

The London 2012 Olympics, the city, (the) capital: Gentrification, governance, be(long)ing

Forget Big Ben, Hyde Park and St Pauls Cathedral. The Olympics is being held in the real heart of London. East London. My London. This is the part of the city that needed the investment, needed the Olympics. This is one of the most multicultural places in the world ... That's London. The real London. My London (Rapper Dizzee Rascal, from Bow, East London, aired on the BBC pre-Olympic Opening Ceremony preview show, July 27th, 2012).

Strand East will house mews-style townhouses [that] sit comfortably alongside creative commercial space. Where beautiful public courtyards open up to piazzas. And waterways weave their way around hotels, restaurants, parks, water taxi piers and cycle paths. The 'face' of Strand East will be a former industrial area re-christened 'Dane's Yard' – a landscaped plaza with restaurants, bars, galleries and more, near the entrance to the development. (Eric Mack, talking about the *InterIkea* development in Stratford, <http://www.gizmag.com/ikea--breaks-ground-on-strand-east-utopian-village-in-london/22133/>)

Under transformations in the dominant mode of economic (re)production and regulation (e.g. MacLeod, Raco, & Ward 2003), the organization and management of the contemporary city has become preoccupied with the reconstitution of urban space—or more accurately, select parcels of urban space—into multifaceted environments designed for the purpose of encouraging consumption oriented capital accumulation (Judd 1999; MacLeod 2002). The subsequent rush to instantiate “spectacular urban space” (Harvey 2001: 92) has, at least partially, advanced a new epoch in the material [re]formation of increasingly differentiated urban landscapes—under the auspices of domineering logics of flexible, diversified capital accumulation—in which new urban economies based on tourism, entertainment, and culture have come to the fore (Boland 2010; Judd & Simpson 2003). Within the context of these material and discursive processes, hosting sporting mega-events has emerged as one of the most effective vehicles for the advancement of internally and externally identifiable places, (re)-imaging through the (re)-organization of spectacular urban space, attracting (mobile) capital and ‘desired’ populations in a period of intense inter-urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism, resultant in viscerally affective and effective processes of subject formation, governance, regulation and social control (e.g. Paton et. al. 2013; Silk 2010; Waitt 2000; 2008).

The two brief, and contrasting, narratives with which I opened the paper, speak to the multiple narratives (see Walks 2000) of cities—in this case London—within the broader shifts associated with these on-going transitions under the auspices of neoliberal political and economic

rationalities. They speak to differing meanings of and about place, to the attendant complexities and cultural politics of class, race, gender contained within *the* city, to the dominant (and competing) (re-)positioning of place through cultural spectacle, to the ‘logics’ of regeneration and historical ‘progress’, competing identities and subject formations, and, to the securitisation and governance of space (and bodies therein). It is these concerns that form the focus of this article: I centre on the complex amalgam of discursive and material (re-)positioning of London through the 2012 Olympic Games. I argue that the contested signifiers of London 2012 bears forth some uncomfortable truths, particularly if one dares to venture behind a seductive, and commercially inspired veil of urban regeneration, historical revisionism, constitution of desired citizens, and, governance. These contribute to both a social and cultural urban apartheid of spatially concentrated practices of regenerative investment, be(long)ing, displacement, urban neglect and/or displacement, human experiences, and the ‘right to citizenship’.

This paper draws from a larger on-going research project that utilises multiple methodological approaches to explicate the complexities of the 2012 Olympic Games under the aegis of what Gordon Waitt (2008) terms the neoliberal politics of spectacle.ⁱ The project explores the uneasy juxtaposition between those served by “capital space” (Harvey 2001) and those either servile to, or shunned by, its over-determining consumerist logics. Within this particular paper, I suggest that London 2012 contributed to on-going processes through which urban populations, urban spaces, and citizens become bifurcated in ‘scary cities’ (England & Simon 2010; Kern 2010) in which a new politics of conduct seeks to reconstruct citizens as moral subjects of *responsible* communities (Rose 2000: 1395 in Stratford 2002).

The Olympic Spectacle

At least since the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, it has been convincingly argued that the Olympic Games are a correlative to a consumer society that requires consumption and the appropriation of spectacle to reproduce itself (Kellner 2003, see also Tomlinson 2002). In a Debordian (1994 [1967]) sense, the Olympic sporting mega-event is part of the broader social forces that nurture and sustain a consumption economy, a seductive spectacle that fascinates,

pacifies and depoliticises the denizens of society, and that directs social practices and subjectivities (cf. Andrews 2006; Kellner 2003). Central to the ‘logics’ of the sporting spectacle—at the least since the Barcelona 1992 Olympic Games—are deep, crabgrass like, entanglements with the very active social policies that circulate around the remodelling and remaking of old forms of social welfarism: such as the privatisation of public housing, the imposition of new fiscal constraints and budgetary measures on cities and regions; the spread of neoliberal fundamentals into urban policy regimes (deregulation, privatization, liberalization, enhanced fiscal austerity); and, the mobilization of new strategies of social control, surveillance and securitisation designed to more effectively police the spectacular cityscape (Brenner & Theodore 2002a/b; Jenkins, 2014; Hodgkinson 2011; Paton et. al. 2012; Peck, Theodore & Brenner 2009). That is, deeply embedded in the bidding process to host sporting mega-events (especially in IOC mandates, see e.g. Armstrong et. al. 2011) and the resultant promises of legacy, are a host of assumptions predicated on the ‘pathologization of problem populations’ (Paton et. al. 2012: 1471): geographical, strategic, political and cultural initiatives centred on discursive and material reconstitution of desired new urban populace and spaces, and, social regulation that infuses desired subjects with the consumer ‘freedoms’ afforded to them as privileged groups in consumer capitalist society. Indeed, sporting spectacles have often serve as extremely *popular* sites for the assertion of the parameters of *the* ‘sanctioned’ identity, in the service of particular corporate-political and military agendas, and readily reflect and reproduce social hierarchies, are often highly gendered, and, offer particular constructions of *the* character, culture and the historical trajectory of people—constructions that by their very nature are acts of inclusion and exclusion (e.g. Hogan 2003; Paton et. al. 2012; Silk 2012). The ‘normative universality’ of the sporting spectacle then is fully bound with, and subject to, measures that aim to secure the extension, maintenance, reproduction and management of the consequences of market rule (Peck 2003).

