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CITY SONGLINES

A planning imagination for the 21st century

The ancients sang their way all over the world. They sang the rivers and ranges, salt pans and sand dunes. They hunted, ate, made love, danced, killed: wherever their tracks led, they left a trail of music. They wrapped the whole world in a web of song.

(Chatwin, 1987)

INTRODUCTION

I look into my crystal globe, and I dream of the carnival of the multicultural city. I don't want a city where everything stays the same and everyone is afraid of change; I don't want a city where young African Americans have to sell drugs to make a living, or Thai women are imprisoned in sweat shops in the garment district where they work 16 hours a day, six days a week; where boys carry guns to make them feel like men, and suspicion oozes from plaster walls, and white neighbourhoods call the police if they see a black/stranger on their street. I don't want a city where the official in charge refuses to deal with the man standing at his desk because everything about him is different; where immigrants are called 'blackheads' and forced to find shelter in the industrial zone; where whites pay more and more of their private incomes to protect themselves from 'strangers', and vote for officials who will spend more of everyone's taxes on more law and order rather than more schools and health clinics; where political candidates run on promises of cutting off services to 'illegal immigrants'; where the media teach us to fear and hate one another and to value violence in the name of 'patriotism' and 'community'. I don't want a city where I am afraid to go out alone at night, or to visit certain neighbourhoods even in broad daylight; where pedestrians are immediately suspect, and the homeless always harassed. I don't want a city where the elderly are irrelevant and 'youth' is a problem to be solved by more control. I don't want a city where my profession – urban planning – contributes to all of the above, acting as spatial police, regulating bodies in space . . .

I dream of a city of bread *and* festivals, where those who don't have the bread aren't excluded from the carnival. I dream of a city in which action grows out of knowledge and understanding; where *you* haven't got it made until you can help others to get where you are or beyond; where social justice is more prized than a balanced budget; where I have a right to my surroundings, and so do all my fellow citizens; where we don't exist for the city but are seduced by it; where only after consultation with local folks could decisions

be made about our neighbourhoods; where scarcity does not build a barb-wire fence around carefully guarded inequalities; where no one flaunts their authority and no one is without authority; where I don't have to translate my 'expertise' into jargon to impress officials and confuse citizens. I want a city where the community values and rewards those who are different; where a community becomes more developed as it becomes more diverse; where 'community' is caring and sharing responsibility for the physical and spiritual condition of the common living space.

I want a city where people can cartwheel across pedestrian crossings without being arrested for playfulness; where everyone can paint the sidewalks, and address passers-by without fear of being shot; where there are places of stimulus and places of meditation; where there is music in public squares, and street performers don't have to have a portfolio and a permit, and street vendors co-exist with shopkeepers. I want a city where people take pleasure in shaping and caring for their environment and are encouraged to do so; where neighbours plant bokchoy and taro and broad beans in community gardens. I want a city where my profession contributes to all of the above, where city planning is a war of liberation fought against dumb, featureless public space; against STARchitecture, speculators, and benchmarkers; against the multiple sources of oppression, domination and violence; where citizens wrest from space new possibilities, and immerse themselves in their cultures while respecting those of their neighbours, collectively forging new hybrid cultures and spaces. I want a city that is run differently from an accounting firm; where planners 'plan' by negotiating desires and fears, mediating memories and hopes, facilitating change and transformation.

That is my love song to our mongrel cities of the 21st century. But how do we get to there from here? How can citizens, city governments, and the city building professions help to construct this *cosmopolis*? To paraphrase the Chinese sage, a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. Many steps have already been taken, some of which have been discussed in previous chapters. Using them as a springboard, it is not hard to imagine a metamorphosis of planning as we have known it, a liberation from its twentieth-century Kafkaesque castle/prison of regulation and normalization – in a word, bureaucratic planning. I see planning as an always unfinished social project whose task is managing our co-existence in the shared spaces of cities and neighbourhoods in such a way as to enrich human life, to work for social, cultural, and environmental justice.[1] This social project has an imperfect past and an uncertain future, but as an enduring social project it needs to come to terms with the new social realities of the 21st century, the demands of an insurgent citizenship on the one hand, and fear of and reaction to those demands, on the other. Is there a planning imagination that can be harnessed to this task?

In this concluding chapter I suggest that there is such an emerging imagination and that, among other things, it involves an expanded language for planning, the language of memory, desire, and spirit: and *five qualities* that are quite distinct from the skills, or even literacies[2], that have obsessed twentieth-century planning education. I propose a different sensibility from the bureaucratic or regulatory planning that dominated that century – a sensibility that is as alert to the emotional economies of cities as it is to the political economies; as alert to the city senses (of sound, smell, touch, taste, and sight) as to city censuses; as alert to the soft-wired desires of citizens as it is to the hard-wired infrastructures; as concerned with the ludic as with the productive spaces, indeed seeing these as inseparable and complementary; a sensibility as curious about the spirit of place as it is critical of capitalist excesses; a sensibility that can help citizens wrest new possibilities from space, and collectively forge new hybrid cultures and spaces.

There are, and will continue to be, multiple roles for planners, but the normative position which this book argues is for a more radical approach, one which is prepared to address the issues of social, cultural, and environmental justice in cities that are being shaped by global economic and demographic forces. This amounts to no less than a paradigm shift for planning. In the next section, I outline that shift, suggesting five qualities of a new planning imagination for the 21st century: *political, therapeutic, audacious, creative,* and *critical.* In the following section I sketch a new language for planning, the language of memory, desire, and spirit. Finally, I explain 'city songlines'.

A PARADIGM SHIFT: FROM METROPOLIS TO *COSMOPOLIS*

Chapter 1 outlined six pillars of modernist planning wisdom that have dominated the planning of modernist cities. The analyses in Chapters 2 through 8 undermined the stability of these pillars and suggested the need for their replacement with a more normative, open, democratic, flexible, and responsive style that is sensitive to cultural difference.

In the old model, planning was concerned with making public decisions more rational. The focus was predominantly on advanced decision-making; on developing blueprints for the future; and on an instrumental rationality that closely considered and evaluated options and alternatives. While means-ends rationality may still be a useful concept for tasks like building bridges and dams, we also need a different, substantial rationality that focuses on debating values and goals. Rather than being technically based, this is a more *communicative and value-driven rationality* with a greater and more explicit reliance on practical wisdom.

