Norlandians never distinguish
Figure 2-1. Image of Norland drawn by travellers
buildings and areas by their looks: hundreds of meters’ deep underground living made them familiar with complete darkness and gradually, developed their unique skills of olfaction. The layers of soils, the direction towards sun, the distribution of rhizome geophyte... these variables forms their own Cartesian Coordinate System of Smell. That’s why you can’t ask the way in Norland: because it can’t be answered by any language, or sign. When the very young offspring of Norlandians is born, the seniority would collect a little bottle of dust from the family. “With the smell of home, god bless you never get lost.” And at that moment, this young baby’s own Cartesian Coordinate System of Smell starts to weave, with his/her home as point 0.

For thousands of years, Norlandians believes that at the very last night of the end of the world, sky would collapse and fall onto the ground, whereas no one could survive the catastrophe except Norlandians. They will be the last branch of human race, taking all the responsibilities of carrying on the civilization. A burden rather than a blessing. For this sacred reason, every Norlandian, from the very young to the very old, devote their lives and dreams to learning and recording. Once a year, they purchase hundreds of tons of papers from all over the world. Countless helicopters rides over the holes at the delivery date, pouring papers all over the sky. In Norland’s calendar, it means the beginning of a new year.
Figure 2-2. Impression of Norland, drawn by travellers
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STORY 3

POLLUWA

For years and years, thousand ships of travelers were dissolved and rested forever at the bottom of The Grand Lake. Only one person from one ship finally managed to land on this mysterious island, and by chance she was given enough life span by the bless of gods – that's all the reason why we could sit here and have a glimpse of this legendary city of deadly beauty.

Cereals, cattle, potteries; bed sheets, wrapping paper, plastic bottles; overspread seaweed, dying fish, red water; The great ancestors of Polluwanian followed the sign of a flying eagle and a dead centipede to choose this lake island surrounded by vast expense of fresh water to settle down. And now it's an island in the center of The Grand Lake of death.

Some people swear that they've witnessed eighty nine different colors of The Grand Lake. Thereupon, a sacred book was written, with each color of the lake water being recorded, combining with the sign and enlightenments of the colors. Cathedrals were build, bishop was elected, and half of the population recite the stories and tales of the eighty nine colors of the lake from birth to death. On the other side, the other half of local citizens believe that the number should be one hundred and fourteen, basing on the fact that the lake is continuing swallowing and creating new chemical elements. A new book was written, recording each color with new signs and new fables, upon which new cathedrals and palaces were built, with half of the population kneeing down.

If one walk to the very edge of this island as no one ever did before, one could witness a great scene of giant flood dams and 100-meter-tall walls standing all
Figure 3-1. The Grand Lake of Polluwa
around the shore to block toxic water and its vapors. Huge fans were inserted in the walls by ancestors to blow away smells and drowning ghosts. Despite all these efforts, devil still found its way out: toxic water penetrated the riverbed and married itself to the soil. Hand in hand, they corroded the heart of the rock; gnawed the root of plants; and finally reached to the ground. “Devils beneath the earth were awakened. Ground under our feet were brought to life” There comes the beginning of Polluwa’s new era, as old Polluwanians remembered clearly: all the paths, streets, hills and mountains became blood-red for the next sixty days, and then bluish-green for another sixty days, and then yellowish-brown for fifty days... For a total of three thousand and eighty days until colors were finally fixed, the land changed eighty nine different colors all together, while some people believe the number is more than one hundred and fourteen.

 Pipelines which travel all throughout Polluwa are translucent and twinkling in the sunshine: they are made out of the hardest diamonds in the world to prevent water theft. Every household has limited fresh water assignment based on the family size and age range. People carry their daily water share on their backs, as a show-off of being alive and being permitted to expand their lives for one more day. Theoretically, crying is a crime in Polluwa, for the guilt of wasting water. But lovers may be allowed to cry secretly on the dark street, while old beggars may patiently hold a glass under their chins, waiting for the transfer of sadness and life permission.