There exists a coalescence of interest groups and power blocs—sporting, state, supra-national, corporate, philanthropic, cultural, military—who operate, often with a collective affinity to (re-)define place and its citizenry, and (intentionally or not) to label, demonize and pathologise

the abject. Framing the London 2012 Olympic spectacle are a group of quite strange bedfellows, an assemblage of the organizing committee (LOCOG) which defines the overarching Games signature, the dictates of the supra-national IOC, and the British Olympic Association, the mores of the host broadcaster (OBS) and rights-holders, state-led investment, business and tourist strategizing (e.g. through Visit Britain, the DCMS), political aspirations related to the positioning of Britain in the world (and indeed of the position and career pathways of British politicians) the legal obligations and market-led desires of various levels of Olympic and national Olympic Partners (such as Coca-Cola, McDonalds, Visa, Dow Chemical), political and economic rationalities related to an on-going neoliberal crafting of place and populace (e.g. the Olympic Development Authority, the London Legacy Development Corporation), the overwhelming securitization and militarization of the city, and the context of the values (see Falcoux & Silk 2010) on which the decision to award the Games to London was made. In the balance of this paper, I focus on the discursive positioning and material regeneration of place and the mediated representation and the associated regulation and governance of the citizenry/populous. In so doing, I explicate how the London Olympic spectacle became ingrained with contemporary discourses of place, identity, neoliberal citizenship, regulation, governance and consumption (Giardina 2005).

The Discursive & Material Refashioning of Place

A central pillar of Games planning and delivery was the regeneration legacy of a select pocket of East London, a process already underway prior to the Games as part of the Thames Gateway, Lower Lea Valley Framework, the Westfield Stratford City, and the *Crossrail* infrastructure projects. The area of the Olympic Park was described in Olympic Delivery Agency documentation prior to the London 2012 Olympic Games as a site of noxious industries, a perennial dumping ground for waste products, and, a haven for artists and traveler communities (Gold & Gold, 2008). The five host Olympic Boroughs have higher than average rates of transience, in-migration, poverty and BAME populations (LLDC, 2012a) and have been recent targets for ID checks for non-whites from the UK Border Agency (especially at Stratford station,

cf. Netpol, 2013; Tseng, 2013). The boroughs in closest proximity to the Olympic park, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham are, according to the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2007, the three most deprived boroughs in England (Lindsay, 2013). Indeed, the Olympic Borough of Hackney has the highest arrest rates from the 471,336 section 1 stop and searches and the 39,352 section 60 stop and searches (which do not require reasonable suspicion) (see Stop Watch, 2013; Loeb, 2014) between June 2011 and June 2012. The rates of disproportionality are also of concern: black people were stopped at 4 times the rate of white people and Asian people twice the rate of white people across London under section 1 searches; this figure rises to 11 times for blacks and 4.5 times for Asians than whites for section 60 stop and searches (Stop Watch, 2013). In the lead up to the Olympics and in the period of the Games, following on from the restrictions of expression and control enshrined in the 2006 London Olympic and Paralympic Act (see Lindsay, 2013), the Metropolitan Police introduced a dispersal zone under Section 30 of the 2003 Anti-Social Behavior Act that enacted powers, for example, to remove groups of young people, enforce a curfew, and cleanse the streets of unwanted ‘social concerns’ (such as sex workers) in the Olympic borough of Newham—as Games Monitor activist and former Clays Lane Resident Julian Cheyne argues, this was beyond remediation, it was the “clean up of everything” (in Gibbons & Wolff, 2012a, p.469). Further, as Kevin Blowe (2012), from the Newham Monitoring Project suggested, this zone not only criminalizes youthful behavior, creates anxiety and raises crime levels on the borders of such zones, but serves as a symbolic message that certain sections of the population are simply not welcome in public spaces.

The building of the park itself displaced a number of local residents (and the Eastway cycle circuit) through compulsory purchasing orders issued by the London Development Authority, notably the Clays Lane co-operative, a 450 strong community that was designed for vulnerable single people to engender a strong local community and aid in the reintegration of residents into social life. Resistance to the discursive constitution of the Lower Lea Valley as ‘noxious’ and to the juggernaut of regulatory capitalism (see Raco, 2012) accompanying the Games was heavily policed and controlled through the 2006 Olympic Act (such as the critical

mass bike ride near the park during the Opening Ceremony), although did find its way into the public domain via social media (see e.g. Games Monitor), photography (see e.g. Marrero-Guillamon, 2012), in left leaning national newspapers such as *The Guardian* and in the writing of Hackney based and situationalist inspired author Iain Sinclair whose book *Ghost Milk* decried the Grand Project of the London 2012 Olympic Games as a shiny, seductive façade that barely conceals displacement, demolition, loss of neighbourhood, history, community and the ‘triumph’ of consumerism (his book was banned from a reading in Stoke Newington in 2009 given he was “off message”, see Tan, 2012). Further, and as explicated by Marrero-Guillamon (2012: 133), the computer generated images produced by the organising committee (of how the Olympic Park would look) in advance of Games-led regeneration were virtual acts of political imagination and social control that worked to gain consensus for a sanctioned space revitalised around a “triangle of financial capitalism, urban renewal and more financial capital.” Any attempts to produce alternative images or question visual representations were simply criminalised as part of the Olympic ‘state of exception’ manifest in suspension of the ordinary juridical order on the grounds of necessity (Agamben, 2005; Marrero-Guillamon, 2012). It appeared little would be able to stand in the way of the expressed desire to refashion the “largest impoverished urban enclave in the world” (Lindsay 2013: 224); “it was London’s gash and it needed healing” (Olympic Park Legacy Company Head, Andrew Altman, in Lindsay, 2013).