In the old model, planning was regarded as most effective when it was comprehensive. Comprehensiveness was written into planning legislation, and referred to multi-functional and multisectoral spatial plans as well as to the intersections of economic, social, environmental, and physical planning. Planning's task was understood as coordinating and integrating, and was regarded as necessarily hierarchical. Today, planning is no longer seen as being exclusively concerned with integrative, comprehensive, and coordinating action and is increasingly identified with *negotiated, political, and focused planning* (Christensen, 1993), a planning less oriented to the production of documents and more interactive, centred on people.

In the old model, planning emerged out of the engineering mindset of the late nineteenth century, and drew its authority from a mastery of theory and methods in the social and natural sciences. Planning knowledge and expertise were grounded in positivist

science, with its propensity for quantitative modelling and analysis. Today there is growing acknowledgement that there are many kinds of appropriate knowledge in planning. New epistemologies – among them hermeneutics, action research, social learning, feminist, and other ways of knowing (Chapter 3) – are displacing the sole reliance on the powers of positivist social science as a basis for action. Local communities have grounded, experiential, intuitive, and contextual knowledges that are more often manifested in stories, songs, and visual images than in the typical planning sources. Planners need to learn and practise these *other ways of knowing*.

In the old model, planning was a project of state-directed futures, part of a 200-year modernization project that began with the industrial revolution. As we saw in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, there is now a thriving, community-based planning practice, in which planners link their skills to the campaigns of mobilized communities, working as enablers and facilitators. Rather than speaking for communities, as in the older advocacy model, this new style of planning is geared to community empowerment. Planners bring to the table skills in research and critical thinking, knowledge of legislation and the workings of state agencies, specific skills in fields like housing and local economic development, organizing and financial skills, and a commitment to social and environmental justice.

This is not an argument for the rejection of state-directed planning. There are transformative *and* oppressive possibilities in state planning, just as there are in community-based planning.

Victories at community level almost always need to be consolidated in some way through the state, through legislation and/or through the allocation of resources. State-directed, but participatory, planning is important for providing strategic directions. But in the new model, there will be more in the way of *partnerships between the state and community-based organizations and NGOs*. Flexible and creative solutions and adaptations are far more likely to emerge from the bottom-up, and processes of learning to live together have to be worked out from street to street and neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

In the old model, at least until the late 1960s, planning was held to operate in 'the public interest', and it was assumed that planners' educations entitled them to identify that public interest. In the wake of Marxist, feminist, and poststructuralist dismantlings of this concept, it seems more useful to talk about planning for *multiple publics*, or for *a heterogeneous public*. Planning has never been value-neutral. It ought now to be explicitly value-sensitive, working on behalf of the most vulnerable groups in multicultural cities and regions, accommodating rather than eradicating difference. In this new arena of planning for multiple publics in multicultural societies, new kinds of multi- or cross-cultural literacies are essential.

In the old model, planning stood apart from politics, distancing itself from that which was believed to pollute its pure rationality and objectivity. Since decades of research have now shown planning to have been neither purely rational nor purely objective, it is now time for it to become transparently political, open about the values and visions it stands for and defends.

These, then, are the bare bones of a shifting paradigm, a brief overview. The world of planning education and practice at the beginning of the 21st century uneasily straddles

the two, the old and the emerging, in a way that is evocative of Matthew Arnold's great mid-nineteenth-century image of 'wandering between two worlds, one lost, the other yet to be found'. The old planning served modernist cities in a project that was, in part, dedicated to the eradication of difference. Metaphorically, this planning can be linked with the machine images of the great Fritz Lang film *Metropolis*. The emerging planning, defined in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, is dedicated to a social project in which difference can flourish.[3] The metaphorical image of *Cosmopolis* is meant to suggest that diversity. To ensure planning's continued relevance as a significant social project, contributing to the creation of cosmopolis, it is important to give more flesh to these bones. This will be done by elaborating the five qualities already mentioned: political, therapeutic, audacious, creative, and critical sensibilities.

EXPANDING THE POLITICAL HORIZONS OF PLANNING

In shifting beyond the modernist paradigm there must be an end to the pretence – still held in some quarters – that planning is, or could ever be, a-political and value-neutral. In this age of global economic integration and multiple migrations there are continuous and conspicuous redistributions of wealth and power which have manifest spatial expressions, and which planners help to bring into being, or to resist. At the moment, these global forces and top-down processes are increasing economic, social, and cultural polarization in an overall climate of increasing uncertainty and decreasing legitimacy of governments everywhere (Marris, 1996; 1998). In response, mobilized communities within civil society launch struggles for livelihood, in defence of life space, and in affirmation of the right to cultural difference. In this context, planners must make choices. For whom to work, on behalf of which set of forces or struggles? The choice is not a simple one, in the sense that it is often posed, as a choice between top-down and bottom-up, between working for the state or working for 'the community'. Not all communities practise a progressive, inclusionary politics (Abu-Lughod, 1998), and the state is not always repressive and reactionary. Further, while community mobilization is the necessary first step of an insurgent/radical planning, it is rarely sufficient for lasting change. The most promising experiments in insurgent planning have involved mobilized communities forging coalitions to work for broad objectives of economic, environmental, social and cultural justice, and in the process resisting, engaging with, and participating in 'the state'. As I argued in Chapter 6, the real work of managing our co-existence in cities of difference takes place at the local level. This means drawing on the creativity and local knowledge of community-based organizations and planners working for the local state, but the national or regional state agencies are still critical as strategic thinkers and enablers of the local work. The German 'Social City' programme, federally funded but locally proposed, designed, and implemented, is a good example of more creative roles between different levels of the state and local communities.

If planning's constituency is to continue to be, at least in part, those groups who are most vulnerable, whether from economic or political disadvantage or from cultural discrimination and oppression, then these new forms of planning will be increasingly important. Current political processes (in the racialized liberal democracies of the West)

represent people's needs only in the crudest and most partisan way, even in an open democracy. If we want to achieve greater social justice, less polluted environments, and broader cross-cultural tolerance, and if planning is to contribute to those social goals, then we need a broader and more politicized definition of planning's domain and practices. These practices will have to include mobilizing constituencies, protests, strikes, acts of civil disobedience, community organization, professional advocacy and research, publicity, as well as the proposing and drafting of laws and new programmes of social intervention (Marris, 1996; 1998).

