

**Re-acting aesthetic politics:
From City to Red Zone to Scenes
of downtown Victoria**

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Abstract

This thesis suggests that *globalization* is best understood as a mode of revealing ethico-political problems as aesthetic. Liberal stories of global civil society and post-structural visions of the global city are unable to engage with the problem that *there are things that we can see that do not have a place*, which requires that we look to the everyday practices that produce dis-placement. This thesis will demonstrate that aesthetic politics is becoming explicit in the creation of official political experiences, through an analysis of urban planning documents and media depictions of downtown Victoria. Approaching these experiences as consisting of *scenes*, the embattlement of the two dominant re-presentations of Victoria – as the City and as the Red Zone – will be exposed as obscuring how they are re-creating the occupation that constitutes the problem of dis-placement. Hence, this thesis will suggest a dis-position more capable of engaging with the problem: urban sensitization.

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Introduction

Towards an everyday global city

Political problems are becoming global. So we are told. We could approach this as a problem of apprehending what it is that politics is becoming, but the global is elusive (as are all phenomena). It could be a novel phenomenon stemming from new technologies of transportation and communication, or it could be yet another iteration of the phenomenon of humanity's ongoing drive for expansion and domination, or... or... We cannot know for certain what the global *is*, or more accurately, what it is that the word global refers to. Hence I am concerned with how the global (as a word) is conceptualized as a venue for political problems because this informs how politics is re-created and re-actings are mobilized. Taking this as my concern, I aim to re-conceptualize the global in such a way that we are able to re-act politics with more elegance. Politics is crucial because how influence is negotiated according to certain modes of valuation affects the ways that political units are constituted, how political beings are able to live, and how political beings are able to re-act.¹ In a time of global political problems, the demands for re-acting abound: the growing underclass, ecological crises, the proliferation of 'civil' wars, AIDS, etc. These problems elude the boundaries of states, and yet the primary response has been denial of the inadequacy of the state, by trying to work through, and thus strengthen its attendant inter-state system. But the inter-state system that we have inherited is not only unable to cope with these problems but it is complicit in their creation.² Cognizant of this complicity, some scholars are trying to conceptualize a global venue for politics. Such a venue has been

¹ The valuation that I am invoking is the uncommon ethics as defined by Shapiro, contra morality as a way of: scripting encounters as events, and being open to difference. Shapiro, Michael J. "Affirming the Political: Tragic Affirmations versus Gothic Displacements." In *Politics of Moralizing*. Jane Bennett and Michael J. Shapiro Eds. New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 236.

² For examples of critical discussions on the complicity of sovereignty thinking in problems of global politics see *Sovereign lives: power in global politics*, Jenny Edkins, Véronique Pin-Fat and Michael J. Shapiro eds., New York: Routledge, 2004.

conceived in two broad ways: as a global civil society, and as a global city. I will attempt to demonstrate that rather than these grand conceptualizations, immanent within the practices of the global discourse is the critique with which it is engaged: the everyday city in which politics are already being re-acted. Thus, re-acting a more elegant global politics involves conceptualizing an effective form of urban activism.

Most commonly the global is conceptualized spatially. As political space the global is considered as a liberal space of government and freedom, marked by “human rights.”³ It is another level of government and freedom, one that transcends the nation-state (and its attendant inter-national system) in much the same way that the nation-state is thought to have transcended the city: by up-sizing.⁴ Many scholars who are conceptualizing this global space of government refer to it as “global civil society.” For example, John Keane frames global civil society as an attempt to salvage freedom (understood as respecting the right of the law as the primary right) in the face of the decline of “the grand narratives of Truth and Knowledge.”⁵ He does so by asserting that the “ethics of pluralism is not negotiable.”⁶ Despite the seeming inclusivity of pluralism (as informed by the universalized ideal of freedom), because this ethics is not negotiable one can only believe in pluralism or not. Thus Keane’s concept of freedom relies on an Other for substantive meaning. In other words, although there can be no contestation of (no politics of) an ethics of pluralism, it is enabled by a politics of exclusion. Global civil society exists in opposition to “tribal orders” and “mafias” that “rely upon kinship bonds, blood imagery, violence and intrigue to *dissolve*

³ See Isin’s discussion of liberal philosophy and practice and municipal government for a demonstration of the down-sizing of the nation-state to the city. Engin F. Isin, “Governing cities without government,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin Ed. New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 151.

⁴ In both formulations, the nation-state is the model of politics that is shifted up or down, adapting to the different political registers of the global and the city.

⁵ John Keane, *Global Civil Society?* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, p. 136.

⁶ Keane, *Global Civil Society?*, p. 208.

the boundaries between the governmental and civilian domains.”⁷ Such imagery echoes Hobbes’ assertion that life in the state of nature is “nasty, brutish and short.”⁸ Re-fining Hobbes’ approach, Keane is securing the global as a civil society, by relegating indigenous people and gangsters behind it – behind spatially, in a state of nature, and behind temporally, in pre-social modes of organization (bloodlines). That which is left behind is not present in the space of global civil society – an ethical space of government and freedom that substitutes the legal for the political.

Keane attempts to seduce us into this statist thinking by ascribing a “brand new democratic thinking” to global civil society.⁹ But if democracy can be understood as the “equal right to politics for all people”¹⁰ the leaving behind of those people deemed un-human or those behaviours declared inhumane by global civil society means that it cannot be considered democratic. Furthermore, this politics of exclusion is disguised by creating an illusion of politics in (legal) government that is immediate within the ethical space of global civil society;¹¹ thus within global civil society there is a separation between (legal) government and private freedom that functions to distance people from the politics of exclusion. The explicit separation of people from (the illusion of) politics means that global civil society cannot even be considered to be democratic within the space of humanity. Democracy as re-defined in terms of global civil society would more accurately be “equal right to human rights for all humans.” Such a definition is unsatisfactory not only because of the persistence of un-humans (such as indigenous people and gangsters) and the

⁷ Keane, *Global Civil Society?*, p. 10.

⁸ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Richard Tuck ed., New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 89.

⁹ Keane, *Global Civil Society?*, p. 126.

¹⁰ Deutsche, as quoted by Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, *Cities: Reimagining the urban*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002, p. 142.

¹¹ Magnusson discusses this as the “show” of sovereignty and citizenship. Warren Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” “Governing cities without government,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin Ed. New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 303-304.

proliferation of inhumane behaviours (such as the militarization of police practices), but also because human rights are de-politicized. Human rights, as the code of an ethics of pluralism, are scripted by a particularly modern way of thinking and acting that is not negotiable; humans are understood as individuals, or groups that are treated as individuals, who share a universal right to freedom within their bounds. In other words human rights are transcendent to the civilian domain in which we live. Within global civil society we can appeal to human rights, but we cannot contest them – to do so is inhumane behaviour that is located outside global civil society.

The liberal framing of the global as a civil society is the predominant re-acting to the reification of the international in the face of global political concerns, but there are a handful of scholars who offer another re-acting: politicizing the global.¹² They do so by considering time as well as space, meaning that they are concerned not with the spatial structures of government, but rather the creative processes of governance and resistance.¹³ Many of these scholars resist the structures of labels, but for the purposes of engaging in a broad analysis of their interactions with liberal scholars they will be referred to in this study as *post-structural*. Some post-structural scholars problematize the implicit progressive temporality of global civil society – which is oriented towards a future of universal freedom (and government).¹⁴ In this way the historicization of the politics of exclusion in global civil society becomes visible, as does what is excluded.

With a view towards that which is excluded from global civil society, post-structuralist scholars are involved in conceptualizing the global as a complex space and time,

¹² Magnusson describes civil society as “the ‘other’ of politics.” Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” p. 292.

¹³ Isin, “Governing cities without government,” pp. 148-151.

¹⁴ For a critique of this approach see for example: R.B.J. Walker, “Polis, Cosmopolis, Politics,” *Alternatives*, 28 (2003): 267-286; Barry Hindess, “The very idea of a universal history,” Australian National University, as presented for the Department of Political Science at the University of Victoria, winter 2004.

as a *plane*. As a plane the global emerges through the inter-actions of political units (such as citizens or movements), and is more than the sum of the inter-actions. Some scholars refer to this plane as the “global city,” – “the city that has become the world, the world that has become the city”¹⁵ – which can be thought of in two general ways. On the one hand, by applying Nan Ellin’s thinking about “integration at another level” to the global city, it can be thought of as an ecological plane that can be understood through computer modeling of the myriad interactions.¹⁶ From this integral urbanist perspective the global city can be thought of as a common ecology that emerges through the integration of the interactions of all organisms, a “whole.” On the other hand, in a reading offered by political theorist Warren Magnusson, the global city is a creation that is “both the venue and the product of our own struggles to become what we would like to be.”¹⁷ From this political theory reading, which I call urbpolitics, the global city is a common way of life that we create and must take responsibility for, a “hyperspace” – a plane that is the condition of possibilities and failures for human action. The question of whether or not the global city is a more natural or cultural product is not in itself of interest to me, especially because it seems a matter of degrees:

¹⁵ Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” p. 291. Much of the academic work that situates itself within the global city literature retains an emphasis on materialism, and hence space, that is unhelpful in the context of this study. See for example Manuel Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000 (1996); Saskia Sassen, *The global city: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001; John Friedman, “The world city hypothesis,” *Development and Change*, 17(1): 69-83.

¹⁶ On this point Ellin is of the order of contingent ecological urbanists, but there are other points on which she has greater affinity to transcendent creative urbanists. “After centuries of technological innovations serving as prosthetic devices that have combated the natural environment while alienating us from it, we have reached a point where technology is corroborating and elaborating upon holistic world views.” Nan Ellin, “A Vulnerable Urbanism,” *Re-envisioning landscape/architecture*, Catherine Spellman ed., Barcelona: ACTAR, 2003, p. 233.

¹⁷ Warren Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed. New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 298-301. In the early 400s Augustine called it “The City of God,” which people are distracted from by the pride of building the City of Man – a material and transient space. See especially p. 289. Saint Augustine, *The City of God (De Civitate Dei)*, John Healey trans., New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1946 (1610).

ecology involves human interventions and urbanism is limited by the natural world.¹⁸ In either case the processes by which the global city becomes a transcendent plane (whether in the end infused with ecological or human authority) are explicitly political. These processes are inter-active and involve some measure of choice – involving negotiation, contestation, consensus and other kinds of inter-actions.

Returning to the earlier definition of democracy – as the “equal right to politics for all people”¹⁹ – post-structuralist thinking can be thought of as allowing for the conceptualization of democratic practice because it enables people (which in some post-structuralist articulations are understood as beings more generally)²⁰ have access to politics. In order to place emphasis on the practice rather than the philosophy of democracy, in a post-structuralist spirit I suggest that its definition be revised to focus on capacity to act rather than abstract rights – “‘equal’ capabilities for engaging in politics in all beings.” Capabilities can hardly be considered equal, because they involve a range of capacities, among which urban theorists Amin and Thrift include “skills, experience, creativity, judgment and reflexivity, to socialization, engagement, communication and expression” along with the “core capabilities” of “education and learning.”²¹ I have retained equality in this definition not because it is possible or ideal, but as an indicator of the persistent need to develop means of distinguishing amongst capabilities.²² We can most clearly see the accessibility of politics in post-structuralist thinking in the common suggestion that we can

¹⁸ Ellin, “A Vulnerable Urbanism,” p. 229, Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” p. 296. For a concise exposition of the idea that we are plagued by nature, but that it “is not a place but always in need of a placement” see Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, “Doing What Comes Naturally,” *The Moral Authority of Nature*, Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal eds., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

¹⁹ Deutsche, as quoted by Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 142.

²⁰ See for example Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York: Routledge, 1991, pp.149-181.

²¹ Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 144.

²² Amin and Thrift suggest that being “normatively non-normative” as a way of thinking about the persistence of politics even in the inclusion of everyone. Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 131.

actively re-create the global city, based on our knowledge of it. Two things follow from this: a fundamental critique of liberalism, and a re-deployment of liberalism's ethos of freedom (and government). Government, as with law, is antithetical to democratic practice because politics is made transcendent in its institutional form.

On the one hand the capacity to re-create the global city refuses the liberal distinction between "governmental and civilian domains."²³ No one is left behind (no historicizing of politics), because the re-creation of the global city involves the inter-actions of everyone. We enact the processes of governance and resistance and these processes can be known. Hence it would be a mistake to describe the global plane as entirely transcendent, because despite the scope of its implications, it is not entirely independent from the everyday plane. Both Ellin and Magnusson describe the relationship between the everyday and global planes through the use of concepts from physics to the effect that: the global is simultaneously discrete from and implicates everyday interactions and actions.²⁴ Thus, post-structural thinkers expose and challenge the transcendence of the (illusion of) politics in liberal thinking by exposing some of the many different kinds of politics (deemed un-human). They furthermore suggest that politics is immanent in the everyday plane, whose inter-actions affect the way that the global plane is re-created. Hence these thinkers can be considered as politicizing the everyday, enabling it to be conceptualized as a domain of democratic practice.

On the other hand, across these articulations there is a similar hubris, however faint, that we can know the global city – whether through technology, or responsibility – thus re-deploying the liberal ethos of freedom (and government). It is not so simple as a replication

²³ Keane, *Global Civil Society?*, p. 10.

²⁴ Ellin, "A Vulnerable Urbanism," p. 225-226; Warren Magnusson, "Hyperspace: A Political Ontology of the Global City," *Governing Modern Societies*, Richard V. Ericson and Nico Stehr eds., Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.

of absolute knowledge (i.e. Truth) that is enabled by the transcendent position above the civilian domain in liberal thinking. Rather, it is a somewhat partial knowing identified by Ellin as “insight” and by Magnusson as “responsibility.” Nonetheless, in order to have insight *into* or to take responsibility *for* the global city, a perspective mainly outside of it must be possible. Such a perspective is possible from the position of the everyday plane. The liberal ethos of freedom (and government) can be thought of as being at work to the extent that the global and everyday planes are perceived as distinct from one another in this thinking. In a sense the global city is an outside that is created through and influences the inside (the everyday), an excluded inclusion. As an excluded inclusion, the global city is for the most part discrete from the everyday, becoming apparent in those moments in which our everyday makes no sense without reference to it.²⁵ The aspects of the global city that are included are conceived as being in flux, variously conceptualized as forces, movements, and passions – all of which manifest in a range of tones (anger, compassion, healthy etc.) and as such cannot be considered neutral, or reduced to good or bad.²⁶ Both Ellin and Magnusson gesture towards a time in which we might be able to act globally (whether due to our integration on this level, or politicization of it). Extending this argument, the global city as conceptualized by integral urbanism and urbpolitics can be thought of as a primarily autonomous plane in which democratic practice might be possible.

Integral urbanism and urbpolitics seriously challenge liberalism by drawing attention to the way that the global city is created through everyday actions. But while politicizing the everyday, these scholars simultaneously simplify the politics of the global city. Inclusion of

²⁵ “[T]here are features of the interior of any domain that are unintelligible except with reference to what is outside” Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” p. 300.

²⁶ On forces see: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, Brian Massumi trans., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987. On movements see: Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city.” On passions see Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994; and Amin and Thrift, *Cities*.

aspects of the global city in the everyday is based on extending the limits of everyday ways of knowing in order to explain inexplicable phenomena. We have difficulty understanding that which is in flux because the ways of knowing that we have inherited involve fixed representations – using names to re-present experiences, institutions to re-present processes and so forth.

Post-structuralist thinking challenges re-presentative reductionism by developing ways of knowing that are able to highlight the flux of the everyday that exceeds structural representation. For example following Benjamin there are numerous urbanists who practice exploring the city as “flâneurs,” in which “the autobiographical walker aspired to an ‘idleness’ in which purposive activity gives way to phantasmagoric experience.”²⁷ The influence of irrational or purposeless forces – variously referred to as creativity, desire, and spontaneous joy – becomes tangible through approaches such as that of “flâneurs.” Taking these forces as primary, new political ontologies are offered by these theorists. Rather than institutions of government (such as the state and international institutions), they offer the time and space of the everyday as approachable through urbanism. Again there are differences in the ways that urbanism is conceived according to the emphasis on nature or culture: Ellin describes a vulnerable urbanism that is in harmony with life’s integration and dynamism, by emphasizing process, relationships and complementarity;²⁸ Magnusson describes urbanism as a way of life “in which people gradually free themselves from their immediate dependence on the natural environment and create for themselves environments of their own making.”²⁹ I am not interested in debating whether urbanism is more vulnerable or created, but I do consider urbanism – the integration and re-creation of ways

²⁷ Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 11.

²⁸ Ellin, “A Vulnerable Urbanism,” p. 224.

²⁹ Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” p. 296.

of life – to be productive because it seems to enable us to approach a space-time in which action is possible, the everyday city.

Contrary to the challenge posed to re-presentational ways of thinking, the global city can be thought of as a spatio-temporal re-presentation of these creative forces. It is a post-structural re-presentation of the mysterious, of that which exceeds explanation in structural ways of thinking. One might expect that if the global city *is* in fact a primarily discrete plane (as these scholars suggest we should consider it), post-structuralist thinkers would seek to highlight its particular context and ways of knowing. But any attempts to do so are constrained by the conceptualization of autonomy from the global city (whether as “another level” or as a “hyperspace”), which means that inclusion is governed through the freedom of the everyday. In other words, by privileging everyday ways of knowing, these scholars constrain understandings of the global city to the mysteriousness of movement. In the context of the post-structuralist response to the structural historicization of politics, movement is infused with the desire for political change through action. Hence, this re-presentation of the mysterious is reduced to functioning as a conceptual cache for the aspirations of ideal ecological functioning and god-like creative power – whether failed, fulfilled, or anticipated. Nonetheless, such mysteriousness is better re-presented by the global city than it is by the institutionalization of God because rather than the fixed space of the church it has the dynamic spatio-temporality of forces, movements and passions that are accessible to all people. Together, the creativity of the everyday and its enchantment by the dynamism of the global city enable very rich studies of the politics of the everyday, while constraining the political field of the global city to movement and aspirations.

Although I accept that there is much of our everyday life that makes no sense without reference to the global city, I suggest that it is more productive to consider it as

internal to the everyday. This is a subtle shift from treating the global city as an excluded inclusion to an included exclusion.³⁰ In this way the global city ceases to be relevant as a thing in itself, becoming one amongst many conceptualizations of the mysterious within the everyday. Nonetheless, the global city is a particular conceptualization in its earthy origination and perceived scope – it is thought to influence inter-actions globally. We cannot work across all global inter-actions simultaneously, but we can get a sense for the everyday impressions that gesture towards the global city – impressions influence inter-actions more broadly than the immediate inter-actions through which they emerge. Hence, the global city that we can get a sense of is a junkyard of everyday impressions.³¹ By emphasizing the connectedness rather than discreteness of the everyday and the global city, the global city might be re-conceptualized not only through the gaps in everyday ways of knowing, but also affirmatively through a more common *sense*. I define sense as a loose ordering of *sensations* – involving bodily emotions and emotional bodies. This suggests a slight change in the everyday way of knowing from one that is strictly human (rational and emotive) to one that involves animalistic (bodily) modes. It is a partial knowing similar to post-structuralist insight and responsibility, inviting further exploration and action, but is distinctly grounded in the conjoining of bodily and emotional apprehension. In sum, rather than approach the global city as a plane of integration, a common ecology or way of life, we can seek commonalities across and alchemy amongst everyday impressions. We might find depression and stasis behind aspirations and movements, but outside the modern progressive temporality such immobility might be revealed as productive.

³⁰ The included exclusion is the marker of contemporary forms of sovereignty as conceptualized by Giorgio Agamben and cited by Micheal J. Shapiro, *Methods and Nations: Cultural governance and the indigenous subject*, New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 180-182.

³¹ Mike Davis conceptualizes the city of Fontana as a “Junkyard of Dreams” where wasted Los Angeles dreams are swept, decay and transform into surreal events. Mike Davis, “Junkyard of Dreams,” *City of Quartz*, New York: Verso, 1990, pp. 373-440.

In the face of the globalization of political problems, I affirm the post-structuralist politicization of the everyday as the most appropriate re-acting. It is in the everyday that the global manifests, and it is also the space-time in which action is already possible. It is a re-acting that is without the confidence of global civil society, refusing the historicization of politics by incorporating the muddled distinctions between human and un-human in the time of the now.³² It is also a re-acting that is without the optimism of the global city, refusing the primarily autonomous time-space of political aspirations by incorporating representations of the mysterious in the everyday. Implicit in these incorporations is an understanding that our political problems are not approaching a different scale so much as becoming revealed as having a particular kind of complexity: aesthetic. That political problems are becoming explicit as a matter of appearances in the creation of official collective political experiences will become clear through the analyses in the second and third chapters of this thesis.

Although we should not mistake the configuration of this complexity – a thin aesthetics of appearances – as the limit of our political imagination, it is most certainly what we are working with. Transmogrification of the form of appearances is possible not through the imposition of the law or through a creative vision of another form. Rather it is through a fundamental shift in the conceptualization of action. Recall that in global civil society action is best understood as the agency of the individual, as distinct from the political memory. In post-structuralist re-actings, as forces, this distinction between the individual and political memory is dissolved. But the analogous distinction between agency and political memory is replicated in the assertion of the global city, in which the mysterious

³² This is to move with Benjamin's concept of "Jetztzeit" (now time), which "is not progression but image, suddenly emergent." Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," *Selected Writings*, Vol. 4., Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings. Eds., Edmund Jephcott trans., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003 (1940), p. 462.

influence of action is made separate from everyday politics. I want to pause in a post-structural analysis that refuses the gesture towards the global city, by exploring the possibility that action as locatable in an agent or force is a misperception of the inter-actions that are fundamental to the everyday city. This is to follow Massumi's suggestion that action is better understood as inter-action, a tensile relation amongst agglomerations of inter-actions that creates a field of play.³³ This is to consider *everything* – political beings and the everyday city itself – as agglomerations of inter-actions. Hence in order to affect these agglomerations we need not engage in action upon them, since we can transform them by re-enacting the constitutive everyday inter-actions.

In order to get a sense of the politics of *the* everyday in order to effectively re-act them, we can work through sensations of *an* everyday city. I am interested in an emergent everyday city in which a post-structural optimism for creating ways of life tempers modern pessimism that sees new mechanisms of control. Such optimism is re-acting (however obliquely) to the totalizing frames of modern power, as theorized by Martin Heidegger in terms of En-framing, and Michel Foucault in terms of governmentality.³⁴ Fortunately, we need look only out my kitchen window to find an everyday city: downtown Victoria. I want

³³ Using the metaphor of a soccer field that becomes a field of play through the tensile relations amongst bodies, goal posts and balls, Massumi suggests that it is the ball that is the catalytic force of play, whose energy is borrowed by the players and may be transformed through style. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002, pp. 72-74. My thanks to Dr. Stuart Murray for sharing this insight through his presentation and paper "The Rhetorics of Life and Multitude in Michel Foucault and Paulo Virno," as presented at the Pacific Centre for Technology and Culture, University of Victoria, 16 March 2005.

³⁴ On Enframing see Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, William Lovitt trans, Toronto: Harper Torchbooks, 1977, pp. 3-35; for more detail on his conceptualization of the modern mode see Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, Andre Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz trans., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992 (1982). On governmentality see Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller eds., Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1991, pp. 87-104; Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: power and rule in modern society*, Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1999; for a genealogy of modern power/knowledge see Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, Alan Sheridan trans., New York: Vintage Books, 1995 (1977).

to be clear that although my window looks out over downtown Victoria, it could just as easily look out over Fernie or some other 'rural' place. In this regard I follow Magnusson's assertion that we are living in a time in which urbanism as a way of life that we create is everywhere.³⁵ I do however want to temper/tamper with this Wirth-style definition of urbanism by suggesting that urbanism is a way of *re-creating*.

In order to re-act the politics of downtown Victoria, getting a sense of this city involves becoming attentive to sensations of it – as mediated by the agglomeration of interactions that constitutes me – because sensations are always particular bodily emotions and emotional bodies. Following Barthes this is to approach each object of study (such as the everyday) anew through my “pleasures” rather than applying a universal scientific method; I am adopting Barthes' search of the fundamental in the particular.³⁶ Barthes is seeking after the quality of being, the “soul,” and while I am similarly interested in the fundamental *quality* or tone of the everyday, I suggest that what we consider that quality to be is of little consequence in terms of how it influences our everyday inter-actions. For example, if the quality of the everyday is boredom, it matters not whether this is its soul or image; boredom influences passionless and distracted everyday inter-actions. Concerning myself with the quality of the everyday is to explore the possibilities of an aesthetic politics that is about more than mere appearances.

Post-structural optimism manifests in currently fashionable political theory such as Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben's becoming communities, and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's multitudes.³⁷ The action of these mobile and contingent collectivities is

³⁵ Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city.”

³⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Richard Howard trans., New York: Hill and Wang, 1981 (1980), pp. 8-9.

³⁷ Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben as cited by Nikolas Rose, “Community,” *Powers of Freedom*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 196; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri; Michael Hardt,

based on creative ways of living, on the politicization of the aesthetics of the everyday. Although it is this politicized everyday that I am interested in, styles of living (such as creative ways of life) must not be mistaken for quality of inter-actions; both could be considered to be aesthetic but style is about appearances and doing, whereas quality is about tone and feeling. It is my suspicion that any style of living can be mobilized for modern ends – recounting the myth of transcendence that enables dis-placement. For example, out of a modern habit Nancy and Agamben raise up an ethic of creativity, and out of fear of modern power Hardt and Negri divine an earthly (global) city; in either case the responsabilization of freedom is renewed in a primarily autonomous plane. It seems as though post-structural optimism is precisely the vitality that modern forms of power have needed to delocalize, in order to survive the de-materialization of global capital (i.e. work is becoming play).³⁸ I want to maintain a sense of optimism while resisting the habit and fear of modern power by positing another end: re-fining a more elegant quality of inter-actions. A more elegant quality of inter-actions is an end but not a terminus or future possibility, because there is continuous re-finement. Furthermore there is no singular ethic of elegance, since it is contingent upon particular inter-actional contexts. What I am proposing is a shift from an everyday politics of action to an everyday politics of inter-action that involves maintaining a precarious (yet hopefully productive) tension between the aesthetic politicization of the everyday and becoming sensitive to a (not necessarily phenomenological) quality of the everyday. In other words in order to re-create the global as a venue for politics, we can measure it by the quality of the everyday.

Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: war and democracy in the Age of Empire*, New York: The Penguin Press, 2004.

³⁸ Jeremy Rifkin, *End of Work: The Decline of the Global Labor Force and the Dawn of the Post-Market Era*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1995.

Since the sensations that will be used to re-create an impression of Victoria are mediated by me (understood as an agglomeration of inter-actions rather than as a willing being), it is important to preface this exploration with a general overview of 'my' Victoria. I am influenced by my experiences living downtown, sitting on the Board of Directors of the Victoria Downtown Residents' Association, and working with Food Not Bombs (an anarchist food salvaging, cooking and serving organization). My Victoria is a mellow city in which young attractive professionals can share our hallways with people who are drug-addicted, with the primary safety concern being how to dispose of used rigs. It is a city of dreamers in which people moving sunwise reach land's end, finding ourselves in a place together, stuck with our questions and lifestyles (from affluent retiree to young fruit picker to myself as a graduate student). But it is also a city created and obscured by textual representations produced by the City, community-based organizations, media conglomerates and street-produced media. My Victoria is informed and avoided by urban plans and media events. I will engage with various texts in an attempt to hear that which I see everyday and yet does not have a place in the narrative of the texts. I am interested in re-creating these texts in such a way that urban planning and creative media might be made more practical – to proceed without planning my Victoria out. This is important more generally because in my Victoria the dis-placed are visible and re-creating the everyday city is already underway, thus enabling practices of urban activism to become audible. There is a gamut of ways that we could approach this task that are based on different conceptualizations of the city, but I will trace three broad approaches: urban renewal, urban sublimation, and urban sensitization.

Victoria's Red Zone

In order to explore the three broad approaches to the city, I turn to the case study of Victoria's Red Zone. The Red Zone is a go-ahead zone for certain activities and people and a no-go zone for others, whose borders are almost synonymous with those of downtown Victoria. Such zoning was deemed necessary because of the persistence of the social filth that the downtown renewal initiative of the early 1960s (including the creation of Centennial Square) was intended to sanitize. In the sixties and early seventies the social problem identified by business owners, City Hall and the media was "hippie activities."³⁹ Youths lounging and protesting were considered so detrimental to business, that a "miniature 'Berlin Wall' for Centennial Square" – a five and a half foot wall the length of the arcade from Douglas to the parkade – was proposed.⁴⁰ Three decades later, the social problem in Centennial Square is identified as lounging "street youth."⁴¹ As before, the youth are considered detrimental to business, but rather than a wall around the arcade, the courtyard is actually fenced off and blocked from view with blue tarps for consumer recreation in various summer festivals.⁴² These examples demonstrate the perception that the activities of hippies and street youth limit the moral majority's access to public space and businesses.⁴³ The citizens of the City imagined that the hippies were a "fashion," whereas their urban renewal

³⁹ Times Colonist, "Tighter Rein On Hippies Due at Square," 22 April 1970, Available at the City of Victoria Archives (CVA).

⁴⁰ Other responses mentioned alongside this included increased policing, more discretion in issuing permits for protest meetings, and a call for creating more public squares for youths. Times colonist, "Barbed Wire Next?," 5 May 1970, CVA.

⁴¹ Jeanine Soodeen, "Mayor worried about Centennial Square gatherings," Times colonist, 14 October 1998.

⁴² Richard Watts, "Square Called a cess pit: Nearby workers say drug deals, fights, sex all to common," Times colonist, 9 October 1998; David Desmarais, "Open up square for marginalized society members," Times colonist, 14 July 2004.

⁴³ "If it means that the majority is suffering from the activities of a minority, we have to do something about it," mayor Haddock said. Times Colonist, "Tighter Rein On Hippies Due at Square," 22 April 1970; "This is our square," Mayor Cross says. "Everyone has the right to use it and that's not happening." Jeanine Soodeen, "Mayor worried about Centennial Square gatherings," Times colonist, 14 October 1998.

efforts were enduring;⁴⁴ realizing that although the fashion of “anti-citizens” changes, anti-citizens endure, the creation of the Red Zone was one attempt to secure the City against them.

The Red Zone as defined by the City is a no-go zone for certain activities, such as skateboarding. This is the Red Zone of the community scene, in which negotiations of the boundaries of the Red Zone take place between skateboarder associations and City Hall.⁴⁵ The majority of those who are implicated by this Red Zone may have stylistic resemblances to street involved people (hoodies and baggy jeans), but they paid a premium for their costumes at a local skate shop. As such, media depictions of skateboarding re-present it as a sport rather than a transgression: the City’s Red Zone is a “no-fun zone.”⁴⁶ Nonetheless, it is a zone in which community associations can participate in the re-negotiation of the restrictions imposed on their fun. It is a go-ahead zone for a community scene.

The Red Zone as defined by the courts is a no-go zone for criminals – “anti-citizens” who are not willing to play in the community scene, to form associations and negotiate appropriately. This legal Red Zone began as a two block no-go zone as a condition of probation for those convicted of soliciting sex and drugs in the early 1970s, but by 1999 the borders were consonant with those of traditional downtown,⁴⁷ and by 2003 they had expanded eastward to include Harris Green – a neighbourhood increasingly considered part

⁴⁴ Ian Street and Roderick Clack, *A Townscape Rediscovered* (Victoria: James Beveridge Associates, 1966), video.

⁴⁵ See for example the skateboarding (“human powered device”) amendment to the Streets and Traffic Bylaw no. 02-57, adopted on 23 May 2002, available from the City of Victoria administration. This shift could be attributed to the broader recognition of it as a sport, with not only gear but etiquette. See for example the website: Found Locally Victoria “Sports: Skateboarding”; Available at: <http://www.foundlocally.com/Victoria/Sports/Spo-Skateboarding.htm>.

⁴⁶ “You’re entering the no-fun zone.” Coun. Rob Fleming as quoted by Emily Bowers, “Change to downtown ‘red zone’ rules may let skaters and scooters roam,” *Times-Colonist*, 14 Jun 2002, B2.

⁴⁷ For a brief histories of the Red Zone see: Jody Paterson and Darren Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks,” *Times-Colonist*, Victoria BC, A6; “the Red Zone just got redder,” *Times-Colonist*, 30 June 1999.

of downtown.⁴⁸ While the zone was territorially defined for many years, it is increasingly becoming tailored to each case. In 1999 the provincial Supreme Court declared the universal application of a Red Zone ban as a condition of probation a breach of the human right to freedom of association and prevention to accessing necessary support services.⁴⁹ This means that the court-ordered Red Zone ban has to be made appropriate to the risks and needs involved in each case.⁵⁰ The Red Zone is a legal entity that recognizes what the community scene is unable to, the street scene: this is the Red Zone as a no-go zone.⁵¹ As a no-go zone it describes a no-go zone for the street scene – for those people and behaviours that are apparently associated with soliciting rather than consuming.

Looking to Victoria's Red Zone as a case study enables us to examine the City of Victoria through the two dominant approaches to the urban: as the City through (liberal) urban renewal thinking and as the Red Zone through (post-structural) urban sublimation thinking. I will begin by expanding on the concepts of urban renewal, urban sublimation

⁴⁸ This is most clearly evident in the current expansion of the Victoria Downtown Resident's Association into the Harris Green neighbourhood, which is technically termed a merger. This merger is made easy by the fact that one of the people active in founding the DRA is a Harris Green resident, so the representation requirements are already met. See DRA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, 25 April 2005, Available online at: <http://www.victoriadra.ca/minutes.html>

⁴⁹ This case attracted media attention locally, regionally, provincially and nationally. See for example: Richard Watts, "Cross defends city 'Red Zone'," *Times-Colonist*, Victoria BC, D1; Robert Stewart, "Victoria can't bar drug dealers from downtown," *Nanaimo Daily News*, Nanaimo BC, 30 June 1999, VPLD; Bill Cleverley, "Judge erases Red Zone: Ban on entering parts of downtown area ruled unconstitutional," *Times-Colonist*, Victoria BC, 30 June 1999, A3; The Province, "Pushers' no-go zone a no-no," *The Province*, Vancouver BC, 30 June 1999, A18; National Post, "Court rejects 'red zones': Violates rights: Ruling a setback for bid to seal off high-crime areas," *National Post*, Don Mills ON, 1 July 1999, A19.

⁵⁰ Victoria police spokesman Const. Mike Yeager said both views are right. "The big difference is that instead of a blanket Red Zone on conviction (as part of probation), it now has to be tailor-made to the person. We definitely have to make a case for the individual. We haven't lost the Red Zone, but it has to fit the person and be reasonable." Roger Stonebanks, "Red Zone OK, but the ban can be altered," *Times-Colonist*, Victoria BC, 4 August 1999, C1; The Province, "Cops say they'll stick with no-go zones," *The Province*, Vancouver BC, 1 July 1999, A19, VPLD. For an example of a case see, the boozing barber (who gets women drunk, rapes and murders them) was banned from being able to consume alcohol in the Red Zone Jim Beatty, "Killer faces jail again after drinking charge," *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver BC, 29 November 2000, A3; Jim Beatty, "The demon barber," *Vancouver Sun*, Vancouver BC, A1, VPLD; Kim Westad, "Alcoholic predator sent back to prison," *Times-Colonist*, Victoria BC, 7 April 2001, D1.

⁵¹ Jody Paterson and Darren Stone, "The Streets of Hard Knocks," *Victoria Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 8 February 2003: A1, A6-A7.

and urban sensitization as they relate to the first urban renewal effort in Victoria. The initial urban renewal effort will serve as a point of reference for the analyses that follows, in which I explore the functions of these concepts of urbanism in contemporary texts and attempt to put them into conversation with one another. Second, I will re-create an impression of the *community scene*, in which the Red Zone is a go-ahead zone for community, by looking to an urban renewal scene of the City, as produced in three working group papers by the Downtown Victoria Community Alliance (DVCA). Asking this scene how it is secured, I will sensitize urban renewal to an *urbanities scene*, by looking to the fourth DVCA working group paper that approaches the Red Zone as intersections and corridors of inter-action. Third, I will re-create a sense of the *street scene*, in which the Red Zone is a no-go zone for the street community, by exploring an urban sublimation Red Zone scene, as created by the CanWest Global media network in a *Red Zone Series*. Asking this scene how it is limited I will sensitize urban sublimation to a *scene of vulnerability*, by looking to a street produced newspaper entitled *the Red Zone*, which re-acts the Red Zone as a place for sharing stories and launching challenges. The community scene and the street scene are both official collective experiences of downtown Victoria in which a sub-urban style is valued. Listening carefully to urban refusals of this style of living, such as those scripted for the street scene, will enable us to discern how the sub-urban occupation of downtown (and its attendant displacement of the street scene) might be thwarted.

Finally, I will gesture at the possibility for conjoining the scenes of urbanities and vulnerability in order to (pro)create urban activism as *scenes of re-acting*. Through this exploration I will refine a sense that re-acting is to re-work sensations to see how an impression of the city is transformed. Re-acting is neither a ritual replay of that which has come before, as in urban renewal, nor is it a force-full explosion that brings into question

that which has come before it, as in urban sublimation. Conjoining urban governmentalities and libratory urbanism, re-acting an aesthetic politics is to challenge the inaudible to become audible, to become sensitive to the quality of the everyday. I will offer an impression of an everyday city – Victoria – as a sub-urban metro downtown full of (alienated) consumers. Re-acting does not aspire to setting another scene or creating another style of performance. As such I will offer an urban sensitization style re-action to the impression of Victoria as a sub-urban metro downtown: an inter-action plan that is concerned with re-enacting the community and street scenes, and their inter-actions. The inter-action plan advocates for an urban activism that refuses the comfort of as-signing locations in relation to a process, and the optimism of self-referential projects. Instead it requires that we engage in projects that re-enact everyday scenes and do not impose on our inter-actions. In closing, I will suggest that this manner of inter-action involves *challenging*, in which there is continual banter; the settled plane of the global city will be challenged to offer its self up to a metaphor more appropriate to urban sensitization: the global slum.

Chapter 1: From City to Red Zone to Scenes

The most power-full urban planning story is told in the name of the City of Victoria. It is a story of *urban renewal*, which envisions a history of vitality, a present that reveals the vagaries of decay, and a future in which vitality can be re-newed. As practiced in 1950s America, urban renewal involved expropriating areas considered to be in decay for development. The poor (read: black) inhabited these areas – which were abandoned by the affluent in their search for sub-urban utopias – so urbanists such as Jane Jacobs critiqued “urban renewal” as the window dressing for “slum-clearance” and “negro removal.”¹ Despite these critiques, the need for physical re-development in Victoria found an ally in urban renewal as a way of conceptualizing it. We can get a sense for the particular ways that this story is told in Victoria by looking to an excerpt from a 1961 “Urban Renewal Study for Victoria:”

Victoria has three faces. The *first is a face of mellowed charm and a dignity* acquired over one hundred years – a quiet maturity to be seen in public buildings, parks and many residential areas. The *second face is that of youthful activity* symbolized by the confident new buildings of the last decade. *From these two faces comes the popular impression of Victoria as an historic provincial capital, a city of gardens and healthy prosperity.* But there is a third face which is not always recognized. It is the face of tired age, weary with the deterioration and neglect which mar the appearance and efficiency of buildings and their surroundings. *This third face is called blight* and it is slowly corroding the fair faces of the city and creating both a threat and a challenge.²

¹ Jane Jacobs coined the term “slum-clearance,” which was applied in her urban activism opposing neighbourhood clearing and its twins: expressway building and high-rise housing projects. She was the chairman of the Joint Committee to Stop the Lower Manhattan Expressway, which was effectively defeated. For more see Project for Public Spaces, “Jane Jacobs: Biography,” Available online at: <http://www.pps.org/info/placemakingtools/placemakers/jjacobs>; Accessed 24 May 2005. For more on Jane Jacob’s street level and common sense approach to the city see Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Random House and Vintage Books, 1961. For an example of similarly critical work in the Canadian Context, see Fraser’s study on urban renewal effort in Trefann Court (Toronto), in which a Working Committee (a model of citizens’ participation) is shown to develop sophisticated solutions within a democratic process, but with only an advisory committee lacks power. Graham Fraser, *Fighting Back: Urban Renewal in Trefann Court*, Toronto: Hakkert, 1972.

