Cassandra Rousseau

Student ID: 40177594

[cass201001@gmail.com](mailto:cass201001@gmail.com)

**Critical Reflection —**

**Our Symbiotic Life: An Exploration of Interspecies Relations**

CART 360: Tangible Media and Physical Computing

Elio Bidinost

December 3, 2021

*Our Symbiotic Life: An Exploration of Interspecies Relations* by Katja Budinger and Frank Heidmann focuses on how every single living being is intertwined with one another in an environmental perspective. The text explains how we depend on each other within the ecosystem. The main goal of this study is to find causes and consequences of climate changes within our interdependent relationships through design fiction. Design fiction is scenarios that helps to find plausible futures for the ecosystem. It gives more insights on the ecosystem and reduce the complexity of the topic. Different types of socioeconomic contexts explored in these scenarios are called Shared Socioeconomic Pathways (i.e., SSPs). These methods led to four main paths: harmony, invasion, on demand and bottle garden. Many scientists and activists spread these possibilities regarding the future of the planet and the humanity. However, the actions taken by the politicians and the biggest corporations do not go in favor to save the planet. The good advancements, the denial of the politicians regarding climate changes are factors that might lead humanity into a not so happy path.

Agreements in COP26 shows some advancement in politics regarding eco conscious actions, leading to the harmony scenario. SSPs scenarios focus on three main factors: a socioeconomic framework, the current technology trends and the relationship between humans and plants. These possibilities will help to find solutions to climate changes. The SSPs are based on five of these factors: demographic, human development, economics, lifestyles, policies, institutions, technologies, environments, and natural resources. The harmony scenario focuses on sustainable technologies like autonomous and sufficient self-driving landscapes. This idea arose due to the eco conscious citizens and their will to save the planet. During the COP26 (i.e., 26th Conference of the Parties), some ecological advancements happened. COP is a global climate summit that brings every country to discuss about the possible actions to take regarding climate changes. This year, multiple actions have been taken. More than 100 countries have joined the coalition to reduce 30% of methane gas emissions by 2030. The Global Methane applies to countries that accounthalf of global methane emission and 70% of global GDP (i.e., gross domestic product). An agreement on phasing down the use of coal has been made during the summit. A pledge between the United States and China has been made. This collaboration agreeds to produce more clean energy, mitigate deforestation and reduce methane emissions. The target of reaching 1.5 Celsius degrees by 2030 has been strengthen. These actions could lead to a more positive future and make the happy path happens. However, these changes are not as strong as they appear to be.

This lack of action by the leaders shown during the summit proves there is still a long way to go, leading to either the invasion or the bottle garden scenarios. Invasion scenario describes the survival war between species. Certain species will use technology for their own needs. This idea comes from the rise of nationalism and protectionism in various countries and the overconsumption of natural resources. This enters in conflict with the cohabitation nature of plants. Bottle garden scenario is based on global inequalities. High-income citizens will access the technological development and food. Lower incomes will have a hard time to feed themselves and will tend to upcycle and repair their material possessions. Teenagers will insulate themselves into digital universes. Species will struggle to survive through continuous climate changes. It will be a collaborative survival. On demand scenario explains the use of plants as accessories rather than considerate them as living beings. This tendency is due to consumerism and individualist social values and their faith in geoengineering as the problem-solver of climate change. During the COP26, the agreement of coal was soften. At first, the countries agreed on phasing out the use of coal and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels. However, China and India (i.e., being big consumers of coal) insisted on changing the term to “phasing down”. This change slow down the process of reducing pollution. The deadlines on certain decisions are not enough tight. Keeeping the golden rule of reaching 1.5 Celsius degrees is not enough anymore for all the work the world needs to do. Indigenous communities calls back the decisions being took during the summit. The communities called out the regulated global carbon trading market. This trade market allows countries to partially meet their environmental objectives. These green energy projects like biofuel monocrops and hydroelectric dams are linked to environmental destruction and even displacement, arbitrary arrests and murder, making them unethical and illogic resources. These exploitation could sequester lands, forests and rivers used by Indigenous and local communities. These exploitation does not guaranteed a huge drop in gas emissions. Critics explains this offsets the gas emissions rather than cutting them. Indigenous communities are often put aside during environmental negociation, when 80% of the biodiversity is in their territories. Around a thousand of activists have been murdered after the Paris accord due to defending lands from polluating projects. The creation of carbon sink through reforestation and afforestation might threatens livilihoods, food security and traditions of Indigenous communities and small farmers for the sake of tree planting. This solution is not bad, butt this will only change an issue to another. The 30 by 30 inititive will cause the biggest displacement of population for the sake of conserving 30% of planet’s lands and seas. COP26 agreements threathens Indigenous communities by fossil fuel companies and climate crisis. Many are worried that richer polluting countries will obstructs any help for communities already victim of climate changes.

The comparison between the SSPs and current situations the importance of SSPs into the take of action regarding climate changes. These different perspectives help to define and start a concrete dialog within the population. However, the fact that the population depends on the high leaders to do greater changes and the results are barely something makes humanity’s future a challenge. Their indifference and ignorance become worrying and dangerous.