“Here is a glass of water from my well.
It taste of rock and root and earth and rain;
It is the best I have, my only spell...” ¹

For polluwaians, their colorful land is deadly but sacred. The city is growing higher and higher to escape from the toxic ground while the eighty nine or one hundred

Figure 3-2. Satellite Image of Polluwa
and fourteen colors are climbing up faster and faster. Meantime, all the chapel spires are pointing down toward the sacred ground and the sacred water beneath the ground. Unlike people from any other parts of the world, polluwanians are well prepared for death since they are praying toward the colorful death, years after years.

Each building in polluwa has giant funnel that connects to water treatment machines to collect and purify rains. During holidays, these giant funnels create huge bubbles that wonder all over the city. And at that time, kids often follow their teachers to ride on these bubbles flying all the way up towards sky as a historical city tour, since the general history of Polluwa is a vertical section of death and growth.

A reindeer was trapped in the mud, while giving it enough time, food and water to survive, will it feel disturbed by the fact that it was not born in the mud? Polluwa, the bravest and cleverest city you've ever seen, always find a way to survive and thrive.
Figure 3.3. The beginning of Polluwa's new era, when polluted water came from the ground
Figure 3-4. Giant flood dams with huge fans inserted in the wall around the shore of Polluwa.
Figure 3-5. Pipelines travel throughout Pollwa are made out of the hardest diamonds in the world.
Figure 3-6. All the chapel spires are pointing down toward the sacred ground and the sacred water beneath ground.
CHAPTER II
CITIES IN ERA OF AUTOMATION
“Among them too are the Jourbllesian,
For everywhere,
To flute and string the young girls,
Are dancing,
In their hair the gold leaves of the bay:
The dance whirls them away:
Age or disease, no toil,
Battle or ill-day’s luck
Can touch them, they
Are holy, they
Will outlast time, exempted
From the anger of the Goddness
And all decay.”

The poem depicts the Libra Age (2230-2438), the third era of Jourblles.

1. Recompose from “The Hyperboreans From Pythian X” by Pindar, 518BC
Figure 4-1. Most Jorbilesian live two lives, real life and cyber life
The first era of Jourblles is the Abundance Age (2050-2125), when the capabilities of machines continue to expand exponentially, aggregating social wealth while enhancing great energy efficiency. Everything was cheap and excessive in Jourblles: food, clothing, gadgets... superfluous products occupied every corner of streets and plazas, as well as the hearts of the young and the old, for the satisfaction of human wants. Bigger house, larger garden, countless shopping malls... Individual greed became collective, the city expanded vertically and horizontally to welcome a new time of materialism. The extra attention exempted from work redirected towards human itself. Narcissism became a new universal value. Privacy is equal to dishonor. Streets and communities became physical forms of social media, craving for exposure and attentions.

The very first job been completely taken over is driving. The debate over the legality and security of Automated Transportation only lasted 10 years and after year 2060, driving has been removed out of human skills permanently (According to historical documents, during the final war (2439-2450) of Jourbelles, many rebellions proposed to readopt human drivers but eventually failed because the skill was completely lost and no car existing was designed for human drivers). Throughout the Abundance Age, the percentage of metropolitan area that devoted to public transportation shrunk from 43% to 20% thanks to the improving efficiency of Automated Transportation. Blocks were merged together to form Superblocks of mixed-use. The hierarchy of roads changed accordingly: before 2060, the hierarchy was Freeways, Arterials, Collectors, Local roads; and after 2060, Superblocks were surrounded by collector roads while local roads transformed into public spaces for market or entertainment. From then, the hierarchy of roads for motor vehicles reduced to three types: Freeways, Arterials, and Collectors. But the hierarchy of roads for pedestrian traffic increased to three types: Connectors (roads that connects to motor-vehicle-roads for pick-up and drop-off), Moving Walkways (travellators that transports people inside Superblock), and Footpaths.
Figure 4-2. Blocks were merged together to form Superblocks of mixed-use
In terms of social value, "cyber-existence" become many people's "primary job". Given the extra leisure and freedom from the exempt of work, using media to maintain a "cyber-existence" became a routine, an absorbing distraction, a daily purpose of unemployed Jorblesian. Most Jorblesian live two lives, each one being as individual and social as the other one. Laws in the real life started to permeate into cyber worlds - e.g., a person cannot marry more than one husband/wife in each life. The control of marital property, inheritance rights, and the right to dictate the activities of children of the marriage cannot exceed beyond the boundary of each world. This dual-life lifestyle became a dominant living status throughout the Abundance Age (2050-2125), the Useless Age (2125-2230) and beginning of the Libra Age (2230-2438), until the Rehumanistic movement that call for people's reemphasis on real life.
Figure 4-3. The hierarchy of roads for moto vehicles reduced while hierarchy of roads for pedestrian increased.
Figure 4-5. "cyber-existence" become many people's "primary job"
STORY 5