When visitors—read ticket holders—arrived at the new scrubbed, sanitized and heavily securitized (see Manley & Silk, in press) Olympic Park, they were funnelled out of the sparkling Stratford station onto the prescribed walkway through *Westfield Stratford City* shopping mall, the largest in Europe (see figure 1); going ‘off-piste’ was ‘vigorously discouraged’ and access routes were ‘neurotically planned and policed’ (Mieville 2012 in Gibbons & Wolff 2012b). Indeed, so keen were organisers to ensure visitors did not stray from the sterile temple of/to consumption, that a shimmering wall of titanium fish—the ‘Stratford Shoal’, designed by urban architects Studio Egret West to hide the existing entrance to Stratford high street and the (apparently dis-functional) Stratford Centre—was erected (see figure 2). The shoal separated sanitized space from that pocket of Stratford not subject to material gentrification and thus not conducive to

either the tourist gaze or global consumption. Patrolling this façade, an army of smiling, helpful and animated volunteers (*responsible* ‘gamesmakers’) happily warned of the dangers of the ‘native other’ lurking behind the screen, suggesting visitors would be far more ‘comfortable’ on ‘prescribed’ routes: a strategy that policed the ‘boundary’ between ‘legitimate’ London and the ‘native other’ tucked behind the giant façade, buffering neighbouring communities from the Olympic zone (Gibbons & Wolff 2012b). To further mark the distinction between the valorised spaces of consumption—and associated visitor—and pathologized extant communities, *Westfield Stratford City* was simply closed to residents (anyone other than ticket holders and the Olympic family) on busy Games days (Hall 2012).

Insert Figures 1 & 2 about here

Alongside the tender contouring of sanitized space, re-imaging for the external tourist market unsurprisingly formed part of the Games based strategizing; a narrative as distinct as possible from the images of London that had dominated during the unrest in the summer of 2011. Working in concert with the organising committee—LOCOG—were a number of semi-autonomous public-private partnerships (among, for example, Visit Britain, Visit London, the Department for Culture, Media & Sport) attempting to capitalise on the immense possibilities the Games provide to showcase this *specific* image of place (Visit Britain 2010). Fully embracing tourism as “merely human circulation considered as consumption, a by-product of the circulation of commodities” (Debord 1967: 169), the Games thus provided the opportunity to construct and promote an image with real political value onto a global stage; the resultant return being the attraction of transnational capital and tourists to the city which act as *legitimising tools* and *accelerants* for urban renewal projects that promote economic growth (Gibbons & Wolff 2012b): the presentation of a particular ‘capital’ (in both senses of the word) image (see also Marrero-Guillamon 2012)ⁱⁱ.

Paraphrasing Debord (1967: 169), and as part of a larger process through which capitalism remakes the totality of space in its own setting, London 2012 was directly regulated by the

imperatives of consumption; the building of frenzied temples of consumption leading the city, literally, to the point of *consuming itself*. Fully in line with market-led approaches to regeneration—predicted on assumptions that British urban social ills are found primarily in working class districts and council estates (Paton et. al. 2012)—this ‘legacy’ stresses the problems (people and places) deemed appropriate to be governed, the sites within which these problems come to be defined, the diversity of authorities involved in the attempts to address them, and the technical devices that aspire to produce certain outcomes in the conduct of the governed (Rose, 2000). It points towards the contextual embeddedness of neoliberalism that stresses the recriminalization of poverty, the widening of the penal code and the disciplining, incarceration, and increasing social surveillance of those outside of market discipline (Peck & Tickell, 2002). Indeed, the ‘legacy’ for the Olympic boroughs promises the social regeneration of a select pocket of East London, community convergence, cohesion, inclusive and diverse neighbourhoods (LLDC 2012a, b, c). Large neighbouring pockets of land have been purchased by *InterIkea* (who plan to build a village of Ikea housing (Strand East), a ‘new Covent garden in the East End’ (Bennett 2010), and by *Tesco* who are planning the development of a supermarket suburb. The London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) is responsible for the newly renamed Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP) which will comprise a series of new neighbourhoods containing housing developments (around 8000 units, the most desirable of which overlooking the canals previously utilized for ‘dirty’ industries), sporting and leisure facilities, educational facilities, community spaces, medical services, natural spaces and further developing transportation infrastructure. These are sanitized, securitized ‘safe’ spaces that are in line with a neoliberal urban politics that stresses the aesthetics of place, the systematic renaissance, creation, and tender management of specific landscapes in the resuscitation of their (symbolic and economic) value, a place-marketing logic that will appeal to footloose investors, shoppers and tourists (Silk & Andrews 2008; Waitt 2000; 2008). Indeed, the Strand East development underpinned by *InterIkea*, which replaces a former ink factory, is designed as a utopian village which in addition to houses contains cafes, restaurants, bars, art galleries, an iconic tower landmark; “a neighbourhood idyll, in which the *unsightly* aspects of everyday life are kept to a