Serious thought has to be given to the institutional location of planning. If we want planning to be more responsive to the pressures that a mobilized civil society is able to exert on the state (in its various guises), then the planning function needs to be located more directly within city councils, rather than protected as yet another line agency. Making planning more overtly political has risks associated, but is surely better than the behind-the-scenes machinations that have typically characterized planning decisions. Planning, to the extent that it is a function of the state, is very dependent on the quality of institutions responsible for implementing it (Chapters 6 and 7). Imagining utopian possibilities, we must be able to imagine the institutions that we desire, as well as imagining the citizens and planners who will maintain and transform them. The following sections on risk-taking and creativity partially address this problem. So too does the section on critical thinking, which tackles how we think about the state itself.

Operating in an always political climate has at least three implications for planners. One is the impossibility of ignoring politics, and thus the need to develop political skills. Another is the need for choices: choice in terms of arenas of practice, as opportunities arise or are foreclosed. But the major choice concerns the vision of the good society to which planners might dedicate themselves. I have argued for planning as a social project in which difference can flourish – difference in all of its multiplicity – as we continue to struggle for economic and environmental justice, for human community, and for the survival of the spirit in the face of the onslaught of a global consumer culture, and growing concern for security at all levels. I have outlined a set of principles to guide the construction of and create the space for this emergent 'utopia', a utopia which has more to do with process and becoming than with achievement and being – principles of social justice, of multicultural and urban citizenship, of coalitions building bridges of cooperation across difference. The creation of *cosmopolis* must be a partnership between citizens, city governments, and the city-building professions. Planners could be midwives at the birth of *cosmopolis*. But they won't be, unless their practice is politically informed and consciously based on values.

DEVELOPING A MORE THERAPEUTIC APPROACH TO URBAN CONFLICTS

When John Forester (2000: 147) wrote that 'planning conflicts often involve not only resources like land and money, but relationships that involve personality and politics, race, ethnicity and culture, too', he was saying something with profound implications for how we think about and practise planning. If it is *relationships* between people that are

driving a land use or resource management conflict, then something more than rational discourse among concerned stakeholders, or the usual toolkit of negotiation and mediation, is necessary to address what's really going on. Conflictual relationships involve feelings and emotions like fear, anger, hope, betrayal, abandonment, loss, unrecognized memories, lack of recognition, and histories of disempowerment and exclusion. I have argued throughout this book that when planning disputes are entangled in such emotional and symbolic as well as material battles, there is a need for a language and process of emotional involvement and resolution. In her fieldwork with indigenous people in southern Australia, planning research by Elizabeth Porter shows that while the ostensible issue is co-management (by indigenous and non-indigenous Australians) of national and state parks, what most concerns this group of indigenous people is the matter of lack of recognition – of their historic presence, and their ongoing special knowledge of and relationship to the land (Porter, 2002). Cooperation is unlikely until that issue has been dealt with, but this is not something that planners have been trained to expect or attend to. There are a variety of ways of dealing with this lack of recognition, some of which are necessarily formal and ceremonial and involve various levels of local, regional and national politics, including (in this instance) the need for an official apology from the Australian government. Obstinacy or blindness about such emotional matters can stall reconciliation or conflict resolution indefinitely.

There are many interesting examples of recognition of the need to deal with memory in order for reconciliation, healing, or social transformation to occur. Best known perhaps are Maya Lin's Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC, and Daniel Liebeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a process rather than a memorial. Lesser known is the case of Liverpool, England, a city which, by the 1980s, after two decades of economic decline, was on the brink of 'city death', with disastrous levels of unemployment, out-migration of young people, appalling race relations, and a deteriorated and neglected built environment. How can a city regenerate from such despair and demoralization?

There were, according to Newman and Kenworthy's account (1999), three catalysts. The first was community mobilization around housing rehabilitation. The second was a major effort to combat racism – starting an arts anti-racism programme, and tackling racism in the police force. But it was the opening of the Museum of Slavery in the new Albert Dock tourism complex that had the greatest symbolic and spiritual impact. This award-winning museum shows how Liverpool was central to the slave trade. It graphically depicts the whole process of slavery, and names the many established Liverpool families who made their fortunes from slavery. Here is a case where the telling of a buried story provides some grounds for healing a divided city, and, in so doing, acts as a catalyst for regeneration and growth.

My detailed analysis of a social planner's response to a cross-cultural planning dispute (in Chapter 7) argued that her therapeutic approach was able to create new understandings and meanings through multicultural conversations. But I also argued that the political space had to be created for such an intervention, and this refocuses our attention on the critical role of mobilized communities, putting pressure on politicians and political institutions, which in turn redirects the works of planning staff. Citizens and their

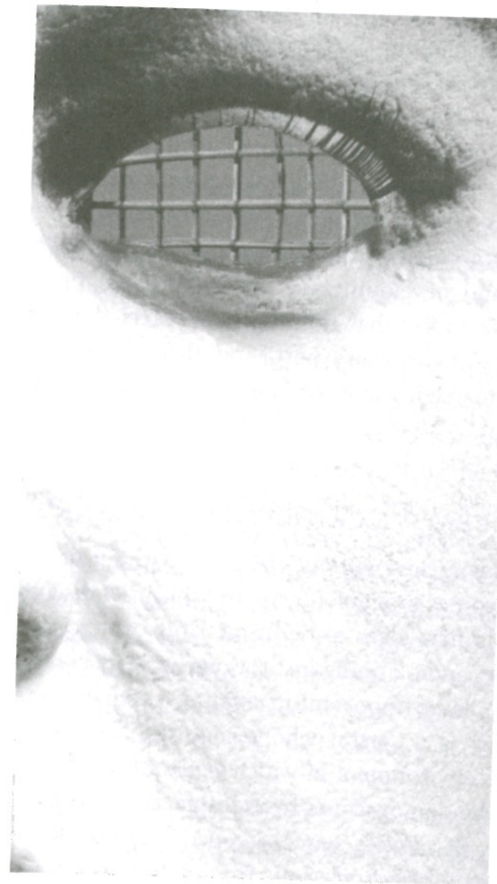
political representatives are always key players in the planning environment, partners in the struggle to build *cosmopolis.*

TOWARDS AN AUDACIOUS PLANNING PRACTICE: DARING TO BREAK THE RULES

If there's any organization that's notorious for being risk-averse, it's 'the bureaucracy'. But so too are politicians and thus, of necessity, the planners who serve them. The essence of twentieth-century planning was regulatory, rule-bound, procedure-driven, obsessed with order and certainty: in a word, inflexible (Jacobs, 1962; Sennett, 1970). But when the world's changing around you, it's often not appropriate to stick to the rules, to the tried and true, nor for that matter to cling to whatever is the main oppositional ideology – to simply assert the opposite of what's currently conventional wisdom/dominant ideology. Neither anti-globalization nor anti-state intervention postures contain the mix of imaginations required for the complexities of 21st century urban life.

