

**Opening Address of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Metropolis Conference**  
**Hosted by the City of Toronto**  
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Diversity, Migration and Change: three charismatic words; at least glamorous by the idealism of a few years ago. They still capture the imagination with the promise of peace, confraternity and progress. But now they suggest the fragmentation of the world. Or they might challenge us to take up the quest for its coherence. But let us name things well. The wrong naming of issues can either detour us from the human heart, or guide help to guide it home. In this sense we are all called to be poets and to name things well; for terms can trivialize or ennoble the subject, and our subject is the global citizen, and the question of how to be a citizen in the world

Toronto is a vibrant part of this subject, and offers itself as a gesture in civic aesthetic. It is a premiere city of change; diversity is its diadem. It is Toronto's hope that the hosting of this conference will refresh ideas, and contribute to the city's self-reflection. Toronto's strategies are about a perseverance in citizenship, with the understanding that hope is always larger than strategy. Hope is the great resource of the global city.

Diversity. Let me offer some thoughts. Diversity is bigger than the ethno-racial, multicultural, or socio cultural. Its ideological dimensions are staggering. By ideology I mean the way people position their lives in the context of meaning. And meaning is made up of aspirations, dreams, rejoicings hopes, fears-- elements that run deeper than a conventional study of values. They are tied to matters of belief. Belief is what makes peoples cohere. Belief! A tricky word, damaged by our sensitivity to its tyrannies. But what we have on the global stage is badly neighbored belief systems, not cohering, and doubtfully negotiated by the science of cultures. Policy is stymied. For at every turn we forget that principles must be impelled by the eros that imagined them; they must be inspired, not in governance, but in the citizen. Principles must be felt in the exercise of empathy, where they began. Empathy is the true engine and flower of civic event; and the manufacture of empathy escapes our genius for policy. Cultures cannot negotiate, they must feel for each other. And we have no levers for this. Yet it is only from empathy that compassion is built, and only from compassion can a passionate city evolve. The global city begins or fails here.

Allow me to extend my talent for the obvious where diversity is concerned. People like to live among numbers of people who believe in the same things. Migration is making that impossible, in a socio-cultural sense. There is no going back; and it is doubtful that we can regain even sentimental affiliations to origin in the wake of the transformations that media and IT have brought. What we are left with is "migrations of belief". To our advantage, this also means the great "migration of hope".

We have run out of the multicultural strategy where it was most naïve. You cannot ghetto beliefs. Beliefs want elbowroom, and seek to spread their enthusiasm, to rejoice; for each ontology has its joy; a way of being, a worldview, a belief that will not to be contained in its expression. Beliefs won't be ghettoed. And if they are, they make for the aberrations that result in riots, bombings, crime and mental unhealth.

The citizen, discouraged from a shared forum of belief, will resort to anxieties that masquerade as political, legislative and cultural matters. In fact, that discourse conceals a primal angst in the global citizen. And that angst is the frustration of a desire—the desire to participate in a “literacy of grace” with fellow citizens.

Why a “literacy of grace”? Because we must learn again to read each other by the simple code of common dreams, desires, aspirations and delight, with the conviction that we are made of the same stuff; skin and cultural styles aside. We have become illiterate by the alphabet of market economies and rampant cynicism; add to that the loss of a leadership that was once sworn to ideals, and not to mere congruence.

A literacy of grace does not begin with the terms of inclusivity, equity, fairness or tolerance. A literacy of grace is about the “eros point” of these ideas, the inspiration to these ideas, the flesh of those ideas.

Concepts will not rally. Or inspire. What does inspire is the exercise of the charitable. The notion of the charitable must become, again, a civic expectation, unlatched from the scaffolds of entitlement. The citizen does not seek to be entitled; the citizen seeks to enter the forum of joy and delight by the casual invitations of grace called the civic. This grace is demonstrable, and therefore practicable.

A literacy of grace involves a pledge between citizens, not by negotiation or the mandate of the reasonable. Each citizen seeks to recognize another citizen as a resource of sacrifice. From this emerges trust, mutuality, and the alchemy of cooperation. When a citizen sees another as a resource of sacrifice --appreciation occurs. This appreciation is the spine of civic grace. Respect is its subsequence. From this civic grace comes civility and allowance, from which come innovation and creativity. Such are the premises for trans-cultural beliefs; for they seduce the citizen by the apprehension of what is beautiful in the human condition; namely, the pledge of sacrifice to another, without which cities are not sustainable.

Migration. To look at its motivations is to know its designs. People migrate either for a better life, or for a more fortunate lifestyle; and the two are dangerously confused. Popular branding does its best say that a prosperous city is a happy one. The citizen can be fooled for a while, until it is seen that the predicate of civic grace is again missing; and the cauldron of issues, rights and political populisms is stirred once more. The issues of entitlement reach a point, where rights are confused with commodities; meanwhile the citizen knows full well that, to live in a global family, the “ethic of entitlement” must be replaced by the “ethic of sufficiency”. It is not a market insight, but one that the market will take into account when it has completely harvested social capital. Sustainability is

about the ethic of sufficiency. How to make this attractive to the global pilgrim? It is already attractive. A shared ethos is what satiates the human heart. Benevolent optimism sees that when the space between people is architected by a shared ethos, the errant architectures of policy and design are manageable. There is in every citizen the desire to return to the currency of humanness; not the desire to subscribe to fresh principles, but to return to the narrative of the charitable and the empathic, from which the pledge of civic sacrifice is born.

This desire is the chief resource of diversity. This desire seeks to be enflamed into collective passion. More than infrastructures, more than opportunity, more than better schools, the migrant is drawn by the lure of a shared ethos engineered by a system and peoples that see beauty as the lodestone of the civic experience. Before the byways and edifices, structures and over-passes there must be the city of empathy, grace and mutuality. Equity, economy and inclusivity arrive when a city is architected by compassion. How to lever that compassion? The heart has its own algorithms for it. The job of governance is not to obstacle those algorithms

Change? Change is embraced in the confidence of collective ideals, when there is faith between citizens. The pledge of sacrifice is the archive of faith. Without it, change becomes a square peg in round hole, over and over again, along with investigations that won't cut to the heart of the matter. The heart of the matter is that when people “become” the ideal they are moving towards, variances do not intimidate; technology, global shifts in economy and idea become addendums to civility.

Cohesion is the theme of this Metropolis Conference. So many, bright minds brought together, from governance, the private sectors, and academia; and we are among those who would see the global city as an experiment that must succeed, before it is given over to the brute strategies of policing, surveillance and regulation; strategies that will only breed suspicion, resentment and self-interest.

This conference has a short but rich history in the inventory of civic care. The next few days will disclose imagination at the service of the global, at the service of the citizen trying to negotiate his/her dignity in a market economy, hungry for the delight and vision that impel migration. But let us be clear on this; the goal of migration is not what it appears to be. The goal is not to “arrive” The goal is to find oneself back home again. The goal of the voyager is to find a universality in recognizable terms. It is not an ethic of politics that the global citizen is concerned with; it is an ethic of humanity in terms that can inspire, in styles that can inspire, by and with people who are inspired to a common dream. May our discussions articulate that dream in terms that are commensurate to its beauty.

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