minimum” (<http://popupcity.net/ikea-urbanism-a-new-era-in-urban-design/>, my emphasis). These are discursive and material revisions of place that attempt to “tame London” (Gibbons & Wolff 2012b: 442), or more accurately, incorporate a specific pocket of London that hitherto did not form part of a sparkling global neoliberal metropolis. Following Paton et. al. (2012: 1470), the legacy of London 2012 is thus part of a concerted attempt to make seemingly “unproductive” people and places “productive,” to transform problem people and places into sites of “active consumption and responsible citizenship.” Through marshalling political, media and private sector interests, the construction of these hegemonic and dramaturgical urban narratives remade and represented the city around discourses of growth, reinforced ‘global city’ imagery and acted to suppress opposition and indeed oppositional places (Gibbons & Wolff 2012b) and peoples. Indeed, following Kern (2010), an institutionalised culture of fear of the urban/racialized other is actually integral to the success and legitimation of revanchist (see Smith 1998) urban gentrification: “fear of the other *justifies* displacement and redevelopment” (Kern 2010: 210, my emphasis) that can be further mitigated through “private security, rationalized through the potential for wealth accumulation, and even commodified as desirable qualities of urban regeneration” (Kern 2010: 225). Who belongs, who is welcome or connected, who constitutes the ‘active’ and ‘responsible’ neoliberal citizenry within ‘productive’ places became apparent, at times contested, and perhaps further complicated, during the cultural performance of place/people during the London 2012 opening ceremony.

Be(long)ing in Place

As has been discussed elsewhere (see e.g. Tomlinson 1996; Silk 2002), the cultural performances of opening ceremonies of major sporting events are key spaces for host cities and nations to construct—however ephemerally—*preferred* pasts, presents and futures. Dependent on context and efforts to gain political consensus, such ceremonies can be nation-building projects with clear political intent (see e.g. Hogan 2003 for a discussion of Sydney 2000 or Silk 2012 on the use of Salt Lake City 2002) or can speak more to the city as a scalar unit. While some events took place outside London (Weymouth, Eton Dorney), the capital was the epicentre of activity

and representations during London 2012. The opening ceremony, directed by Danny Boyle (see Silk, in press, for a full reading of the Opening Ceremony), offered at times conflicting and competing relationships between material transformations of place, contested signifiers of the (national) past, and the mutual constitution of bodies and place. With a central thread grounded in “the idea of Jerusalem, of a better world that can be built through the prosperity of industry, through the caring nation that built the welfare state, through the joyous energy of popular culture, through the dream of universal communication” (LOCOG 2012: 11), performative segments ranged from the *Prologue* centring of a bucolic Britain—a (past) place centred on the Britain of the ‘Wind in the Willows’ and ‘Winnie the Pooh’; the countryside ‘we all believe existed once’ (LOCOG 2012)—through the *Pandemonium* of the Industrial revolution. This was followed by a focus Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH),ⁱⁱⁱ set to the tune of Mike Oldfield’s Tubular Bells^{iv}, a comedic re-enactment of the iconic opening beach scene in the film Chariots of Fire, an allegorical/promotional nod to royalty and the James Bond franchise, with a finale centred on a multi-ethnic digital present. At times, for example in the GOSH performance, Boyle’s ceremony can be interpreted as a thinly veiled social critique of present day consequences of the market-forces responsible for the privatisation of the NHS and asked questions about contemporary welfare reforms, poverty and market-led initiatives (such as those discussed in the previous section, see Silk, in press). However, the ceremony also spoke to growth oriented representations of, and material transformations, of place and the (dis-)connection of bodies to these social and cultural geographies of place. In this section, I focus on the section of the ceremony that spoke most to the neoliberal logics of ‘*capital space*’ (Harvey 2001, my emphasis) and those either celebrated or servile to its over-determining consumerist logics.

As the turf of the bucolic prologue and chimneys of the industrial revolution gave way, a complex picture of London’s streets emerged underfoot—an exact replica of a recently produced map that reveals use of, and the flow of people through, London’s streets (see Prig 2012). Walking these streets were *normal* working people—suffragettes, trade unions, descendants of the *Windrush*, Pearly Kings and Queens, Chelsea pensioners and a squadron of Sgt. Peppers era Beatles who were heralded for overcoming—offering *closure*, historical artefact’ as opposed to

‘present reality’ (Kane 2004)—the ‘problems’ and ‘disruptions’ (Huw Edwards, BBC announcer; LOCOG, 2012: 22) that arose during the industrial revolution (gendered, raced, classed, disease, overcrowding in cities, child labour, and war). With *common* mooring of bucolic Britain established, with race and gender relations (and to a lesser extent, class) presented as *closed historical artefacts* (Kane 2004; Silk, in press), Boyle offered a vision of the future/present: his “where *we* want to be”—a multi-ethnic fantasy (via a celebration of the digital age) in a series of representations that offered *legitimate* multicultural racialized subjects an entitlement to belong to the community and to speak in its name. Functioning to reproduce the concept of a spatially constructed, localized, mnemonic unity; this cultural performance can be read as one that can not only redefines place in the mind of external and internal consumers, but through image and memory, symbolizes who *belongs* in this specific place (Graham 2002; Rowe and McGuirk 1999; Zukin 1995).

