

Liquid London: Sporting Spectacle, Britishness & Ban-optic Surveillance

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Abstract

Under the rubrics of recent ‘terror’ attacks—especially 9/11 and 7/7—the discourses of security and surveillance, and the subsequent heightened awareness of risk and insecurity, have been framed within an increasingly global context. Through an appropriation of the Ban-opticon dispositif (Bigo 2006, 2011), this article analyses the changing urban transformations of civic space and mediated messages perpetuated within, and through, the London 2012 Olympic Games. In so doing, we deconstruct London 2012 through a post-panoptic lens, identifying how processes of social control are reiterated and (re)configured through the establishment of a clearly delineated “other”, that which is deemed ‘unwelcome’ and situated as posing a threat to the safety of the normalised, and accepted, majority. Thus, through a reading of the cultural politics of class, race and gender that are embedded within sporting spectacle, we argue that London 2012 capitalised on the institutionalised culture of fear to convey, and thus contain, an accepted vision of multiculturalism, legitimising surveillance practices and security measures that became ingrained within the urban landscape and social fabric of the nation’s capital. In so doing, we point towards a troubling yet all too tangible true London Olympic legacy, one that identifies and subjects specific yet significant ‘others’ to forms of social control and corporeal governance.

Introduction

A growing body of literature has sought to examine the relationships between global sporting mega-events, terrorism, and the shifting trends associated with securitization and surveillance practises (e.g. Atkinson and Young 2012; Boyle and Haggerty 2009; Coaffee 2012; Fussey et al. 2011; Houlihan and Guilianotti 2012; Guilianotti and Klauser 2012; Lindsay 2013; Palmer 2013; Sugden 2012; Toohey and Taylor 2012). Within these debates, emphasis has been placed upon the *use* of global sporting mega-events as a stage to both deploy and develop enhanced surveillance technologies, and provide a platform in which to implement wider security strategies in major cities located around the globe (Boyle and Haggerty 2009; MacDonald and Hunter 2013; Author B 2012). The hosting of the Summer Olympics in Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 and London 2012 demonstrated the heightened consideration surrounding the discourse of security and the accelerated intensification of militarisation that surrounded the Games (Samatas 2011; Schimmel 2012). Since the terrorist activity of September 11, 2001 (9/11), and the subsequent bombings of the London transportation system occurring four years later (7/7)ⁱ, the discourse surrounding security and modes of social control has become firmly situated within a global context. In the wake of these terror attacks, and the military invasion of Afghanistan, we have come to witness a shift in attitude towards managing the ‘war on terror’ with an increasing propensity to predict ‘when’ terror strikes may occur, and thus alleviate their impact, as opposed to previous considerations that emphasised the potential ‘what if’ of terrorist activity (Elmer and Opel 2011). Through examination of London 2012 in relation to the contemporary state of unease and heightened sense of emergency concerning public, and national, security (Bigo 2006, 2011), we explore how such mega-events—or what we prefer to call the sporting spectacle (see Author B 2012)—operates to implement, but more importantly legitimise, surveillance practices and security measures that inevitably form an unquestioned element of the urban landscape, demonstrating a tangible, yet troubling, *legacy* that can be experienced by those subjected to such forms of social control.

Within this paper we thus explore the evolving methods of social control implemented within the context of London 2012 through a post-panoptic lens. To do so, we draw upon Bigo’s (2006) Ban-opticon *dispositif*, a transversal apparatus that seeks to understand the contemporary age of surveillance under the aegis of suspicion and within the current climate of fear, a process of surveillance that enacts control, and the assertion of sovereignty, via the exclusion of a minority population—those who are deemed “unwelcome” (Bigo, 2006: 35)—and the normalisation of an ‘accepted’ majority. We aim to explicate how, through Bigo’s (2006) conceptualisation of the Ban-opticon, the mediated rhetoric and the consequent (re)fashioning of urban space, London 2012 operated as a site of social control representative of an “invasive practice of politicizing the most intimate forms of information exchange” (Vetter 2012: 19). This is crucial to our understanding of London 2012, for we are outlining an assemblage of control functions that *moves beyond just the reformulation of architectural space*, speaking instead to how seemingly banal and affective mediated celebrations—such as the Olympic opening ceremony—are indeed heavily politicized and highly surveillant forms of information exchange. In what follows we thereby explicate both soft- and hard- forms of the London 2012 surveillant assemblage through exploration of: the dominant (and competing) (re-)positioning of place through spectacle; the attendant complexities and cultural politics of class, race, gender contained within *the city/nation*; the mediated ‘logics’ of regeneration and historical progress, competing identities and subject

formations; and, the securitisation and governance of space (and bodies therein) under the rubrics of neoliberal (and neoconservative) political and economic rationalities.