For politicians involved in urban governance, the greatest risk of all is to think beyond the short term, yet that is precisely what's necessary when the sustainability of cities is at stake. The second greatest risk is to involve the public in decision-making (as opposed to mere consultation), because that involves surrendering some control, and people who hold power are not usually predisposed to share or devolve it. Building better cities depends on both these things happening, and the most likely way to bring it about is through an active citizenry applying pressure at all levels of government, along with a critical media. The now much-celebrated, decade-long, successful experiment in municipal participatory budgeting in the Brazilian city of Porto Alegre (Abers, 2000) was originally a huge risk, not least because the city had minimal financial resources. But the Workers Party was elected to office on such a promise, and carried it out, and the results have demonstrated the capacities of ordinary, not highly educated citizens to debate among themselves, neighbourhood by neighbourhood, and to establish regional and metropolitan spending priorities for urban infrastructure, all of which has pleasantly surprised the most sceptical advocates of participatory democracy.

Another extraordinary example of risk-taking on the part of politicians in partnership with planners and citizens began in the city of Oak Park, on the western political boundary of the city of Chicago. Middle-class Oak Park initiated a policy of residential racial openness in the late 1960s, in the face of surrounding municipalities' policies of racial segregation. Collectively, residents chose to fight exclusion rather than join the forces of white flight (Chapter 6). They chose to become 'diversity pioneers', to regard integration as a positive experience, defining the challenge as one of management rather than resistance (Martin and Warner, 2000: 272). In 1972, the minority population was an almost invisible 1 per cent. By 2002, it was 23 per cent, and the key institution behind this success, the Oak Park Housing Center (OPHC), had initiated a regional outreach programme to clone Oak Park's efforts in the wider western metropolitan region. The OPHC worked in a very people-oriented, micro-political way, apartment block by



apartment block, street by street, anticipating and managing fears in whatever creative ways it could.

The shifts in institutional cultures that are required in order to create *cosmopolis* call for strong, visionary leadership that encourages and rewards exposure to new ideas and risk-taking. That in turn calls for listening to a wider range of voices, for fostering a vibrant public realm, and for the democratizing of decision-making. People don't usually participate for the sheer exhilaration of exercising their democratic rights. They participate when there is a likelihood that their time commitment will have consequences, set new things in motion.

When Wendy Sarkissian was hired by the South Sydney Council to sort out the conflicts between residents in the Redfern neighbourhood, she took huge personal and professional risks in choosing the path of therapeutic planning. But in so doing, she showed that it is possible to find other ways to resolve conflicts. When Ken Reardon took his white students from Urbana-Champaign into the Black neighbourhoods of East St Louis he was similarly taking personal and professional risks in forging new solutions (a community-university partnership) to exclusion and poverty. For planners, the essence of risk-taking is learning to surrender the obsession with control and certainty and developing the ability to listen to the voices of multiple publics. It would be safe to say that nothing new enters the world without a certain amount of risk-taking on someone's part, and that encouraging a culture of risk-takers is essential for managing our co-existence in the mongrel cities of the 21st century.

EXPANDING THE CREATIVE CAPACITIES OF PLANNERS

But risk-taking by itself is useless without creativity, without new ideas about how to do things. Creativity itself comes in many forms, and this brief discussion cannot do justice to the subject. Where do new ideas come from? How can creative thinking be encouraged? How can our cities and planning institutions be more creative places?

Visionary leadership can be important in creating a climate conducive to new ideas. A good leader or manager is a person who recognizes creativity and gives it space to flourish, who creates an environment in which exposure to new ideas and experimentation is rewarded, and who demonstrates by example, taking risks herself. Constable Tom Woods of the Victoria, BC, Police Force, stepped way outside his job description in coming up with the idea of the Rock Solid Foundation as a way of addressing violent behaviour among local youths. Woods became a *de facto* community development planner, in providing a venue and activities for teenagers (Chapter 8), but he also became a therapeutic planner in his willingness to listen to the teenagers talk about their lives, and by recognizing their artistic creativity. One or more of his superior officers had to recognize the value of Woods' idea, and provide the time for him to implement it. That was good leadership, thinking beyond customary job descriptions and addressing a problem in new ways.

In participatory action research, planners place their trust to some extent in the creativity of residents. Ken Reardon and his planning crew in East St Louis were inspired

by the creative solutions, including the political creativity, of local residents in a situation of minimal material resources. The ability to make space for the creativity of ordinary folks to emerge might be considered another important planning skill. A number of community-based planners in North America have discussed their successful experiences with this way of working.[4]

Consultant Charles Landry has written specifically about the creative city (Hall and Landry, 1997; Landry, 2000). Having worked with Landry, I've noticed that one of his talents is the ability to see apparent weaknesses as potential strengths. For example, working in Helsinki he learnt that there is an illness, referred to as SAD, which descends on many residents as winter sets in. SAD stands for seasonal affective disorder, and is a depression caused by light deprivation. Landry and his colleagues undertook an 'image survey' among residents that was based on associative thinking, in order to find a means of discussing the city in new terms. He asked residents what Helsinki would be in terms of 40 associations, including: if Helsinki were a colour, a car, a fruit, a musical instrument, or a song, what would it be? (It came out as dark blue, a Volvo, a raspberry, a flute, and the song 'Silence is Golden'.) Looking at the meanings in the subsequent analysis helped Landry to define a cultural strategy for the city based on the importance of light, inclusiveness, and female strengths. None of this would have come about using traditional thinking paths.