The segment, titled *Frankie & June Say Thanks Tim,*^v depicted an ‘ordinary household’—a mixed-race family—along with 1427 young volunteer dancers from a range of (undefined) racial and ethnic background^{vi}. The storyline centred on June (a teenage girl) getting ready to go out dancing^{vii}. As she travels through London on the tube she encounters a series of nightclubs playing the best of British ‘popular music heritage’ (see Roberts, 2013) accompanied by a montage of popular cultural images (from British film, television and music) that were digitally projected onto an inflatable version of the ‘ordinary’ house in the centre of the stadium. During the performance she glimpses a young man (Frankie) and his friends who pass on a different underground train. Utilising social media (text messaging via mobile phones) and an invite back to the family house, the scene ends with a kiss between the two protagonists.^{viii} This performance, especially when considered with the simplified “historical eschatology” (Bell 2003: 75) presented in the *Prologue* and *Pandemonium*, straddled the tensions between a shared (or imagined) sense or sentiment of be(long)ing together—a common language, cultural identity, ethnos—and the tensions, ambiguities and antagonisms of the place of a multi-ethnic London (e.g. Savage et. al. 2010). This is perhaps not particularly surprising, for following 7/7, there has been a renewed emphasis on integrating minorities to ‘core’ British values, part of an *exceptional*

need to restrict 'normal' democratic expressions of difference by assimilation to the required shared values (Kundnani 2012). Indeed, in line with the promises inherent in the candidate file (see Falcoux & Silk 2010), the representations of harmonious, youthful multiculturalism and the provision of 'ideal' multicultural subjects within this production performed a neo-ethnic version of identity in which "minority groups" were not only be let in, but redefined as integral to the nation," a 'pride politics' (Fortier 2005: 561) in which hyphenated persons occupied leading spaces. The performance was not without critique; perhaps unsurprisingly, Adrian Burley, a Conservative Party Member of Parliament, claimed it was "leftie multicultural crap" (in Zirin, 2012). The Daily Mail conflated the 'crisis of the NHS' with one of multiculturalism and immigration^{ix} (see Walker, 2012) and critiqued the segment for an inaccurate representation of 'England', for "almost, if not every, shot in the next sequence included an ethnic minority performer" claiming further that it was unlikely that the organizing committee would be able to "find an educated white middle-aged mother and black father living together with a happy family in such a set-up."

It is perhaps not expected, given the context of the cultural performance, that Boyle would have been able to deal with, for example: the lived confrontations with structural inequalities for minorities within London and perhaps especially the Olympic boroughs; spatial concentration of multi-ethnic populations; social injustices such as disproportionate levels of unemployment, displacement, or health; the expansion of the penal system; poverty and drug abuse; feelings of disillusionment and resentment; 'Islamophobia'; differential immigration statuses and the concomitant restrictions of rights; links between foreign and domestic policy, e.g. Modood 2007; Pitcher 2009; Rehman 2007; Stephens 2007; Vertovec 2007); or the sources of greatest conflict (e.g. religious difference, accentuated connotations of difference through the body, such as heavily bearded young men or jilbab or niqab wearing women (e.g. Macdonald 2011). With Brown (2008 in Kundnani 2012), as with the refashioning of an inclusive *productive place*, in the production of multi-ethnic purity in *Frankie & June*, difference, inequalities and injustices were literally screened out: the mutual constitution of bodies and places was devoid of antagonisms, the structural processes responsible for inequality and which provide barriers for

participation as active and productive consumer citizens, absent (Paton et. al., 2013).

Furthermore, with rich and poor, coloniser and native, first world and third world, living virtually and physically in closer, or even greater proximity (see North 2011) in a world of extreme and intimately lived inequality within London, this cultural Olympic narrative, much like the material and discursive repositioning of place, *deprived* the poor/ethnic-other of strong *legitimizing* discourses. Indeed, the reproduction of ‘co-opted citizens’ (Kundnani 2012), which by its nature is predicated on the rejection of extremist ideas, of swearing loyalty to a defined set of national values and mythologies, tests of values acquisition, erasure of one’s own experience and history in favour of the public celebration of a/*the* national history, point to what McVeigh and Rolston term ‘rituals of humiliation’ (2009: 22) in the production of useful minority bodies, subject and citizens in the performance of a multicultural London. Moreover, an “aesthetic of selective silence” (Kane 2004: 583) provided the platform to induce nostalgia and identification beyond our own selves while offering a powerful historical teleology. Multi-ethnic citizens were *given* no past: differential legitimating discourses, histories, be(long)ings and identities were simply absent or silenced. The past—the commonalities—in which Boyle’s multi-ethnic Londoners were concretely grounded were those of *Green & Pleasant Land* prologue and *Pandemonium*: Anglicised, simple, stable, safe and pure. It thus propagated an important myth that gave a point of origin and an idea of a common community, travelling through history together (Stephens, 2007); rhetorical strategizing acting as a model of commonality, a dominant trope (Gilroy, 2004) through which to understand the refashioning of, and be(long)ing in, place. As such, the performance of bodies/place was a utopic abstraction of the city as a geographical, cultural and multi-ethnic space^x that “reaffirm[ed] the desirability of exclusive, traditional Britishness” (Cecire, 2009, p. 396). In this regard, viewers were given the means to negotiate, and parody, the altered position of the city in the broader post-imperial, global context (Savage et. al. 2010) relational to idealised and reassuring tropes of the past in which the ‘natural’ hierarchy was threatened but undisturbed by the demands of cosmopolitan mores.

