

PAN—GAIA

narratives of a grand new vision

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a pair of eyes. They could be anywhere: New York City, Bogotá, Mexico City, London, Dallas. Before them stands the roar of a highway. Modernity, encapsulated. Yet nothing has changed from the days that came before: eight billion souls, still grappling to move on up; in search of their own meaning; some have it, many don't. the same pair of eyes. Before them, the rush of a jet engine. Death of distance. The world as one. New York to London at Mach II speed. Paris to Tokyo sub rotation (time is an illusion; it was always an illusion). That pair of eyes; Brasileiros, Salvadoreños, Chilenos – or maybe San Franciscan, Roman, Angelinos (no matter); that pair of eyes, looking up to the Heavens. Wishing there were Heavens. Heaven is – a place on earth? Midway between the Tigris and Euphrates. Mythos. Mythos. Mythos. The Great USA. (U.S.A. is the speech of the people, a great bard once wrote).

Those eyes search. Those eyes stare. Those eyes wander, up and down, round and round. Eager to find the thread – the invisible thread that connects all. Those eyes search on, and on, and on. Suddenly a vision appears before them. Those eyes – so deep, so profound, so powerful (a portal – not in, but out), THEY SEE IT.

this is that story.

the story of those eyes. eight billion pairs.

oculus omnividens.

separati,

sed unus.

the eyes ----- of London

“nous arrivons maintenant à Londres, Saint Pancras.” (*london calls, london whispers*). Sprawling metropolis; global city. That's what this vision is all about. It's about a city, but its not *just* about a city. It's about that city *and* its relationship to the sprawling world beyond. Saskia Sassen captured it pretty well. London is not just London. It's London, integrated in a pretty tight circuit of international finance; international trade; Russian oligarchs; corporations and — money. moneyyyy. Got money in London? You're good. Don't have money in London? Less good.

Fortunately, London's the right kind of place to go if you don't have money but want to have money. Victoria (Victoria!) Line, eight minutes South. London Victoria. (Victoria! Victoria!) Leisurely stroll. Victoria Street. (Did Victoria not *make* this country?) (Perhaps; but perhaps it was the industrialists, the investors, the philosophers, the poets, the thinkers – those forebears are to whom we owe Britain). The eyes look up. *They've* made it. Made it to the grand Palace overlooking the

Thames. A momentous force. (a base from which to capture the world.) River invokes Charles Marlow. Towering gothic Palace invokes... Richard Dalloway?

(but this is real!)

(and their world was too, in a way)

Anyways – slight interruption. (Such is the mind. Perfectly imperfect. *ainsi est la vie*). Before those beaming eyes stands the great Palace. [WESTMINSTER – *etymology: west – mynster, Latin der. of monasterium*] Ah yes. Our subject was *money*. Lucre. Plata. Soldi. Here at the great Palace – the Palace that Charles Barry built; that Augustus Pugin decorated – here one can find *money*. A whole lot of it. Millions. Billions. Trillions. But – ‘*THERE IS NO MONEY!*’ declare the politicians. There is no money. There is no Money. Austerity. Cuts. And yet – there *is* money if one knows where to look.

for a better world, for a fairer world, levelling up Britain, redistribution, a grant here, a grant there, health and safety, world peace. (haven't we heard it all before?)

it's a topsy-turvy world. five o'clock. Men pour out in suits. His Majesty's Revenue and Customs. His Majesty's Treasury. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Petty France (*all must pay their fair share*). There is money – one just needs to look for it. And oh, the grandeur. Grandeurs beyond what those *poor* eyes, those *innocent* eyes, can *ever* imagine. (*topsy-turvy world*). But it's the world, nonetheless. The world we have come to inhabit. One of the many faces of Pan-Gaia

(and you gotta play the game)

There is money! There is wealth! Here is civilization! c.i.v.i.l.i.s.a.t.i.o.n. (*we have it here; they need it there* – or so the thinking goes). (Evelyn Waugh knew. Tony Last understood). LOOK UP. For this is London. The Global circuit. It never stops. Men in suits (*five-thousand-Pound suits*); sharp jaws; a sense of Purpose. purpose. /'pə:pəs/

(what is the purpose of all this?)

(what is the purpose to any of this?)

