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The Warehouse: Reading Response 2

Towards the end of the book, as well as Gibson Wells’ remaining days, his character shows more and more of dictatorial traits. At first, his conviction to help people despite the calculated setbacks towards the company, and himself, and the sacrifices he is willing to make for the Cloud and the people are highly admirable. He created jobs, contributed to the recovery of the environment, and helped lobbied crucial acts that cut some government bureaucracies. His knack for business is second to none. However, those very same approbations are the poison that inflated Wells’ self-confidence and confused his concept of sacrifice. Wells instils into his workers subconscious restraints and ideology that discourage them to find an alternative life for themselves and accept their fate at the Cloud. “It’s called learned helplessness.” The Warehouse (p. 333). He eliminated all his competition and desires for total control globally. A responsibility no one should ever assume for themselves.

Moreover, expanding on the lifestyle in the Cloud, the pure drive towards efficiency has become the biggest factor that made the Cloud so undesirable from an outside perspective. In this day and age, the development of civilizations warrant efficiency in every aspect, most especially in the technological field. We strive for automation to make our everyday tasks easier so we can focus on the more important matters. It makes our lives better, but being oblivious to its side-effects, poses a big threat for us humans. For instance, the infamous CloudBand. A companion device that tells you exactly what to do next, reminds you of your schedule, points you to the nearest bathroom, serves as a master key, navigation, and more. But it also means it knows where you are at all times, you cannot operate without it, you depend on it. The obvious comparison of the Cloud went from Jeff Bazos’ mega-company Amazon to Disney Pixar’s Wall-e. I am surprised people still manage to stay fit, with the exception of the prickers and packers and securities.

Over the course of the book, I thought of the Cloud as this safe haven place in a desolate world atop of a mountain that everyone fought hard to get in. Paxton swallowed his pride and applied for the company who ruined his life, justifying the superiority and the desirable quality of life the Cloud has to offer. However, the way the author portrayed Paxton’s and Zinnia’s daily tasks, a monotonous “cacophony” (Hart seems to like this word), the lifestyle slowly sucks the workers into submission, to leave everything behind as if there are no better alternatives. Now I understand why the Oblivion drug is so common among the people at the Cloud. At first, they just want to save enough money to support a different life in the future. But the wicked lifestyle that Cloud forced in their throat leaves them bound to the shackles of their ignorance and submit to complacency.