² Emphasis added. Capital Region Planning Board of British Columbia (CRPD), “Urban Renewal Study for Victoria,” Victoria, 1961. CVA file CD 146.

The three faces of maturity, youth and blight could be those of any city. In this account blight appears to be working against a careful balance between maturity and youth, and so is the target of the principles for urban renewal: re-development and re-habilitation, with conservation “proposed for the best areas of the City which need the least attention.”³ In this study aim is taken on the city’s faces, focusing on the physical structures of the city – its buildings, parking lots etc. Urban renewal is the face forward in the engineering of the re-development of the City of Victoria. The lyrical image of Victoria as “an historic provincial capital, a city of gardens and healthy prosperity” is described in origin story form, beginning a century ago and unfolding through a golden era. This form of story is mythical, so we tend to associate it with other than modern political associations, but as scholars such as Benedict Anderson have demonstrated, the modern nation-state is constituted in this way. One of our myths is that the nation-state is something new, having a history (way of storytelling) distinct from the religious and nomadic communities that are said to have preceded it.⁴ In this ‘official nationalism’ there is a distinct origin, a moment in which a nation or revolutionary group takes control of the apparatus of the state.⁵ What is different about the nation-state is the scope of the audiences interpolated through media such as newspapers. There is a line drawn from a glorious beginning, through the middle of present struggle, towards The End of glory; this (his)story can be understood as an *origin story*. That the glorious beginning is causally related to The End of glory is crucial, because it is the moral of a collective destiny that transcends ‘personal’ struggles of the present. This involves forgetting that the origin itself is a creative work (i.e. an image of “charm and dignity”). This is achieved in two ways: by assigning it a specific time in a history whose duration (one

³ CRPD, “Urban Renewal Study for Victoria,” pp. 18-24.

⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, New York: Verso, 1991 (1983), pp. 11-12.

⁵ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 159.

hundred years) exceeds that of the creative capture (one moment); and through the ritual re-telling of the story the origin becomes felt as a reality. Creativity is mobilized in urban renewal but hidden in mythical time. If the origin were to become visible as an image, it would become one among many (fictional) images, rather than the inauguration of a lived duration of glory (i.e. a golden era) which urban re-natal uses both as its means of legitimacy, and as its aspiration.

The trouble is that time is no more effective as a container for insecurities than is space, and so the creative force suppressed in urban renewal thinking erupts and is channeled in *urban sublimation*. Creativity is sublimated into those particular forms of creative activity that are descriptive – these are relatively safe forms of creativity because they are made to refer to a reality or vision that are informed by urban renewal thinking. As an artistic process sublimation has two aspects: divine creation, and immediate reception (without explanation and thus its meaning is particular to the context lent to a photo). Barthes suggests that Photography is the medium that decisively marks this kind of creativity, claiming that it is best understood in terms of reference to reality.⁶ This reality is lived rather than historical, which is apprehended in anthropological style by urban sublimation theorists. They wander through an everyday way of life according to how they conceptualize it – for example as a flaneur or a social movement activist.⁷ Their studies, like ethnographies, offer figurative ‘snapshots’ of everyday life that tend towards rich description in order to create an

⁶ “Perhaps we have an invincible resistance to believing in the past, in History, except in the form of myth. The Photograph, for the first time, puts an end to this resistance: henceforth the past is as certain as the present, what we see on paper is as certain as what we touch. It is the advent of the Photograph – and not, as has been said, of the cinema – which divides the history of the world.” Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, pp. 87-88.

⁷ Rose makes this observation in what he describes as “cities of pleasure:” “The city becomes a site for investigation of these strange underclasses or non-classes; an unknown territory like ‘darkest Africa’ to be exposed by intrepid explorers, a laboratory for investigations into ‘unknown England.’” Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 105-106.

atmosphere and a texture of a way of life.⁸ Returning to the example of the image of “an historic provincial capital, a city of gardens and healthy prosperity,” if we think about it as a lyrical snapshot (rather than image), it takes on the force of the “that has been” – which Barthes identifies as the essence of Photography. Hence referential creativity can be used in order to transform the liability of the fictional image into an assurance of the reality of “an historic provincial capital, a city of gardens and healthy prosperity.”

In response to the realities associated with urban renewal style stories, urban sublimation theorists offer ‘snapshots’ of that which is excluded from those realities, in order to make sense of the city. By avoiding the collective destiny imparted as the moral of origin stories, urban sublimation theorists fall into a trap. Like actual photographs, the ‘snapshots’ – little vignettes about urban life – that urban sublimation theorists offer function as what Barthes refers to as “sovereign contingencies,”⁹ bound to the particularity of the reality or creator that they refer to. Such contingencies lead everywhere because in their creative moment anything can be put into relation (e.g. a panhandler could be photographed in the Bengal Lounge at the Empress Hotel), but they also lead nowhere because the snapshot can only communicate that these relations are actual or possible. Hence snapshots can only speak to the meaning of these relations by lining them up in a certain way as: a series (lining them up one after another), collage (arranging them on a surface) or montage (assembling them on each other). Here the Photograph ceases to refer us immediately to the relations within it (i.e. reality or creator), because it is made to refer to a transcendent way of life by

⁸ For a brilliant example of an ethnography that creates a sense of a place through the inclusion of the style of speaking in large chunks of interview data, and photographs, see Kathleen Stewart, *A Space on the Side of the Road*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

⁹ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Richard Howard trans., New York: Hill and Wang, 1981 (1980), p. 4.

speaking through a language (whether visual or textual): it becomes a sign.¹⁰ It is the work of the curator to create a sign out of a range of sovereign contingencies, a task that is shared by the cartographer. In a sense the cartographer can be considered an exemplary curator because they incorporate multiple sovereign contingencies into a sign with visual unity. We can understand the series, collage, or montage of photographs as a map, as a way of referring each photograph to the separately created overall image. Thongchai Winichakul demonstrates how maps have been used as signs to create a sense of the Thai nation. His brilliant analysis focuses on the fundamental role of maps in telling the story of (and thus creating) the way of life that is Thai nationalism.¹¹ The stories that maps tell are not linear; although modern maps tend to demarcate horizontal borders (in which one way of life has a distinct physical zone separate from others), Winichakul also highlights premodern maps that are vertical and borderless (in which ways of life as states of being are zones of activity flowing into one another);¹² in both kinds of maps ways of life are depicted as zones, whether within distinct physical borders or states of being. As artworks, maps are not inherently radical, having modern, premodern, and possibly post-structural styles. In the context of a modern way of life, maps are used to create histories.¹³ In sum, urbanism as a way of life is immediate in the Photograph but it is only through the transcendent plane of the map (the zoning of ways of life), that urban sublimation theorists are able to make sense of it. In other words, urban sublimation theorists turn snapshots of the everyday into maps of the actualities and possibilities of urban life. As such, they overlay the maps (and its attendant histories) of urban renewal with maps of urban possibility that only make sense by

¹⁰ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 6.

¹¹ In other words the “discourse of nationhood.” See Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994, p. 1-19. Benedict Anderson offers praise and a significant summation of Winichakul’s study in the revised edition. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 171-175

¹² Winichakul, *Siam*, p. 20-36.

¹³ Winichakul, *Siam*, p. 140-163.

referring to a transcendental creative vision for which the urban sublimation theorists have no explanation. Thus despite dis-placing the moral of the story, the violence of transcendence persists in urban sublimation thinking.

Contrary to Barthes' insistent focus on the singular reference of photographs to 'reality,' as he notes, an aesthetic classification of photography suggests that in addition to such realism, we can consider it as a kind of pictorialism, an inspired creativity. Photographs can be understood as an art of framing, in which the photographs do not refer to a reality, but to the vision of the photographer most primarily and the vision of the curator supplementarily. For instance, looking at a spread of photos in the "Urban Renewal Study for Victoria" (see Figure 1), there are two kinds of reception: on the one hand looking at each photo on its own I have nostalgia for the junkyards of my hometown and revulsion at the monoculture lawns; on the other hand, looking at the spread as a whole I get the popular impression of Victoria as "a city of gardens and healthy prosperity." Such generality of experience is made possible through the curatorial techniques of labeling and layout. Photos of residential buildings are used to create an impression of "a city of gardens and healthy prosperity" as opposed to the garden-less poor, despite the seeming gradation of the scale of the labels (very poor, poor, fair, good, very good). The three photos labeled very poor, poor and fair are laid out on one side of the page, and the two photos labeled good and very good are laid out on the other side. This creates an opposition between the poor and good houses, and the fair and very good houses; whereas the poor and fair houses are older looking and are tightly framed (without yards), the good and very good houses are more modern looking and are widely framed, including driveways, garages and neat lawns. From this opposition we get a sense for the modesty and order of healthy prosperity – minimalist lines in building design, a place to hide cars, and a lawn that demonstrates that everything

has its place – with excessiveness being manicured in gardens. The photo of the very poor house is also widely framed, including an untended lawn and junkyard. Being grouped with the poor and fair houses, we can think of them sharing the excessiveness of the junkyard – not as a literal excessiveness (it is our guess that the yards of the poor and fair homes are probably well-tended), but a metaphorical excessiveness. An impression is created of the poor as excessive in invisible ways, as indulgent. In sum, outside the visible threats to maturity and youth by decay is the more subtle challenge posed by an impression of indulgent poverty on an impression of a modest “city of gardens and healthy prosperity.”¹⁴

¹⁴ If it were just a matter of framing, we would compare the wide view junkyard and the gardens and the tightly framed “poor” houses and the modern house. This would give us two oppositions: chaotic junkyard versus manicured garden, and traditional building design versus modern building design. Framing would allow the houses with gardens to be considered alongside “poor” houses in opposition to modern house design, mystifying how it is that some traditional houses are labelled “poor” and others not.

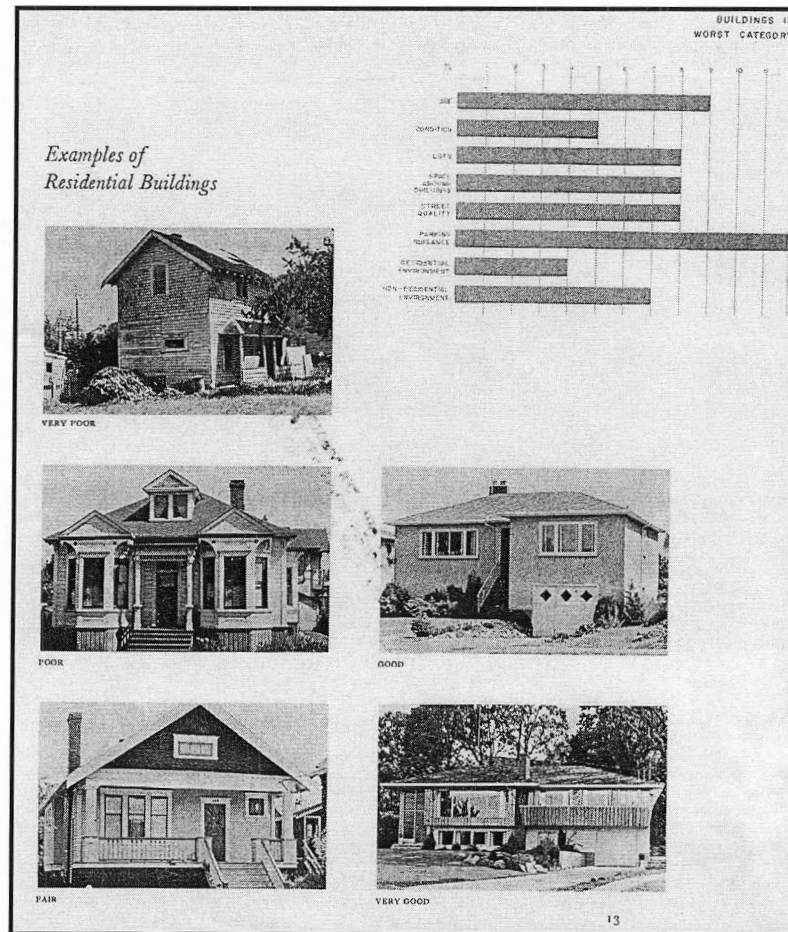


Figure 1: Urban renewal

Even this cursory reading of an urban renewal text illustrates that although urban sublimation is outside the battle against blight, descriptive creativity can be mobilized by urban renewal.¹⁵ Realist creativity can be used to create an impression of a real history of glory through reference, and pictorial creativity can be used to create an impression of modesty and wealth based on inspired manicured visions. Such uses of both forms of aesthetic description are important because urban sublimation is associated with activities

¹⁵ "But pleasure has not evaded the networks of capture that filiate the advanced liberal city: transgression is itself to be brought back into line and offered up as a package of commodified contentment." Nikolas Rose, "Governing cities, governing citizens," *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 106.

and movements that consider themselves outside of and thus obliquely challenging urban renewal: graffiti artists, The Power of Hope youth artistic collective etc. Hence, in order to think about challenging the conceptual hold that urban renewal has on creating the popular impression of Victoria (which informs and obscures my Victoria), we cannot rely on urban sublimation – in fact we need to be skeptical about its relationship with urban renewal.

Unable to trust these two broad approaches with my Victoria, I want to explore the possibilities that non-descript creativity might offer. This is a creativity that does not refer to reality or the vision of the artist; non-descript creativity is ‘inspired’ by function and feeling. We can think of this as a *craft* of sorts, one that is already being used in the everyday. Hence the challenge is not to invent a new art form, but to become sensitized to everyday crafts (re-creations such as impressions) as they are used in the everyday. As a way of conceptualizing urbanism I call this *urban sensitization* – which involves becoming sensitized to an everyday as it is rather than as is convenient to think about it, or as we would like it to be.

The everyday is complex, with overlapping, oblique and synchronous inter-actions that cannot be apprehended in the strict generality of the origin story or the gallery of photographs. In resisting descriptive creativity (in both its realist and pictorial forms), I emphasize the displacement of the referents of reality and creator/curator by non-descript inter-actions. It is the case that the following analyses are offered by me, being filtered through my sensations, but within them it is the non-descript that I seek (rather than reality or a spectacle of creativity). The non-descript is not the stuff of mythic origin stories, nor the inspiration of a frame; rather, it is the matrix of the everyday – it is more fundamental than me as a subject, being before the binary subject-object construction.¹⁶ In an attempt to

¹⁶ Matrix is understood here to mean the quality (not necessarily a substance) in which the everyday is embedded and through which inter-actions are enabled, hailing the archaic use of the term to mean “the

convey a sense of the non-descript I am following a post-structuralist method by offering and exploring vignettes of the everyday. There is a distinction to be made however between the treatment of vignettes as snapshots in which the author's own creative activity is the frame, and as *scènes* in which the author tries to allow the setting and dialogue of the scene to 'speak for itself.'

In the scenes of the everyday there is no authentic description (whether of reality or of personal experience), only performative inter-actions amongst lights, sounds, sets, and those playing roles. Scenes are scripted and yet can take on radically different tones depending on how they are re-enacted. As a concept scenes have emerged in the context of theatre. In the outset I want to be clear that I am not suggesting that the city is a theatre, because I want to resist imposing closure on the relations between the everyday and the mysterious. In suggesting that the everyday can be productively approached in terms of scenes, I want to highlight that scenes are fictions that we try to believe in – whether as actors trying become a role, or as audience members trying to become immersed in the story. The effort of *trying* to believe is not a willing so much as it is the refusal of skepticism. The scene is happening, so there is always at minimum a belief, or more precisely a trust, that it is happening. It is trust rather than truth that creates a sense of the veracity of scenes.¹⁷ The trust involved in scenes enables them to function as sites in which cultures work through various problems; the scenes of theatre are like thought experiments in the challenges of living. Barthes suggests that primary amongst these is Death, with actors in

womb.” Drawn from Encarta World English Dictionary (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999), Word X for Mac, Microsoft Corporation.

¹⁷ “Today the multimedia have, as noted, demobilized consciousness. We speak of a lie as ‘credibility gap.’ ‘Truth’ once again becomes ‘trust,’ not Cartesian certainty.” Marshall McLuhan with Wilfred Watson, *From Cliché to Archetype*, New York: Viking Press, 1970, p. 34.

early theatre forms occupying the space of the living dead.¹⁸ The scene is a zone of indistinction between life and death, reality and fiction. In other words it is through the gap rather than logical connections that scenes can be put into relation with one another.¹⁹ It is precisely in such permeable border zones that some scholars suggest that we might be able to re-create cultures and/or identities by telling different stories.²⁰ Thus the significance of treating the everyday city as scenes, is that we can experiment with re-creating it.

One might think of the task as a re-writing of the script of the scene, based on an understanding of the script as emerging through the enactment of the scene.²¹ Similar to the role of language for archaics, the script creates the scene²² – any identification of a moment or person through which the script was written is arbitrary, and irrelevant in terms of how the script is re-enacted, the quality of inter-actions that are enabled.²³ McLuhan suggests that the verbal matrix and its attendant language is a meta-sensation, I want to emphasize the range of sensations involved in scripting – bodily and emotive – and thus refuse the creation of a meta-sensation. In sum, scenes are informed by scripts – understood broadly as codes

¹⁸ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 31-32.

¹⁹ McLuhan discusses the possibility for affinity through the gap (i.e. the gap between the global city and the everyday city). “Geoffrey Ashe tells us in *Arthur’s Avalon* that the Celtic Church, unlike the Roman Church, was haunted by ‘a sense of something else.’ The oral culture is easily led to feel that something has been left out. Perhaps this is the origin of our feeling of *déjà vu*, the sense of having been ‘here’ before. Gaps create the conditions of maximal participation.” McLuhan, *From Cliché to Archetype*, p. 68.

²⁰ The most prominent cultural studies text on the topic of borders as zones of transformation is: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands = La frontera: the new mestiza*, San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987. For an example of the application of such thinking see: Chéla Sandoval, “Theorizing White Consciousness for a Post-Empire World: Barthes, Fanon and the Rhetoric of Love,” *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, Ruth Frankenberg ed., London: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 86-106.

²¹ McLuhan highlights the verbal matrix of theatre as a key identifier. McLuhan, *From Cliché to Archetype*, p. 195-196.

²² “To archaic man language is an immediate evoker of reality, a magical form... The idea of words as merely corresponding to reality, the idea of matching, is characteristic only of highly literal cultures in which the visual sense is dominant... It might be argued that a main cause of the merging of the archaic attitude to cliché with the modern notion of archetype as a more intense reality resulted from our great variety of new techniques of retrieval.” McLuhan, *From Cliché to Archetype*, p. 117.

²³ “Roles are somewhat antithetic to goals.” McLuhan, *From Cliché to Archetype*, p. 66.

of inter-actions – but the tone of a scene is determined by the ways that the scene is performed and received, not the way that the script is written.

Returning to the excerpt from the “Urban Renewal Study for Victoria,” we can see the re-enactment of a battle scene between the good faces of maturity and youth and the evil face of blight. The battle is for the popular impression of Victoria as “an historic provincial capital, a city of gardens and healthy prosperity.” Although this impression is functionally created through the origin story and the spread of photographs, in the text it is said to originate from the two faces of maturity and youth; the creative activity is ascribed to the performance of two roles. In this light, these faces are better conceptually understood as masks – “what makes a face into the product of a society and of its history.”²⁴ Maturity is the mask of mellowed charm produced through a history of civility (colonialism), and is scripted as the spirit of the city. Youth is the mask of confident new buildings based on an ideology of production, and is scripted as action. Unlike the contingency of photographs upon a singular referent, masks have the capacity to refer to generalities because they are animated by the dynamism of lived culture and history.²⁵ Masks do not hail a sovereign; as McLuhan puts it, “the character with a mask is ‘putting on the audience.’”²⁶ Thus in the battle scene of urban renewal in Victoria the masks of maturity and youth are putting on a colonial capitalist audience in order to mobilize it in the fight against blight. Blight is the mask of corrosion that moves counter to the ideology of progress, and is scripted as the elusive enemy. As a character, blight is the audience that is not recognized as such: the forces of nature. Hence the scene of urban renewal as re-enacted here is as a battle scene

²⁴ Italo Calvino as paraphrased by Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 34.

²⁵ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, p. 34-38.

²⁶ McLuhan, *From Cliché to Archetype*, p. 203.

between civil characters and naturalized characters, thus creating a collective political experience of a battle cry for the civil (the only recognized audience members).

By shifting to scenic thinking, visioning and planning become thought experiments in how to enable scenes to be re-enacted and inter-act with one another more elegantly. In order to approach this way of thinking, I will first offer character sketches of the broad conceptual frameworks that are at play in the everyday city: urban renewal, urban sublimation, and urban sensitization. This will draw together and expand on themes and terms that have already been explored, while making them particular to urbanism. These three ways of thinking about change in the everyday city will inform the analysis of the case study of the Red Zone that will follow.

Urban Renewal

As a way of conceptualizing physical re-development, urban renewal has become abhorred as a term, but we continue to use it because it persists in various guises, such as revitalization. In urban renewal thinking the urban is understood as a space. In contrast to the strict physical understanding of space in the 1950s, space is increasingly understood in terms of place – in which physical space is given meaning through the relationships people have with it. Such a shift enables practices such as governing to become visible; this broadened understanding of space is exemplified in Nikolas Rose's definition of the city "as a field of competitive relations between individuals in the context of specifiable environment."²⁷ In other words, urban space is a space of myriad governing practices and political struggles.²⁸ Urban renewal is becoming visible not only as a way of conceptualizing physical re-

²⁷ Nikolas Rose, "Governing cities, governing citizens," *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 99.

²⁸ Rose, "Community," p. 190.

development, but also as a strategy for government. Rose argues that ‘advanced’ liberal forms of government are enabling, activating citizens as individuals and as members of communities.²⁹ As members of communities citizens are free (autonomous), but they are also made responsible for self-government and the fate of communities; this is a mode of governing through people’s freedom.³⁰ In this configuration citizenship works through communities (rather than states), which are understood as natural rather than politically constructed, but nonetheless need to be created through acts of self-government.³¹ Thus as a strategy of government, urban renewal is effective insofar as it enables self-renewal of the urban – as government through the city.³² Rose terms such strategies “urban governmentalities,” which “involve the generation of autonomy plus responsibility” – the pluralization of techniques and sites of government (e.g. public consultation, objectives) that are monitored and audited.³³

Urban renewal may sound like a nightmare of illusion and control, but as suggested by Rose, in governing through citizenship citizens become actively engaged in the formation of industries; as such through citizens’ ethical dispositions “new agonistic possibilities open up.”³⁴ The radical potential of urban renewal is in citizens’ capacity to refuse, reverse and redirect demands put on them – citizens can demand a change in the mode of urban renewal

²⁹ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 98. “liberal in that they reawaken and revitalize the skepticism of classical liberalism of the nineteenth century over the capacity of political action, informed by political reason and political calculation, to act so as to bring about the good of individuals, populations and the nation at large. Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 97.

³⁰ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 98. Nikolas Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 176; In other words, through community people are becoming free, which is to say that they achieve both self-control and control of the self by the codes of self-control and the self. Rose, *Powers of Freedom*, p. 187.

³¹ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” *Democracy, Citizenship and the Global City*, Engin F. Isin ed., New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 98.

³² Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” p. 99.

³³ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” p. 97.

³⁴ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” p. 108.

itself.³⁵ Although one may be excited by the possibilities for “a new radical politics of urban citizenship,” recognizing that it involves the exclusion of “anti-citizens” is disconcerting. These are people who are not in a position to be radical, to refuse demands put on them as citizens, because they have refused citizenship itself – the anti-citizen “is a constant enticement and threat to the project of citizenship itself.”³⁶ There are numerous strategies to try and convert anti-citizens by connecting them to “the right networks of community” and renewing their urban spaces, as in various take back the streets initiatives.³⁷ Emergent harm reduction initiatives endorsed by the City of Victoria are exemplary of renewed security practices in which security is attached to individual health rather than to neighbourhoods that have to be distinguished from dangerous slums.³⁸ For example, safe consumption sites are intended to convert heroin addicts who are anti-citizens into a community of citizens free to use heroin in a particular place and thereby take responsibility for their health. Approaching such conversion drives, it is important to recognize that they have many benefits (and as such are deserving of support). Nonetheless, it must also be recognized that such innovations in securing citizenship are necessary because the terms of citizenship are exclusionary. Anti-citizens will persist no matter how conversion and security efforts are renewed; freedom comes with a price.

So long as the City is the conceptual unit of analysis, (in)security will persist because even in the city as a place, the problem remains as to how to define the context of the place. Looking to the communities that are enabled by the City, we do not find a singular origin

³⁵ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” p. 100.

³⁶ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” p. 103.

³⁷ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” p. 103.

³⁸ Nikolas Rose, “Governing cities, governing citizens,” pp. 102-103. On the City of Victoria’s endorsement of harm reduction and integrated service delivery see Marilyn Rook, “Speaking notes for Marilyn Rook, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Vancouver Island Health Authority,” News Conference, 31 January 2002, Victoria City Hall, Available at: http://www.city.victoria.bc.ca/cityhall/currentprojects_downtown_action_rook.shtml

story, so it seems that History as a system of truth is breaking apart. While this might be the case to some degree, in the multiple origin stories of communities we can see that the system of truth telling remains intact. Individual members communicate the reason for their joining (the beginning), how they participate (the middle), and what it means for them (the end) – the meaning of the community for them is the reason for their joining. While there may be multiple morals within one community, the community remains secured by the renewal of personal objectives. The End of glory of the community is increasingly constituted by plural histories that renew glorious personal moments of realization of the need of community (rather than the renewal of a singular History of a glorious era). As Anderson highlights, the problem with the origin story form is that it obscures the continuity of the national form, and the chance that it is meant to convert into destiny;³⁹ in the case of the City the continuity of (in)security is obscured, as are the anti-citizens that it is meant to convert into citizens.

Urban sublimation

Urban sublimation is a way of conceptualizing the vitality of the city by drawing our attention to phenomena that urban renewal is unable to contain.⁴⁰ These are the creative forces that move beyond the community's capacity to understand; as forces, these trajectories do not have a specifiable beginning and end and so exceed the line of (his)story, free to move in various directions. The ability of creative forces to move in various directions has radical potential, so urban sublimation is an optimistic way of approaching the urban.⁴¹ Urban sublimation considers that which refuses the morality of urban renewal, such

³⁹ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 12.

⁴⁰ "life is a mutant, undisciplined creativity that is worked out through the properties of existence. In other words, everydayness captures" that which exceeds the capture of urban renewal. Amin and Thrift, p. 95.

⁴¹ One way of thinking about this creative force is as "divine violence" as explored by Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," pp. 236-252.

as the “anti-citizens,” as bursting with possibilities. Urban sublimation thinkers would generally scoff at the term “anti-citizens” because in this thinking there is not an individual space of action (i.e. the citizen), but rather a plane of action. A plane has a space and a time, but no beginning and end; it is a moment of sorts in which the confines of fixed borders are blown open. Across the creative moment there are no restrictions on who can be included, so the possibilities for solidarity are limitless; within this moment of divine creation, reception is immediate (prior to explanation). It is across this plane that creative forces move. For urban sublimation thinkers the plane is the everyday, but they conceptualize that which passes across this plane differently – Magnusson theorizes these forces as movements, Amin and Thrift theorize these forces as passions.⁴² The city as a place is limited in its capacity to think through the everyday plane and the vital forces that pass across it because they are not spatially fixed; hence, urban sublimation thinkers are concerned with the vitality of urbanism as a way of life.⁴³ Urbanism as a way of life “is not just *any* way of life, but is a particular form of it, in which people gradually free themselves from their immediate dependence on the natural environment and create for themselves environments of their own making.”⁴⁴

Urban sublimation is an optimistic way of conceptualizing urbanism, but its radical capacity is overstated because the everyday creative moment – of a movement or a passion – is in relation with other creative moments. Since there is nothing inherently radical about creation, there are many other creative moments that need to be contended with. This is not to suggest that urban sublimation thinkers are oblivious to the other moments that need to

⁴²Magnusson, “Hyperspace: A Political Ontology of the Global City,” pp. 83-93.

⁴³This is to pick up on Louis Wirth’s conceptualization of urbanism as a way of life. Louis Wirth, “Urbanism as a Way of Life,” *City Reader*, 3rd Ed., Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout eds., New York: Routledge, 2003(1938), pp. 97-104.

⁴⁴Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” p. 296.

be contended with, because they are not. For example, Magnusson recognizes that while some social movements have radical potential (i.e. resistance), others are power-full (i.e. capitalism and statism).⁴⁵ This is to become sensitive to the re-direction of creative capacities from outwards trajectories towards urban renewal. For example, the “creative class,” as described by Richard Florida, includes people such as graphic designers working for ad agencies that are responsible for the economic, cultural and physical renewal of urban centres.⁴⁶ Thus in urban sublimation thinking the hope for political change may be inspired by the possibilities of the creative moment itself, but is made meaningful through reference to another plane entirely – an insight that urban sublimation thinkers themselves have made. Amin and Thrift raise up “a ‘politics of the commons’ centred around universal rights to citizenship” – in which citizenship is broadly understood as a right to politics, to urbanism as a way of life;⁴⁷ such universalism emerges “out of worry about an eroding commons.”⁴⁸ Magnusson theorizes a “hyperspace of the global city” as both an “architectonic movement” created by various social movements, and a chaotic order through which new spaces of action are created;⁴⁹ for him the hyperspace is a trope that is “helpful in so far as it loosens the hold of sovereignty-thinking” on his thinking.⁵⁰ Both are responding to urban renewal

⁴⁵ Magnusson, “Hyperspace,” pp. 101-102; Magnusson, “Politicizing the global city,” pp. 298-299.

⁴⁶ Florida argues that the Creative Class (with the values and economic drivers of “Technology Talent, and Tolerance”) is drawn to what he calls Creative Centres (ecosystems where creativity of all forms flourishes), which are “economic winners” because companies follow the Creative Class. He statistically maps the rise of the Creative Class in America, and predicts that small countries with mechanisms of social cohesion and histories of tolerance, in which technology and talent will be spurred (i.e. Canada). Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class*, New York: Routledge, 2005. For an astute critique of Florida’s work see Jamie Peck, “Banal urbanism: creativity as scalar narrative,” Paper presented at the *Studies in Political Economy* conference, *Towards a political economy of scale*, Toronto: York University, 3-5 Feb, 2005.

An example of a society that functions without a centre yet maintains power-full frames that comes to mind is Japan, as told by Barthes in Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, Richard Howard trans., New York: Hill and Wang, 1982 (1970).

⁴⁷ Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 142.

⁴⁸ Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 154.

⁴⁹ Magnusson, “Hyperspace,” p. 101-102.

⁵⁰ Magnusson, “Hyperspace,” p. 101.

(whether guarding against the erosion of the place of politics in urban renewal, the public, or developing the plane to erode the hold of urban renewal on the placing of politics) in order to activate a more 'human' (read: free and equitable) transcendent plane of existence. In other words, despite the creative freedom in urban sublimation thinking, the responsabilization of freedom is re-newed in a transcendent plane (which is a creation we can take responsibility for)⁵¹ through either the fear or the habit of urban renewal.

Although urban renewal and urban sublimation theorists fancy themselves independent from one another, they are actually codependent. On the one hand urban renewal relies on urban sublimation as a way to channel the creative energies that are suppressed by the need to maintain the line between the glorious originary moment and The End of glory. Furthermore, an immediate sense of the originary moment that needs to be renewed is created in an urban sublimation (creative) moment. Urban renewal thinking relies on urban sublimation thinking in order to somewhat safely re-route creative energies back into urban renewal thinking. On the other hand urban sublimation defines its way of thinking in opposition to, or in escape from, urban renewal thinking. Furthermore, the control and freedom of urban renewal is reinstated in urban sublimation through a transcendent plane in order to make sense of the contingencies of irrational relations.

Urban sensitization

Urbanism is a productive way of thinking because it seems to enable us to approach a space-time where action is possible, the everyday city. I am heartened by the realization manifest in urban sublimation that we need not strive for another power-full frame to re-

⁵¹ Magnusson, "Politicizing the global city," p. 304.

place the City, that the major obstacle to political change is our ability to imagine politics otherwise. But through urban sensitization I want to temper the hubris that we can create something new, by advocating a more modest re-creation. (Pro)creation offers one way of thinking about how politics can be re-imagined without the onerous or divine task of trying to create something out of nothing. Conceptualizing urban activism need not involve the difficult work of full-scale revolution (as in the production of an entirely different system of urban planning), or the miracle of inspired creation (as in the desire for universal freedom). It can be as simple as bringing things and processes, beings and becomings into relation with one another, in order to become more sensitive to their conjoining in the everyday.⁵²

Whereas urban renewal identifies urban spaces and techniques of government, urban sublimation is concerned with the space-time of urbanism as a way of life and so involves creating styles of living. On the one hand, urban sublimation theorists have insight into the implication of the emphasis in urban renewal thinking on techniques of government (i.e. deliberation planning): distraction from the active democratization of existing processes.⁵³ But rather than the project of democratization (the ideals of freedom and equality/responsibility), I am interested in constraining freedom with inter-actions, and having a sense of difference. On the other hand, urban renewal theorists have insight into the implication of the focus in urban sublimation thinking on creating styles of living: deferral of the problem of the capture of ways of living.⁵⁴ But rather than use this critique to

⁵² Ellin is attempting to create an urbanism with a similar modesty, and uses the language of “reintegration” to do so. She is more convinced of modernity’s effectiveness in fracturing urban fabrics than I am; I assume that integration exists whether we choose to recognize it or not. For more on her perspective on the task at hand, “mending the seams” see Ellin, “A Vulnerable Urbanism,” p. 226.

⁵³ “the normative discussion should shift from deliberation planning to politics, from issues of good planning practice to actions to democratize existing institutions and practices.” Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 139.

⁵⁴ “But pleasure has not evaded the networks of capture that filiate the advanced liberal city: transgression is itself to be brought back into line and offered up as a package of commodified contentment.” Rose, “Governing cities,” p. 106.

assert the need for a power-full response (another more equitable or radical mode of capture), I am interested in remaining vulnerable to impressions of power, and challenging them to transform through our inter-actions. Rather than a revolutionary ethic or an ethic of creativity, an ethic of experimental practicality provides a use-full way of thinking about how urban politics can be transformed.

Urban sensitization as a way of conceptualizing urban activism considers inter-actions to be fundamental; I call these inter-actions *urbanities*. Urbanities are not determined by space or place, or enchanted by forces; as such they can be understood neither as effects nor affects. Instead, urbanities are a sort of (pro)creation of the two: re-fined re-actions.⁵⁵ Urbanities are continuous so there is no way to distinguish between cause and effect, potential and actual: there are only mutable inter-actions. Inter-actions are fundamental, so we can think of ourselves and other 'beings' as agglomerations that emerge through the inter-actions of urbanities; one way of thinking about this is as a decaying swell of traces of inter-actions. Urban sublimation would like to get under inter-actions to create a stable surface of democracy, a surface upon which agglomerations of urbanities could be fixed, but this is to obscure the dynamism of the everyday city. As agglomerations of urbanities, we ourselves are re-created through urbanities and so are not able to look down upon other agglomerations. It is only through our inter-actions that we can get a sense for different tones of urbanities in their myriad and mutable forms. In sum, urban sensitization is a way for us to become more sensitive to urbanities as fundamental and variable.

It may seem that by leaving democratic ideals aside urban sensitization as a way of conceptualizing urban activism leaves us without any hope. That is the case in fact, because hope appeals to a transcendent plane, whether an inaccessible future (i.e. a time when radical

⁵⁵ We will explore urbanities as re-fined and as re-actions further in the following paragraphs.

democracy is the norm) or impossible ideals (i.e. freedom and equality/responsibility). As a way of invigorating the present, hope devalues it, because the actualities of the present are valued in relation to the (im)possibilities of the future or ideals. Refusing hope is to value the present in which we live and are capable of acting; it is to recognize that we always already have the capacity to transform urban politics. Urban activism is not inspired by hope, but is moved by playful engagement in inter-actions and anger from displacement.

A closer consideration of how urbanities inter-act will give us a better sense for how to transform power-full frames. We can get such a sense by examining urbanities as re-fined. As re-fined, urbanities are influenced by impressions of elegance. Elegance is not universal or fixed, but is *an impression of satisfaction* that is particular to a set of inter-actions; for example, elegance in an open air drug deal may involve an ability to do without being seen. Impressions emerge through what Whitehead calls “conrescent processes” in which urbanities inter-act in such a way that they (pro)create a sense that does more than take stock of urbanities, because through their inter-actions urbanities and the senses that are (pro)created are themselves transforming, and thus display “‘emergent’ properties.”⁵⁶ Elegance is never satisfied – it only creates an impression of satisfaction, which is always incomplete and insecure, emerging through inter-actions of urbanities.⁵⁷ To refuse the satisfaction of elegance is to recognize it as part of the everyday city; we cannot create values such as freedom, but we can re-fine urbanities in relation to impressions of elegance. Hence urbanities are vulnerable to power-full impressions, which are inter-acting with other impressions; for example, doing without being seen is elegant in this set of inter-actions

⁵⁶ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: an essay in cosmology*, David Ray Griffin and Donald W. Sherburne eds., New York: Free Press, 1978 (1929), pp. 211-215.

⁵⁷ resist the determinancy of the final phase of the process of ‘conresence’ as theorized by Whitehead: “satisfaction.” Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: an essay in cosmology*, New York: Free Press, 1978(1929), pp. 211-212.

because police use force (physical and legal) to interrupt drug deals, and because such subtlety is a way of making open air inter-actions private – and privacy is valued as a good. We are vulnerable to impressions of elegance.

Since impressions emerge through particular inter-actions, we can transform urban politics by re-enacting our inter-actions in order to change impressions of elegance. In order to get a sense for how this might be possible let's explore urbanities as re-actions. As re-actions, urbanities are not original affectations, but are re-workings of sensations. Sensation is the third and forgotten influence of action according to Aristotle; the other two influences, reason and desire, are privileged by urban renewal and urban sublimation respectively.⁵⁸ Refusing Aristotle's distinction between sensation as a human emotion (reasoning and desiring) and sensation as an animal tactility, I recognize sensation as the primary mode of inter-actions.⁵⁹ Conjoining sensation as emotion and sensation as tactility, I do not privilege any particular sensory technology (such as the skin).⁶⁰ Rather than forces that move actors, sensations are relations amongst bodily emotions and emotional bodies; for example the relations between body heat and fearful dealers. *Sense* is a loose and dynamic ordering of sensations, which take the form of impressions. Although the idea of such an ambiguous

⁵⁸ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," VI: 2.

⁵⁹ Aristotle, "Nicomachean Ethics," III: 10. The emotive purview of man was secured by separating it from the tactility of animals, a distinction Aristotle is credited with scribing in the behavioural sciences. Aristotle was also the first to point out tactility as a sense – with the subsensations of temperature, pain, pressure and proprioception – by identifying the less obvious sense organ of the skin. See for example Carl H. Delacato, *Ultimate Stranger: The Autistic Child*, Garden City (NY): Doubleday & Company, 1974 pp. 87-88. We are following those who are refusing the distinction between man and animal, being and thing, such as Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York; Routledge, 1991, pp.149-181. For an example of an urban theory application see Jennifer R. Wolch, Kathleen West, Thomas E Gaines "Transspecies urban theory," *Environment and Planning: Society and Space*, (1995) 13: 735-760.