(the eyes had a vision; and so we must proceed)

LONDON LONDON LONDON LONDON LONDON LONDON

eight billion souls are somehow connected to it. eight million souls inhabit little Ldn Town. Those eyes; those baby eyes; follow the river downstream. It's five o' five pm. London Bridge is swarming. Hundreds and hundreds of meek faces marching down the bridge into the grey expanse beyond. London. London. London. Mother London. Little homesteads dot the suburbs. Miles, and miles, and miles of sprawl.

(but this vision ought to be a positive one)

Eight million souls inhabit London Town. And all things considered, it's a pretty neat place. The river's reflection catches another pair of eyes, top of the Shard, Shangri-La hotel. London is no joke. The pinnacle of luxury. Work hard enough, want it hard enough, and any one of the innocent eyes that look to the top of that glowing edifice might have it for themselves. London is a place to think big. London is Norman Foster. London is Boris Johnson. London is William Shakespeare. It is Jeremy Bentham. It is Francis Baco — one second. Let us talk of Jeremy Bentham. For his corpse lays resting, for all to see, a mere half league northwest of the zero-mile marker. UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE LONDON. In swarm the best and brightest from across the world. London is about ideas. And ideas change the world. And so London changes the world. In come the world's best and brightest. (a*a*a*a*a*). It is London that furnishes the world's future governing class. It is London that provides the credentials, the opportunities, the connections –

(all is coming together now – see how the eight million souls of London relate to the eight billion souls of Pan–Gaia?)

the money's more discreet here: that first year of university (*ucl, lse, king's – the golden trio*) is so precious. Everything is new. Or maybe it's not (*the old boys' network, is not quite what it used to be*). London Looks Outward. Here there is dynamism (!) excitement (!) energy (!) youth (!)

(an infinite array of possibilities)

The vision had by those eyes, those deep deep eyes, those infinitely deep eyes, goes further. They see a London of wannabe fashion models and designers. Central Saint Martin's. and the London College of Fashion. They see that familial wealth, *whose meaning has changed, in the twenty first century*. They see homes in *Surrey* and on the *Côte d'Azur*. They see original Whistler's and Rubens, staring down from the walls, of those gilded homes. They see struggling poets and wannabe writers. Artists looking for their lucky break. Politicians – those same politicians – looking to make a better world.

(In their rhetoric a world, that is no-longer. For they speak of Britain, as if it were a century back. Before Suez. Before the Great War. Before the nuisance, of the separatists.)

Those dreamy eyes, *those dreamy eyes*, cross the River Thames. And lying there is another world. Yet not quite: *for* there is no-doubt that this is London, *it is London indeed*. Into those eyes streams the colour red – red from the buses; red from the roundels; red from the little lights, flashing in the sky, marking the flight paths of the jet planes, that connect these eight million lives, with the eight billion lives beyond. London is a Global City. London is a Global City. But London is also London – its own place – incomparable, to any other. Little enclaves dot the capital.

ICI une enclave française. HEC. SciencesPo. ESEEC. – le champagne. Les soirées. La BNP. Mais toujours avec un angle, *algo-saxon*.

Allí un enclave español. “Yes we are spaaanish.” – ‘de dónde, tío?’ – “ahhh pero hablas español!?” y tambien para los españoles. esta ciudad tiene un estatus. *la ciudad international*. Línea directa. Entre *londres – y madrid*.

we are south of the River. *perhaps a scene*, at the Ministry.

(money money money – an incessant whisper in the background)

those blessed eyes shuffle down the street. it's three o'clock in the morning. South London is vivid. So so vivid. The moon shines bright over those council skies. kaCHING. prices rising prices rising need a place to stay want to make it big.

All that glimmers, is not gold, so those eyes, or ones just like them realise. London is not always easy. Eight million souls grapple ever upwards, they are aiming for a better life, a better future, a better world. And yet that world does not always come to them. There are disappointments. There are mistakes. There are miscalculations. Look into those bright blue; gleaming green; beautiful brown eyes – and you will see that there exists a darker core. But that is not to say that man is bad. He is good. He is fundamentally good. For all that is London; *indeed* Pan-Gaia itself, would not have been