Landry began to explore light in all its guises, quickly picking up on such local traditions as candles burning in windows, the placing of candles on graves, the Lucia candle parade, and the lights that mark Independence Day. He also noticed that Finnish lighting design was cutting edge, but not as well known as that of the Italians. He conceived a winter Festival of Light, a two-week event that could turn the weakness of the dark into a strength. The first festival was staged in November–December of 1995 with a budget of £30,000. It is now an annual event that has grown ten-fold, and in unexpected ways. The original concept involved lights fanning out from the central station square, and lantern projects and parades spreading inwards from the suburbs, thus linking, through the symbolism of light, the different parts of the city. Today the festival not only generates a whole series of local projects (including trade events that feature lighting), but also attracts international collaboration as well as becoming a brand name for Helsinki (Landry, 2000: 87–9).

Landry has spent more time than most planning practitioners, I suspect, in thinking about creativity. Creating new ideas, he writes, may involve originating completely new ideas or developing new ideas from old ones. Association, analogy, and metaphor are ways of bringing together by force seemingly incompatible concepts: by making the familiar strange, and the strange familiar (Landry, 2000: 179). Other techniques range from brainstorming to mindmapping, daydreaming to visualization: and a whole slew of techniques developed by Edward de Bono to encourage thinking laterally (De Bono, 1971; 1996). Landry has used a 'survey of the senses' to analyse the city through its sounds, smells, panoramas, at different times of the day and night. This changes conventional ways of discovering possibilities by getting decision-makers to connect with their visceral experiences of city life (Landry, 2000: 180). The senses can be a creative resource.

There is another form of creativity that I have drawn out of some of the stories discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. This is the capacity to *imagine* a different story, a different outcome, a different way of being or relating. The community leaders in East St Louis had that capacity, and the faith to act on it. Wendy Sarkissian had that capacity, as did the people of Oak Park in Chicago, along with their politicians, and housing policy folks. Can this kind of imagination be taught? Possibly. It can certainly be discussed, encouraged, and nurtured through story (Chapter 8).

Another way of tapping, releasing, and nurturing imagination in planning is by working collaboratively with artists. The Welfare State International (WSI) is a company of artists formed in the UK in 1968, now internationally acclaimed for its work with and in communities in processes of change and transformation (Coult and Kershaw, 1990). Initially oriented to popular and political theatre, WSI subsequently became interested in myth, ritual, carnival, festival, street parades, puppetry, feasts, and more. Emblazoned on the side of the company's touring truck is the logo, 'Engineers of the Imagination', reflecting their belief that recovery of imagination is a vital partner and precondition of change through more analytical and rational methods. In a world where local and diverse cultures are increasingly threatened by a largely imposed electronic culture, WSI's mission is to rediscover and invent new hybrid myths and archetypes, new celebrations, and new forms of protest. Working for political and social change in and with communities, these 'civic magicians' (Kershaw, 1990) understand empowerment, teaching people the skills necessary to make their own celebrations and protests as part of the company's 'process'. In their 35-year life, these artists have worked in an extraordinary variety of scales, types of 'performance space', operational modes, and cultural contexts, from one-man back-pack story telling to giant processional imagery; from cathedrals to London docksides; from touring shows in the company's bus, the 'Lantern Coach' (the second smallest theatre in the world), to long-term community residencies; from international festivals to intimate local events. They have survived on grants from arts agencies, local and national governments, and increasingly find themselves in international demand from local planning departments not only to organize public celebrations and transform public space, but also to train local communities in these diverse skills (Coult and Kershaw, 1990).

Vancouver has its own version of WSI, in the Public Dreams Society (PDS), founded by Dolly Hopkins who, like the artists in WSI, has a background in theatre performance. The PDS brings together artists and the public (at the instigation either of local communities or the City of Vancouver, or both), incorporating art, music, theatre, dance, puppetry, pyrotechnics, street and circus performance in the creation of interactive community events like the Lantern Parade around Trout Lake on the evening of the Day of All Souls, or the First Night celebrations on Granville Island. The mandate of the PDS is to 'revive and redefine community arts and the role of the artist in the community' (Hii, 2002). The appearance of PDS productions in the eastern neighbourhoods of the city is not accidental. These are lower-income areas that have previously not shared in city celebrations (Brock 2002). PDS events encourage people of diverse backgrounds to celebrate difference in public arenas; ignored public spaces are re-born; creative impulses are released; fears are confronted and embraced. Communities reclaim the streets and

public spaces through these events, and the skills and experiences of individuals are broadened.

Often there are groups of people who have been excluded from 'the urban conversation' (Landry, 2000) for silly reasons – like age (being too old, or too young), or gender (being a woman, in some cultures), or being newcomers. Working with artists is a way of bringing such groups into the urban conversation, as well as introducing new forms of expression and new ways of thinking into planning processes. Organizations like WSI and PDS, working in and with residents and planners, have the capacity to build community, to cross cultures, to confront fears and nurture hopes, and to transform public spaces through their magic and mystery, their intuitive and visceral methods, their 'celebratory excesses' and 'radical criticism' (Kershaw, 1990).

Yes Ebenezer, the recovery of imagination is possible, and it is coming to a city near you.

MAINTAINING A CRITICAL SENSIBILITY

One of my arguments in preceding chapters has been that we need to reconceptualize planning as a process that involves organizing hope, negotiating fears, mediating memories, daring to break the rules, and so on. But what changes simply by reconceptualizing planning's tasks? A critical planning theorist might ask what power relationships have changed or are changing? Where is the understanding of political interests: of class, gender, race and ethnic power? My reply is twofold. First, social representation matters. If we only talk or write books documenting the hegemonic power of capital, or patriarchy, or governmentality, we are not simply reflecting reality but helping to constitute or reproduce it.[5] My discursive struggle in this book has been to emphasize, rather than to sweep under the carpet, alternative forms of planning, alternative imaginations and practices.

My second response is that, ultimately, a critical sensibility is always asking who is getting what, where, and how (is power operating) in the distribution of goods, services, and opportunities in a specific place at a specific historical moment. Maintaining a critical sensibility in planning does not mean adopting one or more of the many varieties of critical theory at large in the world, and boxing the operations of planning into its iron cage. It means maintaining a critical awareness of and openness to those theories for what they can illuminate in specific contexts about the operations of power. It also means maintaining a scepticism about the 'will to plan' and the 'improving impulse' out of which it grew,[6] best expressed in twentieth-century confidence about scientific and technological progress – a mentality that was unscientifically optimistic about the possibilities for the comprehensive planning of human settlements.