JOURBELLES
The Useless Age (2125-2230)

Soon enough comes the second era, the Useless Age (2125-2230). No one in Abundance Age realized that technology slowly but continually compress the value and availability of human work. The share of prime-age (25 to 54 years old) human beings who are working has been trending down rapidly. Social wealth uninterruptedly grows when unemployment rate rises from 20% to 98%. Citizens in Jourblles have never been so “useless” before, but still enjoying stifling physical satisfaction.

This paradox drove more than eight thousand people mad, left nineteen thousand people giving up in the sofa, and forced three thousand people locking themselves in doors to rethink about self-concept: about who they are and what they truly need; about the meaning of being alive and the purpose as human beings. Houses were abandoned, thinkers were found wandering on city's west side, families dismantled their own doors and slept on the street with friends. Modern transportation was totally shut down. Everyone has to walk to his/her destination – usually the Necessary Supply Center. At the end, Jourblles was divided into 11 autonomous districts, each centered on one Necessary Supply Center within 59-minute walking distance. Foods and necessaries were continually produced, distributed, abandoned and recycled. Human becomes a small link of mass production: as the same function as a filter, or the same function of a large-double-blade impeller.

More people became mad, or gave up in the sofa, while three thousand people locked themselves in doors to rethink over and over again about who they are and what they truly need; about the meaning of being alive and the purpose as human beings. These three thousand people became the early Rehumanistic thinkers.
Figure 5-1. Technology slowly but continually compress the value and availability of human work.
and nurtured the third birth of human self-consciousness. "At the first birth they abandoned their fear of nature; at the second birth they abandoned their fear of god; while at the third birth, they abandoned their fear of themselves; now they are at peace, embracing the darkest human nature and the weakest physical structure; now they becomes human again;" There comes the third era of Jourblles – the Libra Age (2230-2438).
UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEPTEMBER 2015
SELECTED AREA, JOURBELLES CITY
4.6%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEPTEMBER 2055
SELECTED AREA, JOURBELLES CITY
12.6%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEPTEMBER 2095
SELECTED AREA, JOURBELLES CITY
9.8%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEPTEMBER 2135
SELECTED AREA, JOURBELLES CITY
9.9%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEPTEMBER 2175
SELECTED AREA, JOURBELLES CITY
4.6%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, SEPTEMBER 2215
SELECTED AREA, JOURBELLES CITY
9.9%

Figure 5-2. The Trend of Unemployment Rate in Jourbelles
Figure 5-3. Street views during Useless Age of Jourbelles
Figure 5-4. The Necessary Supply Center during the Useless Age
Figure 5-5. Jourbiles was divided into 11 autonomous districts during the era
The city started to reunion again. Roads and streets were widened for autonomous vehicles. Three types of people began to coexist in Jourblles, peacefully while individually. The first type is "The Happy Ones": they were the survivors of the Useless Age (2125-2230). Born with no burden of work, not everyone could at peace with these endless ease and aimless comfort. "The Happy Ones" abandoned the redundant feelings except pure leisure and happiness. They lived in buildings that made out of modular rooms equipped with the most advanced entertainment facilities. The sense of "home" was no longer an individual concept: residents change rooms for different entertainment purposes, since no room belongs to anyone, and all rooms belong to everyone. The "Happy Building" grows larger and larger, along with the booming population of "The Happy Ones".