⁶⁰ This is akin to Deleuze and Guattari's explication of a 'haptic' sense. "'Haptic' is a better word than 'tactile' since it does not establish an opposition between two sense organs but rather invites the assumption that the eye itself may fulfill this nonoptical function." Deleuze and Guattari, "The Smooth and the Striated," *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi trans., Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987(1980), p. 492.

ordering might be intellectually uncomfortable or uninspiring,⁶¹ it is how we negotiate our everyday. We make decisions about our relationships based on varying degrees of confidence in our sense of a situation – nothing is certain. As relational, sensations are not automatic, but can be re-worked through urbanities. For example, if in the open air drug deal there is a sensation of hot fear, it can be re-worked as cool vulnerability through calm and confident inter-actions. Such a re-working might transform impressions of elegance in an open air drug deal from doing without being seen to doing without fearing; such a transformation might inter-act with onlookers' impressions of open air drug deals, changing them from sketchy to transactional, which might inter-act with police impressions of elegance, changing them from force-full intervention to conversational negotiation.⁶² In sum, urbanities can be experimented with – re-enacted – based on a sense for how sensations can be re-worked, which needs to be accompanied with a sensitivity to how impressions are transformed: this is an ethic of experimental practicality. In this way urban sensitization conceptualizes urban activism as challenging impressions to transform by re-

⁶¹ This is especially the case considering that the persistence of positivism (which is a unified view of science that uses methods of natural science to explain the social world) in political science is distinct from empiricism. Both the term and the dream of methodological universality were created and anticipated by Comte, and adopted by political scientists. To this 'pre quantum mechanics' science of the 1920s, there have been minimal refinements: First, *facts are distinct from values*, which can be attributed to Popper's separation of theory from observation; Second, there is a *scientific norm*, a stability in both the natural and social worlds, as in Hempel's conception of the "general law"; Third, *validation enables real knowledge* through empirical falsification, which is articulated by the Vienna Circle of logical positivists. These refinements made the application of the positivist method in political science possible, often in the language of the *verstehen* tradition, where facts are socially derived but independently verifiable. It is worth noting that natural science itself became much more skeptical, departing from this bare positivism around fifty years ago. Steve Smith, "Positivism and Beyond," *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism and Beyond* 3rd Ed., Paul R Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi eds., Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999, pp. 38-54.

⁶² This is a thought experiment, but one that is not entirely conjectural. In my area of downtown rumour has it that police are much harder on heroin dealers who are users (and thus have shifty bodily gestures), than on cocaine dealers who may be users but maintain outward composure. Whether or not this is the case is less important than the way that the perception informs heroin dealers' behaviour in attempts to maintain composure.

working sensations. This is to resist overcoding aesthetic politics with histories or maps, and challenging the contemporary politics of appearances to offer up its tone for re-vision.

Urban sensitization does not aspire to the morality of origin stories or rely on the reference of a map, and so is more comfortable with a way of storytelling that makes an impression: scenes. There is no meaning or inspiration to a scene, only sensations and impressions. Scenes of an everyday city are set through the inter-actions of lights and sounds, backdrops and role players (in which people can be part of the backdrop and benches can be role players). Scenes emerge with the inter-actions of role players, which may be informed by a script of sorts, but are always unique because the particularities of any inter-action can never be replicated. Barthes through reference to Nietzsche describes the scene as amorous dialogue, “the joust of two actors,” as opposed to monologue.⁶³ But whereas Barthes conceives of scenes as being inspired by actors’ desire to have the last word, because I consider inter-actions rather than actors as fundamental to the scene, the scene thrives on inter-actions challenging forth other inter-actions. This is more closely related to Baudrillard’s notion of challenges in the process of seduction.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, I appreciate Barthes’ further insight (which is consonant with Baudrillard’s seduction) that there is no necessary end to a scene, that it dissipates because of something outside the scene – whether inter-actions with another scene, or ‘chance’ (that can be thought of as inter-actions between the everyday city and the global city).⁶⁵

⁶³ Roland Barthes, *A Lovers’ Discourse: Fragments*, Richard Howard trans., New York: Penguin Books, 1990 (1977), p. 204-205; it is also important to keep in mind our expanded understanding of actors here.

⁶⁴ This challenging is much more closely related to Baudrillard’s conceptualization of challenges in his theory of seduction. See Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*, Brian Singer trans., Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1990 (1979).

⁶⁵ Barthes, *A Lovers’ Discourse*, p. 206.

Similar to the site of the global city the *scenes* of the everyday city are spatio-temporal. But whereas sites can be real or imagined, actual or possible, scenes only exist in their re-enactments. Sites are re-enactments of specific actions, as for example the site of gentrification of Victoria's Chinatown. In contrast to the specificity of action, scenes are re-enactments of non-descript scripts. For example the street scene can be re-enacted as a site of gentrification, a site of healing, a site of struggle etc. according to the inter-actions amongst those involved; it is marked by an ambiguous sense of inter-actions in/through/with the streets rather than a specific action. If places are specific to space, sites enable us to think about actions that have particular contexts (space and time), of processes. If sites are specific to process, scenes enable us to think about inter-actions that have particular sensations, of impressions. In short, this is a methodological shift from classification of *beings*, to description (and often classification) of *doings*, to sensing of *feelings*.

Unlike classification and description, there is no prescribed method to sensing, to scenic thinking. Re-enactments of a scene can concretize in many sensory forms (physical, mental, spiritual), and time-spaces – for example it is through scenes of the past (flashbacks) that we re-member, and through scenes of the future (visions) that we imagine. By shifting to scenes I am attempting to develop a way of approaching the urban that defers neither to a natural and pre-given city, nor to a cultural and created city.

In order to explore how scenes can be used to tell a story, we can think about their use in cinema. Scenes can be arranged to tell a story through character driven narrative structure (origin stories), or they can be arranged by assembling shots from multiple perspectives that are overlapping and disjunctured (a montage of photographs).⁶⁶ Although

⁶⁶ Shapiro offers an insightful analysis of “organic film narration” (the origin story) in which space is primary, following the story as it unfolds, and “crystalline film narration” in which time is privileged over space, because the cinematic form (rather than the characters in the story) assemble camera shots (in

these are different ways of storytelling, both are predicated on the continuous flow of images. Looking to a characteristic technique of Japanese animation, the pause, we can get a sense that there are other ways to assemble scenes to tell a story. Japanese animation is marked by an economy of celluloids, as in the sliding one or more celluloid(s) in front of a camera to create an impression of movement (rather than creating multiple celluloids in which the movement of image bodies actually flows). Such an economy of celluloids is exemplified in connecting dialogue scenes and action scenes with the pause – a scene that is inconsequential to either dialogue or action fills the screen, for example a celluloid of a backdrop is held in front of the camera for a significant duration.⁶⁷ In the pause neither the spatial storyline nor the temporal cinematic apparatus is privileged; it is a space-time in which the dialogue scene settles and sensations emerge (such as shock of betrayal or anticipation of action).⁶⁸ Hence, as a way of telling stories scenes can enable us to become sensitive to the sensations of our everyday. Moving with these sensations we can then begin to re-create ways of putting these scenes together, to re-act an aesthetic politics.

In becoming sensitized to urban politics, I want to emphasize that although the ways of storytelling most comfortable to urban renewal and urban sublimation obscure much of the everyday, we cannot abandon their basic modes of inquiry. Although neither reason's origins nor desire's creative moment are sufficient for facilitating action, reasoning and desiring modes of apprehension are in relation with our sense. They do not displace or outshine our sense because reason cannot actualize action in the everyday city and desire

montage). Michael Shapiro, *Cinematic Political Thought: Narrating Race, Nation and Gender*, New York: New York University Press, 1999, pp. 10-39.

⁶⁷ Katsuhiro Otomo, *Akira: the special edition*, [digitally mastered anime] (Pioneer Entertainment, 2001). This version of *Akira* includes a couple documentaries on production that have contributed to my understanding of the pause.

⁶⁸ It is to move with *satori* outside the code of the self, "to ruminate it 'until the tooth falls out' . . . to empty out, to stupefy, to dry up the soul's incoercible babble". Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, pp.74-75

cannot act in the global city; reason and desire inter-act with sensation in the ongoing sensing of inter-actions (as impressions), and re-creation of urbanities. Escaping scenes of everyday life is only possible through complete sensory deprivation, and although some suggest that modern cities are approaching such a time through the privileging of speed over place,⁶⁹ there is no escape (yet?).

Both urban renewal and urban sublimation theorists are asking important questions about urban politics, so in an attempt to re-act an aesthetic urban politics I propose an ethic of experimental pragmatism, by (pro)creating their political dispositions (serious planning and hope-full creation). By taking the City as their unit of study, urban renewal theorists are concerned with politics in the spatial terms of *what kinds of politics are at work* – this is an ontological question. In the shift towards an understanding of space as place, this categorization of political forms is being made according to *how they work*. But by privileging political forms, inter-actions that are not recognizable as political (i.e. those who refuse to be free and responsible) are obscured. Urban sublimation theorists take ways of life, zones, as their unit of study, and so are concerned with politics as process; theirs is the epistemological question of *how to activate politics by changing our fundamental assumptions*. By challenging strictly spatial ways of knowing, they are able to reveal spatio-temporal inter-actions not recognizable as political, but at the cost of obscuring power-full frames. In attempts to make these frames visible again, urban sublimation theorists create another plane of existence on which to challenge them, but because it is primarily outside of the everyday plane in which we act, it is dis-placed from the means of re-acting politics.

⁶⁹ Sennett begins his study of the city with sensory deprivation as the problem “which seems to curse most modern building; the dullness, the monotony, and the tactile sterility which afflicts the urban environment. This sensory deprivation is all the more remarkable because modern times have so privileged the sensations of the body and the freedom of physical life.” Sennett, *Flesh and Stone*, pp. 15-16.

Although I adopt the dispositions of serious planning and hope-full creation, in order to address concerns about that which is obscured in urban renewal thinking and the reliance on transcendental planes in urban sublimation thinking, I will put these modes of apprehending urban politics into relation with each other. I will do so by asking urban renewal the stylistic question of how it maintains borders around kinds of politics, and asking urban sublimation the power-full question of what limitations are imposed on creative activity. This will give us a better sense of how urban renewal and urban sublimation are at work in our everyday. In closing, I will propose that urban sensitization offers a way of conceptualizing the (pro)creation of urban renewal and urban sensitization, and approaching urbanities, the everyday re-fined re-actions of urban politics. I suggest that urban sensitization inquires into both the ontology of our political sensibility (urbanities) and the epistemology of our sensibility of politics (vulnerability to impressions). This is an attempt at becoming more sensitive to the ways that urban politics is being re-created and activated in the everyday in order to expand the time-space of urban activism. *If we have a sense that political change is daunting and political action must be inspired, it is because we have undervalued our everyday political sensibilities and so obscured how we are re-creating impressions through our inter-actions; becoming sensitive to our inter-actions and impressions is to re-politicize the everyday time-space of urban activism.*

Chapter 2: The City

Tales of Power

Urban planning processes and documents tell the tales of power in the City of Victoria, by laying out the vision (The End) of the re-vitalized City and how to achieve it.¹ These tales of urban renewal tend to be told as origin stories, but we can learn more about how urban renewal is at work by exposing its creative aspect and animation as a scene. Looking to Centennial Fountain, the centrepiece of the first explicit urban renewal project in the City, I will quickly move through three different kinds of storytelling that are associated with urban renewal, urban sublimation and urban sensitization thinking respectively: origin story, creative and scenic. This first cycle through these three kinds of storytelling is intended as a vignette through which we can become familiar with the flow of analyses. We will then re-cycle through the flow of analyses in regards to the more serious texts of urban visioning documents. It is hoped that by re-cycling, our focus can shift from the (familiar) analytical frames to be able to hear the inter-actions behind the narratives of urban visioning documents. Through this re-cycling the important role of maps – in realist, pictorial and collage forms – in setting the scene for urban planning will become evident. With mapping, the aesthetic dimension of urban visioning, in view we will then explore its implications for the urbanities scene, the politics of the everyday. In advance I suggest that although pictorial maps cannot be made responsible for the politicization of the everyday, they enable a more complex view of everyday inter-actions than the origin story and its attendant realist map.

Victoria has its very own fountain of re-newing life... We can approach the fountain through its urban renewal origin story, as told by the inscription embedded in the concrete encircling it:

¹ Henceforth “the City” will be used as a short form for “the City of Victoria.”

- THE CENTENNIAL FOUNTAIN GIFT TO THE CITY OF VICTORIA FROM
THE MUNICIPALITIES OF SAAANICH, OAK BAY AND ESQUIMALT TO
COMMEMORATE THE VICTORIA CENTENARY OF PROGRESS 1862-1962 -

The Centennial Fountain was dedicated to Victoria by three surrounding municipalities as the centerpiece of its 1962 centenary. The commemoration is part of the beautification of what one national magazine described as "the city's two most depressed blocks which harbored a brimy city hall, flophouses and rundown stores."² Rather than abandon the decrepit City Hall and surrounding area, Mayor Wilson and council decided to re-develop it. In addition to City Hall itself, two other buildings and the public square, Centennial Square, were re-created as concrete spaces of progress.³ The success of these efforts to modernize the City's heritage was provincially recognized as the most outstanding beautification project in 1971.⁴ Hence the fountain was extraordinarily successful in achieving its intent to commemorate an era of progress.

Unwittingly however, by telling the story of progress as a commemoration, by definition the fountain serves to memorialize it. There was an era of progress that we can re-member or try to bring to life again, but it does not exist in the present because it is dead. We can understand why this past is inaccessible by thinking more carefully about the causality and temporal linearity of the fountain's origin story. Once upon a time the City of Victoria was incorporated (read: born), and it progressed (read: grew) for one hundred years, until it matured (read: died), The End. The moral of the story is that progress leads incorporation to maturity (growth leads birth to death). What is troublesome about the moral recruiting involved in the origin story form is that complexity can only be added in lines. Remembering that origin stories are linear – moving from the beginning through the middle towards the end – by commemorating and re-vitalizing progress, this origin story defines progress as both a past of moving forward towards maturity and a future of moving

² T.W. Paterson, "Centennial Square: Once Ugly Duckling Now Rejuvenated Oasis," Times Colonist, 21 February 1971.

³ The parkade is symbolic of this progress, because in it the concrete supports the flow of the modern necessity of cars. Times Colonist, "Car Snips Ribbon To Open Civic Lot," Available from City of Victoria Archives, *Streets – Centennial Square* file.

⁴ Times Colonist, "Centennial Square a Winner," 17 September 1971, CVA.

backwards towards incorporation. Hence, supplementary logic can be useful, in terms of creating more explanations, but it is limited in its capacity to make sense of the relationships between them.

Sublimating the fountain of re-vitalization... If we ask this origin story how it is able to contain these contradictory impulses, we can get a better sense for how urban renewal is at work. We can either tell another origin story that explains that progress towards maturity leads to the re-birth of progress as regress, or suggest that their relationship is one amongst many arbitrarily chosen lines. Rather than affirming the dangerous combinations that can arise from chance,⁵ the Centennial Fountain origin story re-uses causal logic. Counter-intuitively, this logical method results in a contradiction, consummating the vitality of progress as progress, and the re-vitality of progress as regress. The present, the time of action, is lost in the gap between the reflections on a vital past and the projection of a re-vitalized future. Re-vitalization is not something that is happening, but exists in an anticipated future based on a mythical past of vitality.⁶ If we take this as an urban renewal origin story, it seems that in order for an urban activism to become possible a now of action must be constructed, resolving the contradiction. This could be accomplished by forgetting the death that preceded re-vitalization (so that it could be imagined as a continuation of vitality), or by forgetting the end of the story and patching in a causal relation between death and re-birth (simulating a cycle of life in which re-vitalization is vitality as regress). There is no other logical solution. Hence, through the origin story of the fountain, we begin to get a sense that in order to produce an impression of vitality and a space for urban activism, urban renewal efforts are struggling against death and/or the cycle of life.

Victoria has its very own fountain memorializing possession rituals... We can become sensitized to the urban renewal commemoration of the fountain through a scene in the video A

⁵ Suganami suggests that one of the key ingredients of origin stories is the reliance on chance. Hidemi Suganami, "Stories of war origins: a narrativist theory of the causes of war," *Review of International Studies*, (1997) 23: 401-418. See especially pp. 39-42. If we try to make distinctions using the supplementary logic of origin stories, the best story is one that makes the most other stories possible. It would read: "Once upon a time something happened so that something else would/could, the end." The moral of the story is that things/events cause/enable other things/events.

⁶ This is the method of creating a history in order to project a future of unity echoes the task of nation building as analyzed by Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

Townscape Rediscovered, which re-presents the commemoration ceremony itself.⁷ Reflecting on the centenary, the video depicts Victoria as a city whose citizenry “almost prided itself on a sleepy indifference” until the development of an urban renewal plan. No mention is made of the rejection of plans for a brand new and modern Cathedral Hill Civic Centre, including a multi story glass and steel City Hall.⁸ Instead, the video frames the creation of Centennial Square (including Centennial Fountain) as innovative, using modern materials such as concrete, and modern technologies such as cement mixing trucks. In this context, Centennial Fountain can be understood as a fountain of youth, whose monoliths are put into place by modern machines. Nonetheless, it is difficult to distinguish the general resistance to change that is said to mark Victoria’s residents from the desire to re-develop City Hall rather than develop a new one. While residents were not happy with the perceived death of the city, as symbolized by the decrepit City Hall, neither did they desire something entirely new. Hence an appearance of maturity tempers the modern (read: youthful) sensibility of Centennial Square by trimming the concrete with old bricks and importing old trees for the lawn. Hence as part of the urban renewal effort of the early 1960s as depicted in the video, Centennial Fountain is best understood as a fountain of youth that feeds the youthful maturity of the city.

This youthful maturity emerges in the commemoration scene through shots of old bricks and the aged clock tower, which inter-act with those of concrete and glass mosaics to re-create an impression of a new old space, a re-vitalized space. The commemoration scene also includes shots of young musicians carrying their instruments and music stands into the square. Although they are young, they are dressed in adult clothes, file into place in an orderly fashion, and play ceremonial music. The inter-actions of the young figures, adult clothes and movements, and the pomp of their music re-create an impression of these musicians as specters of youth. Shots of the specters of youth are interspersed with shots of dignitaries and other adults dressed in

⁷ Street and Clack, “A Townscape Rediscovered,”[videorecording].

⁸ In the face of apathy, one plan suggested working with existing civic engagement in the Christ Church Cathedral, Pioneer Square, the Power Commission and the Royal Theatre, by developing a civic centre – including a City hall, Museum, Court House, land Registry, a public square with fountains and statues – at the centre of these. Raising City Hall up as a twelve-storey pillar of glass and steel, this site atop Cathedral Hill lends itself to the creation of a civic landmark. Capital Region Planning Board of B.C., “Report on a Civic Centre for Victoria,” Victoria, 1957, pp. 1-5.

semi-formal costumes gathering together around a podium, standing in a line cutting a ribbon, and wandering around the re-vitalized spaces. The inter-actions of the adult figures, semi-formal clothes, ribbon cutting and gawking re-create an impression of adult ceremony. Other shots mixed in with those of the specters of youth and adult ceremony include those of kids playing on the crown around the fountain. Sunlight is glinting off the water, intensifying the impromptu dance of their play. The inter-actions of the sunlight, water, kids and fountain re-create an impression of a monument of youth. We are getting a sense that the scene is being set by the inter-actions of lights, sounds, costumes and the relation of things in the set. The action of the street scene is inter-action.⁹ There is no one thing or moment that can be isolated as the cause or inspiration of the commemoration scene.

Watching A Townscape Rediscovered, we can get a sense of the commemoration scene without knowing the reason for it or the inspiration behind it. The commemoration scene emerges through the inter-actions among the impressions of a re-vitalized space, specters of youth, adult ceremony and monument of youth (which themselves emerge through inter-actions that set the scene). The era of progress that the origin story memorializes is not evident in the commemoration scene. Instead, we get a sense of an official ceremony honoring the opening of a re-vitalized space. Less obvious is how the monument of youth and the specters of youth are involved in contributing vitality to the space and the ceremony. One way for us to make sense of how these impressions are inter-acting, offered by Michael Taussig in his astute analysis of the modern state, is to recognize the ceremony as ritual possession.¹⁰ Vital civic officialdom is enchanted by the spirit of youth. The fountain monumentalizes this ritual possession, a portal for specters of youth to be channeled into the square in ritual practices. Through the commemoration ceremony we realize that urban renewal does not use

⁹ Barthes discusses how the scene of a lovers' quarrel is their back and forth inter-action. "The scene is like a sentence: structurally, there is no obligation for it to stop; no internal constraint exhausts it, because, as in the Sentence, once the core is given (the fact, the decision), the expansions re infinitely renewable." Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse*, p. 206.

¹⁰ Michael Taussig, *Magic of the State*, New York: Routledge, 1997, see especially pp. 99-108.

reason to enable a now of action. Instead it uses the steady cadence of ritual¹¹ to re-cycle a now by channeling specters of youth through the fountain into the civic spaces. In the ritual now action is prescribed, thus severely constraining urban activism. Thus, in urban renewal urban activism is faced with the daunting task of producing an entirely different ceremony, and putting it into ritual practice.

The Red Zone we are most familiar with (and yet is not spoken about in such terms) is the go-ahead zone for community, the City of Victoria. We need not be conscious of the City as a go-ahead zone, or as a no-go zone for that matter, so long as we are go-ahead people engaging in go-ahead activities; we do not experience the City as a go-ahead zone as an imposition because we take responsibility for re-creating it. City planners, liquor store cashiers, newspaper columnists and others speak about “our community” without any need to reference what exactly that might mean because there is a sense of a common understanding. Regardless of the particular content of each invocation of “our community” and its relationship to a coherent whole “our community,” the very ability for people to invoke “our community” is made possible by stories that have created an impression of a common community. There is no one grand “our community” that can be identified, touched and felt, but rather there are many stories of “our community” that inter-act to set a scene of community. The “community scene” is not discussed in these terms because it is forgotten as a fiction, being the ‘reality’ that we are busily re-enacting through our everyday inter-actions. In order to become strangers to the community scene, in the interest of

¹¹ This is to echo Taussig’s reading of Benjamin’s use of the metaphor of the rosary beads in “Theses on the Philosophy of History”: “Actually the rosary is less a narrative order than a response to events... And if the rosary is by definition repetitive, it at least provides the steadiness of ritual in the space of death, whose chips of messianic time remain violently silent in my chronicle.” Micheal Taussig, *Law in a Lawless Land*, New York: New Press, 2003, pp. 184-185.

becoming more familiar with its re-enactments, we will look to how it is being set in downtown Victoria.

The downtown Victoria community scene has generally been set through the telling of origin stories in which a time of a vibrant bustling downtown is said to decline (whether as a result of sub-urbanization, big box retailing, provincial government cutbacks etc.), ending with a threat of a dying downtown; the moral of these stories is that the downtown is in need of re-vitalization.¹² This moral works to justify the visioning processes that constitute and shape re-vitalization processes. Hence, it is to community visioning processes that we look to get a better sense of the political sensibility of downtown Victoria. These concrescent processes are impressed in urban planning documents, such as Official Community Plans, but there is no such current plan for Downtown Victoria.¹³ While this may seem to pose a challenge to our search, in its absence and recognizing the limited abilities of initiatives such as the Mayor's Task Force on Downtown to effectively engage in community-based conversations, the Downtown Victoria Community Alliance (DVCA) was initiated. The DVCA is a citizen-based initiative that emerged out of discussions about revitalization amongst citizens that coalesced in discussions amongst City staff and Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley.¹⁴ The DVCA "involved a broad cross-section of interested organizations and individuals," from architects to neighbourhood organizations, developers to street

¹² For example in a Downtown Advisory Committee discussion on the conditions of downtown it was agreed that the downtown has been declining for at least 15 years. Adjectives used to describe the phenomenon of decline included "very sick," a "disease" with "symptoms" such as crime, graffiti, filth, and the solicitation of sex and drugs. Downtown Advisory Committee, "Open round table discussion of downtown conditions," [minutes] City of Victoria, 17 October 2003.

¹³ The official downtown plan is broadly understood as outdated. For example, upon requesting these documents from the planning department, I was redirected to the Vision 2020 website on two occasions. There have also been calls for a Downtown Victoria Urban Design Plan, for example: Public Spaces and Connections Working Group (PSCWG), *From Public Space to Public Place*, Downtown 2020 Conference Series, September 2004, p. 2. Currently, the Downtown Plan is being revised, and I am sitting on the Steering Committee on behalf of the Downtown Residents' Association.

¹⁴ Dyan Dunsmoor-Farley, "Opening Remarks," *The Successful Downtown: November 17- November 18, 2003 Conference Synopsis*, Victoria: Downtown Victoria 2020, 2003, p. 2.

involved people. Many of the same principles as the Mayor's Task Force on Downtown – aesthetic pleasure economic and social health – were taken up, with additional emphasis on social responsiveness, the desire for cultural richness and urban ecological sustainability.

The DVCA has facilitated conversations around re-vitalization in an array of venues, such as *The Successful Downtown* conference that they hosted in November of 2003. The aim of the conference, to “create a vision for a renewed downtown Victoria,” contributes to the overall function of DVCA to generate ongoing conversations about “exciting and realistic” possibilities for downtown, around which consensus can be built in moving towards strategies and structures for implementation. At this first conference, presenters from wide ranging areas of interest and expertise in urbanism were invited to speak to participants. The intent was to stimulate conversations about community re-vitalization in Victoria, and develop participants' capacity to do so by offering a variety of frames of understanding, conceptual tools, case studies, techniques and vocabularies. We can think of this activity itself as a re-vitalization of civic activity. Moving with this increased capacity, the DVCA hosted a second conference in the spring of 2004, *From Ideas To Action: Making the Future Happen*, which focused on three nodes of interest that emerged from the first conference: Residential Development Downtown, Transportation and Public Spaces & Connections.¹⁵ Through these conversations, nine working groups were formed, four of which developed and submitted action plans to City council as part of the community consultation process in the development of a contemporary *Downtown Victoria Plan*.¹⁶ It is to these action plans that

¹⁵ Downtown Victoria 2020; “About 2020;” Downtown Victoria Community Alliance; Available at: <http://dv2020.urbanreader.net/about2020.php>

¹⁶ A steering committee for a “triple bottom line” (social, economic and environmental) review of *The Downtown Plan* was endorsed by the Committee of the Whole on 16 December 2004. See Doug Koch, “Downtown Plan Review – File 15-04,” *Committee of the Whole Report*, Victoria: City of Victoria, 16 December 2004.

we look to get a sense for how the downtown Victoria community scene is being re-vitalized.

The form of the story of community scene re-vitalization as told in these action plans is not that of the traditional origin story (in which a moral connects a beginning and an end), but rather is a creative story. The creative story form makes theorizing the re-vitalization of the community scene possible by simulating the cycle of life. Whereas origin stories posit a glorious era, three of the four action plans begin with a description of the present. These vignettes can be thought of as figurative snapshots, which are accompanied by literal photographic re-presentations in two of the plans. The one action plan that does not begin with a vignette of the present, concludes with a base map that re-presents a continuous present upon which monuments of re-vitalization can be layered; as such I suggest that it functions as the present for the community scene as a whole.¹⁷ In sum, rather than a glorious originary moment, the creative story begins with a creative depiction of the present, an immediate (living) history. Through the middle, the three reports offer a vision of the (mature) future, as opposed to the imposition of a moral to causally connect the origin and The End. Hence, in the creative story maturity is not The End, but is part of a process. As 'The End' the three reports offer "strategic objectives" – practical ways to (pro)create, to transform the vision of the present into the vision of the future. Such an ending does not invoke moral causality, connecting the beginning and The End with a singular line. While similarly connecting the two, strategic objectives suggest different ways that we could do so (i.e. projects and processes that could be developed), thus encouraging us to cycle back

¹⁷ By ending with the beginning for the community scene as a whole, the *Downtown as a Place of Learning* action plan begins at a different point in the creative story cycle. Nonetheless, the cycle is in the same 'order,' and so I read it in the same manner as outlined in the following analysis of the other three action plans. Downtown as a Place of Learning Working Group (LWG), *Downtown as a Place of Learning*, Victoria: Downtown Victoria Community Alliance, 2004. *Downtown as a Place of Learning*

through the beginning to explore how particular initiatives affect the beginning and its relation to the 'end' (middle). Based on these explorations different endings, strategic objectives, can be developed. So the cycle – youth and maturity-(pro)creation – continues. In summation, by simulating the cycle of birth-growth-death, the creative story form makes the re-vitalization (re-birth) of community practical by offering us a way of storytelling that enables us to theorize the actualities and possibilities of re-vitalization.

There are two creative stories that can be discerned in the DVCA action plans about re-vitalizing the community scene. One is a story in which the *community scene* is already set, and so focuses on how to re-vitalize particular aspects of it. We can see this in three of the DVCA action plans, which are concerned with specific community issues – learning, residential, and transportation. It should come as no surprise then, that their issue areas correspond with the three faces of Victoria as depicted in the fountain: youthful learning, mature residential, and (pro)creative transportation. Together these action plans are re-vitalizing the community scene as it has been set, while re-working some of the inter-actions. This demonstrates that the creative story form may make theorizing re-vitalization possible, but that which is conceptualized can be the very power structures invoked by the morals of origin stories. Following the structure of the reports themselves, we will look first to the youthful vitality of downtown, in which there are only memorials to learning on a base map; there are only specters of vitality. Next, we will look to a vision of the future of Victoria as a mature residential downtown that is inclusive of residents who are consumers as depicted in a snapshot map; it is a safe downtown. Finally, we will look to the (pro)creative motion, the transportation of re-vitalizing energy as exhibited in a collage map; it is a governance process of learning and caregiving. These three aspects of the community scene – vitality, safety, and caregiving – are things we (as re-creators of the community scene) value as creating the space

for our freedom (and government). Because of the seeming inclusivity of these values, as immediately conveyed through the visual re-presentation of maps, what is not immediately clear in this valuation is the way that the uncivil, the mysterious, and death are being left behind. In fact, they function as the rationale for the drive to include those who have refused the freedom (and government) of the community. In this way the complexities of inter-acting with those who refuse community, and the everyday city that we share, are avoided.

The other creative story focuses on the re-vitalization process through which community itself is re-created. We can see this in the fourth action plan, *From Public Space to Public Place*, which does not assume the community scene, instead focusing on the processes of setting it. This action plan insists that not only aesthetic, but also substantive actions are needed to re-vitalize downtown: the City government enabling urban governance (design and planning), urban governance catalyzing the public realm, and both initiating projects to inspire development in the private realm. By focusing on the *processes* of government, governance and development, this action plan is re-creating a *scene of urbanities*, out of which the community scene emerges. Thus, in contrast to the other creative story's renewal of a community scene in which politics is left behind, this story includes politics by enabling the re-fined re-actions of the everyday. The scene of urbanities is based on inter-actions amongst people who trust the city visioning process and are re-working it; the map included in this action plan is a three dimensional model that also has the substantive function of a table that facilitates conversations.

Although some of the techniques and/or vocabularies of urban planning are particular to this time (such as multi-disciplinary task forces), there is nothing 'new' about the general mode of re-vitalizing the community scene as a popular civic project. In fact, the

involvement of community members is intrinsic to the success of urban renewal, as evidenced in the 1961 urban renewal plan: “the rehabilitation of a district will be greatly encouraged if local citizens form groups to study their areas and to promote and assist in an improvement plan.”¹⁸ It is then a question of whether in urban renewal, as we will explore it in its current incarnation in Victoria, there is a technique or vocabulary that could not only re-vitalize but also re-create the community scene. I suggest that the mode of creative storytelling used in all of the action plans makes theorizing re-vitalization possible because of its (pro)creative capacities. Re-vitalization is also imaged with more complexity through the use of a pictorial visual vocabulary than is possible with words or referential images. Such complexity can be put to work in substantive re-actions, but these substantive projects are within the context of a creative story. This implies that if we are to re-enact the community scene otherwise, we need to create another story. I want to hold open the possibility that by becoming more sensitive to the inter-actions of the everyday we might be able to find catalysts for re-enacting the urbanities scene.

Community Scene

Youth: memorials of learning

It is with a description of the vitality of youth in re-vitalization that we begin our exploration of the community scene. As set through the DVCA action plans, youth is located in the *Downtown as a Place of Learning* action plan, which was produced by the DVCA Downtown as a Place of Learning Working Group (LWG).¹⁹ This action plan is significantly shorter than those produced by the other working groups, with about a third of the content,

¹⁸ CRPD, “Urban Renewal Study for Victoria,” pp. 18-24.

¹⁹ Downtown as a Place of Learning Working Group (LWG), *Downtown as a Place of Learning*, Victoria: Downtown Victoria Community Alliance, 2004.

and is structured differently. Rather than beginning with a description of the present, *Downtown as a Place of Learning* starts right in with a vision of the future, followed by an action plan for achieving that future. The image of a map that is included at the end of the report as a “benchmark for progress” re-presents a present that is always incomplete, and so can always be expanded upon (See Figure 2). Learning is framed institutionally by agencies of learning, which are re-presented by dots that can be continuously layered on top of the base map. On the one hand, such agencies can be thought of as memorials akin to that of Centennial Fountain in which specters of youth are being invoked. On the other hand, as a base map for the community scene more generally that which is layered on top need not be dots.

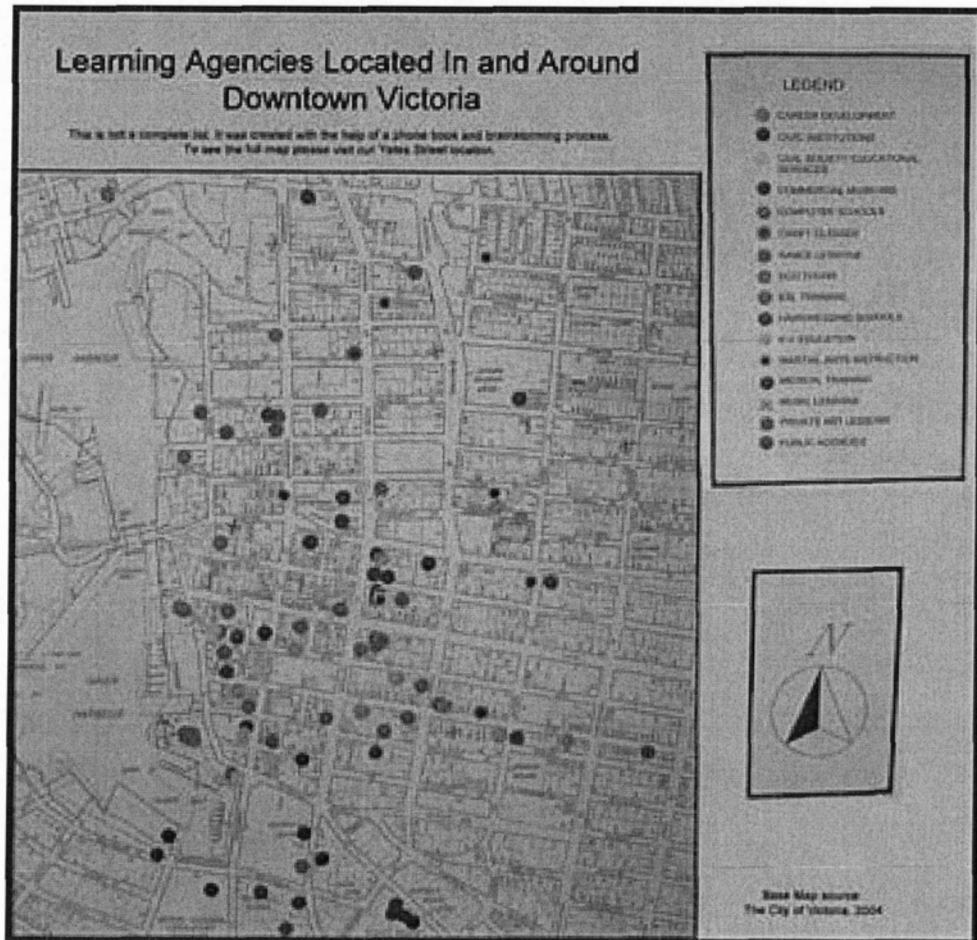


Figure 2: Base map of learning agencies

Rather than offering a rich description of a vision of Victoria as a place of learning in 2020, the LWG identifies an impression as their objective: “By 2020 Victoria will be known as a leading learning community.” Expanding on how this reputation arises, the LWG uses “lifelong learning as an organizing principle and cultural goal” to connect various social scientific categories (such as the economy, environment and social conditions) with resources (such as “human, social built capital”) in “a sustainable and inclusive basis.” This rather abstract and obscure objective lacks the texture of a description of a vision. Instead, it is given content in the following section entitled “Role of the Urban Core,” which breaks the objective down into three components: infrastructure, supporting infrastructure, and

institutional support. Each of these components is further broken down into specific programs and participation targets (measured according to enrollment statistics), facilities (cultural and educational), and strategies (funding, management etc.) respectively. Thus the reputation of a place of learning that is being created here is one based on statistical representations. It is an appearance of learning that can be re-presented by numbers and institutions, echoing the University of Victoria shield embedded in Centennial Fountain's totem mosaic of youth. This narrowly defined version of learning enables it to be 'inclusive' of people of all ages and cultural backgrounds (Aboriginal people, educational tourists), because any group can be re-presented by statistics and institutional structures. Here again we are being visited by specters of youth that are memorialized in structures; re-presenting learning in this way fixes it in the aesthetics of the economic, built and social environments.²⁰ I suggest that this is the case because what is valued in this report is "to be known as" rather than "to be" or to "to feel like." Thus, it is appearances of a leading learning community that are being created as a means for being accredited with a reputation.

In order to achieve the reputation of Victoria as "a leading learning community," the LWG identifies the necessary connections between a certain aspect of the objective (such as a new Central Library), the plans needed to develop it (such as identifying incentives), and the different groups who have the capacity to achieve it (such as the DVCA and the City). Although the heading of this section proposes to address "How this will be done," the brief statements read more like a what, what, and who need to be involved; *how* these things come together is not immediately obvious. But in the context of the community scene as a whole, this aspect of the report is not significant because it functions as a base map. Thus *Downtown as a Place of Learning* is more important as a way to open into the community scene by

²⁰ LWG, *Downtown as a Place of Learning*, pp. 2-3.

describing a present upon which a vision of the future can be layered and a strategic plan developed, so that re-vitalization can be conceptualized.

The re-presentation of the present that the LWG offers is the base map *Learning Agencies Located In and Around Downtown Victoria*. Dots of various shadings that re-present learning agencies are layered on top of a Base Map of the City of Victoria.²¹ As a base map, the City of Victoria is re-presented as streets with names that intersect and divide out parcels of land that are further divided into lots according to ownership; it is a collection of properties and arteries. As the frame of reference for the learning agencies as dots, they can be considered as particular kinds of properties. If we regard this report in isolation, following the logic of property accumulation, we can assume that a reputation of Victoria as “a leading learning community” would be bolstered by a map with more dots on it; the more of these properties the better the learning. Furthermore, by using a base map of Victoria as the point of reference for the layer of dots re-presenting various learning agencies, the layer of dots is never complete. So as a “benchmark of progress,” this always incomplete map suggests that success can be marked by continuous growth. The base map does not function as a sign, because it is the dots rather than the map that are on display; the base map is better understood as a frame than a sign. It can only communicate meaning through reference to other base maps, in a series that illustrates the relative progress of development of learning agencies in downtown Victoria.