Fear & Loathing in London: Civil Liberties, Legacy & Be(long)ing

As evidenced in the social unrest in the summer of 2011 (see e.g. Dorling 2012; North 2011)—and to a degree in segments of Boyle’s opening ceremony—London is an unequal city, the working classes are socially and spatially fragmented, and there exist multiple industrial, ethnic, education and religious planes of division within the city’s socio-economic groups: it is a city convulsed by massive welfare, housing benefit and legal aid cuts, spiralling unemployment and rising social insecurity (Davidson & Wyly 2012; Graham 2012). Despite Boyle’s slight of hand (in places) and (officially silenced and managed) opposition, London 2012 was overdetermined by material transformations and a symbolic representation/performance of place that was historically progressive; a common journey contained within the auspices of an underpinning market-led neoliberal logic. London 2012’s projection of the city and indeed its homogenous—if undefined—populous, through both its past and present, as a harmonious, diverse and plural space/citizenship of opportunity devoid of contemporary antagonisms—a space of elective belonging—performs a terrifying and fetishistic politics (Davidson & Wyly 2012; Whittaker 2011). As Whittaker (2011: 125) argues, this geographical utopia is one that is *sustained* by the exploitation of migrant bodies who nurture the creative class and the tourist image: London is both a site of opportunity and a site of social exclusion; “a dirty and a pretty city.”^{xi} In this sense, it simultaneously generates a double imaginary: a harmonious heterogeneous realm of opportunity and a hidden ‘reality’ of inequality that has been integral to the growth of London as a world-city. Fully cognizant with immigration policy which is centred on a rhetoric of hospitality and tolerance (and one which welcomes some—those who acquiesce to ‘core’ values—but expels others), this is a narcissistic imagining of London as generous, tolerant and hospitable; “a utopian geography that is so powerful and all-encompassing that it ensures the very real processes of exploitation and social exclusion which sustain the vision remain out of sight” (Whittaker 2011: 126).

In this sense, the re-imagining of place (as a form of classed based regulation, see Paton et al. 2012; also Boland 2010) and an unquestioned cultural politics of citizenship/belonging through London 2012, acted to further intensify processes that we could argue were already occurring, if not planned, as urban polity and politics becomes an imprint of neoliberal political

and economic rationalities. Importantly, this reveals the complexities and intersections of class and racial anxieties that are projected onto youth, and which polices and governs the very presence of disposable populations in an increasingly gentrified urbanité, weakens support for citizens rights, downgrades social services, speaks to an increasingly militarized popular culture, and, a surveillance dominated cityscape (Giroux 2003; 2004). Indeed, race and racism are inextricably embedded in the neoliberal project often reinforced through the reconstruction of immigrants and non-whites through common sense and popularised (sporting) discourses (Roberts & Mahtani 2010). Thus, displaced from formal mechanisms and regulation of government rule, these urban/sporting/cultural discourses are an explicit expression of race—as a social force—as it is manifest in both official and informal (popular and corporatized) domains, without being explicitly named. They reveal how race and racisms are embedded within particular public, private and corporatized structures, in which it is more ambivalent, ambiguous and difficult to identify (Goldberg 2008). In this sense, race is discursively produced in the material and symbolic landscapes of London; race was, following Nayak (2011), brought to life in time and space, concretised in place through the contested signifiers and representational strategies of the London 2012 Olympics. Following Susan Giroux (2010) then, these material and symbolic sporting narratives carry a powerful, if symbolic, sadism; they materialize cruelly at key (spectacular) moments to impose order and control through the production of (demonized) subjects and provide the conditions and indeed rhetoric for the subsequent rationalization of their ill-treatment. Sporting spectacle then, as a popular cultural form, forms part of the very essence of neoliberal racist architecture, logics and social relations, they act as a form of symbolic isolation (cf. Giroux 2010; Goldberg 2010) that separates and partitions based on notional distinction and pre-determined difference (Goldberg 2008). In particular, it offered a narrative in which the position of a white (middle-class, consumptive) ethnic majority remains ‘beyond question’ and whom recreate a ‘common sense’ view of a neoliberal world order as it is and should be; ‘others’ become marked against such a category (Skey 2010). It is a narrative that spoke to the reordering of the terms of inclusion: an assimilating, heterophilic acceptance of

‘multiple’ identities as long as there remains a loyalty to core values (Back et. al. 2012) and there exists the material means to consume.

Perhaps of most concern, these representations of ‘useful’, productive and thereby *acquiescent* minorities speak to tensions over civil liberties and the anticipation of risk within a multi-ethnic London. Indeed, an emphasis upon the “management of unease” (Bigo 2006: 6) and the establishment of an interconnected system, comprised of an assemblage of defence and internal security, that aids in determining *who* and *what must be surveilled*, can be seen as a troublesome ‘legacy’ emergent from the planning, delivery and representations of the London Olympics and the concomitant management, control and governance of *selected* bodies, places, citizens and civil liberties (see Manley & Silk, in press). Bigo (2011: 47) suggests that surveillance post-9/11 that has been “established in relation to a state of unease” (Bigo 2011: 47) through the proliferation of a global in-security based upon the perceived or actual threat of terror attacks. In such processes, the “other” is demarcated by an “identity border”, a technique of managing fear that distinguishes the acceptable from the unacceptable, guided through the categorisation of those who present a potential risk to the public/private lives of citizens and the state, here the differentiation of the unwanted or threatening individual is predicated on the anticipation of risk and with reference to an invented criteria pertaining to characteristics closely associated with race and religion (Bigo, 2002: 80). It can be suggested then that the Games provided a stage upon which accepted/productive forms of ethnicity could be played out, further distinguishing and stigmatising the suspicious, undesirable, or ‘dirty’ (Patel 2012) body. Such narratives serve to ‘justify’ authoritarian modes of control sustained through urban geographies of fear (see England & Simon 2010), suspicion, Draconian forms of policing and scrutiny, the suspension of rights, and the promotion of an atmosphere of perpetual emergence and panic (Back et. al. 2012) in ‘actually existing spaces of neoliberalism’ (Brenner & Theodore 2002b). This may well be London’s post-Olympic reality: the ‘legacies’ of hosting the Games may well resemble *Lockdown London* (Graham 2012) in which a range of new punitive measures, the extension of the penal code, potentially invasive laws which legitimise the use of force, new surveillance technologies, methods of dealing with protest, and precedents of joint army, municipal and private security