possible if man were inherently bad (*this has been written elsewhere*). Yet this does not change the truth that flashes before those vulnerable, dreamy eyes. For that which fuels the City of London, the capital's epic Bacchanals, the social functions and receptions and business deals; that fueling all these things manifests itself in darker ways, evoking broken lives and desperate cries that ring through the endless streets of our beloved city. Man is good. Yet elements of his nature must be contained. Rousseau understood. Hobbes too. "In a state of nature, life is nasty, brutish, and short." Funny thing is, if those same eyes look close enough, what becomes evident is that we *still* live in a state of nature. Violence is the law. It's just been contained, to a neat monopoly on its legitimate use. RIOT. ARSON. MURDER – extract from the average weekly broadsheet (*"if it bleeds, it leads."*) No worry: here come the Met (–extract from a comedy show at the Soho Theatre). So little Ldn Town has its highs and it has its lows. But it is London. It is London. It *is*

(pan-Gaia. Londinium Mundi.)

At night the trains, *six, eight, twelve* carriages long; *fifty, one-hundred, one-twenty* miles an hour; the trains connect the eight million of the metropolis, with the eight billion beyond. "*calling at East Croydon, Purley, Coudon South, Merstham, Redhill, Earlswood, Salfords, and Gatwick Airport.*" Surrey. Beloved Surrey. Thousand-Pound private schools (*that is – per week*). And gorgeous English homes. *Deserted streets, and little streams*. Yet the capital lies close. Global Britain. Global City. *Deptford, Greenwich* [the global standard], *Dartford*. — *Guildford, Surbiton, Waterloo*. – *Paddington, Reading, Chippenham, Bath, Bristol*. – the great cities of the United Kingdom. It is six o'clock. Those eyes – the ones that dare to dream, dare to think a little bigger, dare to explore new worlds and new ideas – those eyes open ready to take in another day of this great great Capital. Destination: Bloomsbury, Kensington, Canary Wharf—

(canary wharf?)

Yes – Canary Wharf. Little microcosm of the City. At first one of the busiest ports in the United Kingdom (nay, the world). The eyes of the fifties would have seen it fall on pretty hard times in the post-War era. Empire no-more. But then... Rebirth. New Life. Global influx of capital. *Special Economic Zone*. (in shuffles some of that money, of which "there is none!") Yet here it's private money: Canadian investors. So up go the towers. Hong-Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation. John Pierpont Morgan. Citibank. (and the appropriate, quite necessary, retail). National Westminster. Royal Bank of Canada. Credit Sui— (whoops!) Deutsche Bank. BRITAIN VOTES TO LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION. (*Pound hits record low*) (*Britons warned Brexit means less growth; hormone beef; border-queues; Brexit means—*) But Britain powers on. Well – London powers on.

And so those glorious eyes, before which stood a grand grand vision of the sprawling megapolis; those glorious eyes blink and observe a tapestry composed of eight million or so other beings – each as rich, each as complex, each as complete as any of the other eight million, eight billion, lives.

The vision before those eyes goes further. They envision the world not only as it is but as it could be

(murphy's law, tells us that the two are one and the same, that what could be, will be)

LONDON, LONDON, LONDON

in those eyes

are cranes towering over a skyline buzzing with activity, with movement, with a desire to grow – just like the people for whom these homes are being built. in those eyes, is a belief in the future, in a better future, in a future where millions more are able to join the eight million current inhabitants of that

sprawling sprawling metropolis. Those eyes see progress. They see a London that looks towards the talent of the polis close and far; vying to attract the best and the brightest. They see a London, that builds upon its existing success in art, in music, in fashion, in politics. They see a city aimed towards building a better world, a better future, exporting its ideas far beyond its beltway. They see trains rush by, they see infrastructure that is the world's envy. They see beauty. They see modernity. They see success – rewarded accordingly. They see leisure; they see genius; they see a city – with ties across the entire world. (*and so it was, at its peak, but London cannot look backwards, it must look forwards*).

Those eyes see a vision of London, not so dissimilar from its current state, but propounding its own success and using it to catapult it to ever greater heights. The logic of Murphy's Law – always so pessimistic – has its own little upside to it: it can be applied to the positive too. And so it was, that the vision reflected in those brilliant eyes, for the great Londinium, can one day become a reality, if we so will it.

....

coming soon...

the eyes ----- of New York City

the eyes ----- of Paris

the eyes ----- of Bogotá

the eyes ----- of Rome

the eyes ----- of Pan-Gaia