Silent in this depiction though, is *how* one property (i.e. learning institution) is valued in relation to another. As a mode of connecting the dots, arteries are only conduits for that

²¹ Definition of “Base Map: A term which varies in different applications, but, in general, refers to a map that depicts the fundamental map elements, such as streets, buildings, streams, etc., which are used frequently for locational reference. It is the control document from which various other maps in a geographic information system are developed.” See “Base Map;” *An Agri-Maps GIS Glossary of Terms A through Z;* [website] Manitoba Agricultural, Food and Rural Initiatives; Available at: <http://amsglossary.allenpress.com/glossary/search?p=1&query=base+map>

which passes through the learning institutions, and as such are insufficient for considering how the institutions themselves are related. Hence, the present as a creative moment offered by the LWG action plan is one that contains the youthful spirit of learning in a number of isolated institutionalized learning agencies that are only significant in terms of their increase or decrease in numbers. If from one map to another two learning agencies closed but another two opened, it would appear as though there were no progress; this suggests that there is no valuation amongst agencies, but rather an equality of re-presentation in which each institution is a dot. Such equality of re-presentation of youthful learning indicates a leveling of various processes and approaches to a single hollow and static shell, thus obscuring learning as a process.²² In sum, *Downtown as a Place of Learning* depicts a present in which it is the aesthetics of learning that are of greatest importance in creating a reputation. How this base map is used through maturity and (pro)creation remains to be seen.

Maturity: child safety and convenience

Through the middle of this re-enactment of the community scene, a vision of the (mature) future is offered. It is a maturity that is possessed by specters of youth in the ritual re-vitalization of Victoria, as a way of re-creating a reputation of vitality. Thus, it is with the desired reputation of vital maturity that we begin to explore the community scene as it is currently re-vitalized. The DVCA Residential Working Group (RWG) depicts a face of maturity re-vitalized by residents in the action plan, *Living Downtown: A Plan for the Future*.²³ It opens with an aerial photograph that is digitized in order to convert it into a map, adding a layer (or layers) of borders, scale and labels (See Figure 3). The title of the map is *Downtown*

²² LWG, *Downtown as a Place of Learning*, pp. 3-6.

²³ Residential Working Group (RWG), *Living Downtown: A Plan for the Future*, Victoria: Downtown Victoria Community Alliance, August 2004.

Victoria 2020, the name of the project for which the map was developed, but which also creates a sense of looking at the spaces of Victoria through a futuristic lens. This lens is emphasized by the imposition of a circular border that is drawn as a line that takes Centennial Fountain as its centre, and a radius measured in an experiential register – “15 min. WALKING DISTANCE.” The image contained by the circle is made a bit hazy and brighter with filters. Within this lens the more familiar border of downtown is drawn, and the image contained by it is made hazier still and darkened with filters, and further obscured by the text “TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWN PRECINCT.” The effect of the filter distortions within the circular border of the future downtown, and the square-like current downtown, is that outside the circle appears as a crisp photo, within the circle is hazier and brightened, and within the traditional downtown is hazier still, darkened, and obscured by text. In this way, looking into the future of downtown as a mature residential area is to look through a lens in which an obscured traditional downtown is framed and overwhelmed by its illuminated peripheries. Whether or not this is reflected in the text of the report remains to be seen.



Figure 3: Photo map of metro Victoria

The question that the Residential Working Group (RWG) is addressing is “Will, *can*, downtown Victoria be a vibrant, mixed-use residential area?” Approaching this question, it begins with a description of the present, followed by a vision of 2020, and then offers action items that could connect the two. The sketch of the present situation is anticipated by the darkness of traditional downtown in the map image on the cover page. The moment that downtown as a residential area began dying is identified as the early 1970s when the city enforced residential occupancy standards; there was a 64% drop in downtown’s residential population from 1850 to 665 people. Since that time there has been no identifiable re-birth, only a slow growth in the population, which is approaching pre-1970s levels. A sense for the kind of people who do live downtown is created by invoking statistics: they are primarily

single working age people (two thirds men) of modest means (with a median income of \$20,300), who are renters (83%) of suites that are slightly more affordable than citywide (\$615 as compared to \$657). The RWG suggests that downtown dwellings are undervalued (\$150,900 as compared with \$239,900), and these values “underestimate the potential stock of housing downtown,” pointing to the potential upgrading of second and third storey spaces.²⁴ But beyond this meager potential, the hope for re-vitalization is situated in the peripheries of traditional downtown. Taking the fount of re-vitalization (Centennial Fountain) as the epicentre, the circle demarcated on the map expands the perimeter of traditional downtown. This expanded *metropolitan* downtown residential population displays a greater potential for re-vitalization. It is to these shoulder areas that potential for residential construction on vacant or underdeveloped lands is seen. The population of this wider area is 7,000 and displays more marked growth (10% between 1996 and 2000 in the Harris Green area in particular, which is undergoing a condominium construction boom). The kinds of residents in this area are more affluent than the typical resident of traditional downtown because the developments do not include “rental housing, affordable housing or supportive housing.” It is the mature light of the affluent peripheral downtown neighbourhoods that can be used to re-populate a *metropolitan* downtown with “healthy prosperity.”²⁵ This suggests that considering the community scene as a whole, the institutions of learning could be valued in relation to one another in economic terms. It also suggests that the principle of lifelong learning is given sub-urban stylistics that can be used to create a reputation of a vital community.

²⁴ Citing architect Jack Diamond from the *Successful Downtown* conference, these spaces could account for 500 one-bedroom apartments. RWG, *Living Downtown*, pp. 1-2.

²⁵ RWG, *Living Downtown*, p. 2.

A specific vision of “healthy prosperity” is envisioned as “a vibrant mixed use residential area” by the RWG in the following section “Where We Are Going: A Residential Vision for Downtown in 2020.” In this vision the expanded metropolitan downtown is the core of an expanded Victoria Metropolitan Area. Here the logic for re-imagining the boundaries of downtown is made explicit: the Centennial Fountain is symbolically channeling the vitality of the regional sub-urban peripheries into the peripheries of metro downtown. Metro Victoria as a region seeks recognition as a big city, without having big city problems because it does not appeal to the traditional downtown residential culture, framing and overwhelming it with sub-urban vitality. The adjectives used to describe the metro downtown should be read in the light of sub-urban vitality: “safe and lively around the clock, the enviable, livable, human-scale Victoria downtown of 2020.” In the absence of sub-urban vitality, these adjectives could be used to describe traditional downtown today. For example, it is one of the safest mid-size city downtowns in all of North America according to Chief of Police Paul Battershill;²⁶ but presumably it is a different kind of lively that is being sought in this report. Moving with the economic valuation of that which is put on the map, we could think about sub-urban vitality in economic terms, as in the RWG’s identification of metro downtown residents as “a resident market of 30,000 consumers.” A bare economic understanding of consumer is evident in the envisioned effect of its tripled population as supporting an “energetic and profitable” downtown retail sector that provides services and amenities for both resident and visitor populations. There is more to the story though. Although the metro downtown resident (consumer) population is increasingly affluent, in its vision of the future the RWG emphasizes a mix of upper, middle and lower income

²⁶ Paul Battershill, “Speaking notes for Paul Battershill, Victoria Police Chief,” Press Conference, 31 January 2002, Victoria City Hall, Available at: http://www.city.victoria.bc.ca/cityhall/currentprojects_downtown_action_rook.shtml

households (due to an abundance and variety of housing choices such as market and non-market), which implies a broader understanding of consumer. The final words of the vision of metro downtown, “home to enough households and families with children to support numerous community facilities, including a new school,” suggest that another way of identifying the consumer is through their valuing of children.²⁷

The challenge faced by the final section of the report, is how to transform a narrowly defined and dying downtown into a more widely re-presented and re-vitalized metro downtown, and singles and empty nesters into families with children. The RWA offers its attempts in five objectives, various strategies for achieving them, and particular action items. Rather than examine each strategy, I will identify each objective and look to the marketing oriented action items of each strategy because they reveal how the strategies are envisioned as connecting the present with the future vision of a “Living Downtown.”

The first three objectives are concerned with how to re-vitalize metro downtown, by size, kind and diversity within that kind. The first objective is to achieve a metropolitan downtown resident population of about 30,000 people. In the private sector approach, investors, developers and potential residents are targeted in the marketing plan as a necessary “in-migration” as part of a technical calculation of the population target; this is a market science of re-vitalization. In contrast, in the civic driven approach the concern is to market Victoria as a liveable city in order to compete with Vancouver, Seattle and Portland – who have revitalized “*through residential re-investment*” – by ensuring “that the great story and opportunity of downtown Victoria gets out, and gets heard” throughout the world; this is a

²⁷ “Those who refuse to become responsible and govern themselves ethically have also refused the offer to become members of our moral community. Hence, for them, harsh measures are entirely appropriate. Three strikes and you are out. Citizenship becomes conditional on conduct. The counterpart to the moralism of these community-based programs is the enhancement of the powers of the penal and psychiatric complexes and the transformation of social workers and other caring professionals into agencies of control concerned with risk management and secure containment.” Nikolas Rose, “Community, Citizenship and the Third Way,” *American Behavioral Scientist*, (2000) 43(9): 1395-1411, p. 1407.

lifestyle market re-vitalization. Finally, the marketing plan recommended for the north of downtown “focuses on its unique heritage, industrial and harbour waterfront character;” this is a re-vitalization as branding. To realize a metro downtown resident population of 30,000 consumers, three kinds of re-vitalization strategies are offered: market science of a population, creation of a lifestyle market, and reputation creation (i.e. branding).

The second objective is to have “enough families with children to support community facilities including a school” by 2020. In order to achieve the single strategy, to develop the facilities needed to make downtown an attractive place for families to live, there is both a marketing plan and program. The marketing plan promotes Victoria as liveable city, giving families an overall community to belong to. The marketing program targets families that have or plan to have children through market research to determine which sub-urban families would consider living downtown, and with what amenities; this is market research on and for re-vitalization of a community market. In creating a sense of what that community looks like, the resident consumer is more clearly defined as valuing “child safety and convenience.”²⁸ The consumer need not value children themselves, so long as they value child safety (which is a science of risk)²⁹ and convenience (in which the youthful spirit of curiosity is unnecessary). Thus in terms of the community scene, we can think of the learning agencies as being valued economically, and through a risk science that re-places the burden of curiosity (i.e. thinking) with statistics.

The third objective is to achieve a downtown “population profile that reflects that of the region as a whole, with a comparable range of income levels, ages and household types –

²⁸ RWG, *Living Downtown*, pp. 7-8.

²⁹ Berlant coins the term “infantile citizen” and engages in a careful analysis of how everyday oppression is enabled and transcended by the space of possibility that is the infantile citizen. See Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of America goes to Washington City: Essays on sex and citizenship*, Duke: Duke University Press, 1997.

socially, downtown is the region in microcosm.” The strategy offered for achieving this is to “establish a coordinated program including policies, regulations and incentives.” A marketing program designed to avoid attracting the “limited demographic of young urban singles or empty nesters,” focuses instead “on a diverse downtown population, and emphasize the breadth of household, lifestyle, and housing opportunities being created;” the sub-urban market need not be excluded from downtown. Despite the association of the word diversity with ethnicity, with mention of only class and age, diversity in its usage here is better understood as the integration of sub-urban families into metro downtown, by including their value of inclusion in the marketing plan.³⁰ This third objective illustrates the consumers’ demand for inclusion (which excludes valuing a traditional downtown lifestyle and considerations of ethnicity). In sum, in order to realize the vision of a mixed-use residential downtown, the consumer value of inclusion must be used to frame traditional downtown with a much larger consumer population that values “child safety and convenience.” Downtown must re-present the majority sub-urban population if it is to be accredited with a reputation as a re-vitalized community.

The fourth and fifth objectives of *Living Downtown* are concerned with the obscured traditional downtown and the poverty associated with it. The fourth objective evokes the potential introduced earlier, to redevelop “all of the approximately 250,000 square feet of vacant upper-storey space in older heritage buildings downtown.” Such re-development would enable the darkness of traditional downtown to be illuminated by “an ‘old town’ marketing program to promote the unique heritage/pedestrian accessible residential environment of downtown’s heritage core;” this marketing program obscures the traditional

³⁰ RWG, *Living Downtown*, pp. 8-9.

downtown residents (less affluent singles and empty nesters) with a mature image.³¹ The fifth and final objective takes aim on the poverty associated with traditional downtown, aiming to have 20% of housing units be affordable – for those “with incomes in the bottom two quintiles of regional household income, including the provision of housing for those with little or no income – the homeless.” In a laissez-faire approach to fundraising for new affordable housing, rather than a marketing plan, “a communications initiative” is recommended, “to explain the importance of affordable housing solutions to the community as a whole;” this is a way of facilitating co-operation in fundraising for affordable housing. In a civic driven approach for direct facilitation of more affordable housing, rather than a marketing plan, streamlining and coordinating bureaucratic processes are recommended to make affordable housing development easier and faster. In envisioning the transformation of the poor into consumers, there is no perceived market; there is only the market mechanism of fundraising, or bureaucratic streamlining. In sum, traditional downtown is not a market, but it can be marketed as mature (amenable to consumer tastes), especially if accompanied by transforming the poor into consumers; obscured in these approaches are those buildings and people who refuse conversion.³²

Taken together, the objectives affirm the sense we gleaned from the digitized snapshot map that there are two trajectories to this vision of a *Living Downtown*: on the one hand there is a framing and overwhelming of metro downtown as illuminated by the vitality of regional suburbs; on the other hand there is an obscuring of traditional downtown by marketing it as mature ‘old town’ and of traditional downtown residents by converting them into consumers of affordable housing. Framing this mature ‘old town’ is the illumination of those consumers who have mature values of child safety and convenience. These are people

³¹ RWG, *Living Downtown*, pp. 9-10.

³² RWG, *Living Downtown*, pp..10-13.

who have abandoned the youthful spirit of curiosity for convenient decisions based on risk sciences. In a community scene that is mature, inclusion is used as the demand for conversion of those who have refused sub-urban (read: modern) values. It is not convenient to move through the complex spaces and inter-actions of everyday life; mazes of alleys and life stories require a spirit of curiosity, to make sense of divergent, convergent and oblique inter-sections.

(pro)creation: learning processes

The final act of this community scene offers a way to transform the sparse base map of specters of youth into a real snapshot map of downtown as a mature re-vitalized (sub-urban) metropolis: transportation. Beyond the techniques of leveling, framing and obscuring there are processes at play. The DVCA Transportation Working Group (TWG) produced a report entitled *Improving Downtown Transportation* that takes movement as its object and is concerned with process.³³ Rather than including literal maps as the singular form of visual re-presentation, this report begins with a collage map of sorts, consisting of six contiguous photo images depicting two different kinds of buses (one public transit and the other tourist), two kinds of parking (one parkade and one street level parking lot), and two different kinds of non automobile transit (walking and biking) (See Figure 4). Even the photos of parking lots create an impression of movement because the angle of the shots creates a distant point of perspective towards which the eye is drawn; hence, together these photos constitute a collage map of a desirable variety of aspects of movement.³⁴

Approaching this flux the TWG uses the same structure as *Living Downtown*, beginning with a

³³ Transportation Working Group (TWG), *Improving Downtown Transportation*, Victoria: Downtown Victoria Community Alliance, 2004.

³⁴ TWG, *Improving Downtown Transportation*, pp. 1-2.

description of the present, a vision of the future, and objectives to connect the two; each section and objective is introduced with a photo image of transportation.

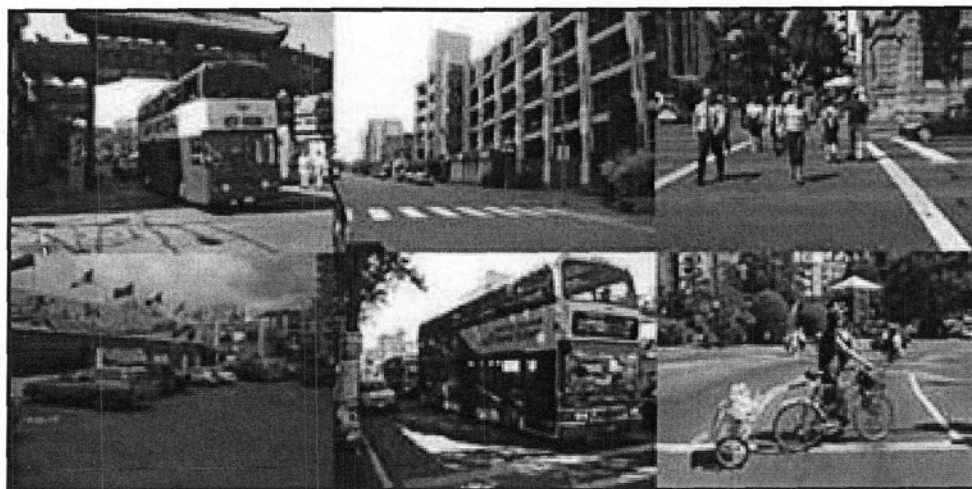


Figure 4: Collage map of movement

The present is introduced with an enlarged version of the introductory photo of pedestrians walking across a very wide street (Blashard St. at Yates St.). The TWG identifies transportation as fundamental to the very existence of cities: “Downtowns exist because they offer a high level of accessibility – the ability to reach a diverse range of goods, services and activities with minimal physical travel.” Hence movement enables the vitality and revitalization of the community scene. Ensuring efficiency within the “intensity and diversity” of travel modes downtown requires coordination and balance. Noting the increasing automobile dependence over the last half century, Downtown Victoria is used as an example of a city that has resisted its negative effects (costs such as infrastructure and environment) and maintaining “a relatively high level of accessibility, walkability and transit convenience for a city of its size.” Nonetheless, the TWG suggests that the transportation system needs both substantive and image improvements. Before envisioning how these improvements could be made, the processes of doing so are recognized as “transportation decisions” and are situated in relation to other issues such as land use development patterns. A brief outline

is offered in regards to how these decisions are currently structured, with the Capital Regional District (CRD) as central, but operating with “minimal resources and no authority.” The one decision that is agreed upon is “a consensus that a strategic approach to downtown and regional transportation is needed” for regional and downtown transportation planning.³⁵ Hence, in the context of movement planning is understood as “transportation decisions,” processes of funding and authorization; the process that is authorized by the TWG is consensus decision making, and the method authorized is strategic planning.

The vision of 2020 is also introduced with a photo of pedestrians, but rather than crossing a wide street, they are gathered around a marumba band on a wide sidewalk; it is a street whose cars move in the background of a public space alive with music, dancing, and people of all ages. Through the text that follows, the image is situated within (sub-urban) metro downtown – as defined in *Living Downtown*. In fact the TWG envisions the movements of a mature downtown, as those of consumer residents who primarily travel by walking, cycling, and using new streetcars. Further indication of the fundamental role of a transportation system in the community scene is its supporting of a “safe, vibrant and walkable” (read: re-vitalized mature (pro)creative) metro downtown. The transportation system has a fundamental role, but is not itself fundamental; it emerges out of and is molded by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and the Downtown Transport Management Association (TMA).³⁶ In terms of the community scene, it is not so much that which moves as the movement itself, the governing re-vitalization process that is important.

In order to strive towards the vitalization of transportation governance processes (facilitated by the RTA and TMA), strategic objectives are offered. The first strategic objective is primary in terms of both being first and supporting all that follows. Its

³⁵ TWG, *Improving Downtown Transportation*, pp. 3-5.

³⁶ TWG, *Improving Downtown Transportation*, pp. 5-6.

supportive role is re-presented visually in a photo whose frame almost equally encompasses both the sidewalk with pedestrians, and the street with automobiles and a double decker bus; every other objective is introduced with a photo that focuses on one of these elements. Re-affirming the importance of regional and downtown transportation governance, the primary strategic objective of the TWG is: “An effective structure exists for transportation planning and program funding.” Two strategies are offered to create a governance structure with planning and fundraising capacities: one regional and the other downtown. The regional strategy is to “Establish a Regional Transportation Planning Organization.”

Acknowledgement is given to the CRD’s current partnerships with both the Province and municipalities that enable “long term transportation planning, governance and funding in the Capital Region.” The mechanism through which these partnerships work is an implementation agreement that is “a permanent and durable framework and mechanisms.” An implementation agreement is something like an action plan, which identifies the movements that each party commits to making. Using the CRD’s *Regional Transportation Governance Considerations* discussion paper as a point of departure, the TWG asserts that in order to realize a regional transportation organization, better coordination is necessary.

Upon this already existing institutional structure, the TWG insists that there must be engagement in the pressing discussion “about which governance model would be suitable for the metropolitan area.” Such a discussion would enable “a champion to move forward” and would include specific actions such as researching and assessing models, hosting workshops and other professional development programs. Even the technical action item to “combine planning resources” is framed as, “a regional planning exercise,” as part of a learning process. In sum the regional strategy frames a governance structure as decision-making coordination and integration that emerges out of and is based on learning

processes.³⁷ In contrast, the downtown strategy is to “Update Downtown Transportation Plans,” due to a lack of coordination between the City and private parking facility managers. The City is assumed as the governance structure, so action items are concerned with techniques – to vision, define, identify and coordinate specific strategies. The one action item that could be concerned with governance, to create “a transportation management association” is framed as a “transportation management services” provider. Hence the authority of the City of Victoria’s downtown government is not negotiated, but delegated to service providers, and is limited in that it is the “hub” of the flux of learning processes in negotiating a regional governance structure. Since the vision of the region and the metro downtown are drawn from *Living Downtown*, implicit in this regional governance structure are the consumer values of sub-urban family structures and convenience. Thus, as applied in the context of the community scene, a model of governance (depicted as ongoing learning processes) would enable the re-vitalization of a (sub-urban) metropolis.

Now that we have been through one cycle of the community scene as re-enacted through three DVCA action plans, let’s re-cycle through it. This is to explore how the re-vitalization of learning agencies as processes might affect the community scene in its youth and its relation to maturity. Moving with the momentum of learning processes, the appearances necessary to invite a reputation of Victoria as “a leading learning community” can be created. The memorials of learning depicted on the base map are enchanted by putting them into relation with one another. This complicates the base map in that the value of learning agencies is no longer oriented in relation to properties and accumulation, but in relation to the learning processes that enable consensus to be reached (such as workshops).

³⁷ TWG, *Improving Downtown Transportation*, pp. 6-8.

Thus there is no fixed mode of valuation, but a plethora of possibilities that can be explored and debated. In other words, the base map has been transformed from a re-presentation of the physical realities of properties into a pictorial collage map whose photos refer to the movement of learning processes – the dots have become smeared, so that there is a visual description of the flows and intersections of the processes.

We can now explore how this collage map referring to movement relates to the pictorial photographic map re-presenting the hazy and brighter future of a residential metro downtown. Without the ease of referral to the base map, properties and the consumers they re-present are no longer able to maintain appearances of “child safety” through containment in a lens. The authority of way finding techniques (base maps and calculations of risk) have been revealed through learning processes as convenient ways of thinking about danger that exceeds their ability for containment. The re-vitalized community scene involves people in the visioning of community, in which danger and other factors are at play in the learning processes. This does not mean that the desire for “child safety” is lost, but rather that less convenient ways of creating its appearance become necessary. Calculations are displaced by more interactive processes in which community members are free to learn about and negotiate consensus about appearances of “child safety” that each community member will then create. This implicates a (sub-urban) metro downtown that has the appearance of being vital – in its interactive processes – without committing to the risks of living that are involved in scenes in which consensus is not possible. But where appearances are primary, such commitments are unnecessary.

Together, the creative story form and the emphasis on governance as a process are able to re-vitalize the values and power structures associated with institutionalized forms of government. The community scene is one in which inclusivity, marked by “child safety,” is

used to limit curiosity with the governance processes of community. Thus even when community membership (inclusivity) is facilitated through inter-active processes rather than re-presentation, the youthful spirit of curiosity must be left aside for the responsibility and freedom involved in the more mature task of administering community. In either case, those who refuse to curb their curiosity in order to explore the complexities of everyday life in various ways are scripted as threatening children rather than as having youthful curiosity. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that the visual vocabulary of pictorial maps (photographic and collage) enable the complexity of relations amongst various elements and processes to be depicted immediately: movement can be apprehended with a visual vocabulary. This lends force to the scene in which they are mobilized, but such force should not be mistaken for the politics of the everyday. The complexity that is possible to conceptualize with this visual vocabulary must be politicized.³⁸

Urbanities scene

The vision of the community scene and the learning processes that are enabling it to become vital in a post-structural context suggest that the values associated with institutional forms of government can become fluid. If re-enacting a scene that allows for the curiosity necessary to explore the everyday city is not so simple as adding process into the mix, how might we do so? In order to explore this question we can look to the remaining DVCA action plan, because it is concerned with the process of re-vitalization through which the community scene emerges. Asking the question “How can we bring Victoria’s underutilized downtown spaces to life?” the DVCA Public Spaces and Connections Working Group

³⁸ Susan Sontag cautions that “while the photograph is significant because of its capacity to engender a space for thought, it cannot by itself be an instrument for change.” As quoted by Campbell, “Cultural governance and pictorial resistance,” p. 72.

(PSCWG) focuses on how the community scene is re-created. Rather than re-negotiating the units and processes that exist within the cyclical movement of the community scene, the PSCWG explores the very processes through which the community scene emerges: urbanities (re-fined re-actions). Their action plan, *From Public Space to Public Place*, is itself “intended to be a *catalyst* for a Downtown Victoria Urban Design Plan.”³⁹ Such a plan would cover the overall space of the downtown core and its open spaces in particular, and would need to be accompanied with adequate funding. As a “catalyst” for the plan, *From Public Space to Public Place* is envisioned as a facilitator of a re-action that does not itself undergo change.⁴⁰

A closer look at the aim of the PSCWG – “to appeal to those who care about Victoria as a livable City, to work together as well as individually in their own area of interest” – reveals that the re-action being facilitated is not simply the plan as a thing, but the inter-actions and actions of those who care. In fact the report demonstrates how these inter-actions could work, by integrating three perspectives into the report: urban design, community development, and long-time Victoria area residents.⁴¹ The primary role of inter-actions in constituting the public is re-affirmed in the focus of the working group “to identify and study successful public intersections – i.e. places where people interact – and corridors in the city’s urban core.” Spaces are important as *places*, venues for human inter-actions and movement, rather than being defined by their structural functions (i.e. learning agency). We can get a sense for how places are deemed ‘successful’ by the comparison with “less successful adjoining locations that interrupt the flow of public life downtown;” success

³⁹ Emphasis added. PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, pp. 1-2.

⁴⁰ Definition of “catalyst”: a substance that increases the rate of a chemical reaction without itself undergoing any change; somebody or something that makes a change happen or brings about an event.” Encarta World English Dictionary (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999), Word X for Mac, Microsoft Corporation.

⁴¹ PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, p. 1.

is “flow of public life.” This nuances the movement of re-vitalization by articulating the vitality of learning processes as “public life,” privileging citizens rather than consumers.

The report is structured (as were the previous two) by describing the present, a vision of 2020, and projects to connect the two. The present is introduced with the subheading “Downtown Victoria as the Living Room of the City,” in which downtown is understood as the core of the Capital Region. Quoting the 1987 Victoria Official Community Plan, the PSCWG re-affirms the need for downtown to respond to the challenges posed by sub-urbanization. While affirming the core values of the *Downtown Plan 1990* – growth and vitality, maintaining its heritage and human scale – the working group offers a series of critiques that suggest that the plan is insufficient and outdated. From underestimating “the important potential of the harbour as an integral part of downtown,” to lacking “an overall open space strategy,” the *Downtown Plan 1990* is framed as having missed out on important attitudinal and paradigmatic shifts in “urban planning and design.” In appreciating the existing civic vision of downtown as “a mixed-use, central core with significant regional importance” the PSCWG brings a “fresh perspective” in terms of the assumptions and methods necessary for realizing this vision. The PSCWG measures approaches against attitudes and paradigms, which we can see in their critique that the City’s implementation of the aesthetic aspects of the “Beautification Strategy” is great, but that *appearances are not enough*; the implementation is regarded as a commitment to its more substantive recommendations. The substantive method that the PSCWG recommends is that the City “support and facilitate a multi-disciplinary team led by the Planning Department.” The City is thus an enabler for a governance process involving various interested groups and individuals.⁴² Hence visioning are substantive governance processes

⁴² PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, pp. 2-3.

that generate, are influenced by and evaluated in relation to attitudes and paradigms, which I refer to as *impressions*.

The vision of the future is entitled “2020: the Not-so distant Future,” which includes aspects of both the visions of the community scene’s mature residential downtown and (pro)creative transportation. Pedestrians who live and/or work downtown are moving through “an extensive network of public pathways and open spaces.” Since the downtown is so pedestrian friendly and public transit has been improved, “the streets serve as shared pathways, lacing through and defined by both historic and contemporary architecture” – the presence of private cars has been greatly reduced. Public, semi-private and private spaces interlace in such a way that particular places are created “to pause, sit and enjoy the social atmosphere of the region’s busy retail and business centre.” Although the spaces can be defined as public according to ownership, at the core of the pedestrian centred vision are “face-to-face encounters with others in the community.” This implies that public life is constituted of inter-actions. It is a community of pedestrians defined only obliquely as workers, shoppers and residents, and *everyone is a pedestrian*. In public places the particularities of identification are less important than the shared atmosphere, an impression, of sociality that influences inter-actions.⁴³ The particular impression of sociality that is re-created in this action plan is that of the community scene as re-enacted by the DVCA.

In order to realize the vision of the future as appreciated with a fresh approach, the PSCWG offers objectives of three kinds: policy, process and projects. Policy objectives focus on the “role of the City” to enable: structures such as the multi-disciplinary team, financing for projects, and implementing plans. Government is an enabler of governance structures, financing and implementation, but lacks the capacity for visioning. Process

⁴³ PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, pp. 3-4.

objectives are those that involve the “improvement and expansion of the public realm Downtown” through the multi-disciplinary team, the “urban design task force,” whose tasks are to “develop” various plans, programs and guidelines. This is much like the function of the report itself, to act as a catalyst by offering appreciation and fresh perspectives that come out of inter-actions between various interested groups and individuals. Hence the task force is envisioned as a catalyst for the public realm, which is understood as places that facilitate inter-actions.⁴⁴ Remembering that the task force is itself a process objective, governance structures can be understood as continuous processes that facilitate inter-actions as reactions of particular people, concerns etc.

The PSCWG acknowledges government as an enabler and governance processes as catalysts of public life, but the *substantive action* that it engages in through the report is “to suggest projects.” These are “projects that could be initiated and implemented by the City” in order to jump start private sector development by “setting an example.” As a kind of objective, projects do not have fixed understandings of how their example could be interpreted or responded to; rather, projects are a kind of punctuation in an overall urban design plan.⁴⁵ Many of the specific projects relate to specific spaces and networks of public spaces, with a couple focusing on the transit system and parking lots, and one highlighting the importance of integrating public art in the public domain.⁴⁶ But it is the final project, the CityRoom, which is not only recommended by, but actually created by the DVCA. As the final project, the CityRoom, is made more prominent than the others in two ways: first, it is accompanied by a byline, whereas the others are not; second, it closes with the only image

⁴⁴ PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁵ Urban developments as punctuated planning has been discussed as a kind of “urban acupuncture” in which a project is initiated and then there is a waiting to see how it catalyzes other developments. See Ellin, “A Vulnerable Urbanism,” pp. 224-225.

⁴⁶ PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, p. 5-9.

included in the action plan, a framing of three photos of the prototype CityRoom (See Figure 5). The byline, “Where a City Plans Itself,” encapsulates the objective of the CityRoom “to facilitate ongoing discussions on urbanism by providing a location with high public exposure and accessibility.” The city planning process as “ongoing discussions on urbanism,” an intersection of urbanism and visioning, can be understood as “an inclusive, conscious and continuous process.” Rather than the experts in the planning department, anyone in Victoria can be involved in city planning if they pause and enjoy the CityRoom as a place of ongoing public discussions. The CityRoom itself emerged out of such inclusive discussions at the 2020 conference, so a prototype was developed by the DVCA in retail space on Yates street, which was “supported and used” by the PSCWG and other working groups. The prototype proved to be “an effective vehicle for *raising public awareness* of downtown issues and *nurturing* positive urbanism in the city.”⁴⁷ Here the specific modes of facilitation, processes of learning, are revealed as raising awareness and nurturing. So it is not just anyone who can pause in the CityRoom that can be included in city planning; it is people who are available to be educated and nurtured through those discussions. This seemingly paternalistic approach needs to be tempered with another curious finding of the CityRoom prototype: “a high level of public interest in participating *with* city government ... as a critically important element of the health of the community.”⁴⁸ People are not being educated and nurtured *by* the City or city visioning, but rather are being educated and nurtured *with* them; it is a process of mutual education and nurturing in which there is no single author or authority over the process, which requires that the people involved make themselves available to educate and nurture and be educated and nurtured through the process.

⁴⁷ Emphasis Added. PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Emphasis added. PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, p. 9.

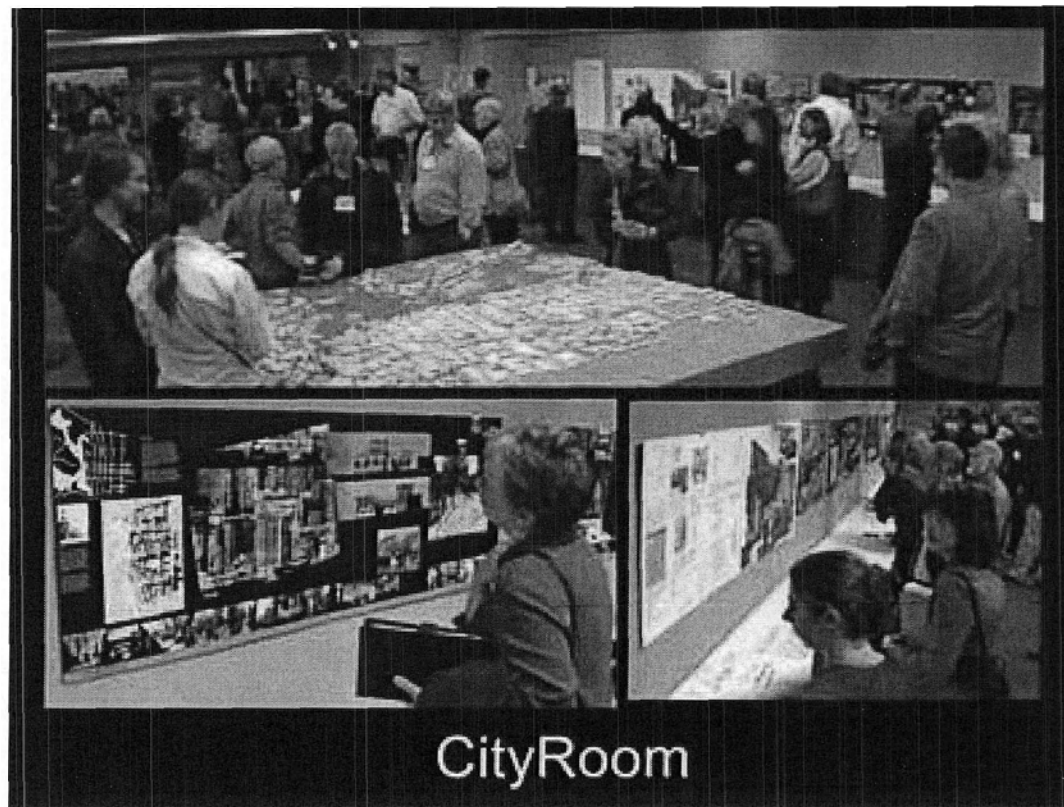


Figure 5: Model map as a project

We can gain more insight into how city visioning discussions, and their mode of educating and nurturing work by looking to the images of the CityRoom that are included. The report ends with three photos of a prototype CityRoom full of people interacting with each other, a three dimensional model of downtown (a map of sorts), and poster presentations of various maps, photos and text prepared by the DVCA and various working groups. In the top and largest photo, centred in the frame is a three dimensional map of Victoria, a model that people are milling around, looking at, and discussing across; the effect is that in addition to the aesthetic re-presentation of downtown, the model also acts as a table around which people can interact, and so facilitates conversations. Despite this added function, as a form of re-presentation the model has affinities to the base map in its

depiction of buildings, roads and shoreline. Against the emphasis on inter-actions as constituting the public realm in the text of the action plan, the model does not re-present nodes of inter-action in the flow of movements of pedestrians. Similarly, although facilitating conversations, that people are wearing nametags suggests that their inter-actions can rely on the familiar re-presentations of professional affiliation in relation to the visioning process rather than being present in the particular inter-action. In sum, the process of city planning as an ongoing conversation in the CityRoom begins with a city that is re-presented as structured space, and unfolds through people that have an identifiable location in relation to the process.

The two photos below that of the model of Victoria frame people inter-acting with poster presentations. While on first glance we might interpret this as an educating and nurturing of these people *by* the posters, the posters themselves have been created through processes of educating and nurturing among working group members, and furthermore, these people are bringing to the posters their own experiences and insights (which through inter-actions with each other contribute to the ongoing conversations). These images have a strong resemblance to science fairs, in which people who are learning share their processes and discoveries with one another, which can spark allegiances and discoveries. But just as the scientist must negotiate the scientific method, the city planner must negotiate the visioning process.⁴⁹ Taken together, as the unifying black frame of the photos suggest we should do, we can think of the CityRoom as a place where education processes are the foundation of the mutual nurturing of citizens through inter-actions facilitated by a shared aesthetic re-presentation of the City that also functions as a shared substantive process.

⁴⁹ PSCWG, *From Public Space to Public Place*, pp. 9-10.

An urbanities scene as re-enacted through *From Public Space to Public Place* drops behind the learning process that re-vitalizes monuments of learning by putting them into relation, and explores how the learning processes themselves are valued. The PSCWG straddles two approaches to urbanism: one that privileges place and another that takes interactions to be fundamental. This straddling is evident in the consideration of “public life” as constituted by places such as the CityRoom, and as constituted by face-to-face interactions. The tension is somewhat resolved in the choice to identify citizens as “pedestrians” rather than “consumers” in an effort to include everyone; the base form of participation that is implicit in the pedestrian is movement through open spaces, rather than the interactions amongst them. Nonetheless, the action plan itself acts as a catalyst, facilitating a re-action that expands the public realm from those that value “child safety and convenience” to those with interactions in the community. The straddling persists in the consideration of the quality of pedestrians’ participation as being influenced by atmospheres of sociality. On the one hand the atmospheres of sociality are considered as animations of space, and on the other hand they are informed by attitudes and paradigms. While the PSCWG again chooses to emphasize atmospheres of sociality as place based, as in the prominent role of the CityRoom, I want to emphasize the inter-actional aspects of atmospheres of sociality as informed by attitudes and paradigms. Rather than attitudes and paradigms, I prefer the term impressions, which move across time and space, and also include the non-descript feelings that atmosphere implies.

In a scene based on interactions and influenced by impressions, visioning are revealed as aesthetic practices of governance based on appearances. On the one hand appearances are hugely important because they enable processes rather than simply

institutions to become visible; movement becomes recognizable. As re-enacted in the community scene these are continuous learning processes through which authority and funding are negotiated, in which government is embedded as an enabler. It is a perpetual flow of learning processes that influence the flows of consumers in the drive towards the sub-urbanization of a metro downtown. On the other hand governance practices based on appearances can be considered as a commitment to a more substantive aesthetic politics; movement must be activated (become something other than self-referential). As re-enacted in the urbanities scene substantive aesthetic governance practices take the form of projects that catalyze the public realm (i.e. CityRoom). It is a punctuated approach to urbanism that attempts to stimulate pedestrians to inter-act by creating atmospheres of sociality. In this particular urbanities scene, actions are catalyzing the community scene, by an emphasis on place rather than on inter-actions. This is evident in the location of conversations in relation to the places of the city (communities), and the location of people in relation to the learning processes (the visioning community).

By re-vitalizing the community scene with pictorial (snapshot and collage) maps, the picture of the City becomes much more complex because the images of the institutions of university and family, expert and parent are no longer read as referring to the 'reality' of education and learning. Instead, such images are thought to refer to the creative visions of those who care about the City (whether as consumers or pedestrians). The community scene re-enacted in the DVCA action plans is one that responds to challenges that sub-urbanization poses to downtown Victoria by extending the suburbs inwards. A mode of inclusion is used to extend the scope of freedom and government through the (pro)creative capacities of the creative story form. As a creative story that moves from a base map, inclusion involves the equalizing of processes through institutional re-representation. As a

creative story that moves from a snapshot map, inclusion involves the overwhelming of downtown with the clarity of the suburbs. As a creative story that moves from a collage map, inclusion is facilitated by governance processes. Cycling through these stories, there are increasingly more flexible ways that the downtown can become a sub-urban metropolis, that the freedom and governance through community can be secured. It is only in the final creative story, which unfolds across a model map, that inclusion is seemingly universal, being facilitated on the basis of the shared status of pedestrian. Although the significance of this inclusion is minimal, being limited to kinds of participation associated with public places, at least it provides for the possibility for anyone to engage in the re-enactment of the scene.