The second type of people are "The Community People". They devoted themselves into domestic trivia. Knowledge and experiences are what they value most. With complete freedom from work, they spent most of their time with their family: taking care of the old, and educating the young. Usually the big family of "The Community People" live together as a group, and when the teenagers grow into 18, ceremonies will be hold, when young men and women are given the choice to stay within the community, or to step into the "Happy Building" to become "The Happy Ones"; or to choose another direction: they could walk two days and nights to the very west of the city, where the third type of people lives, where saints and fools coexist, where the place is named "The End of Jourblles".

"The End of Jourblles" is a total mess. A hotchpotch. A scattered building block in a
Figure 6-1. Three types of people that coexist during Libra Age

'The Happy Ones'

'The Community People'

'The End of Jourbelles'
kindergarten. A constant state of anarchy. A church. A church full of devoted people ready to give up all they have and all they could get.

It started with a group of people who refused to take foods from Necessary Supply Center (a regional center that appears during the Useless Age (2125-2230) and gradually disappeared at the beginning of the Libra Age (2230-2438), a place where foods and necessaries were continually produced, distributed, and recycled by machines). These rebellions took vows to give up their rights of consuming without attributing. They refused to be bred by machines. To feed themselves, these people formed a primitive society based on shifting cultivation and exchange economy. The lack of experience and the bad weather killed almost 2/3 of the early rebellions, however, the rest eventually survived and became the city father of this new place - “The End of Jourblles”.

Gradually the place grew even larger than the old Jourblles city. For the old Jourblles city, it was completely organized and managed based on resource efficiency: which is, compact urban form with efficient transportation system. But in “The End of Jourblles”, personality and craftsmanship became the basic theme of city formation. Houses are sprawling, human productivity were reclaimed by piecing together jobs informally. The pride of work accompanied by the fighting for resources.

People were coming and leaving. Real saints live within those who frequently rob the old Jourblles for living.

The final war starts at year 2439, witnessing the end of the Libra Age (2230-2438) and the collapse of Jourblles. The city Jourblles claimed the existence of “The End of Jourblles” a threat to energy efficiency, endangering the collective welfare of all Jourblles citizens. According to official data published by the city Jourblles, non-renewable energy would be used up by year 2908 if “The End of Jourblles” kept sprawling. In response to this condemnation, “The End of Jourblles” call on people
to fight for their liberty and ownership. The war ends with the fallen of the city Jourbiles at the end of year 2450, but the fight never ends. A new Jourbiles arose at the east of the old Jourbiles - a place of complete self-dependence and complete automation, where human functions as a filter of mass production, until someone awaked.
CHAPTER III
CITIES OF NEW SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORDER
Every morning is different.

A lonlander went sleep and woke up normally, with his beloved streets, bell towers, and exotic gardens. But on the other morning he woke up, the grocery store at the corner disappeared imperceptibly, along with the girl inside who laughed a lot, as if the grocery store is only a personal dream, and the girl has never existed on this street. Instead at the same corner stands a typewriter repair shop, with its folded flag hanging down and greasy window glittering in the sun, as if it has been standing there for the entire century.

The speed of time runs distinctively in different areas of lonland, and those “time zones” are continuing changing, from one place to another. Even in the realm of one house, or one bed, the sphere of “time” could be different and if so, a couple sleeping on one bed might equal to sleeping on two planets of different gravity. For each individual person, one night is as normal as the other nights, but in-between two of them, a gap of 10 years has been quietly weaved throughout the night, without any trace, or any simple notice that one will have to live without the other, for the next 10 years.

