

The Future as an Underwater World

A Dream Comic

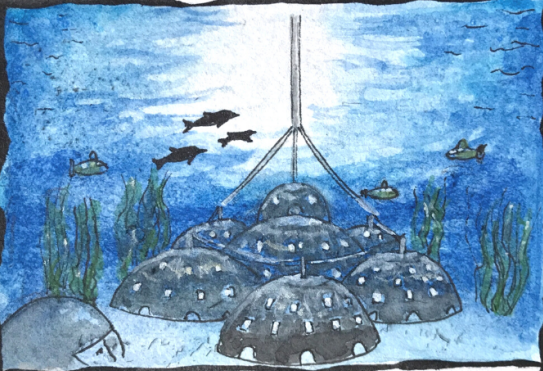
Mengzhu Fu

York University | fmengzhu@yorku.ca



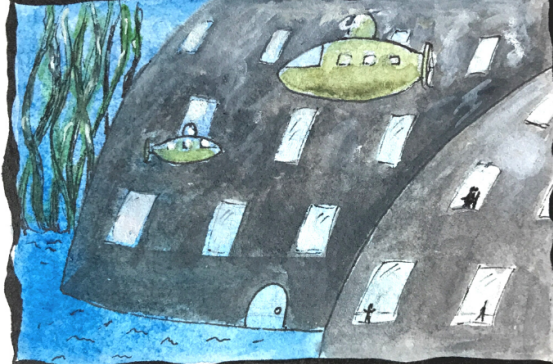
The climate crisis is high in all levels of our sub/un/consciousness. As flash flooding and sea level rising around the world occupy the headlines while a pandemic is still raging, a nocturnal dream in January 2021 inspired this comic. In ink pen and watercolour, the comic depicts a dream of a future where humans have survived and cities are built underwater, where all the human world is submerged. Offering dreaming as method, Tanana Athabascan scholar Dian Million (2011) explains how dreaming and theory are not exclusive of each other. Like Million (2011), dreamings for me have ‘led to further searches for meaning’. What are the teachings of our dreams? In my waking interpretations, I wonder if this was a dream steeped in ancestral memory of prehistoric pasts where our bodies were not yet human, when we could only live underwater in relationship to seaweed and octopus—a full circle, return to the ocean. The character for ‘ocean’ in Chinese (海) is composed of the radical for ‘water’ and the character for ‘every’ (每) which requires ‘mother’ (母). Rita Wong (2015) interprets this to mean “the mother of all waters”. In the face of current and looming calamities, there was a strange calmness in the dream, a calmness contrasted by waking climate anxieties. While there is a presence of new technologies in this dream, I do not believe in techno-fix or green capitalist solutions. As many Indigenous scholars and activists have been saying, climate justice requires a restoration of Indigenous sovereignty and care economies, a radical transformation of dominant and extractive relationships to all land and life (Alook et al., 2023). The meaning I take from this dream is that we must relate with a deeper respect for water, which we may return to as a new/old home, as well as a radical love for land, which could be submerged once again.

I KEEP HAVING DREAMS ABOUT THE FUTURE AS AN UNDERWATER WORLD



WITH UNDERWATER CITIES WHERE HUMANS HAVE ADAPTED TECHNOLOGIES TO LIVE...

BELOW THE OCEAN. THERE ARE NO AIRCRAFTS, ONLY SUBMARINES AND



TUBES FULL OF OXYGEN INSTEAD OF ELECTRICAL LINES.



OCTOPUS ROAM THE CITIES AS GIANTS AND GARDENS ARE PLOTS OF SEAWEED

IS THIS WHAT A FANTASY FUTURE POST-CLIMATE CRISIS LOOKS LIKE?



IS THIS AN OPTIMISTIC VISION WHERE HUMANS HAVE AT LEAST SURVIVED?



Funding Statement

This research received no funding from any funding agency in any sector.

Conflicts of Interest

The research was conducted in the absence of any conflicts of interest.

References

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About the Author

Mengzhu Fu is a doctoral student in the Gender, Feminist and Women's Studies at York University. Their MA research focused on the lifeworlds of young Asian survivors of domestic violence in Aotearoa (New Zealand) through an analysis of structural violence, age and intersectionality. They have been involved in diasporic Asian activism on gender-based violence, migrant justice, anti-racism and building Asian support for Māori sovereignty. Their PhD topic is on Chinese diasporic solidarity with Indigenous sovereignty movements in Aotearoa and Canada-occupied Turtle Island.