The pictorial map and its attendant vision of a re-vitalized metro Victoria interpolates everyone and no one. It is only when the map becomes a project, when it ceases to be strictly referential, that specific inter-actions are implicated, and so other possibilities for re-enacting the scene emerge. We might consider this as exemplifying the ‘pictorial turn’ that David Campbell highlights in social theory in which there is “a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, institutions, discourse, bodies and figurality.”⁵⁰ In a sense the pictorial becomes active as part of a scene. Campbell suggests that we need not “burden *the image itself* with the responsibility for politicization” that instead we can view “it in intertextual context of the news, information, captions, layout, outlets and the like.”⁵¹ In other words, it is in the scene that the responsibility for politicization must be taken up, to make a project of the picture. In the community scene that responsibility is effaced in the wash of processes that are imaged as referential to the process itself, thus constituting a continuous wash. In the urbanities scene the responsibility for politicization is informed by the creative stories of

⁵⁰ W.J.T. Mitchell as quoted by Campbell, “Cultural governance and pictorial resistance,” p. 72.

⁵¹ Campbell, “Cultural governance and pictorial resistance,” pp. 71-72.

community in which everything and everyone has a place in relation to the community and its formative processes. It seems that in order to re-enact the urbanities scene as something other than the community scene another creative story is required. I want to suggest that it might be possible that rather than the daunting task of setting an entirely new scene, by being attentive to the dynamism of inter-actions and impressions within the everyday, we might find punctuations that could inspire us to re-act otherwise and thus transform the urbanities scene.

Chapter 3: The Red Zone

Liberatory Movements

In the previous chapter we explored the politicization of aesthetic governance practices based on appearances – visioning processes in urban planning – of the City of Victoria. Despite the important role of pictorial maps in creating the complex view necessary to envision an aesthetic governance that is inclusive of everyone, it also became clear that mapping is embedded in acts of creative storytelling. In this chapter we will explore the possibility that rather than creating another story, we can find within everyday inter-actions the inspiration for re-enacting the urbanities scene as a scene of urban activism. This requires that we remain dis-posed to the aesthetic politicization of the everyday, by being attentive to inter-actions as pictorial projects within scenes. But we must put this disposition into tension with sensitivity to the quality of the everyday, by sensing the impressions that emerge through and influence inter-actions. Becoming attentive to that which is repressed in urban renewal – creative freedom and those who refuse community – will provide us with the opportunity to put into play the tension between an aesthetic politicization of and sensitivity to the quality to the everyday.

The liberatory movements of the Red Zone are creatively inspired, and so tend to manifest in artistic media. Looking to the limits of creative freedom and how it is at play in an everyday scene we can get a better sense for how the creations of the Red Zone are reacting (obliquely to) the City. As in the previous chapter, I will use Centennial Fountain to create a vignette that cycles through three kinds of analyses associated with urban renewal, urban sublimation and urban sensitization thinking respectively: creation, exploring limits and scenic. Familiar with the vulnerability, challenging and contingency of liberatory movements' creative disposition, we will then re-cycle through the analyses in regards to

media depictions of the Red Zone. Through this re-cycling we will get a sense that the street scene is re-enacted with the sensations of selfishness, sick criminality, and warm meanness. Becoming further sensitized to these sensations we will discover playfulness and anger, addiction and compassion. With a sense of the tension amongst these emotional bodies, I will suggest that we have a greater capacity for re-enacting a scene of urban activism if we refuse our alienation (read: freedom) by taking the risks involved in making ourselves vulnerable to inter-actions. Doing so enables us to call the bluff of urban renewal's demand for another story, and might even challenge it to become explicit about its possession by the creative activity of urban sublimation. It also enables us to call the bluff of urban sublimation's elevation of creative forces, and challenge it to be explicit about its (in)security measures. If we are successful in doing so, then these ways of thinking will have enacted an urban sensitization scene by becoming sensitive to everyday inter-actions.

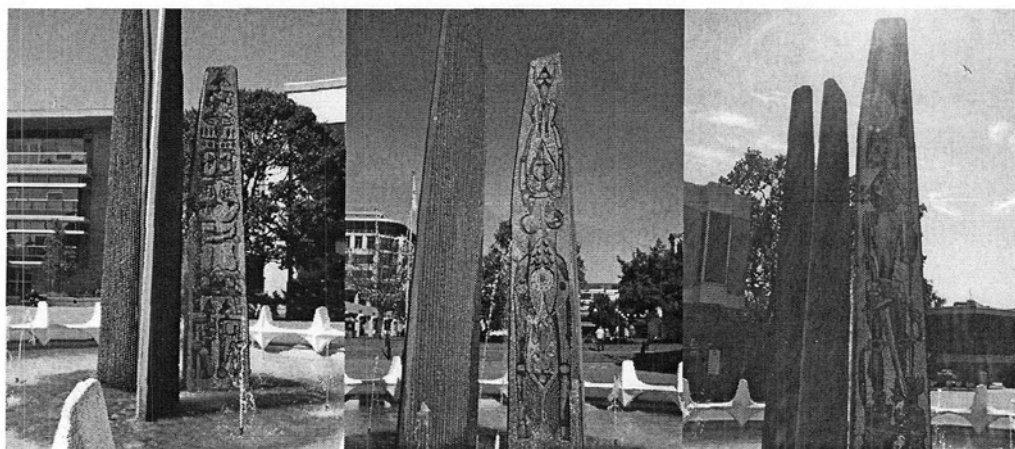


Figure 6: Centennial Fountain as art

Victoria has its very own fountain of divinely inspired maturity... We can approach the fountain as an urban sublimation artwork. While the fountain as origin story consigns vitality

to an era past in order to posit a re-vitalized future, the fountain as artwork offers a rich depiction of life in the creative moment (See Figure 6). The fountain is rugged and sophisticated, replete with water cascading upon a river stone base. Jutting out of the river stone are three concave monoliths, whose roughened concrete backs are contrasted with smooth golden-hued faces. The faces are totemic representations – in Italian glass mosaics – of three phases in “every man’s life:” youth, (pro)creation, and morality (a kind of maturity).¹ The column of youth depicts youthful figures and a school (the University of Victoria) shield. In front of and rising higher than youth, (pro)creation is embodied in mother and fetus-child forms. In front of and rising higher than (pro)creation is morality, man’s struggle against evil as symbolized in a dragon slain by an armored male figure crowned by a sunburst, symbolizing the deity. The deity emerges through a keyhole that is present in each of the monoliths, getting brighter from youth through (pro)creation to maturity, and also shines upon each of the faces through amber glows cast from below the surface of the water. The light and glow of a higher power animates this “story of mankind,” in which the key to maturation is increased enlightenment of this power until morality rises above youth and (pro)creation. Reading the fountain as an artwork, we get a sense that within the creative moment there are seemingly limitless possibilities for urban activism. Since decay of public space and other vagaries of mortality can be thwarted, the only limits are those of the creator’s own desire and vision; the creator can create relationships amongst anything, so that the possibilities for urban activists’ solidarity are also seemingly limitless.

Renewing the fountain as artwork... If we ask this creator what limits are imposed on their creative freedom we can get a better sense for how urban sublimation is at work. The fountain as artwork offers a rich description of relationships among youth, (pro)creation and maturity that is not possible in an origin story. But the re-vitalization visionaries and designers of Centennial Fountain did not grasp the implications of the circular formation of the monoliths in the creative moment. Despite Centennial Fountain’s triumph over earthly evils such as decay in its creative moment, outside that moment, we can see that the

¹ Ab Kent “A Rugged Yet Sophisticated Symbol: Centennial Square fountain dedicated today,” *Times Colonist*, 1 December 1964, VCA.

pinnacle of maturity is inter-acting with youth and (pro)creation. The fountain as artwork is transformed through other creative moments such as the singing of The Raging Grannies at protests or the picnicking of anarchists. Reflecting on the fountain as artwork outside its creative moment, we can see that since the monoliths do not stand in a row, there is no evolutionary line from youth through (pro)creation to an end point of morality. Instead, there is continuous cycling through all three, such that in each moment there are residuals and re-emergences of each. Hence, while the fountain as artwork is useful in terms of being able to create a rich description of relations within a creative moment, it is unable to respond to the other moments in which it might be involved. Although the creative moment may be sanctified, it is not isolated and so is constrained by its inter-actions with other creative moments.

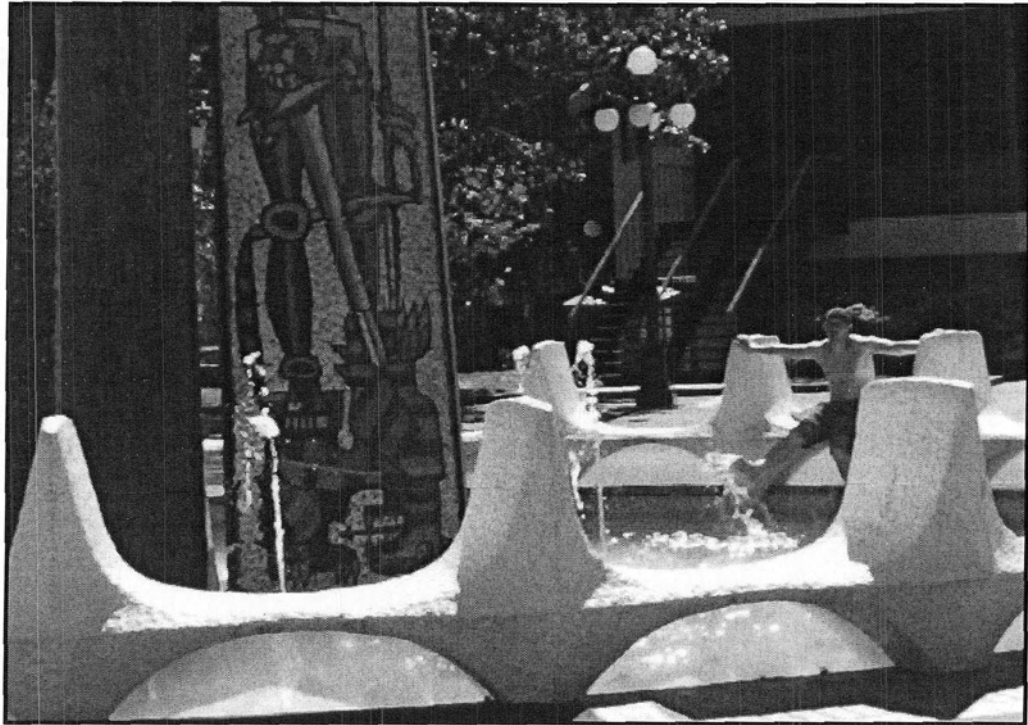


Figure 7: Centennial Fountain in a street scene

Victoria has its very own fountain setting an everyday street scene... Looking to the fountain as part of an everyday street scene we can get a sense for the ways that impressions function. Walking through Centennial Square on an un-eventful day (no official ceremonies), I come across a handful

of street involved people pausing to sit on the surrounding benches, and young 'punks' hanging out on the crown around the fountain.² Without describing the inter-actions within the street scene, we might already have an impression of it, without any clarity as to what causes or inspires it. The street scene has been set in the social imagination in such a way that any performance can be substituted for another; the Victoria street scene differs from the Chicago street scene only in details such as the costumes, sets, and particular re-enactments. This is the case because the street scene, just as the community scene, is scripted through urban renewal thinking as a universal phenomenon. In casting for the street scene urban renewal seeks free and autonomous individuals that refuse responsibility and transgress decency. Rather than performing the borders of decent and indecent, public and private, re-enactments of the street scene are marked by a generalization of these behaviors and spaces. In the street scene behaviours such as congregating in public, drug use and sexual activity are generalized, as opposed to the moral majority's ritually separating them into civic spaces, pubs and bedrooms. A 'slippery slope' connects hanging out with more pernicious activities – drug dealing, gangs etc. – and so the street scene emerges.³ In the urban renewal version of the street scene, the fountain is symbolically claimed by the street scene to pose a threat to the moral majority.

But the fountain as artwork that I am concerned with is inspired by urban sublimation thinking, in which street involved people are just creating their own styles of living (which may have the secondary effect of threatening the moral majority). This creative freedom is not sensitive to the ways that the inter-actions of the punks are vulnerable to impressions of the street scene as threatening – styles of dress, music and banter are influenced by this impression to have an edginess to them. In the sixties and early seventies the social problem identified by business owners, City Hall and the media was "hippie activities."⁴ Youths lounging and protesting were considered so detrimental to business that a "miniature 'Berlin Wall' for Centennial Square"

² We walk through Centennial Square at least once a week, but this particular scene is taken from a walk and picnic dinner we had on one of the benches around Centennial Fountain on 3 May 2005.

³ See for example Watts, "Square Called a cess pit," 9 October 1998.

⁴ Times Colonist, "Tighter Rein On Hippies Due at Square," 22 April 1970.

– a five and a half foot wall the length of the arcade from Douglas to the parkade – was proposed.⁵ Three decades later, the social problem in Centennial Square is identified as lounging ‘street youth.’⁶ As before, street involved people are considered detrimental to business, but rather than a planned wall around the arcade, the courtyard is actually fenced off and blocked from view with blue tarps for consumer recreation in various summer festivals.⁷ Across these moments, impressions of the street scene as dangerous influence the exclusion of people who do not display healthy prosperity, by framing them as limiting the moral majority’s access to public space and businesses.⁸ In the vein of urban sublimation one might suggest that street involved people don’t need the arcade or the courtyard to perform their way of life, but such a response becomes less tenable when it is the public washrooms that become off limits.⁹ The important point in the context of this exploration is that the inter-actions within the street scene are vulnerable to impressions of the street scene that inform inter-actions with other scenes (such as the consumer scenes of shopping and festivals). The young punks’ performances of style involving the crown of the fountain are thwarted when the square becomes the exclusive domain of consumers. They can no longer inter-act with the symbol of re-vitalized civic space. In order to maintain the impression of punkness, the youth may engage another symbol such as the library, or adjust their styles. Hence impressions influence both the way inter-actions re-create the street scene and how the scene itself can be re-enacted, and thus the inter-actions through which it emerges. Importantly, impressions, like cities, are not externally imposed, but emerge through inter-actions and so are continually re-created.

⁵ Other responses mentioned alongside this included increased policing, more discretion in issuing permits for protest meetings, and a call for creating more public squares for youths. Times Colonist, “Barbed Wire Next?,” 5 May 1970.

⁶ Soodeen, “Mayor worried,” 14 October 1998.

⁷ Desmarais, “Open up square,” 14 July 2004.

⁸ “If it means that the majority is suffering from the activities of a minority, we have to do something about it,” mayor Haddock said. Times Colonist, “Tighter Rein On Hippies,” 22 April 1970; “This is our square,” Mayor Cross says. “Everyone has the right to use it and that’s not happening.” Soodeen, “Mayor worried,” Times colonist, 14 October 1998.

⁹ It is said on the streets that one of the archivists at the City of Victoria archives complained about the presence of drug users and others that she experiences as threatening, so that the washrooms in Centennial Square became closed to the general public.

If we can think about vulnerability as a way of the street scene being and being in the street scene, we can think of challenging as a way of becoming.¹⁰ It is through challenging that the generalized field of the street scene is animated, by inciting inter-actions; the re-enactment of the scene requires that each inter-action is taken up as an invitation or a challenge by another inter-action. This does not mean that anything goes, but rather that inter-actions are limited by their ability to challenge forth other inter-actions. We can think of this as an empathetic mode of re-creating the capacities of inter-actions by vicariously sensing what will incite or incite inter-actions within or between scenes. For example, hippies had a sense that protesting around the fountain is within the civic scene's moral capacity (as marked by the issuing of licenses for such events), and that having sex on the fountain's crown during the day is beyond the civic scene's moral capacity (for whom sex is relegated to the private space of the 'home'); hippies may have challenged these capacities to broaden by engaging in some sex acts in the context of a public protest, but would have had a sense of a limit to that which the civic scene will tolerate before withdrawing from inter-actions (shuttering windows and media coverage) or removing hippies from a scene setting (arresting them for indecency). Through this example we can see that, while re-enacting can challenge the capacities of another scene, it does so only so long as inter-actions are sustained; this is also the modus operandi for inter-actions within a scene. In sum, unlike the singular moral of the origin story or the multiplicity of subjective creative moments, the street scene is influenced by continually re-negotiated senses of capacities for inter-action within and across scenes.

Vulnerability as a way of being, and challenging as a way of becoming are based on the contingency of inter-actions. On the one hand inter-actions are dependent on other inter-actions that we cannot know (we are never outside or after them); there is no one story of the fountain that determines others. On the other hand inter-actions proceed nonetheless in the flux of indeterminacy, without severing dependency on other inter-actions; the fountain as artwork is inspired as part of a scene of re-vitalization. So rather than actual

¹⁰ Our thinking on challenging has been influenced by Baudrillard's seduction, in which there is an offering up of a challenge that invites a return challenge (as opposed to demanding engagement). See Baudrillard, *Seduction*

inter-actions that can be completed and fixed, or possible inter-actions that are animated by the force of chaos, we are becoming sensitized to contingent inter-actions that are enigmatic and mutable. If we put our sense of the commemoration scene and the street scene into relation with one another, impressions of the fountain could include: a civic monument defamed by punks, a sensibility of politics in which the fountain is unable to effectively re-invoke the specters of youth, or it is channeling the kids playing on the crown in punks; and a place of sociality destroyed, as a political sensibility involving the monumentalizing of the street scene through stucco, or the monumentalizing of the civic scene's capacity for inclusion.

* * *

The Red Zone that is less familiar to us is the legal Red Zone, the no-go zone for street involved people at risk. In a sense we are exploring a scene that is set by naming downtown the Red Zone rather than Victoria. Amin and Thrift highlight the importance of naming in “city identification. The history of the local media can be read in these terms. In chronicling local events, a narrative of the city is constructed, and over the years the city comes to be memorialized in detail.”¹¹ In other words, we become familiar with the Red Zone through the infilling of its name with multiple tellings of stories, such as the novel *The Torn Skirt* in which a ‘red-zoned’ teenage girl followed the adventure of the streets into danger from a home with irresponsible parents.¹² Through these depictions the Red Zone becomes synonymous with the street scene, so that even if its particular name (the Red Zone) is not known, its popular name (the street scene) is. As we explored in the vignette of the fountain, like the community scene, the street scene has been set as a scene of universality, so that any performance can be substituted for another. Because we are involved in re-enacting the community scene, our approach to it was one that attempted to make it recognizable as a scene rather than as a desirable ‘reality.’ In approaching the street

¹¹ Amin and Thrift, *Cities*, p. 24.

¹² Rebecca Godfrey, *The Torn Skirt*, New York: Harper Collins, 2001.

scene, this work has already been done, so we can engage in the further challenge of inquiring into how the street scene is created. Taking this as the task at hand, I do not imagine that the street scene is a re-presentation of the everyday lives of street involved people. I recognize the street scene as a work of art, but strive to push beyond an artwork that refers to a creative vision, gesturing towards an artwork as a project that facilitates interactions and acts as an interface of impressions. It is these impressions that urbanities (refined re-actions) are vulnerable to in the politics of the everyday city.

The downtown Victoria street scene is generally set through artistic creation. Most commonly it is created through personal descriptions of a group of “street youth” or “punks” or “hippies” hanging out around the pizza joint; beginnings and endings can be added to these descriptions, but they really aren’t necessary to create an impression of the street scene as wasted. This is the case because each new description of the street scene is in relation with other descriptions, so it is in the context of those relations that each description must be understood. It is when such descriptions go CanWest Global that they take on spectacular proportions; here a description deemed legitimate is shared across the region, thus dominating the setting of the street scene, or in Amin and Thrift’s terms, memorialize it. Hence it is to media events that we look to get a sense for how the street scene is set in downtown Victoria. There are two primary kinds of media organizations that create the street scene: one is CanWest Global, and the other is street produced.

The CanWest Global media network in Victoria – the *TC* (previously *Times-Colonist*) newspaper and CH (City Hall) Television News – is the predominant daily news source in the Capital Region District. Looking to an eruption of the street scene, the “Johnson Street Parkade incident,” into the media network, we can get a sense for how the street scene is created. In late January of 2003, CH News captured footage of a young woman addicted to

heroin sitting in the Johnson Street Parkade holding her head with police cruisers with lights flashing on either side of her. This footage depicts signs of a crisis (with the cruisers' flashing lights), and an injured young woman who is being attended to by police, but their relationship is ambiguous (is she a victim or a criminal?). Picking a common thread through the stories told about the incident, a private security officer who was patrolling the parkade struck her on the head with a flashlight (causing her to experience a brain hemorrhage), which may or may not have been a response to her wielding a dirty needle as a weapon. While readers may interpret this variously – as an indication of an exploding problem with injection drug use, the insecurity of parkades, the excessive and unregulated violence of private security guards etc. – the TC explicitly states that the problem is the *bad impressions* that follow when drug users are treated as foreigners to downtown. In this light the problem is the “storm over the Johnson Street Parkade” – the storm being the effluence of talk about the problems downtown (drugs, violence) sparked by the incident.¹³ The TC directly relates the problem of making spectacles out of the issues of the street scene to the guard's intolerance; the former guard acknowledged drug users as part of the community, establishing limits that could be respected by taking users' needs into consideration (i.e. clean up after themselves). Hence, open-air injection drug use is not a problem so long as the stories that we tell about it, and thus re-enact, do not create the street scene (as a spectacle). Thus the street scene as set by CanWest Global is constituted of the stories that are told

¹³ This storm includes a range of media events, primarily hosted by CanWest Global, but another prominent one is the City of Victoria media event used to announce the *Downtown Health Initiative: Action Plan*. This included speeches by Alan Lowe (Mayor of the City of Victoria), Marilyn Rook (executive vice president and chief operating officer of VIHA), and Paul Battershill (Victoria Police Chief). Taking aim on drug addiction and mental health, there was talk of intensifying and integrating support services for consumers, as well as cracking down on dealers with a Drug Task Force. Although the action plan was conceived of prior to the Johnson Street Parkade incident, it is in relationship to the incident that the Mayor situated the announcement. See City of Victoria, “Action Plan Short & Long Terms Actions,” *Downtown Health Initiative*, Victoria: City of Victoria, 31 January 2003, Available at: http://www.city.victoria.bc.ca/cityhall/currentprojects_downtown_action_plan.shtml

about it, rather than the everyday urbanities of addicts. It is a scene that can be minimized through tolerance in everyday inter-actions, and thus avert the crisis of appearances, which creates discomfort in the audience (the community scene).

In addition to CanWest Global, there is another kind of media organization involved in creating the street scene: street produced media. Looking to how street produced media re-act to the making of the street scene as a spectacle to be minimized, is a way for us to consider some of the limits of the CanWest Global re-enactment of the street scene. In order to explore these limits, we look to the *Red Zone*, a street produced newspaper that had a similar prominence in Victoria, with consistent production and fairly wide distribution over four years.¹⁴ Rather than being a discomfort, the street scene as a spectacle is created by the *Red Zone* as a site of struggle. Taking the everyday urbanities of those cast for the street scene as the primary concern, rather than the comfort of the audience (the community scene), the street scene is re-enacted as a *scene of vulnerability*. Furthermore, by highlighting that the comfort of the community scene is secured in opposition to the discomfort of the street scene that threatens its comfort, the implicit vulnerability of the community scene also becomes visible. The impression of the community scene's healthy prosperity is revealed as increasingly unable to obscure the way that we are all becoming 'homeless.' Such a realization demands re-visioning of our ways of thinking, and there are indications in the *Red*

¹⁴ The only other media that I consider to be street produced that I have been able to acquire through Food Not Bombs is *Street Press: the un-official 'zine of dissent*, a zine produced by street involved youth in the same building as the Victoria Street Community Association. It was produced over a couple years and as a 'zine was less frequently produced than the newspaper and had more limited distribution. See Victoria Street Press, *Street Press: the un-official 'zine of dissent*, ['zine] Victoria, 1994-1995. Although it would be interesting to do an analysis of this zine in relation to mainstream media and the *Red Zone*, it is beyond the purview of this current project. Other media that some might consider street produced are the *Street Newz* newspaper, and the dvd *Hide & Go Homeless*. Although these re-present perspectives of street involved people and involve street involved people to some degree, the former is produced by an activist middle-class woman, and the latter was produced as part of a government re-training program and facilitated by a social worker. Street Incomplete and Mask Removal Production, *Hide & go Homeless*, [dvd], Victoria, 2005.

Zone that both urban renewal and urban sublimation thinking can adapt to these demands. Against the re-vitalization of the battle between the community and the street scene, I suggest that the dis-position of vulnerability, while lacking the revolutionary potential enabled by anger or the oblique creative potential enabled by love, is the risky quality of the everyday that we must become sensitive to in order to move through it.

In the remainder of this chapter we will re-cycle through the analyses of creative visioning, exploring limits, and scenic thinking in approaching the quality of vulnerability. First, we will examine the TC-CH News “Red Zone” series, which was developed in response to the storm over the Johnson Street Parkade. In this creation of the street scene there are three characters sketched, with distinct sensations: the selfishness of the urban nomad, the sick criminality of the drug-addicted drug dealer and the warm meanness of the merchant. Second, in order to explore the limits of the CanWest Global re-creation of the relations between the street scene’s care-free capitalism and the community scene’s care-full capitalism, we will look to a street produced re-enactment of the street scene as a scene of vulnerability. It will become clear that it is not only the street scene, but also the community scene that is being re-enacted as a scene of vulnerability, displacing the care-free/care-full distinction with an emergent ecological capitalism. Re-newing capitalism as ecological (just for the environment and people) involves changing ways of thinking. One style of thinking that is offered in the *Red Zone* is poetry, so it is to poetry that we will look for indications of the re-visioning of embattled thinking. Through the excess of poetry we will see that there continues to be a re-visioning of the battle between urban renewal and urban sublimation thinking; but there is one poem that gestures towards another mode: challenging. I suggest that the dis-position of vulnerability and the challenging style of inter-actions enable us to conceptualize how we might re-enact a scene of urban activism.

Street scene

We can most clearly see the CanWest Global creation of the street scene in the “Red Zone: Our Troubled Downtown Core” series – a five-day series of CH evening news features and four days of TC articles.¹⁵ The series as a whole is only spoken to in an anonymous and photo-less article that is buried in the back pages of the TC, and yet by bearing the “Red Zone” logo it speaks for the series without reference to journalists (i.e. creative visionaries). In the title “Time to act on downtown’s problems,” this article foreshadows a concern with temporality in approaching the Red Zone. At stake in the face of these problems is the heart of downtown – a metaphor articulated in its dual function of capital circulation (shopping, business) and care (health). Speaking for TC-CH News and the series as a whole, “we,” it is made explicit that the problem is one of discomfort with appearances rather safety concerns, and thus is not comparable to the actual danger of Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. A decline in the number of people moving *through* downtown is explained as a manifestation of discomfort with the rising number of people *on* the streets. Being uncomfortable is a subjective experience, but it is here given the fixed form of “our community” by confining “people on the streets” within nighttime, a time of heightened discomfort. Although both are people, one lurks in the shadows of night haunting those who prefer the illumination of day. This metaphor is loaded with ideas about light and dark, good and bad, knowledgeable and ignorant, giving moral force to the urgency to act against the rise in the number of “people on the streets.”¹⁶ Despite mention of

¹⁵ “Our Toubled Downtown Core” is the byline of the series. Jody Paterson, Louise Dickson, Gerard Young, and Darren Stone, “Introduction,” *Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, Victoria, 7 Februray 2003, A1.

¹⁶ The emblematic metaphor of seeing the light is Plato’s cave. Plato, “The Republic,” *Great Dialogues of Plato*, W.H.D. Rouse trans., New York: Signet Classic, 1999 (1956), VII, pp. 312-341.

addressing the plural problems of the causes of homelessness, there is a subtle shift to the singular aesthetic problem of discomfort with appearances. The CanWest global media network is working to illuminate the problems that emerge in the night, in order that the light of day might shine unwaveringly at all times.¹⁷

By understanding the problem of the street scene as one of discomfort with appearances, the TC-CH News network is able to elevate graffiti to the level of seriousness of drug dealing. Using thievery as a bridge between the drug dealing that is being targeted by the City of Victoria's Downtown Action Plan and petty crime, the aesthetic problem of graffiti is elevated as the missing dimension of the plan. Focus is put on the parallel campaign by City Hall to discourage graffiti (mandatory cleanup within 14 days), and the success story of New York City's 'broken windows' campaign.¹⁸ But whereas New York was battling minor crime to signal a policy of no tolerance in order to discourage major crime, Victoria does not have a problem with major crime. Nonetheless transposing this model, minor crime is made major so that "actions that break no laws at all" become minor crimes against comfort that need to be addressed. Thus the startling implication of framing the problem as one of discomfort with appearances is that legal actions, that we people of the day are uncomfortable with, become intolerable in order to discourage petty crime such as graffiti.¹⁹

¹⁷ Times Colonist (TC), "Time to act on downtown's problems," *Victoria Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 9 February 2003, D2.

¹⁸ Wilson and Kelling conceptualized this approach by taking perception of disorder and crime seriously. "at the community level, disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence. Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken....one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It has always been fun.)" p. 269, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, "Broken Windows," *City Reader*, 3rd Ed., Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout eds., New York: Routledge, 2003 (1982), pp. 267- 276.

¹⁹ TC "Time to act," D2.

In the concluding paragraphs the reasoning behind such an unreasonable transgression of rights emerges: we are aligned with the interests of business – merchants are framed as the ones with the biggest stake in downtown, a financial stake. In the heart of downtown it is the circulation of capital that is made most important, and it is against the loss of this function that readers are called to act: “The time for action is now.” The downtown core is made an “asset” over which a war between merchants and people on the streets is being fought; the heart in both its material and symbolic functions is commodified. The problem is an uncomfortable aesthetic that is more faithful to the habits of streets than the rituals of community. The CanWest Global news network is mobilizing immediate action against that which offends a polite consumer aesthetic.²⁰

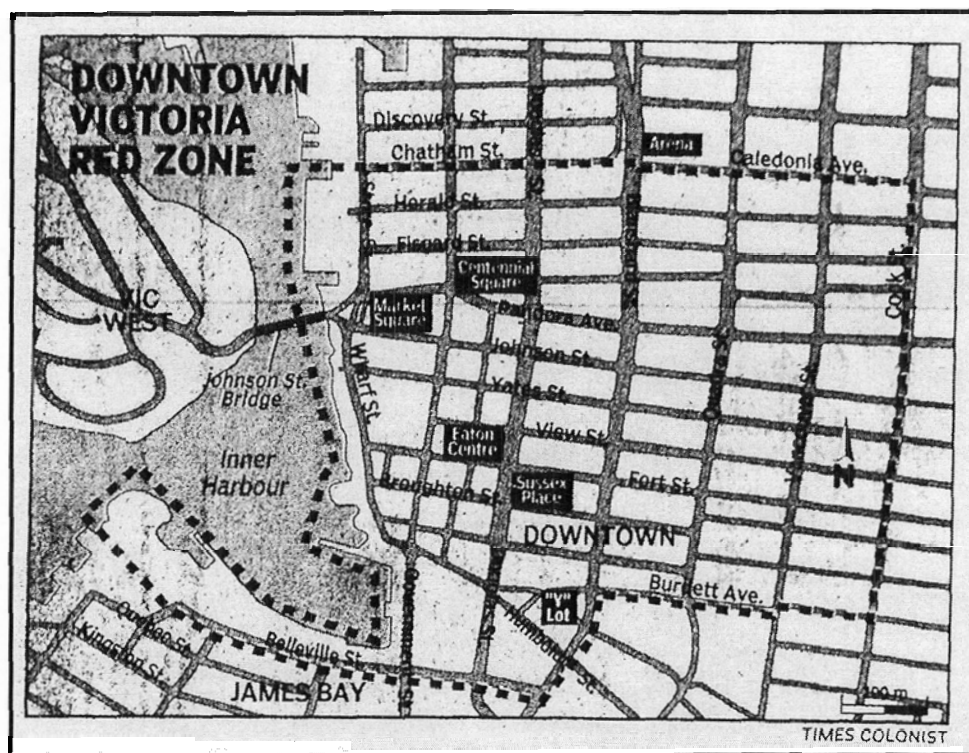


Figure 8: Map of Red Zone

²⁰ TC “Time to act,” D2.

The first TC installment to the series is created in proper anthropological style, beginning with a map with the border of the Red Zone marked in a dotted line (See Figure 8), photographs and field notes at intervals throughout “24 Hours in the Red Zone.”²¹ The border of the map operates in relation to roads, the shoreline, and landmarks that would be familiar to someone who is local to the area with disposable income (many of the landmarks are related to shopping). Designed by the TC, this map is used to greet readers with a comfortable sense for the spatially contained form of the Red Zone. If the map was intended to represent the urbanities of the Red Zone, it would include a different set of landmarks – “crack corner,” the needle exchange, the dead zone etc. The activities of people who use downtown happen in particular places at particular times, but everywhere and always is the street community. There is only one entry in the field notes that does not specify a place: “3:25 a.m., everywhere downtown: The bar crowd is gone and the street community is visible again.” In other words, the Red Zone as a space is entirely occupied by the street community, and as a time is active in the dead of night. This general spatio-temporal sense of the form of the Red Zone is given the texture of troubles through the field notes that follow – nomadism, sickness, criminality and sadness. First, there is the *selfishness* of “urban nomads” (a name given to them by police and adopted by the TC), traveling youth who choose to be street involved.²² Second, there is the *sickness* of the drug-addicted who are locked into a closed circuit of buying drugs and selling drugs or sex. Third, there is the *criminality* that can infect either urban nomads or drug-addicted. Finally there is the *sadness* of the poor, victims of unfortunate circumstances that could befall anyone. This

²¹ Jody Paterson, Louise Dickson, and Darren Stone, “24 Hours in the Red Zone,” *Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 7 February 2003, A1, A10-A11.

²² Whereas the other feelings are specified, the selfishness of urban nomads is implied in their imposing themselves on the streets and the people of Victoria. For more on the “sick, sad and criminal” see Jody Paterson and Darren Stone, “Search for Solutions,” *Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 10 February 2003, A5.

typology of troubles – selfishness, sickness, criminality, and sadness – is the focus of the series. Approaching the series, I am interested in developing a sense of the street scene as an artwork, and so will leave aside aspects of the series in which the creativity of urban sublimation is explicitly re-directed towards the community scene; this includes coverage of police and social service activities, as well the sadness of the poor, who are framed as re-entering the community scene with the support of social services.²³ Hence I will offer sketches of the selfishness of urban nomads, the sickness and criminality of drug-addicted drug dealers, and their counterpart, the righteous businessperson.

As re-presented by the TC, street involved people are not numerous but they are “living large enough to drive downtown merchants and Victoria city councilors mad.” The implications for positing “living large” as the overarching problem that the street community poses for each of the troubled groups are not clear, but I advance the following possibilities: the youth are squandering love, drug use is indulgent, and criminals are extravagant. Presumably business people are living modestly in comparison. These do not necessarily reflect the CanWest Global creative impulse, but ambiguity enables audience members (such as myself) to create their own interpretations: that is the glory of art.²⁴ Despite ambiguity in the particularities, the discomfort of the viewer created through the Johnson Street Parkade incident, “the perception that downtown just isn’t safe,” is clearly used as the sense through

²³ See Paterson and Stone, “Search for Solutions,” A5.

²⁴ Rough estimates by the police are presented as statistical representations of the makeup of the homeless population. Of the approximately sixty people who are considered homeless, the largest group is the urban nomads (25 people), followed by the sick with a total of 20 people (12 drug-addicted and 8 mentally ill), and the homeless by default with only about half of each of these groups (12 people). The fourth trouble identified by the TC, criminality, is treated as a separate entity. Totalling 40 people, the criminal includes “drug dealers, sex trade workers and hangers on” who are street involved through their work. It is unclear who the ‘hangers on’ are, but in its generality this category could be used as a catch all for minor criminals (i.e. graffiti artists). Taken together, there are about 100 street involved people, which is “A small number in a region of more than 300 000.” Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”

which the more immediate sensations of the street scene are experienced.²⁵ This suggests that the community scene's adoption of aesthetic governance based on appearances is accompanied by an aesthetic of insecurity.

Youth: cool selfish urban nomad

The character on the streets that is closest to those of us re-enacting the community scene is the selfish urban nomad. The urban nomad is scripted as a child of the community scene who is acting irresponsibly in their youth – refusing the freedom and responsibility of the community scene. Urban nomads are identified as “kids” who have loving families, as exemplified by Alex Monteau – who has been well supported by his family, but squanders their love and shirks responsibility.²⁶ The prominent face that the TC gives to this pack of youths is that of Benoit Hallis, a young urban nomad from Montreal (See Figure 9). With an image of his hooded face taking up more than half a page, and an image of John Bigeye “dressed in standard streetwear: camouflage pants and a hooded grey sweatshirt” on the facing page, it appears that street involved people are being stereotyped by the TC as urban nomads.

²⁵ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, [video], Victoria: CanWest Global, released by CH News in December 2004 to author, 6 February 2003.

²⁶ Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”



Figure 9: urban nomad

The signs of cold in both the images of urban nomads – rubbing hands, crossed arms – are recast by a description of Victoria as an ideal place for living on the streets. For example, Hallis is quoted in the caption as saying “it beats minus 40 in Montreal.” In addition to the weather, urban nomads note that there are nice people in Victoria, as well as an abundance of support services.²⁷ Victoria as a nice place echoes in the story of Yakob, a mentally ill man who doesn’t get thrown in jail and mental institutions in Victoria, which he did in Manitoba and Ontario. In this way the story of the mentally ill fits the profile of the

²⁷ Paterson, Dickson, and Stone, “24 Hours.”

urban nomad, with the distinction of mannerisms such as preaching, bodily detachment and belief in immortality. This is counter-intuitive because the mentally ill are sick, but they are marked by the TC with the key feature of choosing Victoria as a better place to be. Creating the urban nomad as a child of the community scene who chooses Victoria affirms the impression of the community scene as nice, and of the urban nomad as cool rather than cold, appreciative rather than mean.

Due to the niceness of Victoria, urban nomads and the activity that they are identified with, panhandling, is framed as “Victoria’s permanent trademark.” Urban nomads are framed as an annoyance (rather than a problem) to merchants, and it seems that the TC is resigned to accepting the presence of this group of people; individual urban nomads will likely become housed in their own time, but their positions on the streets will filled by others.²⁸ Although the urban nomads are merely an annoyance, CH news dedicates one of their features to the activity of panhandling, as a challenge faced by merchants. Viewers are brought into the examination of panhandling through a scene of panhandlers on the street that is shot from the height of an average adult’s hip. This perspective lends immediacy to the people on the streets, as might be experienced by children; through this adult-playing-child view²⁹ the announcer frames the scene: “a stroll in the Red Zone is not like a walk in the park: you are constantly being hit up for money.” Outside the licit spaces of capital flow (i.e. stores) are public spaces that are idealized as re-creational, but occupied by those who drain the capital flow. Informed by the cool appreciation and irresponsibility of the urban nomad, I term the economy at the other end of the drain *care-free capitalism*.

²⁸ Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”

²⁹ This is the perspective adopted by Benjamin in his wanders of the city, in which the child’s perspective provides immediacy of experience and yet is a stranger to the city. For a concise analysis of the immersion made possible by adopting a child’s perspective in Benjamin’s work see Graeme Gilloch, *Myth and Metropolis*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.