That happens a lot. Lonlander knows it deeply, that they are connected, but alone. They understood themselves as being in society or being in relationships, but in the end one is alone, that one lives at the heart of a solitude. For them, ultimate loneliness is not a pure psychological experience, but also a physical status: that everyone is experiencing different time speed; that the rates change of quantities in material reality cannot match the rate of conscious experience; that there is no
Figure 7-1. Individual time zones in Lonland
constant promise of companionship, or future, or any simple relationship. And this understanding constructed their unique society.

On the very top of the greatest mountain in the center of Lonland, an aphorism is permanently carved in a giant rock, it reads:

“We are all of us alone.”

For Lonlander, houses are small and simple to prevent subdivision of time zones. They don’t care about physical ease or visual enjoyment. Being comfort or not are both experiences of different qualities. Different experiences help to cultivate their capacity for solitude, but also, they never abandoned their longing for connection. In Lonlander’s houses, floors are having angles with walls, which allows them to watch out of the roof when they are laying down: to watch stars before they are about to sleep, or to watch the change of mountains and seas when they woke up during the dark nights. Some Lonlander use glasses and crystals to build their walls, roofs and floors. In those houses, they are able to see each other remotely throughout the whole city.

In-between Lonlander’s houses there are sacred rooms: rooms for pure conversation. For Lonlander, every meet is an unexpected gift. A collision of two eras. A glimpse of moving stars. Hence, two Lonlander hug before they greet, kiss before they know each other, and smile at each other when they notice the split of time in-between them. Outsiders took it for granted that a relationship should be developed continuously and steadily, thus created Marriage, the Hereditary System, and hypocritical social parties. But in Lonland, relationships are segmented and unexpected, thus randomness overrides logic, and the society is established based on completely self-centered relationships. There are general regulations and laws to prevent this fragile system from collapsing, and admittedly this unique system is
Figure 7-2. One type of individual house in Lonland
not productive economically, but the pure beauty of the structure of this fragment-
ed society is stunning enough to be remembered.

Lonlanders create, cultivate, and maintain their individual trace of existence: from
their little houses to every street they pass by. They write epitaph on the roads,
and engrave the sculpture of their loved ones on the walls. The entire city is a silent
ceremony, for the living ones, and for the past.
Figure 7-3. In-between Lonlander’s houses there are sacred rooms: rooms for pure conversation
Figure 7-4. Social Structure in Lonland
Figure 7-5. City view of Lonland
Figure 7-6. Lonlanders write epitaph on the roads, and engrave the sculpture of their loved ones on the walls.
Long time ago, in the year 2525, the Anti-face War started to break out in Appearno City. The war eventually ushered in a new era of social equality. In the year 2573, the city government fully legalized the abandon of public exposure of physical characteristics: from the color of eyes to feet size. From then, Appearno became a place of no appearance.

Curious travelers, disabled patients, unemployed models... people with or without a story steadily immigrate to Appearno looking for hope, or escaping from a dead one. All of them are given a chance of rebirth, as Appearno promised to everyone. Walking on the street of Appearno, passengers greet each other behind permanently wearable shells. Gender, height, race, skin color... even the tiniest factors could be modified on the shell. At this place, no one has to stick to one persona throughout his/her entire lifespan. People are showing what they psychologically wish to be, instead of what they ‘physically’ are. Freedom of choice extends individuality.

Everyone is ghost, which lives in one’s own desires.

“The world is my representation. Including myself.”

So, how to present a soul?