It was not only capital, or patriarchy, which got in the way of those dreams. The administrative ordering of society and nature proved an equally formidable enemy. The seemingly unremarkable tools of modern statecraft, tools of measurement, accounting, mapping, record-keeping, are tools vital to our well-being and freedom. They undergird the concept of citizenship and the provision of social welfare. But they are also constitutive of a new social order: privileging the centre and the synoptic view, and marginalizing local knowledges. As James C. Scott puts it in his marvelous book, *Seeing Like a State*, 'the builders of the modern nation-state do not merely describe, observe, and map: they strive to shape a people and landscape to fit their techniques of observation' (Scott, 1998: 82). Thus, categories that begin as artificial conventions of cartographers, census takers, police officers, and urban planners can end by becoming categories that organize people's daily existence, precisely because they are embedded in state institutions that structure that experience. The state is thus the vexed institution that is the ground of both our freedoms and unfreedoms (Scott, 1998). A critical vigilance about the operations of the state must be second nature to planners. But so too must there be a symmetrical vigilance about the operations of mobilized communities, always asking who is excluded from the 'we' of any self-defined community, and the causes for which they are mobilized.

EXPANDING THE LANGUAGE OF PLANNING

I've talked so far about five qualities that would help reshape 21st-century cities and planning. In Chapter 8, I made a case for the importance of story and story telling. In this final section, I want to connect the idea of story with the notion of an expanded language for planning, a language that can encompass the lived experience of mongrel cities: the joys, hopes, fears, the senses of loss, expectation, adventure. In planning's postwar rush to join the social sciences, some of its capacity to address important urban issues was lost because it turned its back on questions of values, of meaning, and of the arts (rather than science) of city-building. The language, and the mental and emotional universe of planning, was thus constricted. We can and must expand this universe by being more attuned to the city of memory, the city of desire, and the city of spirit: these are what animate life in cities, and they are also what animate urban conflicts (whose memories are respected? whose desires are fulfilled? what spirit of place seduces us?). Planners with those five qualities that I've described above are more likely to be attentive to these vital dimensions of urban life than those who are obsessed with technical skills or wearing the protective armour of the policy sciences.

CITY OF MEMORY

Why do we visit graves? Why do we erect sculptures to dead leaders or war heroes or revolutionaries? Why do we save love letters for 30 or 40 years or more? Why do we make photo albums, home movies, write diaries and journals? Why do we visit the sites of cave paintings at Lascaux, at Kakadu? Because memory, both individual and collective, is deeply important to us. It locates us as part of something bigger than our individual existences, perhaps makes us seem less insignificant, sometimes gives us at least partial answers to questions like 'Who am I?' and 'Why am I like I am?'. Memory locates us, as part of a family history, as part of a tribe or community, as a part of city-building and

nation-making. Loss of memory is, basically, loss of identity. People suffering from amnesia or Alzheimer's are adrift in a sea of confusion. To take away a person's memories is to steal a large part of their identity. Whether or not we are one of those people who likes to 'dwell on the past', the past dwells in us and gives us our sense of continuity, anchoring us even as we move on. Cities are the repositories of memories, and they are one of memory's texts. We revisit the house(s) we grew up in, we show our new lover the park where, as a kid, we had our first kiss, or where students were killed by police in an anti-war demonstration . . . Our lives and struggles, and those of our ancestors, are written into places – houses, neighbourhoods, cities – investing them with meaning and significance.

Modernist planners became thieves of memory. Faustian in their eagerness to erase all traces of the past in the interest of forward momentum, of growth in the name of progress, their 'drive-by' windscreen surveys of neighbourhoods that they had already decided (on the basis of objective census and survey data) to condemn to the bulldozer, have been, in their own way, as deadly as the more recent drive-by gang shootings in Los Angeles. Modernist planners, embracing the ideology of development as progress, have killed whole communities, by evicting them, demolishing their houses, and dispersing them to edge suburbs or leaving them homeless. They have killed communities and destroyed individual lives by not understanding the loss and grieving that go along with losing one's home and neighbourhood and friends and memories (Marris, 1974). Since nobody knows how to put a monetary value on memory, or on a sense of connection and belonging, it always gets left out of the model.

This is not an argument against change. (Change can be for better or worse, depending in part on how it happens. Decaying and growing, cities can't choose to stay the same. They have to choose all the time between alternative changes – blight or renewal, replacements or additions, extensions outwards or upwards, new congestions or new expenditures.) It is rather an argument for the importance of memory, for the need to pay attention to it, to understand that communities can and do go through grieving processes, to acknowledge these in some sort of ritual way. We need to remind ourselves of the importance of memory, and of ritual in dealing with loss. If we need to destroy, as part of our city-building, we also need to heal.

Recent work by planner-historians Gail Dubrow (1998; Dubrow and Goodman, 2002; Dubrow and Graves, 2002), Dolores Hayden (1995), and John Kuo Wei Tchen (1990), among others, indicates that there is a new multicultural sensibility at work in planning. Hayden's work in public history and public space dwells on the ways in which public space can help to nurture a sense of cultural belonging and at the same time acknowledge and respect diversity. She writes of the power of ordinary urban landscapes to nurture citizens' public memory, and notes that this power remains untapped for most working people's neighbourhoods in most American cities, and for most ethnic history and women's history. Urban landscapes are storehouses for individual and collective social memories. Moving beyond the familiar architectural approach to cultural heritage which favours individual buildings, Hayden argues for a deeper understanding of the entire urban cultural landscape as an important part of American history, emphasizing

the social and political meanings of vernacular buildings (factories, union halls, tenements); ending the invisibility of the history of all but the white Anglo occupiers; and connecting the history of struggle over urban space with 'the poetics of occupying particular places' (Hayden, 1995: 12).

Both individuals and communities need to find ways to connect to the larger urban narrative. Some urban planners are now working with artists, anthropologists, landscape architects, archaeologists, and communities to do just that in public history and public art, community mapping, and urban landscape projects that seek a more socially and culturally inclusive approach to our urban memories. One beautiful example of this is research by Dubrow and Graves (2002) on the previously undocumented built environment and cultural landscape associated with Japanese communities on the West coast of the United States – community halls, temples, hospitals, language schools, midwiferies, and the Japanese-style public bath houses known as *sento*. Drawing on vintage photographs, personal memories culled from oral histories, and research on historic places, the authors of this study have made visible the once-thriving urban communities that were destroyed after Executive Order 9066 in 1942 forced the internment of all Japanese residents on the West coast for the duration of World War II. By contributing to a deeper knowledge of this history, the authors hope to assist in new claims of historic preservation of what remains of Japanese American heritage.