action become ‘normalised’ (Gibbons & Wolff 2012: 441) within the QEOP and the communities with which it buffers. These new geographies of fear may well serve to maintain the fluid boundaries between deviance and belonging, order and disorder, that are instrumental to the ways in which cities are planned, built, lived, and experienced (England & Simon 2010). This is likely to be especially the case the further one ventures from the phantasmagorical locus of Olympic consumption, the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, with “omniscient surveillance” (Graham 2012: 446) further deepening the city’s existing inequalities, the social and spatial fragmentation of London’s poor, and exacerbate the multiple industrial, ethnic, education and religious planes of division within the city’s socio-economic groups (Davidson & Wylie 2012). Poor and minority multi-ethnic bodies who border the space of the scrubbed, sanitized, safe and securitized QEOP (and who are simply excluded through a range of discursive and material strategies and techniques from these spaces and the Ikea and Tesco towns which rub against it) are likely to be *legitimately* dispersed, be deemed inactive/non-productive, “broken windows rather than people [who] simply have no right to the city” (Mitchell, 2001, p. 71), or subject to increased regulation and surveillance, policing techniques, displacement or ‘civilising’ (Gibbons & Wolff 2012b; Paton et. al. 2012).

Furthermore, London 2012’s utopian geography and the associated representation/performance of place/people renders the sanctioned urban sphere (and its constitutive populace / citizenry) *visible* through the preservation, management, and sustenance of the boundary between the bodies proper that fulfil the ‘obligations’ of participatory democratic citizenship (through appropriate rates and acts of consumption), and those constitutive socially, morally, and economically pathologized ‘outsiders’ who do not. In this regard, this material and discursive refashioning of place/people is one that utilizes gentrification *as governance*: spaces of consumption provide the means for displacement and for civilizing, managing and securitizing unruly populations in ‘problem’ places through ‘inviting’ those positioned as problem populations into the gentrification process, without providing the means for achievement (Paton et. al. 2012; Uitermark, Duyvendak & Kleinhans 2007). These outsiders (those in the ‘underworld’^{xiii} who cannot, do not want, or do not have the means to participate in

the processes of gentrification) become positioned as an *invisible* source of life that protect the constitution of the consuming polis by rendering it visible, and thereby distinguish it from those who do not properly belong to it (Butler 1993). In this sense, the discursive representations and material repositioning of London operates as a form of ocular authoritarianism that facilitates the disappearance of degeneracy, through it being made in/visible: the pernicious, discursively based subjectification of the degenerate body, ultimately providing the justification for its systematic evisceration (Silk & Andrews 2008) from London's post-Olympic consumptive spaces. Thus, somewhat reworking Kern (2010), the mutual constitution of bodies and places, point us towards an understanding, through London 2012, of the embodied dimensions of urban life and the governance of subjects, places and everyday life through valorisation of consumption, the pathologization of the other, and, the associated legitimacy of an apparatus of security predicated on fear and perceptions of insecurity. Of course, such concerns raise important questions about the relevance and morality of such spaces, their symbolism for the wider urban citizenry morality and the longer term 'liberty-cost' (Raco 2012) of such 'grand projects' (Sinclair, 2012).

Concluding Thoughts

As with any spectacular edifice, the physical form and discursive constructions that circulate around sporting spectacles offer but a thin *veil of appearance* (Debord 1967) that frequently obscure the complexities and contradictions of urban life, and the experiential realities of a deeper social malaise. Framed by hybrid relationships between states and powerful corporations, to the point that distinctions between providers and policy makers becomes increasingly blurred (Raco 2012), the place/peoples of London 2012 became bound within the dictates of capital and the spectacle of fear (Giroux 2006)—tourism, consumption, image, gentrification and the management of risk; a narrative of a London *devoid of division*. Despite Boyle's thinly veiled critique of neoliberal political and economic rationalities, the dominant discursive narratives and material repositioning presented market centred logics of inner East London, and is suggestive of very real consequences for being (in space), belonging, privilege and hierarchy within a post-colonial heterophilic multi-ethnic space (cf. Back, et. al. 2012; Skey 2010).

With ‘citizens’ antithetical to such ‘logics’ becoming erased, hidden from view, subject to new penal codes, discourses of fear and securitization (see e.g. Fussey et. al. 2011), or, physically displaced from the glitzy new consumptive spaces of play and domicile, London 2012 contributed to an on-going bifurcation of the (urban) social formation, in which those who are different, those who threaten the ‘normative universality’ of ‘the market’ become subject to measures that will *secure* the extension, maintenance, reproduction, and management of the consequences of market rule (Silk & Andrews 2008). Of course, difference existed and was purposefully incorporated in a complex (re)contouring of people, place and past, yet these differences were devoid of struggle and memory, packaged and palatable instead for a global and domestic audience. In this regard (multi-ethnic) difference existed as a surface aesthetic that “elides the real significances of material difference into mere symbolic novelty, producing the comforting sense that we are all under one skin” (Banjeree and Linstead 2001: 705).