Behind baggy jean wearing people and face to face with people asking for money, what is not engaged with by this adult-playing-child is the playfulness of the panhandler (Kramer) who in seeing the camera takes on a role – “Hi, I’m actor Dan McClearen, spokesman for...” Perhaps this is what CH News might identify as one of the “strange things going on” that exceeds the functional behaviour of panhandling.³⁰ Simply scripting playfulness as strange ignores the ways that it works to reveal the creative processes at work in the media. Kramer’s commentary makes explicit that the narrator, regardless of who it is (for example the one from CH News that informs us of the occupation of re-creational spaces by care-free capitalism), is an actor; the community is a scene just as much as the street is a scene. Through his playfulness, Kramer takes on a role and thus makes his interaction with the audience (the community scene) a project by intervening in the imaging of the street scene as irresponsible, and by analogy uncritical. In his playfulness Kramer dupes the news editors and the narrator (who presumably were not critical enough to catch his subtle play) into depicting the community scene as scripted and acted.

The flipside to the playfulness framed by the adult-playing-child is the anger filmed from on high, looking down on another urban nomad “John Bigeye.” Approaching this indigenous person (the only non-caucasian person featured in the entire series) from on high is consonant with the paternalistic approach that marks colonization efforts.³¹ Through this adult perspective we are exposed to the anger that is fundamental to his homelessness – “I’m angry, I just cover it up by living on the streets.” Looking down on the urban nomad we can see the child of the community scene as unable to communicate emotions in an adult

³⁰ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 9 Feb 2003.

³¹ For more on the paternalistic approach of the Canadian government to indigenous people, as Indians see: Menno Boldt, *Surviving as Indians: The Challenge of Self-Government*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

manner, and so we can think of him as a child having a temper tantrum.³² In sum whether by playfulness or anger, the urban nomad is panhandling because they are choosing not to take responsibility for their lives. But whereas playfulness has critical capacities, anger (as framed from on high) only reinforces the community scene's script of personal responsibility.³³ As opposed to the responsible living of the community scene, the way of life of the urban nomad – panhandling – is debased from a mode of employment in the licit flow of capital by the declaration that “this isn't what most people would call living.” Panhandling is scripted as unnecessary, the image of panhandling undesirable, and thus cannot be considered human activity; below the status of responsible adults' understanding of life (as the exercise of freedom and responsibility), panhandling is degraded to a sub-human mode of scavenging.³⁴ Thus panhandling shifts from the status of annoyance to that of problem, despite its legality. I suggest that we regard this as an example of the unreasonable intolerance associated with framing the problem of the Red Zone as the community scene's discomfort with appearances.

Although the prominent image of the urban nomad is from somewhere else, the inclusion of a brief sketch of Victoria-born William suggests that movement across space is not the primary marker of this aesthetic way of life. The choice of wording avoids calling him a Victorian, marking William as from the place, but separate from the way of life of Victoria. This distinction is made through his panhandling and extensive criminal activities, whose physical and administrative dirtiness make his getting off the streets very difficult.³⁵

³² CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 9 Feb 2003.

³³ It is possible that framed from the perspective of the adult-playing-child another view of anger, perhaps as a drive for justice or force for transformation, would emerge. Such a possibility is traced by Janice Acoose in her bending of academia to explore the politics of indigenous women as a grandchild. Janice Acoose (Misko-Kisikàwihkwè), *Iskwewak-kah'ki yaw ni wahkomakanak: neither Indian princesses nor easy squaws*, Toronto: Women's Press, 1995.

³⁴ *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 9 Feb 2003.

³⁵ Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”

Importantly, the criminal activities of the urban nomad do not make him a criminal person, because as an irresponsible youth he cannot have criminal intent. The urban nomad has the potential for maturity, to grow into the community scene from which he has deviated.

In the image of the urban nomad there is potential for adopting not only the place, but also the way of life of nice Victoria. This is illustrated in the sketch of the resident in whom a hope for the renewal of the City is invested. The downtown resident is a female relative of the urban nomad – imaged as a young woman in her loft in street wear, a hoodie with skull prints, holding her pet iguana – who is happy to be “where the action is.” Her interest in action manifests in urban nomad style clothing and playfulness – manifest in her artistic proclivity as a “budding” career photographer – but she also demonstrates an ability to nurture a pet (albeit an untraditional one). She is the poster girl for the City’s desire to hear people speaking optimistically about living downtown. It may be worth noting that in many respects I could be she. All the downtown residents featured – her, her ex-roommate, and another young man – are attracted to the atmosphere and convenience of living downtown, but they all dislike “being hit on by drug dealers and prostitutes.” These activities constitute the limits of residents’ comfort, but her playfulness overrides discomfort. In a time when comfortable masculinity – as in the image of a young man smiling in a casual button down shirt – is moving out of downtown Victoria it seems that only those who are close to street culture in their dress and playfulness, yet differentiated by their gender (read: nurturing) are surviving as residents in the changing downtown.³⁶ The renewal of nice Victoria relies on the ability of the female artistic relative of the urban nomads to transform discomfort into artistic edge in order to bridge from the irresponsibility of the street scene to a vibrant artistic community scene. In other words, it is the very playfulness of the urban

³⁶ Gerard Young and Debra Brash, “Address: Downtown,” *Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 9 February 2003, D6.

nomad that is invested with the hope for the re-vitalization of the community scene (and its comfortable masculinity). This puts me in a very suspect relationship to this project.

Maturity: drug-addicted drug dealer

Whatever hope for urban renewal that may be discovered in the cool selfish urban nomads is absent in the generalized sickness and criminality of the drug-addicted drug dealer. In this plane of contingency only purposeless forces such as pity and fear can pass.

Addiction is a sickness that is attributed by the TC to 12 hardcore addicts whose littering of needles and criminal activities that fund their addictions make them a threat to all readers, as evidenced by addressing the reader as “you.” This threat brings the reader into the street (your health and safety are at risk due to sickness and criminality); this generalization of the threats of the street is confirmed in the next section in which readers are addressed as potential addicts: “If you’re an addict yourself, you’ll be worrying about diseases.”

Generalization is not unidirectional; the street is also brought into the home, internalized by the family unit – your children are vulnerable to the crystal methane dealer. There ceases to be a safe space of community, bringing the community into the streets and the streets into the community.³⁷ We have gone from observers of the street scene to participant observers. We are all becoming ‘homeless.’ As embedded in this plane of the street scene, everyone is made vulnerable to the dangers of sickness and criminality. The TC reinforces that the danger is aesthetic: “Even if it is a safe city, the problems are often high-profile.”³⁸

³⁷ Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”

³⁸ Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”

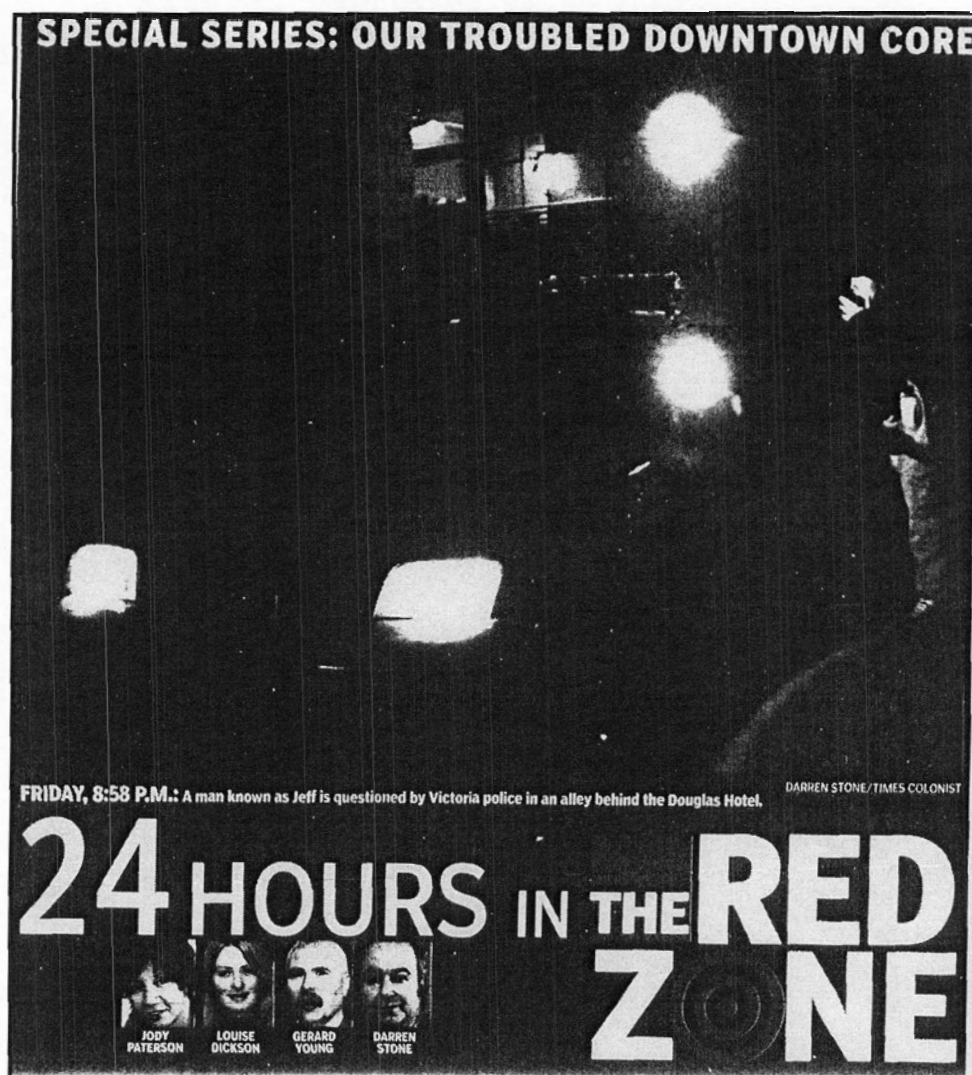


Figure 10: drug-addicted drug dealer

Beyond the gestures necessary to bring readers into the generalized space of the street scene, the immediate sensation of sickness and criminality is created through depictions of the drug-addicted drug dealer. He is a “young HIV-infected heroin addict fresh out of jail for trafficking ... he’s ‘red-zoned’ – but he says he can’t stay away when all the social agencies he needs are in the same area.”³⁹ In his words: “you’re dying and you

³⁹ This connection is sealed in the profile offered of Jeff as “fresh out of jail on a trafficking conviction ... HIV-positive” in “The Streets of Hard Knocks,” CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 7 Feb 2003.

need help but you can't go to the person who can help you."⁴⁰ He is the cover boy for both the TC and CH News portions of the series: it is a photo of him interacting with the police on the front page of the TC issue introducing the series, and footage of him being followed by police into an alley and interrogated by police that introduces the first two CH News features (See Figure 10).⁴¹ Hence, despite the visual profiling of street involved people in the field notes as urban nomads in order to make the community scene familiar with the space-time of the street scene, the profile that is used to represent *Our Troubled Downtown Core* as a whole, is that of the drug-addicted drug dealer. The mixture of sickness and criminality that the drug-addicted drug dealer embodies takes form in the police discoveries of syringes and a knife in his pack. The police activity and the imposition of the Red Zone are framed as necessary to "stem the downtown drug trade."⁴² The force of necessity comes from the threat that the drug-addicted drug dealer poses to merchants; the visibility of drug dealing (marked as criminal by the flashing lights of the police cruisers in the photo and footage included) is scaring away potential customers according to the testimony of a downtown clerk.⁴³ In other words, this is a threat posed by an economy that is too sick to care about the drain that the appearance of criminality puts on the licit circulation of capital – the drug-addicted drug dealer is operating along with the urban nomad in a care-free economy.

Despite the conjoining of addiction and criminality in the drug-addicted drug dealer, there are aspects of each that are treated separately. On the one hand, addiction is aimless, but there are forces that pass through the addict; the cover boy describes his experience of

⁴⁰ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 6 Feb 2003.

⁴¹ Both CH News' "Scott" and the TC's "Jeff" are living in a car with their girlfriend, have HIV and other diseases, have recently gotten out of jail, and are involved with police in the same alley. Considering the overlap in their personal facts, it is very possible that they are in fact the same person, with different pseudonyms. This connection is sealed in the profile offered of Jeff as "fresh out of jail on a trafficking conviction ... HIV-positive" Paterson and Stone, "The Streets of Hard Knocks."

⁴² CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 6 Feb 2003.

⁴³ Gerard Young and Debra Brash, "Give Our Regards to Broad Street," *Times Colonist*, *Our Troubled Downtown Core* Special Series, 9 February 2003, D1, D7.

heroin, his drug of choice, as “a big warm hug from God.” The experience of inner warmth that transcends the everyday is not explored any further, instead focusing on the financial cost of his addiction – fifty dollars a day.⁴⁴ On the other hand, criminality is given the purpose of profit – the dealers are “those who profit off the addiction of others.” The dealer is portrayed as a profiteer as separate from the addict. That these two aspects are conjoined is symbolized when the CH camera “captures the dope” that he is dealing to finance his addiction, confirming the simultaneity of using and dealing drugs, addiction and profiteering. Interestingly, CH News does not criminalize him because he is already “paying the ultimate price for his addiction,” his life. Listing his health problems (epilepsy, Hepatitis C, HIV), homelessness, and desire to avoid the bad crowd, he is framed as being punished through the crushing of his desire for health and a healthy community by the sickness (discomfort) of the street scene. In the final scene he says “It’s too late to start feeling sorry for me. Yeah, I’m dying,” suggesting that there may have been a point at which “feeling sorry for him,” or compassion of some sort, may have been effectual; perhaps that would have been a time when he would have been considered an urban nomad. With that moment having passed, he and his girlfriend turn to walk down the alley along a wall full of graffiti, and around the corner. The drug-addicted drug dealer was once a lost youth, but is now a youth lost.⁴⁵ He consumes and deals in a care-free economy that re-cycles drugs and money for survival in a scene of discomfort.

Rather than an image of conjoined addiction and criminality, the drug-addicted sex worker is entirely invisible in the CH News coverage, and hidden in the text of the TC. In the absence of visual modes of becoming familiar with her, the drug-addicted sex worker is

⁴⁴ I use the term extreme here because HIV is not as common among users as Hepatitis C, and on top of both of these Scott also has epilepsy.

⁴⁵ *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 7 Feb 2003.

introduced through her nickname, Little Red Riding Hood. Similar to the drug-addicted drug dealer, the drug-addicted sex worker is re-presented as more criminal than sick, being vulnerable to being policed out because soliciting sex is illegal. She is suffering desperate circumstances – articulated by an officer: “if you see girls working down here, you know they’re hard up.” Just as the TC presents a trend in increasing homelessness and danger in downtown Victoria, there are indications of an increase in the numbers of sex workers and the risks that they are exposed to. Having been policed out of downtown, sex workers are pushed into more remote areas such as an industrial park. In addition, johns seem to be drunker. Little Red Riding Hood embodies sickness and criminality, being infected by HIV, hepatitis-C, hepatitis-B and tuberculosis and exposing others to her sicknesses in desperate street level sex work. The physical illnesses that the dealer and sex worker are exposed to are the same. It is as if together he (the drug-addicted drug dealer) and she (the desperate sex solicitor) are suffering the same fundamental sickness in different ways according to their criminality. It is in this unison that the closed circuit of the Red Zone economy presented in the introductory paragraphs of the series – “easiest place to buy drugs and sell sex” – begins to make sense. The effect of this pairing is to make invisible the sickness involved in care-free capital flow by presenting criminality as a closed circuit of exchange. But the drug-addicted drug dealer stands in for her in representing the series of downtown Victoria as a whole. She is invisible.⁴⁶ An implication of the closed circuit of criminality and the invisibility of her desperation is that we need not pity the drug-addicted criminal (as he suggests). Only fear is necessary.

In contrast to the emphasis on the criminality of the drug-addicted drug dealer and the drug-addicted sex worker, sickness is emphasized in the image of the drug-addicted thief,

⁴⁶ Jody Paterson, Louise Dickson, and Darren Stone, “24 Hours in the Red Zone,” *Victoria Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 7 February 2003, A1, A10-A11.

as re-presented by CH News. We are introduced to the drug-addicted thief in a flash to a close-up of a man shooting up, the unseen activities of the drug-addicted drug dealer are made explicit: he is a drug user. CH News frames this visibility as something more than the privilege of the camera, constituting the problem itself – being able to see people shooting up in broad daylight. Panning across alleys and parkades littered with drug paraphernalia and people doing drugs, a sense of the widespread visibility of drug-use is shored up as the problem. Despite his verbal claim of being a careful user, the footage of the drug-addicted thief shooting up with drops of blood dripping down his arm create a scene that would make most anyone uncomfortable.⁴⁷ The close-ups combined with his explanatory language create a sense of a drug addiction ‘how-to’ manual, from seeking a bigger rush to the mechanics of injection drug use. Listening closely to the latter betrays that behind the how-to aesthetic there are other stories being told; at one point he seems to be recounting an unfortunate experience he had shooting up, in which two-thirds of the way through he began to hear things. This more personal story is not only truncated, but also silenced by couching it in an explanatory framework. Moving from the how-to shoot up into the how-to secure his next fix, while shooting up in a washroom, he explains that he stole two bottles of perfume and sold them. Here the connections between drug-use and crime, and crime and women who can’t refuse a super deal, are made explicit. This story of care-free capitalism implicates *everyone who wants a deal* in the drug deal, which unfolds over the complete visual story of injection drug use – from cooking morphine with an alcohol wipe pad all the way through to injection.⁴⁸ Through the drug-addicted thief we begin to get a sense for the substantive threat of the care-free economy to licit capital flow: goods and services can be provided to those in the community scene more cheaply and conveniently (the perfume comes to you no

⁴⁷ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 6 Feb 2003.

⁴⁸ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 7 Feb 2003.

need to wander through the isles to find it). The community scene actively supports the care-free economy by an exercise of the logic associated with licit capital flow.

The drug-addicted criminal stands in for the entire “street community.” In addition to growing numbers of homeless people, with an increase in drug-addicted criminals, “the streets are meaner than ever.” The nice feeling of Victoria, the symbolic heart of the city, is at stake. There is no attempt to index meanness; the focus is put on drug use by including a statistic that charts a record numbers of needles exchanged in a month. The police’s statistical breakdown of the ‘street community’ – including sex workers and the homeless – is telescoped down to the core indicator of increased drug use.⁴⁹ The meanness of the drug-addicted criminal is symbolic of the care-free economy’s threat to the licit circulation of capital downtown. By maintaining that this threat consists of appearances of criminality, the ways that the community scene works to support the care-free economy (by the exercise of its logic of convenience and good value) is obscured by baseless fear.

(pro)creation: warmly mean merchants

At the intersection between the street scene and the community scene are merchants, depicted as having two predominant sensations: meanness and compassion. Moving into the spread of the issue that features the concerns of merchants, the headline *Mean Streets* is accompanied with a half page photo of a homeless man sleeping in the doorway of a downtown business alongside a shopping cart filled with his stuff. The caption introduces skepticism about the niceness of Victoria: “Some wonder whether Victorians are really worried about the root problems, or are just sick of acknowledging their existence.” Considering the photo’s juxtaposition of the homeless with business, and the text’s

⁴⁹ Paterson and Stone, “The Streets of Hard Knocks.”

beginning with a presentation of merchants' perspectives, it seems that 'Victorians' are represented by merchants. The photo might be better suited to a headline such as *Mean Merchants* rather than *Mean Streets*. Choosing the latter makes the homeless foreign to their home – the streets – enabling an exclusion of the homeless from the citizenship status of Victorian. If the homeless were foreign only to merchants they could be considered local to the streets, and to Victoria itself.⁵⁰ Instead, merchants are local to the nice interior spaces of Victoria, and meanness is externalized, scripted onto the streets.

Merchants defend these spaces, becoming mean warriors whose energies are (to some degree) captured by urban renewal, as evidenced in an article running with an emblematic headline: *Reclaiming Downtown*.⁵¹ It is from the vantage of the police and the concerns of merchants – through an image of Chief Paul Battershill addressing merchants – that readers are drawn into the article. The caption⁵² evokes a sense of eroding safety and relates it to government downsizing and the loss of the Business Improvement Association. This perception of un-safety is used to explain the difficulty of getting people to reside downtown, trumping the growing tourist interest in downtown Victoria. In the absence of residents, the text opens with the frustrations and anger of merchants. They claim downtown residency status despite their sub-urban habitations, on the basis of monetary contributions to the City in the way of taxes. Forgetting their 'homelessness' in the Red Zone and re-membering them as at home in city coffers, merchants achieve the status of residents. The problem as clarified by the TC is a change in "the mood" downtown, because

⁵⁰ Paterson and Stone, "The Streets of Hard Knocks."

⁵¹ Louise Dickson, "Reclaiming Downtown," *Victoria Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 9 February 2003, D5.

⁵² "Victoria police Chief Paul Battershill, addressing an audience of merchants, encourages people to live downtown. But it's an uphill battle. Despite its appeal to tourists, the city seems less safe than ever, and has been hit by government downsizing and the loss of its business improvement group." Louise Dickson, "Reclaiming Downtown," *Victoria Times Colonist*, Our Troubled Downtown Core Special Series, 9 February 2003, D5.

of the street community's increased drug dealing, use, and aggression. Unable to speak to mood directly, the statistics indicating an increasing demand for beds at a shelter that does not have a strict sober policy and an increasing use of the needle exchange, and the fear of single women are used as oblique and ambiguous evidence of an increase in aggression on the streets.⁵³ The mood as articulated by the mayor is a "tunnel of frustration, fear and despair."⁵⁴ In a sense the quality of the street scene as created by the CanWest Global media network with an aesthetic of selfishness and criminality – frustration and fear – is the substantive problem for merchants.

Rather than turning inwards on the frustration and fear, merchants make urgent calls to war, as in the opening text highlighting merchants' demands for "bringing in the army and turning fire hoses on homeless people sleeping in front of their stores." These calls to war contribute to urban renewal efforts but they are made outside of it, exceeding the safety concerns of the City and the security capabilities of the police. The safety and security of the licit flow of capital involves assessing and pre-empting violence in the "mean streets" – the latent violence that is scripted into the street scene. The war zone that merchants occupy is marked by the assembling of private police, barred windows and iron gates. Such signs of violence are meanness put in the service of healthy prosperity in a war against urban nomads and drug-addicted criminals by virtual residents.⁵⁵ The sudden flare up in the battle, the escalation towards war, is attributed by the TC to the filmic capture-creation of the Johnson Street Parkade incident and the less spectacular brush with death-by-garbage-compressor of a homeless man sleeping in a dumpster. By relating these two incidents the homeless could be scripted as desperate victims, who are deserving of pity. Instead these events triggered a

⁵³ Paterson and Stone, "Search for Solutions."

⁵⁴ Paterson and Stone, "Search for Solutions."

⁵⁵ Dickson, "Reclaiming Downtown."

spike in criticism of both the street involved (panhandlers and drug addicts) and those trying to address street issues (police and city hall). Despite recognizing the need for care, it is neglected by focusing on the immediacy of a violent crisis.⁵⁶

If the crisis that merchants face were not scripted as violent, and thus cried out with such force, we might be able to hear other ways of negotiating the crisis. For example there is a brief foray in CH news coverage on another possible explanation of the declining downtown retail sector: sub-urbanization.⁵⁷ The installation concerned with loss of business, articulates it in terms of the statistical rise of retail vacancies, which is implicitly attributed to urban nomads by including footage of an abandoned storefront with a punk walking in front of it. But an urban planner offers another explanation, suggesting that sub-urbanization is draining the downtown of stores, such as department stores. Significantly, there is no imaging of this explanation – no flashes to big box retail outfits constituted of massive traffic jams in the form of parking lots and cashier lines. The threat of sub-urbanization to downtown retail is swept away in a flash to another economic drain downtown: the cost of policing.⁵⁸ This cost re-invokes the war cries, so that the final clips can return to an understanding of the street scene as the cause of a decline in retail business. The meanness of merchants in waging war against the street scene animates the intolerance of legal actions based on discomfort with appearances. It scripts and preempts the violence of the streets in

⁵⁶ Dickson, "Reclaiming Downtown."

⁵⁷ A downtown overfull with political bureaucrats until about the 1980s was vacated through intensifying processes, enabled by the development of information and communication technologies. Fewer and fewer people willing to perform healthy prosperity remained downtown, and more and more people refusing to do so became visible. With spectralizing technologies capital only needs to touch down occasionally, as in the government call centre and big box retail outfits outside the downtown core. Bureaucrats replaced by automated technologies are conducted to suburbs at high speed on fancy new highways, abandoning allegiances to downtown businesses. Jay Wallenber, "Coriolis Consulting Presentation," Downtown Advisory Committee, [minutes] City of Victoria, 21 November 2003. These intensifying processes are also referred to as downsizing and outsourcing. Randy Lippert and Daniel O'Connor, 'Security Assemblages: Airport Security, Flexible Work and Liberal Governance,' In *Alternatives*, 2003, 28(3) 331-358. See especially pp. 338-339.

⁵⁸ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 10 Feb 2003.

order to re-claim a spatial zone for the licit circulation of capital. In declaring the crisis violent, the discomfort internal to the community scene (sub-urbanization) is made faint.

Although not discounting the meanness of the business community's war cries, CH News highlights the limits of intolerance: there is nowhere for homeless panhandlers to go, other than into sheltered nooks and crannies around the city for sleep.⁵⁹ Hence, the spatial zone in which licit capital flows must be shared with care-free capitalism. There are merchants who understand this, and take a more compassionate approach. The TC offers a story of merchant Gary Bolt: "Where others are militant, he is compassionate." With an eye to the often desperate histories of people on the streets, he allows them to use the space around his building after business hours as long as they clean up after themselves. He recognizes them as residents of Victoria, and negotiates temporal use zones based on common respect for the space. This is affirmed by the inclusion of a small photo of Bolt in his gallery with a quote that expresses his concern for the root issues that lead to people becoming street involved (See Figure 11). Reading like a how-to manual, the sketch begins with recognition that "street people" are often coming from cycles of abuse that need not be perpetuated through militant approaches. Instead, street revitalization in tandem with polite interactions, and maintenance of the building's clean and bright appearance are practiced. Rather than giving panhandlers money he contributes to the food bank by purchasing coupons along with his groceries at Thrifty's. A whole ethos of consumerism and community is implied in this model, based on clean and safe environments, treating everyone you meet as your neighbour, and supporting locally owned and operated businesses. In other words tolerance combined with creating comfortable aesthetics are effective in dealing with the problem of an uncomfortable aesthetic. Rather than

⁵⁹ CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 10 Feb 2003.

approaching the crisis faced by the safety and security of prosperity as a violent demand to secure a space of circulation, approaching it as an opportunity for compassionate practice based on temporal rather than spatial distinctions, a care-full capitalism is enabled.⁶⁰

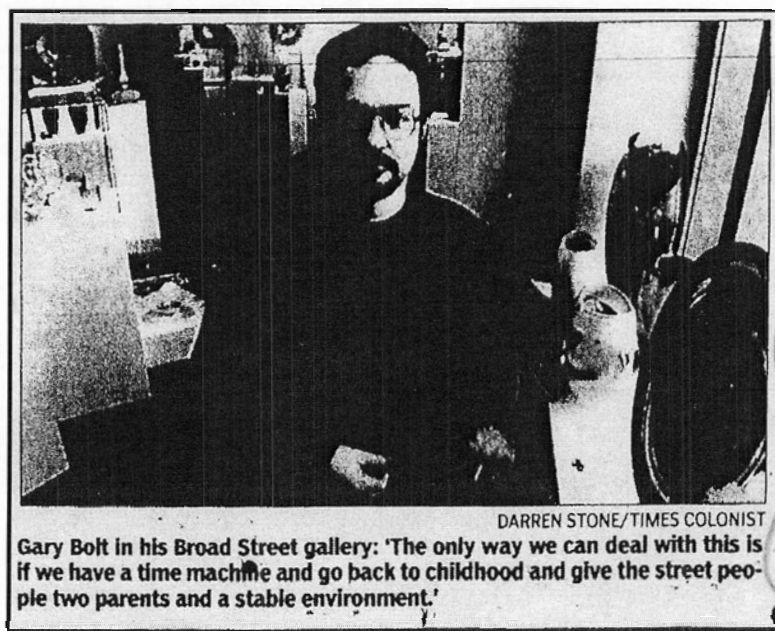


Figure 11: merchant

Having effectively empowered merchants with compassionate governance capacity in a care-full capitalism, the final paragraphs of the installation re-direct care-full capitalism towards an urban renewal reclamation of space. A woman who lives, works and plays downtown acknowledges her feeling “a bit uncomfortable” sometimes but rather than abandon downtown because of it she suggests that it is more important “to do something instead of talking about it.” In addition to her demonstration of compassionate support for the needle exchange, we can think of her very presence downtown as doing something; it is suggested that the more residents downtown using the space after work hours, the less comfortable junkies and homeless will be. Those who live and those who work downtown share the use function of crowding out for the undesirables that they care for. In a sense,

⁶⁰ Dickson, “Reclaiming Downtown.”

both are employed by care-full capitalist merchants – one operating during working hours and the other after hours – so that together the aesthetic problem of the Red Zone can be re-solved. But this solution is more in line with the spatial reclamation of urban renewal than the temporal negotiations of urban sublimation. Hence just as the female relative of the urban nomad is scripted as a source of hope for urban re-vitalization, the female resident is made a relative of the merchant in order for the care of care-full capitalism (based on an understanding of shared space) to work for the re-claiming of space for urban renewal.⁶¹

The crisis of the Red Zone, offence of a polite consumer aesthetic by sensations of cool selfishness and sick criminality, sets the street scene in two ways. First, seeing latent violence in the stylistics of the street scene, spectacles are made of everyday activities (i.e. a punk walking down the street) in order to justify calls to war that drown out voices that urge an examination of the role of sub-urbanization in draining the downtown of economic vitality. We can think of this as a ‘civil’ war of sorts, operating in a moment of crisis that is focused on the immediate securing of a spatial zone for the licit circulation of capital. Second, hearing desperation in the stories of people on the streets, the spectacle of the street scene can be minimized with care, thus freeing up creative energy for re-financing a consumer aesthetic. We can think of this as a care-full capitalism, which uses the moment of crisis as an opportunity to respond to urban renewal with compassion for those people on the streets. This urban sublimation style compassion can be re-directed towards the ends of urban renewal, but the temporal rather than strictly spatial approach of care-full capitalism accepts care-free capitalism as internal to downtown and allows it its time (the night). In emphasizing the desirability of care over war, CanWest Global is not picking one rather than

⁶¹ Dickson, “Reclaiming Downtown.”

the other; in order for care to have reason to function (light of day), it requires a spectacle of irresponsibility and criminality (darkness of night) that needs to be minimized (illuminated).

It would be a mistake however to accept the language of compassion that is used by CanWest Global to describe the quality of care-full capitalism. I suggest that although the merchant recognizes the different life histories of people on the streets, there is no evidence of attempts to sympathize with them, to sense their experiences of vulnerability. Perhaps a more appropriate term would be *pity*, in which recognition of desperation registers as sadness in the merchant. This sadness manifests in a code of politeness, a warm meanness, resigned to the inclusion of desperation in the space of the city. Thus, in the street scene as re-enacted by CanWest Global only aimless forces such as fear and pity can pass.

Compassion suggests an aim of sympathizing with another, which requires not the allowance of time, but a critical practice of suspending oneself (i.e. judgment of a history as desperate) in order to be able to sense another experience. Moving with compassion allows for the possibilities for articulating any kind of experience, from desperate to playful. We have heard such an articulation in the urban nomad's playing of the role of actor-spokesperson. The danger of such a critical mode of inter-action is that it enables a self-reflexivity that could, for example, reveal the sub-urban aesthetic as constituted of traffic jams rather than flows. The extent of this threat can be sensed in the de-grading of the urban nomad activity of panhandling to sub-human status, while how-to manuals are provided for both drug use and care-full capitalism. We might even consider that this project itself, given my affinities to the female urban nomad, is indicative of a risk involved in feminizing creative capacities in order to affirm urban renewal's comfortable masculinity: the critical edge of compassion may be softened but that does not mean that it is dulled. It is possible that relying on the creative

capacities of urban sublimation for the re-vitalization of downtown Victoria, the sub-urban aesthetic may be bent to more urban tastes.

Having cycled through the street scene as re-enacted by CanWest Global, let's re-cycle through it. Only two months after the Red Zone series, TC-CH Television did a poll of Greater Victoria residents, and found that 71% feel safe in the downtown.⁶² Without statistics from the time of the series to compare these findings to, they can only indicate that most people at the time of the survey felt safe downtown, but the TC uses them as an indicator that the crisis has passed due to increased police visibility and activities. The impetus for the series is revised by the TC from the storm over the Johnson Street Parkade incident, to merchants' complaining about downtown issues such as prostitution and visible injection drug use.⁶³ We can think of the passing of the crisis as a successful mobilization of the police as a private army – there was never an actual safety concern for the City's community members for the police to address.⁶⁴

Since the TC frames the crisis that was resolved as the violent crisis over the space of the Red Zone, it remains unclear what purchase care-full capitalism has had. I suggest that we do a thought experiment to explore how the resolution of the crisis might look if it were considered as one of desperation, by re-cycling through youth and maturity with pity. This will serve to summarize some of the key aspects of the character sketches, as well as offering a tentative exploration of the limits of care-full capitalism. Approaching the urban nomad with pity, we might have greater tolerance for their annoyance, and a heightened awareness

⁶² Times Colonist, "Red Zone cools off, most feel safe in core," *Times Colonist*, 26 May 2003, A3.

⁶³ TC, "Red Zone cools off."

⁶⁴ Chief Paul Battershill asserts that the perception of unsafety is "inaccurate" – it is nothing more than a perception. To the contrary, a decline in violence is declared and confirmed by statistics such as no homicides having taken place downtown the previous year. CH News, *Our Troubled Downtown Core*, 6 Feb 2003.

of their ability to move through ways of life. In a sense this would be to recognize the transformative creative capacity of the young woman artist in every urban nomad. As responsible adults, from our perspective on high we would be more likely to see the anger of the urban nomad in the context of cycles of abuse, rather than allowing personal responsibility to be taken. With pity, the re-vitalizing potential of the urban nomad would be obscured by the desperation of their histories.

Approaching the drug-addicted criminal with pity, we might be able to accept that the discomfort of the street scene is punishment enough for the criminality involved in the profiteering of care-free capitalism. It is unlikely however that we would be able to hear behind the aimlessness of addiction as a way of life, personal experiences of living – such as a warm hug from God, or hearing things in a bad trip. This is because drug use is scripted as the indicator of the meanness of the drug-addicted criminal, which threatens (and thus justifies) care-full capitalism by detracting from the flow of licit capital. I propose that such experiences of living threaten by highlighting that which is excluded from care-full capitalism: ineffable feelings such as compassion. If such feelings were taken seriously we could leave aside the (breakable) law of love thy neighbour, and realize transcendent love as an everyday experience. Care-free capitalism could be made into a project in the re-visioning of politics of the city, sublimating urban renewal into the optimism of urban sublimation.

Scene of vulnerability

In the CanWest Global re-enactment of the street scene we 'saw' that listening to the urban nomad we can get a sense for a curious and playful mode of critique, and listening to the drug-addicted criminal we can get a sense for powerful feelings such as compassion. Although such 'listening' is possible in text and image (through the inadvertent inclusion of a

quote or gesture) in this case we have become sensitive to the “room tone” of video – the sounds that constitute the audio backdrop of a scene. In an attempt to continue this practice of trying to hear behind the community scene narration, I turn to street produced media – the *Red Zone* newspaper, which was published by the Victoria Street Community Association from 1994-1998. In doing so I seek the possibilities for re-enacting the street scene otherwise with an urban sublimation style optimism for creativity; but I also seek the limits that creative freedom with an urban renewal style skepticism of anything to remain aimless.

Rather than skim across numerous issues I want to listen carefully, so will engage in a specific analysis of three issues – the last issue of each year that I was able to acquire.⁶⁵ In the first two years of publication the *Red Zone* was free, operating on a grant from the B.C. Aids Secretariat and Mental Health, Peer Helping Peer Fund with donations accepted. But in the following years it came under review as the organization shifted from an Editorial Staff to a Volunteer collective, and so the price became negotiable, with vendors paying a nominal fee per copy and then re-selling it to people. In this shift from government to independent funding, advertising in the form of information boxes listing free entertainment events (e.g. Baseball Bash, movies), free meals, and upcoming holidays,⁶⁶ became supplemented by market advertising by service providers and such. But throughout the transformations of the *Red Zone*, the mandate remained essentially the same: “promoting the Victoria downtown community by providing access to a forum for the discussion and debate of problems and solutions to poverty.” As a forum for discussion and debate, the *Red Zone*

⁶⁵ Thanks to the Victoria Public Interest Research Group for the long term loan of all their issues of the *Red Zone*. As a street produced newspaper, the *Red Zone* was not archived by libraries in the city, and the organization that created it has been long defunct.

⁶⁶ See for example Victoria Street Community Association (VSCA), *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, pp. 6,10.

is envisioned as a catalyst for action: “to promote social change and responsibility.”⁶⁷ This is similar to the function of the CityRoom to catalyze the public realm, but by defining the problem of the “downtown community” as poverty, the innocence of the community scene (as a scene that does not inflict harm) is lost. Projects that take the apparent governance processes as their aim (i.e. the CityRoom) are insufficient in the *Red Zone* because they tend to reproduce social structures through convenient modes of identification. This does not mean to say that projects such as the CityRoom do not have the potential for facilitating social change, because they most certainly do; it is only to say that they are not constituted of substantive activist aims. In contrast, the *Red Zone* is activist in that it makes a commitment (in itself as a project) to a substantive aesthetic challenge to social structures and convenient ways of thinking. The street scene as re-enacted by the *Red Zone* is a struggle inspired by the vulnerability of street involved people.

In approaching the *Red Zone*, focus will be on articles that are actively creating, as opposed to those that are designed by service providers for fact sharing. I will briefly trace articles that illustrate the influence of and re-actions to urban renewal thinking. This will serve to situate the *Red Zone* as an included exclusion,⁶⁸ as a zone that is conceptually embedded in the community scene, and yet whose fundamental influence is difficult to sense. Oriented thus, we will move into a more extensive exploration of the influence of and re-actions to urban sublimation thinking in articles that are concerned with capitalism and compassion. In advance, I suggest that there is evidence of an emergent ecological

⁶⁷ The shift from organization to volunteer collective was observed by Dave Butler in his editorial on the evolution of the *Red Zone*, in terms of the content. He suggests that over time there was a change marked by “less victim and more accuser; more talk, now, on its pages about “the rich” and capitalism, a more explicit and potent questioning of the entitlements of the city to regulate the behavior of the marginal. This is great stuff. It’s *Les Misérables* in your own backyard, a cautionary reminder of the recrudescence of power of the underclass to re-mount the revolution.” He affirms the shift “toward ideals of social equality,” Dave Butler, “Real Estate – Gene Miller – Top Storey,” *Times-Colonist*, 18 July 1998, p. 1.

⁶⁸ Recall that this is the way that I am seeking to conceptualize the relation of the global city to the everyday city, consonant with formulations of contemporary forms of sovereignty.

capitalism and compassionate practice that involve being vulnerable to inter-actions: a scene of vulnerability is being re-enacted. Finally, in taking seriously the need to change our ways of thinking in the face of ecological capitalism and compassion, we will explore one possibility offered by the *Red Zone* poetry. Through a brief tracing of poems we will see that the capacity for generating excess in the poetic form is being used to re-vision the battle between urban renewal and urban sublimation thinking. In closing, we will pause on one poem that does otherwise, by challenging the very idea of the necessity of the battle. I suggest that by admitting our vulnerability and making our inter-actions difficult, we might be able to re-enact the urbanities scene and the scene of vulnerability as a scene of urban activism.