Fashion industries still exist well in Appearno. They sell music selections and reading lists to help build one’s social impressions. Without limits of physical identity, people devoted every effort to externalize their inner spirit to be seen by others. The boundary between public and private completely collapsed. People drag out every detail of their personal lives to build up their ‘self-identity’.
Figure 8-1. Year 2573, the city government fully legalized the abandon of public exposure of physical characteristics.
Appearnonians love to cover their shells with their life slogans and epitaphs. Every surface of the city is the extension of the mutative shells. Huge screen walls stands on both sides of the street. Passengers’ life stories are projected on the screen in pace with their walks. The more one walks, the longer the projection continues. Hence, local residents kept on demanding more streets and walls in order to walk and show. As time went on, Appearno became a city of maze. Thousands of huge walls are sitting along the streets. And people never stopped walk and meet. On a sunny Saturday, you may have a crush on one's first thirty years of life.

The surface of Appearno are covered with mazes, and the inside of Appearno are thousands of libraries. For appearnonians, in order to distinguish their souls from other souls, knowledge became the new sex hormone and ignorance turns into the worst sin. Libraries became homes of most Appearnonians. People sleep and dream among books. From year 2664, there is no private house in Appearno anymore.

For Appearnonians, the concept of “self” are both strong and vague: they have the complete freedom and justice on the external shape of a person, but on the other hand, the internal ones (or what’s usually called ‘souls’) could also be faked, pretended, or embellished intentionally. The war between reality and objective reality became materialized here. Some Apperanonians believed themselves as part of a book, or part of a maze. And the whole Appearno is just a dream of a no one.
Figure 8-2. People are showing what they psychologically wish to be, instead of what they ‘physically’ are.
Figure 8-4. City view of Appearno
Figure 8-5. The surface of Appearno are covered with mazes, and the inside of Appearno are thousands of libraries.
I remember a city, the greatest city I've ever encountered in my journey: a masterpiece of human intelligence; a collective product of frontier technology; a living creature that changes and evolves accordingly with time and environments. And it has evolved into such a flawless being: a place which makes one doubt the existence of pain and infortune.

There is no fixed figure of Optan. Travelers, adventurers, wanderers... people are telling different stories about this legend city. The portraits of their descriptions vary from each other as if they are all stories of liars. But if one stay there long enough, and if attentions are paid carefully, the pure truth of this city would reveal itself in a state of peace: that the city is variating its form in accordance with its surroundings and residents. Energy efficiency, public comfortability, temperature suitability... the city calculates and evaluates thousands of indexes to form its most appropriate shape.

While the city is continually changing, Optanians don't have their own fixed homes. In fact: they don't need one. If homes are founded to create sense of belongings and security, and if a society is prosperous enough to eliminate every form of inequality and insecurity, why the physical form of a home being of necessity? Instead, the entire city is their home: they can choose any one of the thousands of beds to breed their dreams and then leave at the next morning to start a new life. So is the city. Streets are changing and reforming for traffic optimization; stores are moving and modifying to improve profitability; and the boundaries of the Optan city is altering and swaying with the waves of its rivers and lakes. Every details are well calculated and optimized to create perfect harmony. There is a saying in Optan that goes, 'No
Figure 9-1. Data are collected to optimize decisions in Opton.
regret lives here since you've done the best.’ And it is truth. People are matching with works that best suit their talents and potentials. Before Optanians making any efforts, feasibility and mathematical statistics are presented for them to make their best choice:

‘If you keep practicing piano half an hour a day, the possibility that you could won this year’s music competition is 15%. And if you practice two hours a day, the possibility will increase to 21%. So please, make your own choice.’

Hence, Optanians choose to take a cry every fifteen days; to make an excise every thirty six hours; to change a lover every seven years... Decisions are optimized for the better of personal development, physically and psychologically. Altogether, the city is an effulgent compilation that gathers all the best contributions of its residents. It keeps evolving and growing.

But the longer I stayed, the more fear I get from this city. It is an indescribable fear when one is standing in front of the perfect truth: a fear of programmed happiness; a fear of revealed outcome; a fear of obedience to some greater responsibility; It is the very moment when you've acknowledged something being reasonable to do, and everyone is expecting you to make the only perfect choice. But what’s all in your mind is to destroy everything and ran away.

So I escaped from Optan, the greatest city I’ve ever encountered in my journey, and never come back.
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