Perhaps the most troubling and stark legacy of the cultural production of these fantasies lies in the longer-term liberty costs (Levi-Faur 2011 in Raco 2012) associated with fear (or the anticipation of fear), surveillance, regulation, securitization, consumption, democracy and citizenship. With Paton et. al. (2012), legacy has uneven effects, and is a nebulous and opaque term; the language of legacy obscuring the real agenda of urban regeneration. The pathologization of people, places and pasts—and the subsequent concerted efforts to transform ‘unproductive’ people and places into sites of active consumption and responsible citizenship (Paton et. al. 2012)—are emblematic of what Raco (2012) terms regulatory capitalism: a system that enables giant management consultancy firms to shape policy and regulatory environments in their own image. This brings with it a quiet accretion of restriction, one hardly visible behind technical rule making, legal doctrine and complex bureaucracies and of course the seductive spectacle of an Olympic Games. Such accretion of restriction will likely have a harsher and longer lasting legacy on the poor and on ethnic minorities in London: dangers of a massive police presence for Black and Asian youth in the surrounding communities, new policing techniques, the further stigmatization of working-class communities in policy discourse, and the familiar security architecture of airports and international borders—scanners, checkpoints, ID cards,

cordons, security zones—have been rolled out in the city (Gibbons & Wolff 2012b; Graham 2012; Paton et. al. 2012). In this regard, the amalgam of regeneration effects, state-sponsored gentrification, unquestioned acquiescence to core national values and pasts, and the corporate economic rationalities that coalesce around the hosting of such a major sporting event become seen and experienced mostly by the surrounding multi-ethnic and working class communities that rub against the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the cossetted visitor/resident (Gibbons & Wolff 2012; Kennelly & Watt 2012). Simply put, it points to the attenuation of the poor/impooverished/'other', to the degree that they are denied the basic human rights to exist in public [spectacular] space (Rose 2000). There is thus a need to be “politically engaged and morally responsible” (Smith, Brown & Bissell, 2011: 525) academics who can tell the stories that, well, simply do not matter to official neoliberal, growth oriented regimes and rationalities. With MacLeod (2002) we need to think about how the production of culture is negotiated, enacted, performed, lived in and lived through, contested, and representative, “how public space is continually being shaped, reshaped, and challenged by the spatial practices of various groups” and which undermine the homogeneity of contemporary cities (McCann 1999: 168 in MacLeod, 2002). We need to ask pressing academic and social questions about belonging, about hierarchies of belonging, of displacement, negotiation, contestations and representations of place as the QEOP and neighbouring projects (such as Strand East) develop over the course of the foreseeable future. We need to understand how such spaces are lived in/through and the processes through which bodies/place become mutually constituted if we to begin to shed light on (real) London's Olympic legacy.

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Figure One: The view from Westfield



Figure 2: The Stratford Shoal



Notes

ⁱ Methods include interviews with former residents/activists, policy-makers (Visit Britain, the British Olympic Association) and Olympic sponsors (Visa, Coca-Cola), walking methods (see e.g. Hall et al. 2008) in and around the Olympic Park as well as at satellite venues, ‘reading’ official representations of London (especially the Opening Ceremony) for dominance (following Johnson et. al. 1994). The next phase of this project involves discursive analysis of promotional materials for new neighbourhoods and resident photo/video diaries of their use of QEOP and its surround.

ⁱⁱ This was an image based around what Charlotte Brundson (2007 in Whitaker 2011) termed ‘Landmark London:’ equestrian fences themed to depict British maritime histories, London landmarks (Nelson’s Column, the Greenwich Royal Observatory), popular London-based cultural forms (such as the Eastenders soap opera, East End Barrows), and royalty. Iconic heritage sites formed the backdrop for many events offering dramatic ‘scenery’ for the mediated London Spectacle and The Royal Parks hosted a number of events.

ⁱⁱⁱ GOSH was established in 1852 to care explicitly for children in poverty initially in areas of London such as Clerkenwell, Holborn and St. Pancras explicitly for children in poverty. JM Barrie’s bequeathed the rights from Peter Pan in 1929 to GOSH. In the ceremony, GOSH was considered emblematic of “two of Britain’s greatest achievements: its amazing body of children’s literature and its National Health Service (NHS)” (LOCOG 2012: 26).

^{iv} Tubular Bells may well be a subtle referent to the fragmentation of the NHS: Tubular Bells sold over 17 million copies and was in the UK charts for 279 weeks, a major success for a then fledgling Virgin music brand. The Virgin brand now includes in its stable the private Virgin Care, who are involved in the privatisation of the NHS. *Mee Healthcare* with a branch in Stratford Westfield (the gateway to the Olympic Park) and who are backed by Cherie Blair, also contribute to a fragmented health system in the UK (see also Chen, 2012).

^v The ‘Tim’ in question being Tim Berners Lee, a British computer scientist best known for ‘inventing’ the world-wide-web.

^{vi} Frankie was played by Henrique ‘Cel’ Costa, a mixed-race immigrant from Portugal (who wore his hair in an African cornrow style and June by Jasmine Breinberg who is of mixed ethnic background from Deptford, South London. The ideological importance of her ‘black-hair’ was a hot topic trending on social media sites.

^{vii} The scene was scored by *The Jam*’s ‘Going Underground’ with dancers recreating London’s iconic tube trains; the choice of music here can, again, be read through the lens of oppositional social protest: written under the auspices of Thatcher’s Britain the lyrics decry materialism and war-mongering at the expense of the NHS /welfare.

^{viii} Underscored by consumptive and heterosexy discourses—in the ‘private’ world of the bedroom (McRobbie & Garber, 1991)—the scene served to enact extant and normalised social and cultural power relations related for example to middle class connectivity to digital technology, gender relations and politics, the body as a site of private investment and commodified transformation, compulsory heterosexuality, and the consumptive neoliberal body.

^{ix} In an article titled “The NHS did not deserve to be so disgracefully glorified in this bonanza of left-wing propaganda”; following backlash, they subsequently heavily re-edited this article.

^x In contrast, sport was a heated space of racial tension in the summer of 2012 epitomised by an on-going dispute between then England captain John Terry (Chelsea) and Anton Ferdinand (QPR) whom Terry allegedly racially abused during a 2011/12 Premier League fixture.

^{xi} A reference to the Stephen Frears film *Dirty Pretty Things*.

^{xii} Musical Director for the opening ceremony was Rick Smith for the band Underworld who worked with Boyle on the films *Trainspotting*, *Sunshine* and the stage production *Frankenstein*.