CITY OF DESIRE

Why do we enjoy sitting alone in a coffee shop, or outdoor café, or on a park bench, apparently day-dreaming? If city dwelling is in part about the importance of memory and belonging, it is also about the pleasures of anonymity and of not having to belong. These are closely related to desire, to sexual desires and fantasies. We sit on a bus, empty seat beside us, watching new passengers come on board, wondering whether anyone will sit next to us, and, if so, who? This is the thrill and the fear of the chance encounter (Epstein, 1998). We sit on the beach or stroll through a park, watching others and being watched, and in that watching are hidden fantasies and desires, sometimes unacknowledged, other times a conscious searching.

This is the eroticism of city life, in the broad sense of our attraction to others, the pleasure and excitement of being drawn out of one's secure routine to encounter the novel, the strange, the surprising. We may not want to partake. But we enjoy the parade. If city life is a coming together, a 'being together of strangers' (Young, 1990: 237), we need to create public spaces that encourage this parade, that acknowledge our need for spectacle – not the authorized spectacle of the annual parade or the weekly football game, but the spontaneous spectacle of strangers and chance encounters. Yet the opposite is happening. Planners are systematically demolishing such spaces in the name of the flip side of desire – fear (Chapter 5).

The city of desire – and its place in city planning – is one of the aspects of city life that has only just begun to (re)surface in writings about the city.[7] There are many themes to be unraveled and stories yet to be told relating to desire and the city, to

sexuality and space. Elizabeth Wilson's *The Sphinx in the City* (1992) argues that the anonymity of big cities has been liberating for women (at the same time as it increases our jeopardy from sexual assault); and George Chauncey (1994: 135) makes the same point with respect to gay men, in his history of gay New York, noting how many gays have moved from the oppressive, homophobic atmosphere of small towns to the anonymity of New York, with its many identifiable places for cruising, looking for dates, for simply being freer to be one's true self. In Barbara Hooper's account of the origins of modern planning in nineteenth-century Paris, 'The Poem of Male Desires', the role of desire on the one hand, and fear of it on the other, produces the desire to control desire, which Hooper argues has been a central organizing theme of planning practice.

In making the hitherto invisible visible – that is, the significance of desire, of eros, in urban life – we also make it discussable. In breaking the taboo, the silence, we move slowly towards a richer understanding of urban life and of what has been left out of planners' models and histories. But there is much more to the City of Desire than eros, as philosopher Iris Young has suggested:

> The city's eroticism also derives from the aesthetics of its material being: the bright and colored lights, the grandeur of its buildings, the juxtaposition of architecture of different times, styles and purposes. City space offers delights and surprises. Walk around the corner, or over a few blocks, and you encounter a different spatial mood, a new play of sight and sound, and new interactive movement. The erotic meaning of the city arises from its social and spatial inexhaustibility. A place of many places, the city folds over on itself in so many layers and relationships that it is incomprehensible. One cannot 'take it in', one never feels as though there is nothing new and interesting to explore, no new and interesting people to meet.
>
> (Young, 1990: 240)

The city of desire is also an imagined city of excitement, opportunity, fortune. It is what brings millions of people from the countryside to the big city – Nordestinos to São Paolo, Turks to Frankfurt, Anatolians to Istanbul, Michoacans to San Diego, the Hmong to Chicago, the people of the Maghreb to Paris. It fuels dreams. By not understanding the power of such dreams, or by dismissing them as irrational, planners' own dreams of rational control of migration processes, of orderly human settlements, will remain just that – dreams. The daily stories of border-crossings (for example, from Mexico into the United States), crossings in which people all too often risk, and sometimes lose, their lives, illustrates the point. Such is the power of the city of desire, a power strikingly rendered in Gregory Nava's movie *El Norte*, and John Sayles' *Lone Star*, both of which also show how easily the city of desire may become the inferno.

One symptom of the narrowness of modernist planners' horizons is the fact that they find it very hard to focus on desires rather than needs. A need is supposedly an objectifiable entity, identified in 'needs surveys': 'I need a more frequent bus service'; 'I need more police patrols in my neighbourhood'. A desire, by contrast, involves the subconscious, a personal engagement, dreams and feelings, an ability to intuit the

atmosphere and feeling of a place. How does the city of desire translate into planning? Perhaps by giving more attention to places of encounter, specifically those which are not commercialized – the street, the square – and which are not placed under the gaze of surveillance technologies. Perhaps also by recognizing that some places of encounter must necessarily be appropriated, and not trying to regulate the uses of all public spaces.[8]

CITY OF SPIRIT

What draws many of us to visit places like Machu Picchu, Stonehenge, the Dome of the Rock or the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, the Kaaba stone at Mecca, Chartres, or Uluru, in the apparently empty centre of Australia? Why do certain mountains, springs, trees, rocks, and other features of landscape assume symbolic and sacred values to certain peoples and cultures? Historically we have invested our surroundings, urban as well as non-urban, with sacred or spiritual values, and we have built shrines of one sort or another as an acknowledgement of the importance of the sacred, the spiritual, in human life. The completely profane world, the wholly desacralized cosmos, is a recent deviation in the history of the human spirit. Beginning perhaps in the nineteenth century we have created landscapes, cityscapes, devoid of the sacred, devoid of spirit. The tall chimneys that arose in the nineteenth-century factory landscape (Mumford's 'Coketown') and the skyscrapers of the late twentieth-century city, perhaps symbolize the excessive dominance of the masculine *yang* force and its values. From East Germany and Russia to California or the Mississippi Delta, parts of the devastated countryside are left sterile and dead, a monument to the consequences of human rapacity unchecked by considerations of spirit. We are so deadened by our western industrial landscapes that we now go in search of comfort to Aboriginal songlines or Native American sacred places.