The influence of urban renewal thinking in the *Red Zone* is especially clear in the centrespread street map of the Red Zone and North Downtown that is converted through hand numbered stickers that represent various services into the “VSCA Street Map of Services” (See Figure 13). Service number one is VSCA, followed by social service agencies such as Downtown Welfare, Gateway and the Open Door. Visually, VSCA is not only top of the list, but is in the visual centre of a density of services in Old Downtown between View and Pandora and Government and Douglas.⁶⁹ Situated at the centre of community services, the *Red Zone* re-enacts the street scene as a community, “the downtown community,” urban renewal style.

⁶⁹ VSCA, “VSCA Street map of Services,” *Red Zone*, 2(8), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, July/Aug 1996, pp. 12-13.

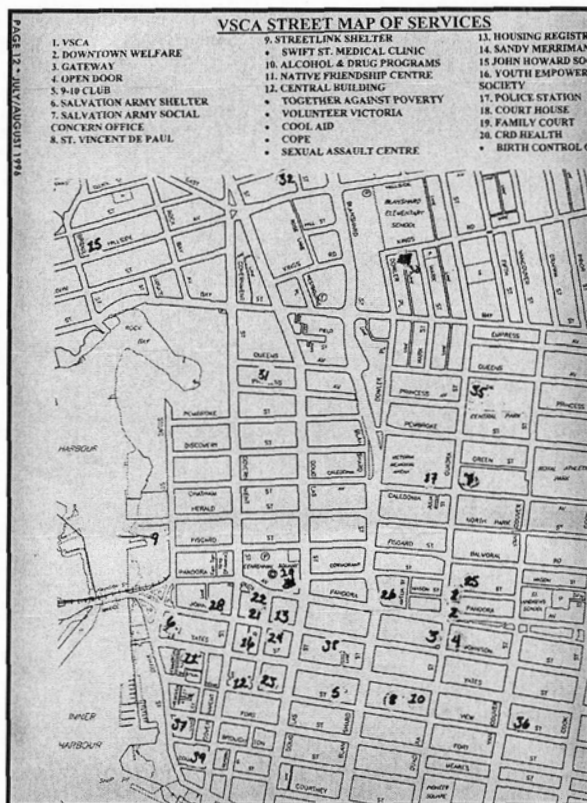


Figure 12: VSCA street map of services

While constituting a community within urban renewal thinking, the *Red Zone* is partially outside the community scene and provides an opportunity for speaking back to it. For example, in a three page comic, “Nasty Nick: Takin Care of Bizz,” Nasty Nick is able to turn his debauchery and misfortune into a tasty meal and revenge on his welfare worker by feeding her a plate of Rat Noodles.⁷⁰ Such re-clamation of power is also evident in articles that speak back to the mainstream media. For example, an interview with the “Fifth Woman” (who came forward with accusations of sexual assault against councilor Robin Blencoe) offers “explanations to questions that were posed in the TC letters section” regarding the “Blencoe Affair.” She speaks back to the “scandalous and tabloid manner” of the TC coverage of the Blencoe Affair, explaining the particular constraints that someone

⁷⁰ Robin, “Nasty Nick: Takin care of Bizz,” *Ozone Komix, Red Zone*, 2(8), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, July/Aug 1996, pp. 18-20.

dependent on social services lives with (e.g. fear of being reported to MSS).⁷¹ Similarly revealing the ignorance of mainstream media, a more playful feature, “They Said, We Said,” lists statements made in the Mainstream Press alongside responses to them by the Alternative Press, the *Red Zone*. For example, “Opera first-nighters had to run a gauntlet of panhandling winos between the arcade and the McPherson Playhouse” (Jim Gibson of the TC), is rubbed up against Suri’s response: “Isn’t it amazing, Jim, how the finest human emotions are evoked by opera: compassion, sympathy, empathy... it really is too bad that Victoria’s panhandlers see a rookie opera crowd and think: ‘Hey look! It’s patty-wack time!’” Through sarcasm, Suri is able to elicit a laugh and recognition of the irony of those people with appreciation of refined human capabilities being unable to manifest it in walking through the streets. He pokes fun at Gibson’s use of the phrase “run the gauntlet” by literalizing it as “patty-wacks.” The effect is a reversal of who is able to wack who – Gibson and the opera first-nighters as the prime wackers receive a couple tongue lashings from Suri.⁷² In sum, through street produced media a reversal of the powers of humiliation, knowledge, and compassion is made possible by constituting the street scene as a community with moral authority (inside urban renewal) and deploying creative critiques (outside the community scene in urban sublimation): the *Red Zone* is an included exclusion of downtown Victoria.

The precarious position of the included exclusion is illustrated in the article, “Lobbying,” which highlights the differential access to city hall. It begins by characterizing the City’s approach to “real people on the street” as: “we will grudgingly work with you, but you have to do it our way and if you make noises we don’t like we will blame you for the

⁷¹ Red Zone staff, “The Fifth Woman,” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, pp. 12-13.

⁷² Andrew Suri, “Media Circus,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 7.

whole thing not working out.” Rather than engaging in “deal making” of this kind, the author suggests that people who are “just plain poor” need to make coalitions and field desirable candidates, in order to “start seeing real things happen for real people on the street.”⁷³ On the one hand, the desire to take over the mechanisms of government demonstrates an acceptance of urban renewal style governance as a necessary site of power. On the other hand, the emphasis on real political action suggests an urban sublimation creative force that exceeds urban renewal’s continuous re-cycling through processes. Applying this insight to the dis-position of the *Red Zone* as a voice for the downtown community, we can consider it as simultaneously reifying and straining the community scene’s hold on legitimate political power.

In an urban sublimation spirit, we will explore the possibilities for the creative forces of the downtown community to put strain on the community scene. We will first trace those articles that are concerned with capitalism, followed by those relating to compassion. There are a couple of articles that articulate the dis-position of poverty as an included exclusion of capitalism. One article uses the May Day occupation of the Royal Bank and the information forum leading up to it as a way to demonstrate the capacity for interrupting capital flow. It concludes that the “action was a great success and proved that the banks are not all-powerful when a group of determined and enlightened people band together to make a stand and close a money-hungry bank for the afternoon.”⁷⁴ Another article that aims to enlighten in regards to the capitalist system in order to stimulate action, “How ‘Bout a Revolution?” frames poverty as a necessary part of “the world’s power structures.” It goes on to assert

⁷³ Rande McMurray, “Lobbying,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 12.

⁷⁴ Andrew Swain, “May Day Celebration: time to occupy a bank,” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, pp. 7-8.

that the political and social aspects of poverty are effaced through the personalization of poverty: “Told from birth that success is possible if we can just work hard enough, the poor become prisoners of their own guilt, believing that through some personal short-coming they have brought this state of poverty upon themselves.” This article aims to re-politicize and re-socialize poverty as a systemic issue, since it “requires the have-nots of society to *demand* fundamental change.” This is a call for class war in order to establish “a society where the conditions of all human life take precedence over the acquisition of wealth by a minority.”⁷⁵ In both articles, the values of enlightenment and humanity associated with universal power structures are invested with the hope of resolving the contradictions of (care-full) capitalism, by re-newing it through action as a revolutionary (care-free) capitalism. In other words, this is to make care-free capitalism a project (within a scene of care-full capitalism), with the creative force of urban sublimation.

More numerous than the re-iterations of revolutionary capitalism, are those articles that gesture towards an emergent ecological capitalism in which care-free and care-full capitalism are conjoined or dis-placed. For example, in the article “Turning the *Red Zone* Into a *Green Zone*,” the care-free economy of marijuana trade is incorporated into the care-full economy. Author Ian Hunter takes the ‘war on drugs’ and the spectre of ‘gangs and violence’ that are spawned in street level open markets, and transforms them into a vision of reinvigorated freedom and responsibility to nature by bringing the pot market indoors. The ecological aspects of care-free capitalism – not directly impacting the environment to the same degree that industrial capitalism does, and assisting the poor in survival – are separated from their ecology: the streets. Similarly, the values of ecology, democracy, peace, justice and freedom are torn from the interiority of government and applied to the Green Zone in

⁷⁵ Lake, “How ‘Bout a Revolution,” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, pp. 9-10.

an explicit call to refuse the social contract as it was drafted and “sign a contract with ourselves and with our collective consciousness for our freedoms, for our rights and for our responsibilities.”⁷⁶ The distinction between the streets and interiority is effaced in the Green Zone, which proposes to be an entirely inclusive go-ahead zone in which an illicit drug trade is recognized as licit. But the lack of mention of other drugs such as heroin and crystal methane in regards to the Green Zone is suspect; it likely indicates a limit at which the Green Zone functions as a Red Zone (where liberal values are transgressed). Hence, although in this article there is a gesture towards an ecological capitalism in which there are no externalities, by simply expanding the scope of application of the Zone, its inherent delineation of a space-time re-creates a different set of externalities.

There are two other articles that attempt to conceptualize ecological capitalism by expanding the bounds of care-full capitalism. Both suggest that valuing the environment in itself, not just as resource, also serves to highlight the contributions of the poor. One article highlights the environmental contributions of the poor by not participating in over consumption and choosing to spend minimal dollars ethically.⁷⁷ The other article highlights the similar motives of business people and street involved people, but notes their different environmental effects (i.e. polluting entire ecosystems vs. dirtying an alleyway), which are ignored in the assigning of respectability (i.e. legal business vs. illegal activities).⁷⁸ As gleaned from these articles ecological capitalism involves recognition of the value of the environment and the lesser environmental impacts of those living in poverty. The comfort of the community scene is recognized as vulnerable to the environment and the re-actions of the

⁷⁶ Ian Hunter, “Turning the *Red Zone* Into a *Green Zone*,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 8.

⁷⁷ Shiri Pasternak, “How the Poor Save the Planet: My Interpretation of ‘Buy Nothing Day,’” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 10.

⁷⁸ Rob Weaponed, “Rich Rules for the Poor,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 12.

poor, and so puts into question the moral authority of the community scene. Over consumption becomes a matter of discomfort rather than comfort in ecological capitalism. There is a revolutionary echo in privileging the lifestyles of the poor over those of the rich, which neglects to evaluate the fundamental mode of valuation of one thing against another.

Recognizing the tenacity of the battles (i.e. between urban renewal and urban sublimation) that have made the environment and poverty into problems, there is one article that suggests that we must change our ways of thinking in order to act otherwise. Beyond lifestyle changes we must also “change our thinking about humanity’s relationship to the natural world and to one another, as well as engage in all levels of political action from protests to elections.” Ecological capitalism as gleaned from this article suggests changing our thinking by: avoiding ‘novopilia,’⁷⁹ appreciating differences amongst people, trying to close the gap in the standard of living between people in underdeveloped nations and developed nations by lowering the standards of living of the latter, shifting from desires to needs, appreciating all life forms, and having fun. Taken together, these items indicate a rejection of Enlightenment thinking (i.e. newness as an indication of progress, difference as hierarchical or evolutionary, reason as *the* mode of thought), by thinking inspired by compassion and playfulness. In striving towards the practice of such thinking there are many conveniences that we need to leave aside, such as the conception of the world as composed of nations that can be scaled according to a universal model of development (whether in a rich or poor register). With compassion and playfulness, we can think

⁷⁹ “love of what is new merely because it is new” VSCA, “Earth Day: Philosophical solutions,” [Exerpts from pamphlets: “101 Ways to Save the Earth,” and “Personal Action Guide for the Earth”] *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, p. 5.

possibilities for affirmative inter-actions that are not based on individuals that require an imposition and transcendence of difference in order to relate.⁸⁰

There is a danger that rather than push ecological capitalism beyond the creative visioning of urban sublimation thinking, towards sensitivity to inter-actions, the battle between care-free and care-full capitalism will be re-visioned as one between revolutionary and ecological capitalism. A warning of this potential can be read in the layout of the article outlining an ecological way of thinking alongside one calling for a kind of socialism.⁸¹ The terrain of the battle would shift from responsibility and irresponsibility, freedom and addiction towards pity and meanness, playfulness and anger. We have seen pity and meanness at odds in the street scene as re-enacted by CanWest Global, but in order to approach the encounter between playfulness and anger we would need an adult-playing-child view of the characters of the street scene. While a shift towards a field of battle play comfortable to urban nomads may engender greater creative possibilities than the battle amongst communities, the struggle would persist. Politics would remain preoccupied with a violent crisis rather than engaging with the quality internal to the crisis.

Seeking a better sense of aesthetic politics that are becoming apparent, we can look to *Red Zone* articles that engage with compassion. As exemplified by the warmly mean merchant, compassion is temporally dis-posed and can be re-iterated as pity; it remains to be heard whether through the *Red Zone*, as an included exclusion, we might get a different sense. In an article that treats compassion specifically, it is made distinct from Charity in its care for the other. Tracing her personal experience as both someone who used to donate to food

⁸⁰ VSCA "Earth Day."

⁸¹ Jason Borgeson, "Dear Shredder," *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, p. 4.

banks, and as someone who uses them, Glenda Fleming takes Charity as manifest in the food bank, and flips it into Charity as acts of kindness. Recognizing 'the poor' as people with limited finances requires "compassion, respect and understanding of another person's needs." The focus of Charity shifts from "giving a person something because it makes them feel good, or that it's a tax write-off... [to] listening to what another persons needs are and responding to those needs." In other words, at its best pity creates self-absorbed givers, whereas compassion – Charity as "acts of kindness" – requires a suspension of the self in order to be able to hear and inter-act with the needs of another. Rather than the convenient label of 'the poor' that reduces people's needs to physical survival, compassion involves recognizing that physical survival is scripted (it is not simply given by nature), so we need to listen.⁸²

In a sense, creativity becomes a basic need in a compassionate way of living, as demonstrated in two articles. One article expands the understanding of (naturally given) basic needs from strictly physical, to the "need to be useful, productive, creative." Reflecting on "Street Meet 95," where street involved people gathered to discuss a range of issues, the author offers a broad view of the stories that poverty stricken people tell about their situations, as "a depressingly repetitive litany of society's failure." From the position of "Outside Looking In"- someone who was once street involved but no longer is – he calls for creative thinking about *how* to address the problems raised by people at the conference. His own suggestion of how to do so (taking out the garbage) presupposes a place outside where problems can be taken. In the absence of such an outside, what is of greater interest than his particular suggestion, is the call for a collective creative approach to practically address

⁸² Glenda Fleming, "The Case of the Missing Charity," *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 9.

issues.⁸³ Rather than expanding basic needs to include creativity, the other article seems to dis-place nature in order to posit creativity as *the* basic need. It celebrates artistic self-creation as exemplified in Halloween, as an opportunity to think through the freedom of expression of punks and others. The author goes on to assert that “each person deserves to be ‘treated’ with respect and kindness,” and concludes by calling on people to extend their acceptance of artistic self expression to other days of the year by giving “only TREATS please!”⁸⁴ Everyone’s artistic self-creation should always be supported through our interactions. Regardless of whether we consider creativity to be natural or freely created, both these articles suggest that with compassion there might be possibilities for collective self-fashioning otherwise.

In an attempt to imagine what kinds of collectivities might become possible to fashion through compassion, we can look to an exemplary practitioner of compassion. Memorialized in an ornate obituary, “Kelsey” Gerry Sinclair, “was a First Nations’ Cree from Saskatchewan. During his years in Victoria, he was a non-judgmental friend to the downtown community and was uniquely respected by all.” It goes on to explain how he avoided panhandling during store hours so as to appease the business community, cleaned up the streets for and advised tourists, collected and redistributed items (clothes, condoms, clean rigs) to people in need, and recorded license plates so that ‘bad dates’ could be tracked. Furthermore, “In Calgary, he was instrumental in getting Connections Housing (supportive housing for street people) up and running.” His everyday and institutional kindnesses are appreciated as “one of a kind,” inspiring the naming of a street corner in Victoria “Kelsey’s Corner, but Kelsey will be missed!” The obituary memorializes his compassion, but there is

⁸³ Talos Moondancer, “Street Meet 95: Outside Looking In,” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, pp. 3-4.

⁸⁴ Fleming, “Trick or Treat?”

no reference to the corner on maps; it is a name shared by those who continue to appreciate Kelsey as a unique “true friend.”⁸⁵ Based on Kelsey’s memorial I suggest that the compassionate practice of suspending judgment enables everyday friendships that can move through the institutional spaces of urban renewal (i.e. supportive housing), and the temporal use zones of urban sublimation (i.e. panhandling after business hours). Furthermore, collectivities based on friendship have sites of honour that unsigned (without reference), because they are ‘embodied’ in lived appreciation.

In the absence of compassion there is meanness, as we saw in the merchant, but the implications of such meanness remains hazy. An article that explores meanness is written by a woman who shares a personal story about the interruption of her and her daughter’s ritual of going to feed the ducks in Beacon Hill Park, by the drowning death of an inebriated man in the pond. Emerging out of the darkness, “crashing through the bushes towards us... was a man, whooping and hollering. He sounded drunk.” Fear drove the mother and daughter to run away, back to their car from where they heard “him thrashing around in the pond, yelling and cursing... a gurgling, and then a vomiting noise. I remember thinking how awful it would be to have a mouthful of that filthy pond water.” Nonetheless, the mother and daughter drove away, thinking about how stupid it was to go there in the dark, and angry with the man for violating their ritual and scaring the ducks. When she discovered that the man had drowned, the author made a police statement, and was filled with guilt, but assuaged by an officer – “With the amount of sludge in the pond, I would have most likely ended up as stuck as he was, and drowned myself.” She has a realization of the man’s humanity – a person with personal relationships (as a friend, son, brother, ex-boyfriend) and

⁸⁵ VSCA, “Kelsey’s obituary,” *Red Zone*, 2(8), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, July/Aug 1996, p. 22.

a life (with an innocent childhood), who she abandoned in his moment of death.⁸⁶ In the absence of compassion people die alone and those who survive are alienated from the innocent nature of life by their meanness, at best becoming people with (self) pity who make statements to police and street produced newspapers.

Although the mother has become (self) pitying through the realization of the capacity of her meanness to let die,⁸⁷ the problem remains as to how to remain open to that which inspires fear in us: (criminalized) addiction and (medicalized) anger. Looking at articles crafted by people who could be profiled in this way will provide us with the opportunity to explore different possibilities. First, a personalized news article, “Anti-Prohibition of Drugs,” speaks back to the ‘war on drugs’ that criminalizes addiction, by situating it (with knowledge gained through studying law for five years) as an illness (associated with the author’s migraine headaches). The author concludes: “I am being discriminated against by a prejudice based on the grounds of the prohibition of my disability, addiction.”⁸⁸ The author is inviting us to refuse such prejudice by acceding to his knowledge, and being sensitive to his bodily emotions of migraine headaches and emotional body of addiction. Second, another personalized news article similarly invites us to recognize police activities as illegitimate by re-presenting his experience of victimization. It is the story of a person who was wrongly suspected of a murder – “the officer told me that they confirmed that I was not the person they were looking for, and they wished me a good trip home.” There is allusion to ongoing victimization – “strange things still happened that

⁸⁶ Lesley House, “An Evening in the Park – and Noises in the Dark,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, pp. 5-6.

⁸⁷ Foucault maps the shift from sovereignty as control over the mechanisms of death, “to take life or let live” to a biopolitics that involves control over life, “to make live and let die.” See Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended: lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana eds., New York: Picador, 2003.

⁸⁸ John B. Hill, “Anti-Prohibition of Drugs,” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, p. 17.

are beyond my present writing ability” – and an assertion of innocence – “In my view its not me who is on trial: it’s the police.” His plea for compassion is threaded with what seems like paranoia, from the suspect IGA clerks who were all too well-kempt, to those who keep track of police suspects that crack under pressure. The possibility that his paranoia is related to mental illness is put into relief when in the last sentence there is a claim that “it’s partially the fault of those goddamn people who keep putting drugs in their [the police officers’] coffee.” We have the opportunity to be sensitive to his bodily emotion of confusing victimization and emotional body of anger, but it is convenient to allow his medicalized paranoia to overcode his anger, so that we need not question the legitimacy of police activities.⁸⁹ In sum, these articles suggest that sharing knowledge (whether gained through years of study or personal experience) is one way for us to leave our fear aside in order to be open to (criminalized) addiction and (medicalized) anger. The knowledge they share suggests that it is not addiction or anger that is scary, so much as the institutionalization of discrimination and harassment.

I suggest that if we listen to the tellings of (criminalized) addiction and (medicalized) anger, we can also become sensitive to their bodily emotions (migraines, confusing victimization) and emotional bodies (addiction, anger). This is to make difficult our apprehension of these sensations, by refusing institutionalized re-actions (i.e. anti-institutionalism). Instead, insisting on sensitivity to the needs that arise as they manifest through particular inter-actions, our re-actions are continually attentive to those needs, which may take many forms. Such a compassionate dis-position is difficult to continually re-enact, so the conveniences of criminalization and medicalization will likely persist in some way.

⁸⁹ Anonymous, “Mistaken for a Murderer,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 6.

As re-enacted so far, the scene of vulnerability is one in which everyone is vulnerable, whether to the environment and social justice, or institutionalized discrimination and harassment. Hence, there is neither a natural inter-action (being crafted with the basic need of creativity) nor an entirely free creative plane (there are always already emergent needs that influence our styles of living). It is a scene in which we are scripted into roles (playful nomad, criminal addict, sick anger, critical compassion) that can be performed, refused, or transformed. In order to explore how we might re-enact the scene of vulnerability otherwise, remembering the realization in ecological capitalism that a different way of thinking is needed, we can look to the poetry that is included in every issue of the *Red Zone*. The use of the poetic form suggests that there is an excess in the stories of street involved people that cannot be contained in the journalistic form. Rather than conveying information, poetry is an evocative form of writing that invites affective responses. I do not pretend that the following analyses re-present the poems themselves, which would surely be an injustice to their transformative capacity; I am only offering a sketch of the themes of some of the poems along with my responses to them. The overall theme of the poems is that of struggle, but the authors identify different modes of struggle, most of which involve systems of power (urban renewal) and personal creativity (urban sublimation). This suggests that the excess of the poetic form does not dull the battle, but rather offers a metaphoric way of thinking that is perhaps appropriate to an aesthetic politics. There is however one poem whose theme of challenging danger can be read as another way of thinking that is apposite to urban sensitization.

First, there are two poems that seem to be moving with an urban renewal mindset, struggling against systemic power. One is a response by someone consigned to suffering and

death by “the machine,” which aims to destroy the machine. There is a distinction made between the person and their machinic functions: “Although I can love you as a person; I hold nothing but hatred for the; uniform you wear.” The author implores the people who are part of the machine to understand and forgive his demand for their deaths.⁹⁰ The understanding that the author seeks is analogous to the understanding that the author has about his own death, “which you so freely distribute as an inevitable product of human evolution.” Similar to human evolution, his violent response to the threat to his life is natural, but it puts both the inevitability of evolution and evolution itself into question. I am left at the end of the poem with a sense for the author’s frustration.⁹¹

The other urban renewal style poem “Say what...” has a rhythm that emerges through the beginning of each stanza with “Say what about...” and ending each stanza with a word with a hard ‘e’ sound. It puts into question “confusion; illusion and delusion” as the “conceptual conclusions; made plain to see.” Other such apparent concepts that are put into question are: “evolution, population and pollution,” “education fighting discrimination,” “recognition,” “diversion,” and “separation.” The author offers other ways of thinking about these concepts: “the manufactured solution,” “egotistical addiction,” and “the infusion of anger fear and greed.” Through these different techniques, concepts are created and their creation forgotten in their becoming “plain.” But there is one explanation that offers a way of remembering: “segregation and illumination planting new breeds.” With the remembrance of “segregation and illumination” the author returns to the initial triad of “confusion; illusion and delusion” this time as a target of “the peoples’ revolution to change.” The author asks “what conclusions will we see?” This is an extension of the

⁹⁰ I assume that the author Lake is a man because the first line is addressed to “fellowman.”

⁹¹ Lake, “Forgive me, fellowman...” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, p. 20.

recognition that conceptual conclusions are used for oppressive purposes, with the possibility for other kinds of uses. There is ambiguity about what (if anything) might be different about “conceptual conclusions” developed by “other breeds:” Are they able to conclude without segregation? Are they necessary? Are they inevitable?⁹² I have a sense that the author is making the demand that we say something in the face of alienation and oppression despite the fact that whatever we say will likely alienate and oppress, even if in different ways.

In these urban renewal style poems the very structures of “human evolution,” and “segregation and illumination” are put into question. Both suggest that there are other ways of living – violent revolution and new breeds – that can interrupt the seeming naturalness of conclusions and human evolution. But both also seem to imply a naturalness of conceptual conclusions and violence, which seems to replicate the logic and violence that inspired the poetic responses. In this natural system of power there may be revolution through the mobilization of anger and frustration, but it seems as though the system of power is replicated.

Second, seemingly exercising urban sublimation thinking there are two poems that emphasize self-creation. One poem, “Centennial Square,” is a third person narration of an alcoholic man in the park. There is however one section in which he is given a first person voice that speaks through tears – “What did I do, what did I say; How come I ended up this way; There once was someone along the way; I guess this is the price I must pay.” Here he is taking personal responsibility for his aloneness. The old man is described as confused and alone, in which “Every morning there’s the hurt; Nothing left to gain.” In this place there is no getting ahead, each day is marked by the draining of a bottle, the earning of coin enough

⁹² Kilo, “Say what...,” *Red Zone*, 2(8), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, July/Aug 1996, p. 23.

to buy another bottle. While he remembers “another place,” there are things he “should” know and say that elude him in “his place.” This is a position that becomes his not only through his earlier resignation/responsibility, but also through the assignment by the author. Leaving aside that which he cannot grasp, the old man dons a smile – “he would never leave his place.”⁹³ I am left wondering if the author is implying that getting out of the situation is a matter of choice (to “leave”), and whether the ‘shoulds’ that the old man is missing are his tickets out. We could think of this as a lack of a moral code, but his smile suggests something more, a way of life created (in this case as a poetic narration) with its own style.

Another urban sublimation style poem traces the desire to become a “true poetic champion” in the image of John Lennon. The author highlights the redemptive power of love, which demonstrates that “To be one – one must belong.” In love, singing original songs is to echo those of others, but never to play “watered-down renditions of other people’s songs.” The author seeks recognition of their “local signal,” “but your radio is on the freeway... Your song is going national.” Here the singularity of local creations goes undetected by an accelerated and individuated audience: “... from the heart my aim is true, your love turned and I missed you.” It is unclear to me whether this turning is a turning away or a turning sour. The author is unable to become a “true poetic champion,” because despite being original and “strong,” they have not found a way to “belong.”⁹⁴ The power of creation moves as the force of the author’s love, which remains unrequited. I am left admiring the romantic faith of the musician, but the tragic (rather than romantic) form of the love poem suggests a romantic fatalism.

⁹³ John Rose, “Centennial Square,” *Red Zone*, 1(9), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, May 1995, p. 21.

⁹⁴ Anon, “Other People’s Songs,” *Red Zone*, 2(8), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, July/Aug 1996, p. 23.

These urban sublimation style poems speak back to urban renewal by claiming other ways of life – with a smile and a bottle, and with true love. But yet the responsibility and freedom of urban renewal are necessary for self-creation, so in a sense the assertion self-creation is simply to defer the moment of capture by urban renewal. Following the personal responsibility (free self-creation) of these ways of life the protagonists of these poems are resigned to suffering alone (outside urban renewal communities). Both the protagonists are fixed to localized ways of life (on the street and live performance), which are missed by others (passersby on the sidewalks and freeways). By localizing responsibility the protagonists themselves become not only the site of other ways of life (possibilities), but also the site of the problem (actualities), whether on the basis of lacking a moral code or an inability to find a way to belong. The smile and love of the protagonists have a capacity for transformation, but they seem to be impotent in terms of seducing urban renewal power. The ways of life that they create are unwittingly complicit in creating the conditions of poverty and isolation that are necessary for the smooth functioning of urban renewal.

The continued appeal to the smile and love in these poems speaks to the faith of the authors. We can understand such faith as targeting the divine, which is made explicit in a poem that traces a series of questions that Tony poses to the Lord about his struggle with the Devil. From a question of origin, “How did the Devil get a hold of me?” it moves into an appeal for release – “Please Lord, won’t you set me free?” – and a question of why this struggle has ensued. Leaving these questions aside, the author goes on to describe the struggle – “I try so hard to do what’s right, but the Devil’s grip is so damn tight” – ending with an assertion of triumph – “The Devil’s strong but so am I: I’ll beat THAT Beast before I die.” It is not clear whether the shift from questioning to asserting was made because of the Lord’s silence, or if it is a continuation of the same conversation (in which the Lord is

witness to, and thus authorizing a commitment to action).⁹⁵ Regardless, it is through appeals to the creator of life for freedom, for the power to overcome evil, that the motivation for action emerges. In this poem the earthly life of the author is under the sovereign reign of the Devil, and appeals for the assignation of freedom against or by the Lord. By analogy we can understand the smile and love of the previous poems as divinities of sorts, it is the divine involved in urban sublimation's securing of the plane of creativity. Hence, although the ways of life that they create may unwittingly complicit in urban renewal, their faith provides the possibility of transcending it.

It seems that the divine appeals of urban sublimation are falling on deaf ears, because as re-presented in the above poems people are suffering addiction, loneliness and evil in the everyday. This is affirmed by looking to the only poem in the seventh issue of the third volume of the *Red Zone*, "Dilemma of a Caring Almost Middle-Class Person." It is as though the poetic excess is dwindling in this issue, supplanted by a union slogan, and a couple letters to the *Red Zone*. The poem is written in prose style, and explores the dilemma introduced in the first stanza: "are there any words you can give me; To ease my guile, my pain; As I brace myself for the very long walk; downtown; the walk that is becoming increasingly, stressful; Because I have a hard time saying 'no;' To your requests for money?" The author situates themselves somewhere between middle-class and poor, having lived on welfare and Food Bank donations at one time, but now struggling with what to do with the change they are able to spare – offer it to someone on the street who might be an Oak Bay student, go to a matinee, help out their children etc. The author highlights the insecurity of the almost middle-class: "So how can giving some coin here and; there make me poor, you ask? You'd be surprised. Sometimes the line between; 'Poor' and 'almost middle-class' Is so thin."

⁹⁵ Anonymous, "Tony's Poem," *Red Zone*, 2(8), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, July/Aug 1996, p. 23.

From this in-between place, the author calls for “good change; for all of us; for mutual respect. If one person receives more; Then in one way or another; We all benefit. Let’s all try to keep; Our heads up; And our hearts open.”⁹⁶ In a sense this is an emblematic poetic expression of the position of the included exclusion. On the one hand it enables us to realize the insecurity and discomfort of the community scene, the ways that we are all becoming ‘homeless.’ On the other hand in responding to this awareness there is a tendency to become debilitated by (self) pity rather than assuming the risk of compassion.

Third, there is one poem that suggests how we might assume the risk of compassion, suggesting a way of struggling that is amenable to an urban sensitization way of thinking (See Figure 14). Rather than the masculinity assumed in the male authors and protagonists of the other poems, “fellowman” and “old man,” the one poem with a female pen name challenges masculinized Danger to “Dance for me Danger instead.”⁹⁷ She has seen others “in the eye of the needle” doing Danger’s dance – presumably the upturned wrists, cocked palms and pacing that mark junkies – but she refuses to dance, reversing the demand for a performance. Unlike the other poems, she hears his demand as a challenge rather than inevitable (human evolution, conclusions) or a failure to create (habit, inability to belong). She meets Danger’s challenge to dance by first calling his bluff – presumably by continuing to use opiates – and then returning the challenge. In doing so, she is offering her self up to Danger, making her self vulnerable to him. She does so with the recognition that Danger must then meet this challenge, whether by returning the challenge, dancing, or trying to possess her self. In a sense this is to refuse the freedom (and responsibility) that underpins

⁹⁶ JJ, “Dilemma of a Caring Almost Middle-Class Person,” *Red Zone*, 3(7), Victoria: Victoria Street Community Association, Oct/Nov 1997, p. 13.

⁹⁷ This is in line with Baudrillard’s conceptualization of the role of femininity as the irreducible singularity through which seduction is possible. Baudrillard, *Seduction*.

urban renewal thinking and the submission to the (divine) power to create in urban sublimation thinking.⁹⁸

What is important in this inter-action between the author and Danger is the continued banter. It is only when either one accedes by trying to possess the other self or submitting by dancing that the banter ceases. On the one hand, possessing the other self is to claim authority to re-present them, by walking away from the inter-action and imaging that self in a different time-space. For example we can see this in a junkie who quits using

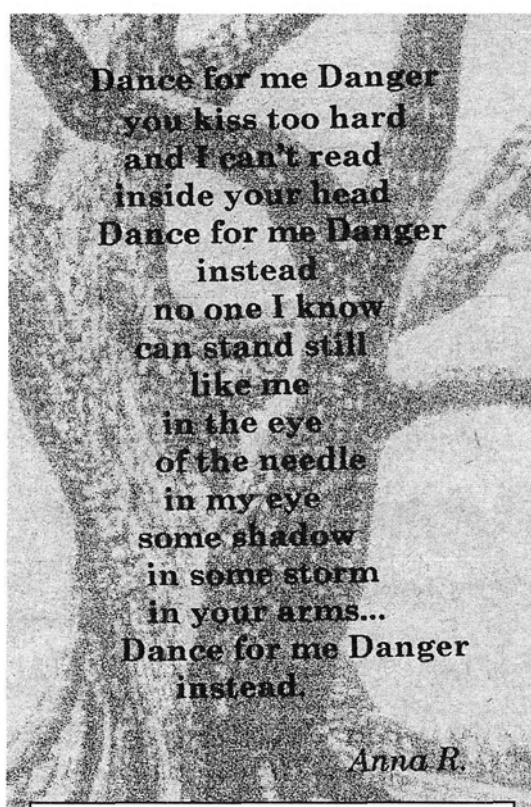


Figure 13: Dance for me Danger

This is the power of fascism and lonely artists – which both involve submission to an externalized power to create (i.e. a fascist or creativity as a basic need). Inspired by this

and then preaches the evil of junk. This is the power of community re-vitalization – which uses creative energies (i.e. the playfulness of urban nomads) and then re-presents them as ordered by the nurturing of community (i.e. the female relative of the urban nomad). On the other hand, submitting by dancing makes possible the appearances of total power (the inevitable power of Danger) and self-creation (to dance in one's own style). We can script the junkie who walks with upturned wrists and cocked palms as either slave to junk or choosing another way of life.

⁹⁸ Erich Fromm asserts that in response to negative freedom, we can either assert a positive freedom or submit to fascism. By analogy this is to claim urban renewal or urban sublimation. Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, New York: Avon Books, 1969.

feminine challenge to Danger, I suggest that in refusing freedom, we need not submit. Instead, we can engage in the difficult but titillating work of challenging. We can get a sense for this mode of power in the female relative of the drug-addicted drug dealer, who we might say feels the warmth of heroin's hug but attributes it to Danger rather than God: and she can talk back to Danger. She attributes her capacity to refuse to dance to "some shadow; in some storm" in her eye. Although I could attempt to ascribe meaning to the shadow (as for example an absent present), it is ineffable, and so appropriate to the metaphorical excess of the poetic form.

In this chapter I have sought to explore how the street scene is created. CanWest Global creates the street scene as a spectacle of crisis, as in the repeated airing of footage of the Johnson Street Parkade incident. Thus the street scene is constituted as a problem of appearances that disturb a comfortable sub-urban aesthetic. In this framing the street scene as a spectacle of crisis requires minimization; I want to emphasize, it is not actual violent crises that need to be minimized because these are already minimal in the everyday city of Victoria. Attempting to address the problem of the street scene as one of appearances spawns two approaches: tolerance of the street aesthetic where it is less visible and can be minimized (i.e. in the Parkade when users clean up after themselves), and excessive intolerance of the street aesthetic where it is visible (i.e. graffiti and panhandling around retail spaces).

The crisis of the street scene is given the masculinized faces of the urban nomad, and the drug-addicted drug dealer. While the former is a selfish child of the community scene who squanders love by refusing responsibility, the sick criminality of the latter puts them beyond the reach of community (addicts are not free, so cannot take responsibility despite

being made responsible for their criminality). There are two urban renewal style approaches to these characters: one that markets tolerance, along with the creativity and nurturing of the female relative of the urban nomad, as enabling the re-vitalization of downtown; and another that is intolerant of the criminality associated with drug-addiction (soliciting drugs or sex, stealing). In the third character within (although not of) the street scene, the merchant, we can see two urban sublimation style approaches to these characters: one that employs a female resident in a care-full capitalism by tolerating (taking pity on) the street scene as part of the space of Victoria, and allowing it the time of the night; and another that is intolerant of the threats posed to the space in which licit capital circulates by the care-free economy in which both characters operate, by declaring war against them. Becoming sensitive to the room tone of the CanWest Global re-enactment of the street scene, we sense a critical playfulness (playfulness) in the urban nomad, and ineffable sensations (such as a big warm hug from God and disembodied voices) in the drug-addicted criminal.

As a means of becoming even more sensitive to the room tone of the street scene as re-enacted by CanWest Global (i.e. playfulness and ineffable sensations) we explored street produced media. Whereas the merchant is within (but is not of) the street scene, the *Red Zone* is within (but is not of) the community scene; they are included exclusions, a disposition that interests urban sublimation. Whereas merchants constituted a care-full capitalism in opposition to a care-free capitalism, the *Red Zone* gestures towards an ecological capitalism that lends language to and yet is also obliquely opposed to a revolutionary capitalism. I suggest that in care-full and ecological capitalism we are enacting an aesthetic politics that privileges forces rather than power-full institutions, time rather than space.⁹⁹ In

⁹⁹ This is not an original suggestion, but one that has been suggested by numerous scholars. Perhaps most succinctly drawing together the themes of glocalization and temporality is Paul Virilio. Paul Virilio, *Open Sky*, Julie Rose trans., New York: Verso, 1997 (1995).

this aesthetic politics the conceptual battle shifts from freedom and responsibility vs. irresponsibility and addiction, to pity and playfulness (obliquely) vs. meanness and anger. At stake in this emergent politics are the actuality of a lonely life and death (alienation), and the possibility of collective self-fashioning. I suggest that it is possible that ecological capitalism could move through this battle by becoming sensitive to the quality that influences it: vulnerability. We are all vulnerable to the (in)security associated with poverty. It is the quality of vulnerability that enables compassionate practice, as openness to inter-actions, as the source of understandings of necessity and re-actions that address the needs that emerge.

An aesthetic politics that is about more than appearances involves a language and way of thinking different than that which refers to something fixed in (linguistic, visual or physical) space; one offered by the *Red Zone* is poetry. Poetry can be thought of as metaphorical, referring one image to another and creating 'meaning' (affect) out of the tension between them. Through a tracing of the themes of the poetry included in the *Red Zone*, it became clear that while the poetic form offers another language, it can be used to revitalize urban renewal and re-create urban sublimation thinking. Urban renewal style poetry creates affective charges of frustration and anger that demand that we re-act despite them. Urban sublimation style poetry creates affective charges of warmth (of a smile) and love that go about their thing, but in demanding nothing of us, are complicit in the re-creation of frustration and anger. Only one poem, "Dance for me Danger," illustrates a way of thinking that is dis-posed to inter-actions rather than to one self (as actor or creator). In a poetic spirit we might suggest that the dance that is of interest is the author's very challenge to Danger to dance. Importantly it is a dance in which she stands still. Applying this insight to an emergent aesthetic politics, we might be best able to challenge the movement (battle cries) that it seems to inhere by pausing.