Perhaps it's time to re-introduce into our thinking about cities and their regions the importance of the sacred, of spirit. In his superb book about black and white Australians' relationship to the Australian landscape, *Edge of the Sacred* (1995), David Tacey calls for such a 'resacralization' as a social and political necessity. 'White Man Got No Dreaming' was the partial title of a book by anthropologist W. E. H. Stanner (1979). The Aboriginal Dreaming and western rationality stand to each other as thesis to antithesis. What the one affirms, the other denies. In Aboriginal cosmology, landscape is a living field of spirits and metaphysical forces (Tacey, 1995: 148). Our English word 'landscape', as the Australian poet Judith Wright has pointed out, is wholly inadequate to describe the earth-sky-water-tree-spirit-human continuum that is the existential ground of the Aboriginal Dreaming. Obviously white Australians cannot appropriate Aboriginal cosmology, tacking it on to their own overly-rational consciousness, and nor can alienated North Americans adopt the cosmology of Native Americans (although much of so-called new-age spirituality, the world over, seems to be attempting something very much like that). But there are western traditions of re-enchantment to which we might connect, and one way of connecting is through the collaboration between artists and communities outlined in the previous section. Perhaps our modernist/progressive longing for freedom

from the non-rational is inherently flawed, out of date and out of touch with enduring human needs.

How can cities/human settlements nurture our unrequited thirst for the spirit? In the European Middle Ages, it was in the building of cities around cathedrals. But that was long ago. In the more secular cities of today, at least in the West, life does not revolve around the cathedral, although in many communities the church, synagogue or mosque continues to play a vital role in social organization. But if we look at cities as centres of spontaneous creativity and festival, then we come closer to an appreciation of the presence of spirit around us. Our deepest feelings about city and community are expressed on special occasions such as carnivals and festivals. Creativity is not only found in art galleries or heard in symphony halls. The nourishing of the spirit, or soul, needs daily space and has everyday expressions: a group of students in a coffee shop discussing plans for a protest; an elderly Chinese man practising his tai chi on the beach or in a park; amateur musicians performing in front of cafés and museums; an old woman tending her flowers in a community garden; kids skateboarding among the asphalt landscaping of sterile bank plazas; lantern parades through city streets on the winter solstice . . . Rational planners have been obsessed with controlling how and when and which people use public as well as private space. Meanwhile, ordinary people continue to find creative ways of appropriating spaces and creating places, in spite of planning, to fulfil their desires as well as their needs, to tend the spirit as well as take care of the rent.

There is another dimension to the city of spirit that has begun to actively engage some planners, in collaboration with artists and communities. That is the process of identifying what we might call 'sacred places' in the urban landscape. The works of Hayden (1995), Dubrow (1998), and Kenney (1995; 2001) are suggestive. Kenney's work in mapping gay and lesbian activism in Los Angeles reveals the connections between place and collective identity which are at the heart of gay and lesbian experience of the city (Kenney, 2001). In her essay 'Remember, Stonewall was a riot', she evokes Stonewall – the scene of three days of rioting in Greenwich Village in 1969 in protest at police entrapment and harassment in a bar frequented by African American and Puerto Rican drag queens – as essentially a sacred site for the gay and lesbian movement (Kenney 1995). The labour movement, the women's movement, African Americans, Japanese Americans, and Native Americans could each name such 'sacred urban places', and have begun to do so, and to commemorate such sites.

In a creative twist on this theme of sacred sites, '*The New Charleston*' project is an exhaustive look at one city and the spatial history of African Americans within it over three centuries (Hayden, 1995: 69). This is a project in which an artist, in collaboration with a poet and an architect, developed a detailed map of historic places of importance to African Americans – slave markets, the hanging tree, community centres – and painted this map onto the wooden floor of a public room. The map serves as a stage for performances by African American musicians. The map is actually a complex layering of physical and social history. There are 14 places, 'Spiritual Signposts', each marked with a crossroads sign of Congolese origin. The art work functions not only as a performance space but also as a cosmogram, a 'description of the universe of the African American story', and as an image of a water journey, delineating the waterways that slaves travelled, from Sierra Leone all the way to Charleston Harbor (Hayden, 1995: 72). We might describe this as a *created* sacred space, as opposed to the struggle for the recovery of actual, erased sacred spaces.

What the above discussion suggests is the need for a diversity of spaces and places in the city: places loaded with visual stimulation, but also places of quiet contemplation, uncontaminated by commerce, where the deafening noise of the city can be kept out so that we can listen to the 'noise of stars' or the wind or water, and the voice(s) within ourselves. An essential ingredient of planning beyond the modernist paradigm is a reinstatement of inquiry about and recognition of the importance of memory, desire, and spirit, as vital dimensions of healthy human settlements, and a sensitivity to cultural differences in the expressions of each.

THE WORK OF THE SONGLINES

I've argued that in working towards more creative and sustaining multicultural cities, we need some new models of planning practice which expand the language of planning beyond the realm of instrumental rationality and the system world, and speak about (and develop the skills for) organizing hope, negotiating fear, mediating memory, and daring to break rules, as well as developing the habits of a critical/analytical mind. This transformed language would reflect the emotional breadth and depth of the lived experience of cities: cities of desire, cities of memory, cities of play and celebration, cities of fear and paranoia, cities of struggle. The new planning imagination embodied in this work is political and critical, creative and therapeutic, and audacious.

The sensibility underpinning this transformation includes the ability to tell, to listen to, and, above all, make space for stories to be heard. We use stories in various ways: to keep memory alive, to celebrate our history/identity; to derive lessons about how to act effectively; to inspire action; and as a tool of persuasion in policy debates. We uncover buried stories. We create new stories. We invent metaphors around which policy stories pivot. Stories, carefully told and carefully heard, have the potential to act as a bridge between ingrained habits and new futures. Stories can (usefully) disrupt habits of thought and action that control everyday life. The will to change has to come from an ability – a planner's ability and also a city user's ability – to imagine oneself in a different skin, a different story, a different place, and then desire this new self and place that one sees. An effective story telling practice is perhaps that which is able to conscript readers or residents to *suspend their habits of being and come out in the open and engage in dialogue with strangers.*

I've provided examples of this kind of planning work, from all over the world, which I think of as the work of the Songlines. So let me finally explain this allusion. Pre-colonial Australia was the last landmass on earth peopled neither by farmers nor by city dwellers but by hunter gatherers. Along a labyrinth of invisible pathways,

known to us as Songlines, the Aboriginals travelled in order to perform all those activities that are distinctly human – song, dance, marriage, exchange of ideas, and arrangements of territorial boundaries by agreement rather than by force. The Songlines, in Aboriginal culture, are what sustain life. The task of a new planning imagination is to search for the *city's songlines*, for all that is life sustaining, in the face of the inferno.