Although I am not versed in gender politics, the significance of the role of femininity in these scenes cannot be ignored, and warrants further investigation. In the street scene she is scripted with the capacity for (pro)creation, for bringing the urban nomad and the community scene together, and for bringing the merchant and care-full/care-free capitalism together. But in light of her capacity for challenging Danger through the pause in the scene of vulnerability, we might reflect on the street scene as well. Perhaps it is her capacity to pause downtown as a resident that is fundamental to the challenge that femininity poses to the street scene. Following Baudrillard, we might consider her capacity to pause as indicative of femininity's function as a singularity.¹⁰⁰ Thus, what is being challenged is a masculinity that has made itself comfortable by universalizing, as in the idea that there is one self that we each have.¹⁰¹ In this light metrosexuality's (pro)creation of masculine professionalism and feminine aesthetics, for example, can be thought of as a mourning of the loss of singularity, or it could be read as an attempt to fashion another way of moving through the world. Or again, it could be a question of how certain metrosexuals inter-act with others otherwise. This latter possibility gestures towards a fundamental implication of urban sensitization: taking the risks involved in making ourselves vulnerable to inter-actions in order to re-act appropriately is not fixed by a space or time. It can be discovered anywhere with a prying open of time.

The challenges of a scene of vulnerability re-enacted urban sensitization style are neither insatiable (there is always the chance that someone could claim freedom from the inter-action and possess or dance) nor can they be satisfied (the content of challenges cannot

¹⁰⁰ Baudrillard, *Seduction*.

¹⁰¹ Baudrillard offers a concise distinction between the universal, associated with "human rights, liberty, culture and democracy" and globalization, which is associated with "technology, the market, tourism and information." He suggests that "Globalization appears to be irreversible whereas universalization is likely on its way out... any culture that becomes universal loses its singularity and dies." Jean Baudrillard, "The Violence of the Global," François Debrix trans., [online journal article] ctheory, Accessed 8 Jan 2003, Available at: www.ctheory.net/printer.asp?id=385.

be actualized without ceasing to be challenges). Hence there is no promise in an urban activism influenced by urban sensitization thinking – only a sense that by offering up our selves (or any other project for that matter) and being attentive to responses we can begin to sense the quality of the everyday city and re-act to it accordingly.

Conclusion: Scenes**an everyday city**

This thesis began with a discussion of the common sense that our political problems are becoming global, which we will return to towards the end of this conclusion. In our trajectory we will first pause on a scene of an everyday city, Victoria, which I have suggested might indicate the kind of complexity that the globalization of political problems refers to. The analyses of official collective political experiences as re-enacted in regards to both the community scene and the street scene have indicated that the problems we face are based on appearances; we might say that political problems are becoming apparent as aesthetic. Whether in the use of maps and self-referential governance processes in the community scene, or in the spectacle of crisis and caricatures in the street scene, we have seen a politics of appearances. At stake in the aestheticization of politics are: the mode of governance, the way that people live and die, and the mode of collective re-action. Whether these processes are re-enacted in an orderly, creative, or sensitive fashion is based on whether we choose to regard things, actions or inter-actions as fundamental to the everyday. I have tried to demonstrate that we must move through the debate about whether politics is fundamentally a play of power-full things or violent actions, by trying to inter-act with the debate itself and sense its quality. In order to do so, stories and maps are insufficient because they tend towards reference of some thing or some creativity, rather than featuring the inter-actions themselves. Hence, through the concept of scenes I have tried to be attentive to inter-actions, with an emphasis on listening (without privileging any particular sense).

In wanting to re-enact a scene of Victoria in which both urban renewal and urban sublimation are at play, I offer a vignette of Centennial Fountain as it has been planned in the current re-vitalization of Centennial Square. It will begin with a tracing of the

fountain as influenced by urban renewal thinking, followed by one influenced by urban sublimation thinking. Across both readings the language of ecology is used, which is indicative of the generalized space-time associated with an aesthetic politics. With a more synthesized sense of how urban renewal and urban sublimation are at play, I will apply this to a scene of urban activism in Victoria. The scene will have two aspects: an impression of an everyday city that emerges through the sensations that we have become familiar with; and an inter-action plan that highlights a project in Victoria that demonstrates the potential of urban activism. In closing I will gesture towards a metaphor appropriate for thinking about the how to activate an aesthetic politics based on appearances: the global slum.

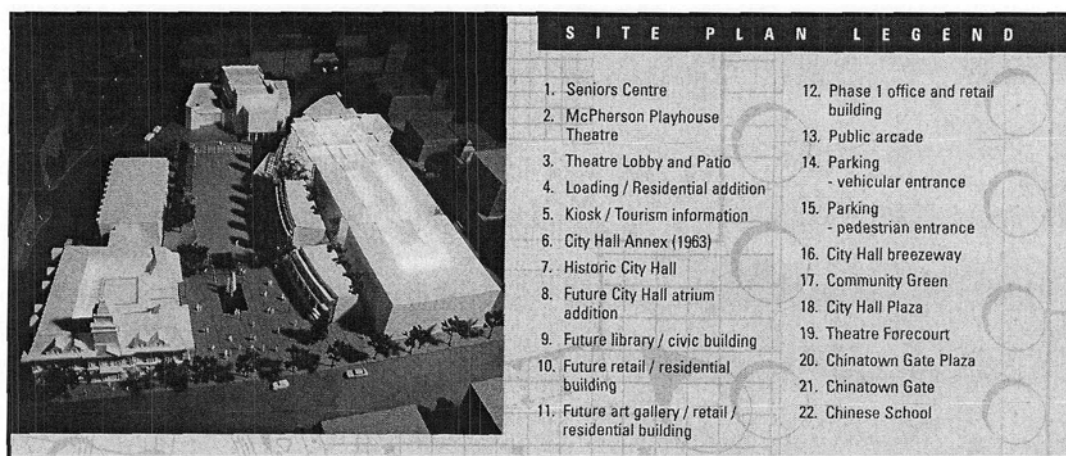


Figure 14: Ecological Fountain

*Greater Victoria will have its very own fountain of ecological renewal... We can approach the future fountain as marketed in a pamphlet describing the background, vision and action plan of the "Centennial Square Revitalization."*¹ *In this most recent urban renewal effort the future fountain is part of a creation that "will define a new public realm for Centennial square." The initial revitalization was concerned with*

¹ Roger Hughes Architects, (RHA) "Centennial Square Revitalization," pamphlet created for City of Victoria Planning Department, undated, contract won through competition, July 1996.

public space, as defined by municipalities. In expanding renewal efforts from space to realm, the process of defining the project moved beyond City Hall to definition through competing visions. Rather than commissioning an artist to work with City staff, "an architectural design competition open to all architectural firms registered in British Columbia was held. The intent of the competition was not only to show the redesign of the open spaces of Centennial Square but to demonstrate how new uses could be integrated into the existing urban fabric through selective redevelopment creating a sense of harmony between old and new." The marketing of the current re-vitalization effort emphasizes that in addition to de-centralizing the process of definition, functions (i.e. uses) as well as form (i.e. spaces) are of concern. In sum, the public realm is to be understood as emerging through competitive processes initiated by the City, and includes the development of spaces and integration of multiple uses.

In order to get a sense for what kind of politics is working through competing visions in the public realm (as both functions and form), we can look to the content of the vision. The first building to be constructed in this re-vitalization project is described "as a model of an environmentally responsible and sustainable approach to design. Features include natural ventilation, daylighting and the retention and treatment of water." Rather than a politics of progress, as in the initial re-vitalization of Centennial Square, this is a politics of environmental responsibility and sustainability. As opposed to the modernist approach to creating the public square as a concrete space of progress, this approach sees the public realm as part of an environment. Rather than unlimited potential for growth, we are responsible to an environment, and that environment needs to be sustained if we are to be sustained. Rather than a politics of power, this is as a

politics of survival. The success of urban renewal in a politics of survival is not inevitable because the future does not extend out of an original moment of glory, but is a projection of a present in which we are impacting the environment; hence, the present and the future include decay. Physical survival involves taking stock of resources and assessing our impacts on the environment in order to use resources more efficiently, as exemplified in the first building.

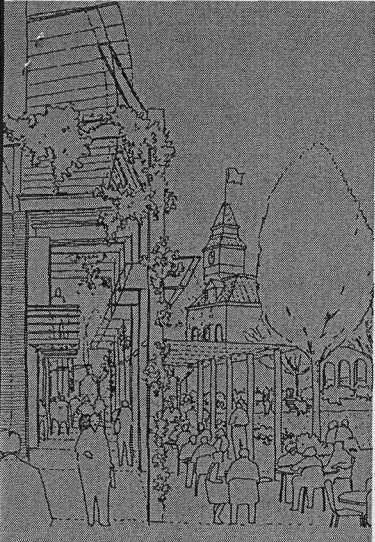
The predilection for space is not sufficient in the most recent urban renewal effort, so in addition to physical survival attention is given to social survival: "The new concept will lead to the renaissance of the square as a vital and heavily used social centre serving Greater Victoria as well as the downtown community. It will become a ceremonial and recreational place attractive to a wide variety of people, a truly public place." Social survival is made possible through the "new concept" of urban renewal as urban renaissance – physical and social, environmentally responsible and sustainable. Rather than allowing the square to be physically determined as a centre of downtown Victoria, the square is embedded in the social environment of the Greater Victoria region. The fountain is no longer needed as a symbolic indication of the regional importance of a physically delimited civic centre: it is part of a regional social centre. The regional social centre is physically marked by the CRD offices in the centre, and socially marked by the kinds of uses of the square. As a social centre in the service of Greater Victoria, presumably activities would resemble those of the region: shopping, going to cafes, eating at restaurants. The "downtown community" is also a user of the square, but it is unclear whether or not this includes the street community that is currently the most visible user of the square on a daily basis.

The physical civic centre cannot contain a politics of survival, which implicates all those who are users of downtown Victoria. There is a de-centralization of the political functions of downtown Victoria that is evident in the marketing of the square as a “ceremonial and recreational place.” Civic ceremony cannot perform the rituals necessary for urban renaissance of a place that exceeds civic boundaries; ceremony is no longer a strictly civic (read: territorially determined) affair, being regional and social, and is supplemented by recreation. Re-creation can be understood as political rituals in the “new concept” of the public realm that includes certain everyday uses. The public realm cannot be enchanted by municipalities alone, but requires the participation of various groups such as architectural firms, and involves political rituals such as ceremonies and everyday re-creation.

A politics of survival extends the rituals of politics to everyday re-creation, so that maintaining the boundaries of this politics becomes more challenging. Situating a mythical past that is repeatedly invoked through the telling of origin stories is no longer adequate. In everyday re-creation there are multiple uses and multiple histories. A politics of survival operates with free market logic, with definition driven by competition and realization encouraged through advertising. The marketing pamphlet demonstrates this logic, attempting to gather the multiple uses and histories together in a public realm by outlining an action plan. Using an action plan to set the boundaries of a politics of survival, there are phases of action rather than repetition of a shared past. In every phase of the action plan there is continual assessment in relation to the action plan as a whole – this whole can be understood as a vision of the public realm. For example, the fountain is situated as the final action item following two phases of “Centennial Square

revisions," before the fourth phase of building a new library and civic auditorium. The fountain is the punctuation of the process of revising Centennial Square, but is part of the renaissance of the public realm including a library. As a mode of boundary setting, action plans involve continuous assessment in relation to the plan as a whole, and reporting of the findings (i.e. advertising) of those assessments. It uses market logic to define the resources available at any given time, and to mobilize the use of those resources through advertising.

CENTENNIAL SQUARE REVITALIZATION




The redevelopment of Centennial Square will revitalize Victoria's main civic centre. The new concept will lead to the renaissance of the square as a vital and heavily used social centre serving Greater Victoria as well as the downtown community. It will become a ceremonial and recreational place attractive to a wide variety of people, a truly public place. It will have the potential to accommodate commercial, restaurant, cultural, residential and civic buildings and will be the point of contact between a revitalized Chinatown and an active and dynamic north downtown area, combining a high degree of safety and visibility.

To begin the revitalization process, an architectural design competition open to all architectural firms registered in British Columbia was held. The winning plan and model photographs are shown here. The intent of the competition was not only to show the redesign of the open spaces of Centennial Square but to demonstrate how new uses could be integrated into the existing urban fabric through selective redevelopment creating a sense of harmony between old and new.

The new concept for the square places a community green in the centre which is entered through three plaza forecourts: The City Hall plaza on Douglas Street, the theatre forecourt on Pandora Avenue and the Chinatown Gate plaza at Government and Fisgard Streets. The square is opened up visually and pedestrian access is increased and enhanced by a network of arcades and passages which connect the perimeter to the community green.

The first new building in the redevelopment, located on the north side of the square, is planned to accommodate offices and shops and will retain the facade of the former Police Station. This side of the square also allows for the future development of a new central library, art gallery, civic office buildings, seniors centre, commercial and residential space. The existing City Hall is to be retained and connected to the new facilities on Fisgard Street by underground parking along Douglas Street. The McPherson Playhouse Theatre will receive minor renovations including a new loading bay. Below is a list of the facilities for each phase of the project.



<p>PHASE ONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office and retail building • Removal of McPherson Playhouse restaurant annex • Phase 1 Centennial Square revisions • Existing parkade building revisions • City Hall Annex revisions 	<p>PHASE TWO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knot Garden Reconfiguration • McPherson Playhouse loading / residential addition • Mixed use seniors centre / residential building • Phase 2 Centennial Square revisions 	<p>PHASE THREE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation or re-build of existing parkade building • New mixed use residential / commercial civic building • 600 stall underground parking • Phase 3 Centennial Square revisions • Relocation of fountain. 	<p>PHASE FOUR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New public library / civic building • Historic City Hall atrium addition
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Figure 15: Ecological design

Greater Victoria will have its very own waterfall fountain of sublimation... In order to get a better sense for the vision of the public realm, we can approach the fountain as it is described in the 3D digital images and situated in relation to slogans of the marketing pamphlet. This is to acknowledge that the public realm as an urban renaissance effort, also involves the creativity of urban sublimation. In a politics of survival, place (as in the public realm) rather than space (as in public space) is fundamental. By shifting to an assumption of place embedded in wider contexts (physical and social environments), the politics of survival is active. Whereas vitality is outside a politics of power (in the space of death), a politics of survival does not have an outside and so includes both decay and vitality. Specters of youth are not needed to enchant hollow spaces with vitality, but rather unity needs to be mottled out of multiple histories and uses. In advertising urban renaissance there is an assumption that the inter-actions of various histories and uses in spaces are necessary for the realization of the vision of the public realm.

In order to realize the "new and unified civic presence for Victoria," unity among diverse actions in a politics of survival, the marketing pamphlet has been created to include multiple histories and uses in describing a place. In its environmentally responsible and sustainable approach, it is communicated that we are all embedded in wider contexts. In doing so, rather than highlighting the many different ways that we are embedded, a particular aesthetic style is used. It is a graphic design that uses crisp lines, sans serif fonts, and images of 3D digital models. In digital modeling the only limits to creating images of the public realm are those of the imagination. But this technological style is tempered with soft colours, lots of greens and the incorporation of (digitized) sketches of people sitting at tables and walking through an arcade. The overall design

implies that to create a public realm that is environmentally responsible and sustainable, we need to employ technologies that are capable of modeling and putting them to use within a humanly conceived sketch of inter-actions. In this way the design of the marketing pamphlet embeds computer technologies in human imagination and environmental realities.

The limits of creative activity in the digital modeling of the public realm are evident in the conceptualization of the design of the models themselves. For example, the buildings adhere to a “defined formal vocabulary.” It is a visual vocabulary of light – as emitted and contained by white buildings that are unified by continuity in lines of skylights, windows and rooftops. This is a unity of style in which buildings as imaged are limited by the impression that defining a formal vocabulary involves continuity of lines, and absorbing and re-presenting environmental light. Alongside this unity of style, other features of the models such as the arcades and passageways unify by “linking” and acting as a “network”. This is a unity of flow in which the users of the buildings are connected, and the users of the streets outside the square are connected with the square. The unity of flow is made possible and limited by the buildings themselves, the streets and the square.² The most prominent unity of flows are the plazas through which the square is “opened up visually.” For example, in the first phase of development a line of sight is opened up from the fountain and City Hall to Chinatown’s Gate of Harmonious Interest. Because of the connections between the square and its environment, its renaissance acts as a “point of contact” with “a revitalized Chinatown.” In a sense we can think of urban

² “Significant urban design elements such as a public arcade linking all of the new buildings along their south side, the establishment of a network of passages that run north-south linking Fisgard Street to the square, and a defined formal vocabulary are all addressed in this first addition contributing to a new and unified civic presence for Victoria.” RHA, “Centennial Square Revitalization,” [pamphlet].

renaissance as increased visibility, that re-covers the invisibility of racial politics (amongst other things) with an appearance of cultural celebration.

Within an overall design informed by a unity of style and flow, the fountain is designed as part of a natural environment. Rather than symbolizing nature through the incorporation of a river stone base, it is part of a natural environment. Rather than being centred in towers of water and a concrete crown, the fountain is set within a natural flow of water at the headwaters that feed the grassy square, the “community green.”³ The headwaters are at the edge of the square alongside the busiest street, so that the sound of the waterfall acts as a buffer between the street noise and the square. In this digitally modeled image of the fountain as (monument) embedded in a manicured nature, no dedication or explanation is necessary; the function of the fountain speaks for itself. It is the natural (albeit manicured) source for the vitality of the community green.

* * *

In looking to the everyday city of Victoria, similar to Amin and Thrift I have tried to approach “the phenomenality of practices.”⁴ However, they might suggest that in advocating urban sensitization (becoming sensitive to our everyday vulnerability) and urbanities (re-fined re-actions) I have relapsed “into a romanticism of the everyday, and of action for itself.” But as opposed to their optimistic (almost messianic) claim – “Each urban encounter is a theater of promise in a play of power” – I have made the more modest suggestion that making ourselves vulnerable to inter-actions we can re-act more

³ Securing a space for exaltation becomes a more complicated affair in a world of flows. The impulses of myths of salvation can no longer be contained in marble edifices; they need to be channeled. Taussig highlights concrete as the medium of modern monumentalization, with the road as its highest form. Concrete is “the poor man’s marble of modernity . . . concrete can be poured over everything and anywhere, symmetricalizing an ever more fluid world.” Michael Taussig, *Magic of the State*, New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 170.

⁴ Amin and Thrift, p. 4.

appropriately. In this way modesty as a way of approaching the everyday is not a balance achieved between power and creative force, anger and joy. Rather, the vulnerability of the everyday is obscured by this battle. In a scene of vulnerability challenges are re-turned, but although challenges are seductive (at best), they are not inherently romantic – challenges can be re-turned in desirable and undesirable ways (not to mention the possibility of stealing away with the challenge altogether). In the everyday there is no action as such (no willing community members or forces that move), and so no “action for itself.” Instead there are re-fined re-actions, urbanities, that can be understood as a kind of salvaging of re-actions (there is no original action) that is influenced by (rather than operating for) impressions of elegance that emerge through particular inter-actions. Hence, rather than structural planning of power-full spaces, or divinely inspired creation of ways of life, I conclude with an impression of an everyday city and inter-action plan for urban activism.

Impression

In this section I want to re-create an impression of the everyday city of Victoria. Through the vignette of the current urban renaissance of Centennial Square, I hope to have demonstrated that the creativity of urban sublimation is no longer being repressed by urban renewal. In fact, there is an explicit reliance on creativity to make technologies of computer modeling more human, and thus natural. In the ecology of Centennial Square these two ways of thinking are (pro)creating in order to create a unity of style in a politics of survival, and a unity of flow in an ecological capitalism. By laying out the action plan, the everyday can be situated in relation to the process at any time, and

marketed to the appropriate re-creational users of the square. In the public realm stories are re-covered by functions that speak for themselves. Embedded in the physical and social ecologies of the region, Centennial Square is coming into a renaissance through recreation activities (i.e. sub-urban style consumerism), which are themselves the ceremony of re-vitalization. As we saw in the community scene, this is a (sub-urban) metro downtown whose inter-active processes (i.e. architectural or civic visioning) appear vital because they evade the risks of dissention by limiting involvement to those who care about the community and its sub-urban social ecology – this is a thin aesthetic politics based on appearances. There is a force of (manicured) nature moving this appearance, which is able to imply the complexity of its design through the use of digital imagery.

While there may be a (pro)creation of the two ways of thinking in urban renaissance, its limits are indicated by the persistence of the street scene. The “downtown community” is visible, in that they are named, but they have no substantive location in relation to the vision. Remaining functionally invisible, the street scene and the revolutionary capitalism that they may re-act with remain in the dark of night in which they can haunt and from which they can retaliate. Despite becoming aesthetically dis-posed (metrosexual?), urban renewal as urban renaissance remains functionally at odds with urban sublimation.

Based on the Can-West Global re-enactment of the street scene, we can suppose that the (in)visible downtown community is moved by playfulness and anger. While playfulness was shown to have the critical capacities necessary to reveal the aesthetic nature of official storytelling, I am concerned that it will only be ‘revealed’ to those of us who already have listening skills. This is similar to the concern I have about the self-

referential learning processes of the urbanities scene – that although there is continuous learning for those who have a location in relation to the place and the process of governance, most are only involved as target markets and the targets of marketing. As such, only the already critically active will re-act and only the already civically engaged will be involved in the renaissance. Official collective political experiences of the community scene and the street scene will not change in tone. Hence, the swaths of sub-urban metro Victoria will continue to operate in crisis mode, turning inwards upon the urban core that sustains and challenges it with its vitality (i.e. street scene, creativity, night life, stories). Beyond the disconcerting question of how vitality will survive when intolerance becomes broadly enforceable, it is also important to ask what might be left. Looking to the urban renaissance vision currently being marketed, I am not comforted by the digitized image of café dwellers and arcade shoppers, which in order to maintain such boring appearances through the night could involve excessive and offensive lighting, increased policing, or even worse still the installation of speakers playing tinny sounding classical music;⁵ I much prefer the jamming of youths experimenting with lyricism and rhythm. Similarly, although the community green may be more comfortable than concrete, the sprinkler system that is sure to be embedded in it will likely serve as a deterrent for its use by street involved people. The image of a sub-urban metro downtown full of (alienated) consumers during the day obscures the poverty that makes it possible by occupying the non-consumer public places as (consumer) pedestrians. Perhaps it is in the angst of youth, in anger, that we might be able to discover a more articulate form of critique with which to supplement playfulness.

⁵ This is a technique used by a convenience store in my hometown of Huntsville (ON) to discourage youths from hanging out in the parking lot. It has been quite effective.

Inter-action plan

The inter-actions of the scene of urban renaissance consist primarily of marketing (as was the case for the DVCA action plans in the community scene), and a free market style competitive visioning process. The free market becomes possible where everyone is considered as a free agent; a similar universalism was achieved in the urbanities scene by reducing civic participation to the unit of pedestrian. In this way everyone was scripted as engaged in inter-actions (as individuals in public places), but in order to maintain a distinction between pedestrians and those in the street scene, only inter-actions in certain public places (i.e. the CityRoom) are counted. These inter-actions are ones in which everyone is as-signed a position in relation to the process. While the concept of using projects such as the CityRoom to catalyze action is use-full, when the project is self-referential (i.e. a public realm catalyzing a public realm) it creates a false sense of security. (In)visible are the ways that the process of self-reference is implicated in inter-actions outside that process. For an example of this we can look to poverty activism in Victoria.

By taking their own ideologies, of revolution and creation, as the point of reference for political re-action most self-identified activists are missing the needs that emerge through poverty. On the one hand, there are many organizations that are convinced that the suffering of poverty is a lack of power, and as such seek to take possession of power through revolutionary means (i.e. international socialists, community coalition). While these organizations unquestionably engage in some crucial actions, they are geared towards constituting spectacles of abstract crises (such as Empire and

global capital takeovers) and responding to them in crisis mode (as in occupations and demonstrations), rather than towards transforming our everyday inter-actions. As such their force is easily captured by the urban renaissance spectacle of inclusivity.⁶ On the other hand, there are other activist groups that see the possession of power as creating the problem of the suffering of poverty, and as such are inspired by creativity, which is empowering other ways of performing poverty (i.e. random acts of kindness, power of hope). As opposed to the abstract symbolism of revolutionary actions, these performances transform particular places; but similar to the crisis mode of revolutionaries, their inspired performances are limited in their influence to intermittent moments and places (as in parades and painting parties). More importantly, they do not pose a challenge to urban renaissance, and in fact could be scripted as contributing to its performance.⁷

In an urban sensitization spirit, I will highlight a project that refers not to itself, but catalyzes re-enactments of an urbanities scene as a scene of urban activism. Doing so, I hope to demonstrate that the scene of urban activism takes inter-actions as primary, listens to the needs that emerge through them, and re-acts by meeting those needs and posing a further challenge. In Victoria there are: many street involved people who are hungry, a number of organic food distributors who have food waste that is not marketable

⁶ “The parades, masquerades, balls and folklore festivals authorized by a power structure caricaturize the appropriation and reappropriation of space. The true appropriation characteristic of effective ‘demonstrations’ is challenged by the forces of repression, which demand silence and forgetfulness.” Henri Lefebvre, *The Urban Revolution*, Robert Bononno trans., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, p. 21. In an emergent aesthetic politics the distinction between these different kinds of demonstrations is increasingly difficult to make.

⁷ I want to suggest that both the revolutionary action and creative performance are most significant in terms of the ways that they transform the inter-actions of the people who become involved – who may become convinced of the merits of supporting local and ethical businesses, vegan diets, making people laugh etc. I support the capacity building of individuals in these contexts, but suggest that they may be better understood as modes of governance than as urban activism. Urban activism involves the re-action of urbanities, and attentiveness to how impressions are affected, with a sense of an impression of elegance.

but is still consumable, and a handful of activists who for whatever reasons are interested in food security issues. So Food Not Bombs (FNB) was organized with the weekly project to collect organic food waste in order to prepare, serve and enjoy a meal with street involved people, with the secondary function of re-distributing unprepared organic food (to street involved people, FNB-ers, and organizations such as the needle exchange and the women's shelter). Instead of revolutionary possession of poverty or empowering poverty to dance, FNB returns the challenge of poverty: it calls the bluff of the suffering (powerlessness) of poverty by collecting the food waste of wealth and re-cycling it as nourishment and enjoyment; it re-turns the challenge to suffer to power by highlighting the waste of wealth. In other words the street scene is re-enacted as having the function of re-cycling the waste of a waste-full way of life, rather than being a drain on a considerate consumerism. Hence, rather than being a quasi alternative or supplement to the everyday, Food Not Bombs (FNB) actually re-creates urbanities.

In this example of urban activism, what is important is the collection of waste, and the collective cooking, serving, and eating of food; who does it, where it happens and how it gets done is different all the time. There are ongoing conversations about what might need to be done (which can include anything from chopping veggies, to converting the legislature lawn into a garden, to painting bike lanes into our delivery route to the serving). In these conversations there is generally a vulnerability to the inter-actions and modulation amongst those involved as to the what, how and who. There is often uncertainty about where the cooking will happen, whether there will be people who show up for cleanup etc. but somehow the weekly serving of organic food on the streets of Victoria has persisted. In fact, according to street talk FNB is the longest running

anarchist organization in Victoria, maintaining a collective style of organization in which people participate in whatever ways they want and are able to. So although the basic project persists it is continually re-acted with compassion as always unique urbanities (refined re-actions).

I propose that FNB is an exemplar of urban activism, transforming everyday inter-actions – waste is re-cycled as nourishment, and suffering is re-acted as collective enjoyment – but perhaps even more importantly FNB has resisted the convenience of structured inter-actions. Thus it challenges the notion that situating one self in relation to a place or a process is necessary for inter-actions that are productive in terms of sustaining a project. But if it were only a matter of an effective anarchist style of organization, there would be no particular reason that FNB has survived when others have not. I suggest that perhaps even more important than the commitment of a couple of FNB-ers to maintaining this collective, it is the openness of the field of conversation when cooking and eating that is unique – this is the poetics of FNB. Whereas the revolutionaries have to stay faithful to the cause and the artists must busily create, in FNB there is no way to become off topic, only different possible trajectories for inter-actions. The open field of conversation has enabled many other projects to be initiated through FNB activities. Such openness is not marked by anarchism, but to a poetic disposition and a loose persistence of a project that does not impose on inter-actions; I suggest that similar contexts of re-action can be found in the most counter-intuitive places, such as construction sites, photocopiers in offices, and line-ups at cafés. Hence they too can be made into urban activist projects that can transform inter-actions by offering a pause in which urbanities can be made more elegant, to meet the usually (in)visible needs. Thus,

rather than the daunting task of setting an entirely new scene, by being attentive to the dynamism of inter-actions and impressions within the everyday, we might find punctuations that could inspire us to re-act otherwise and thus transform the urbanities scene into a scene of urban activism.

Scene of a global slum

In a sense the particular kind of confusion that we are experiencing as evidenced in official collective experiences of aesthetic politics is that there are things that can be seen and yet do not have a place. Such is the case for the street scene. There are two ways that we can approach this problem according to two emphases in defining place, as we saw in PSCWG action plan: space and inter-actions. We might try to solve the problem by as-signing places to these things. Such a spatial approach creates an everyday impression of alienation that is debilitating because it re-enforces the reason for displacement: occupation. Even attempts to as-sign a time to the street scene (the night) have failed to give it a place in the community scene. Similarly, attempts to divine styles of living to create a street community have failed to give it independence. So instead of trying to find increasingly more creative ways to as-sign/divine places to/of the displaced, I suggest we pause and listen to the needs that arise out of dis-placement. This is to consider dis-placement (and the place that it derives from) not as a thing in space, but as re-enacted through inter-actions.

The needs that arise out of dis-placement have been dis-covered in this thesis by becoming attentive to the creative role of mapping in visioning the City of Victoria, and the room tone in media depictions of the Red Zone. I am not merely suggesting that dis-

placement is a role that is enacted in the street scene. I want to make the further suggestion that dis-placement is the quality of the street scene for a community scene audience, which is a function of the inter-action of the community scene and the street scene. The uselessness of these inter-actions becomes apparent with the community scene becoming vulnerable to and occupying the streets – the audience becomes displaced from its self. Despite the fact that there is no audience to put on (to recall McLuhan's terms), the community scene continues to be re-enacted as though it were audience to the street scene. The challenge is to conceptualize how these scenes can inter-act cinematically rather than theatrically – through techniques such as montage or the pause rather than based on the singular space of the stage. In emphasizing the technique of the pause, I am suggesting that there are aspects of our broader context (i.e. the global) that we can become sensitive to if we inter-act scenes without filling their intersection with meaning or movement. In this thesis' analyses, the pause has enabled us to sense a warm hug from God, disembodied voices, and intrigue. Some possibilities for conceptualizing these aspects more broadly are offered by political theorists in their work on aesthetics, such as the sublime.⁸ Although this thesis has provided a way of opening into such conceptualizations, a rigorous engagement with them in relation to globalization and urban politics remains for future work.

Moving with the realization that we are all becoming 'homeless,' whether identified as vulnerable to the violence of the streets or as pedestrians in the streets, it is our own dis-placement that we must first become sensitive to. The self being the prime occupier of our inter-actions, we are dis-placed by our selves. Thus, sensitivity involves

⁸ For a concise sketch of the history of aesthetics in political thought from ancient Greek through contemporary thinking, See George Dickie, *Aesthetics: An Introduction*, Indianapolis: Pegasus, 1971.

a refusal to secure or perform independence, and offering our selves up to inter-actions. Through these inter-actions we can then become sensitive to the convenience of identifying our selves according to how we occupy space and time; for example my self as a student says little about the quality of me, and demeans other forms of learning. Such pre-occupation obscures the quality of our occupation of the everyday; for example my self as well adjusted to a way of life predicated on accumulation and acceleration is secured in opposition to the mal-adjustment of those whose way of life involve cycles of re-distribution and varied pace, as in some forms of indogeneity. In order to make my self as a student I occupy the university, making it difficult to listen to the needs of indigenous struggles, whose specificity and duration is primarily outside the university structure. It is not that my self as a student is *responsible* for colonizing Victoria, but rather that my self as a student gets in the way of solidarity with indigenous struggles so that only *pity* seems possible. Pity has the colonial function of occupying the quality of well adjusted with a specific way of life, to the exclusion of others. Thus through this cursory example, we can see that one of the benefits of an aesthetic politics based on appearances is that behind the narrator (actor), the functions of things (such as the self) become visible. When functions 'speak for themselves' their complexities become audible; for example my self as student alienates me from myself and other ways of learning *and* enables a feeling of being well adjusted by scripting others as mal-adjusted. How we choose to re-act in the face of these complexities has been the theme of this thesis.

In official collective re-presentations of downtown Victoria, the realization of inner complexity is registering as a crisis. First, through urban planning processes the

crisis of the City was cast as a void of apparent sub-urban values (convenience and child safety) at the core of the metro City, exacerbated by the absence of a power-full model of governance at the metropolitan (regional) level. But this realization that there is no centre of power need not be a problem; Barthes exposes the function of the empty sign (a sign without meaning), by illustrating that the imperial palace at the centre of Tokyo functions as a void that levels the field around it: there is no ultimate destination in a city with an empty centre.⁹ Applying this insight to downtown Victoria, there would be no need for creating a metro downtown to monumentalize the sub-urban swaths surrounding it – as with the imperial palace, those who occupy it would be able to do so in the manner of their choosing. Furthermore, it would involve a renaissance of the (sub-urban) neighbourhoods in which the particularities of each are re-created. Such a renaissance is already underway in many of the neighbourhoods that have their own ‘centres’ (Cook Street Village for example). Second, the media generated crisis of the Red Zone was dually created as violent and pity-full offenses to a polite consumer aesthetic. Re-acting to the violent crisis, mean merchants mobilize a war for the spaces of interiority against the street scene in which legal actions (such as panhandling) become intolerable, and illegal actions (such as drug dealing) become the targets of privatized armies (security guards and police task forces). Re-acting to the pity-full crisis ‘compassionate’ merchants allow the street scene the time of night, and use their creative energy to beautify the time of day. But whether violent or pitiful, spatial or temporal, the crisis of the Red Zone created by the media narrates over the playfulness, anger and ineffable feelings (i.e. warm hug from God) of the street scene. In doing so, the critical possibility

⁹ Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, Richard Howard trans., New York: Hill and Wang, 1982 (1970).

that the crisis we face (whether power-full, violent or pity-full) is a form of re-creation in the battle between urban renewal and urban sublimation becomes inaudible.

An offence to a polite consumer aesthetic need not register as a crisis requiring zoning (whether spatial war zone or temporal pity camp). In fact it distracts from the actual danger to downtown retail that is posed by sub-urbanization and from the possibility that the vitality of the street scene is necessary for the survival of downtown Victoria as urban. This is not to suggest that poverty is a necessary aspect of the urban, but rather that the dynamism of urbanism involves the playfulness, anger and ineffable feelings of those who refuse community forms of re-creation. These sensations embody the capacity for critique, and the ineffable quality that is necessary to defy the odds. Such capacities are necessary for becoming comfortable with emergent aesthetic politics. But comfort must not be mis-taken for ease: an aesthetic politics that involves more than appearances requires making inter-actions difficult. Downtown retail would be well advised to make their selves (i.e. mean merchant and 'compassionate' merchant) vulnerable, to admit the danger that sub-urbanization poses and to become sensitive to the playfulness, anger and ineffable defiance that arise. Becoming vulnerable would involve refusing to script downtown as the spatial or historical centre of Victoria. In playfulness the convenient sub-urban critiques that would have parking lots rather than streets would be revealed as silly. In anger another way of moving through and pausing downtown would emerge. In ineffable defiance another quality of downtown would become possible. Behind the beautification of the streets, another re-action to the quality of downtown Victoria is needed – another way of inter-secting the street scene and the community scene.

The quality of downtown as dying influences the creation of a spectacle of crisis, which could be re-enacted as a danger. Whereas re-acting to a crisis is immediate – limited to the scope of the crisis itself – re-acting to danger requires us to be sensitive to a broader context. For example, in order to get a sense for how the street scene is at work it is imperative that we have an understanding of how it relates to the community scene. In official re-creations the street scene is scripted as transgressing the community scene, whether through the ethics of irresponsibility and criminality, or the affects of playfulness and anger. Bataille suggests that transgression is the marker of eroticism,¹⁰ which is one way for us to conceptualize the community scene’s pornographic-like de-meaning and reverence for the feminized creative capacities of the street scene. Unlike a crisis, danger is not transgressive because it lies before us, rather than being upon us. As such we have the opportunity to pause and explore it sensually, to re-turn the challenge that it poses to us. If the quality of the danger that we face is dying, we need not try to capture control over life, which involves sacrificing some by “letting die.”¹¹ Instead we can refuse the challenge to “let die” by working for the survival of ways of life, and challenging dying to die. This challenging does not aim for the death of dying, which would result in a quality of re-birth. Rather, it is the continual banter that is desired. Rather than an erotic relation between the community scene and the street scene, I suggest that we re-enact it following Benjamin’s gesture towards “intrigue” at the close of his aesthetic work.¹² A relation of intrigue is not bound by promises or sacrifices; it is a tensile curiosity that we can

¹⁰ Georges Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, Mary Dalwood trans., City Lights, 1991 (1957), San Francisco. see especially pp. 63-71.

¹¹ This is to refer to the biopolitical form of sovereignty explored by Foucault. See Michel Foucault, *Society must be defended : lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-76*, Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana eds., New York : Picador, 2003.

¹² Benjamin, *Critique of violence*, p. 235.

think of as being maintained by offerings that only make sense in particular inter-actions, in a system of empty signs.

In closing let's pause to consider how shifting from alienat-ed/ing eroticism to vulnerable intrigue implicates the global city and its relation to the everyday. By re-creating the everyday impression of alienation as an impression of vulnerability, the everyday city is not conceived as autonomous from the global city. Instead the everyday city calls the bluff of transcendence, offers its self up to the global city, and challenges the global city to become vulnerable, to offer its self up in re-turn. One way that we might begin to re-turn the challenge is by re-naming the global city. The global city can be associated with the struggle between freedom and responsibility, and addiction and irresponsibility. If it is the case that the battle field is becoming affective rather than spatio-temporal, then perhaps another metaphor for that which exceeds our understanding and yet influences our inter-actions would be use-full. I propose the global slum as one such metaphor. In this way the creative freedom implied in the term city could be displaced by the re-creative decay implied in the term slum. Unlike the global city the global slum is not primarily an ordered time space that enables action, but is constituted of the inter-actions of 'homeless' residents. In the global slum waste is re-cycled as use-full, survival and celebration are collective projects, and the law is supplanted by codes of honour.¹³ Unlike the global city, the global slum is primarily within the everyday city, being constituted of decaying impressions (rather than abstract creations). Hence, the global slum provides a way of thinking about affecting global politics through urban

¹³ Segger in her thesis defense asserted that people on the streets die when they lose their pack. Cara Segger, *Landscapes in Transition At The Northern Edge of Downtown Victoria*, [MA thesis defence] Victoria: University of Victoria, 3 March 2005.

activism, by making our selves vulnerable to and re-creating our inter-actions and the impressions that emerge through them.

There is an immense anger of the global slum – that constitutes a danger not a crisis – that can only be sensed by approaching the particular inter-actions through which it emerges. This is to move as an adult-playing-child, without a vision of what we might discover, but with intrigue. As such I close with curiosity about the anger of indigeneity depicted by CanWest Global as choosing ‘homelessness’...

There is a trace of a fountain of sensitivity in the slum of Victoria... It exists as a suggestion “by Chief John Albany and members of the Songhees band that the fountain include a bronze figure of the legendary Indian princess, ‘Sweet Camosun.’”¹⁴ It is a fountain in which the power of colonial stories such as the Indian princess (pro)create with Aboriginal creations such as Sweet Camosun, in a figure of remembrance to be embedded in a formless fountain. There is no design for this fountain. We can approach this fountain of sensitivity through the refusal to forget or design this fountain, while continually challenging its proposal to become audible in the everyday city ...

¹⁴ T.W. Paterson, “Centennial Square: Once Ugly Duckling Now Rejuvenated Oasis,” Times Colonist, 21 February 1971.

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