Surveillant, Technological and Securitized *Orientations*

With the introduction of Foucault's (1979) *Discipline and Punish*, the panoptic metaphor, adapted from Bentham's architectural design, has provided the theoretical basis for the exploration of surveillance practices in a myriad of social settings and organisations. More recently, a number of authors have begun to examine the limitations of Foucault's conceptualisation and application of surveillance, with the emergence of post-panoptic concepts that seek to challenge and extend our understanding of surveillance and social control (e.g. Andrejevic 2005; Bigo 2006; Haggerty 2011; Haggerty and Ericson 2000; Latour 2005; Mathiesen 1997; Poster 1990). These recent examinations of surveillance have pursued the notion of an interconnected and decentralised mode of observation and control. Latour's (2005: 181) 'oligopticon', for example, demonstrates a dispersed mode of surveillance that opposes that of the Panopticon as separate surveillance sites, or oligoptica, "see much *too little* to feed the megalomania of the inspector or the paranoia of the inspected, but what they see, they *see it well*" (cf. Mathiesen's [1997] concept of synopticism). Such, contemporary analyses of surveillance, and the evolution in technological methods of observation and control, have emphasised the liquidity or fluidity that characterises contemporary society. Framed within Bauman's (2000) portrayal of 'liquid' modernity, the course of surveillance practices has evolved; as opposed to viewing surveillance as a fixed concept, a more contextual manner urges a consideration of the developmental, and progressive, dimensions of surveillance and social control measures, questioning how they may be implemented, contested and viewed as an "*orientation*" (Bauman and Lyon 2013: 2, our emphasis). With Bauman and Lyon (2013)—whose book, *Liquid Surveillance*, we have drawn upon in the title of this paper—we theorise practices of surveillance in light of shifting cultural trends and in relation to specific cultural contexts (Gad and Lauritsen 2009; Monahan 2011).

The development of biometric (Mattelart 2010) and genomic (Lyon 2007) technologies, is suggestive of a surveillance age that facilitates the ability to observe, identify, extract and categorise individuals into specific populations through an increasingly more automated process (Gandy 2007). Haggerty and Ericson's (2000) 'surveillant assemblage' depicts a flattening of the surveillance hierarchy, a rhizomatic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) expansion of observation sites that accentuate the interconnectedness of monitoring and computer devices, or human points of contact, that seek to capture and record the many components that comprise the human body. Through the acquisition and dissemination of data via 'discrete flows' the individual is relocated in a multitude of contexts, represented as a 'data double' (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). This rise of electronic modes of surveillance and computerised surveillance technology (Lyon 1994; Lyon 2003; Marx 1988, 2006) has allowed for the collation of information through a vast expanse of online networks, facilitating the formation of digital personas and enabling the monitoring of "digital shadows" (Agre 1994; Clarke 1994). Thus, the introduction of electronic technologies and digital data capture has enhanced the capabilities to control specific populations as surveillance becomes more mobile, dispersed and interconnected, transcending the borders and boundaries of fixed geographical locations or institutional spaces (Graham and Wood 2007; Latour 2005; Poster 1990).ⁱⁱ We aim to demonstrate within this paper a somewhat different comprehension of the ways in which individuals are identified and categorised into specific populations through the mediatization of

London 2012; in this sense and somewhat reworking Agre (1994), we argue that *digital shadows* were contained within the discursive Olympic rhetoric, providing both understanding of, and legitimising increased surveillant control of, those not deemed to fully belong to a post-9/11 British citizenry.

Indeed, with the (renewed) emphasis upon a heightened awareness of hostile threats, increased securitization has become a permanent part of the contemporary landscape that dictates national and international security; however, the effectiveness of such measures is becoming increasingly difficult to identify (Elmer and Opel 2011). The terrorist activity of 9/11 facilitated the development of enhanced methods of electronic surveillance and data capture, primarily surrounding airport security (transposed to London via the Olympics), which effectively “delocalized” borders and increased the mobility and dissemination of data, demonstrating techniques of monitoring that encapsulate the premise of a globalized system of surveillance (Lyon 2003). The consequences of implementing such surveillance technologies reinforces social divisions within civic space, promoting a distinction between the individual who may be categorised as either ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’ and thus legitimates suspicion of the non-acquiescent localised other (Lyon 2007). The integration of such divisive rhetoric is not solely restricted to the use of advanced technologies and can be witnessed through the mediated messages perpetuated by palatable and accepted commodity forms. Here we turn to the sporting spectacle; a powerful, political, public, and extremely popular mnemonic that we argue can serve as an economy of affect through which power, privilege, politics, and position are (re)produced (e.g. Author B 2012) and through which those bodies deemed abject are named, made visible and subject to measures of surveillant control. That is, we argue that sporting spectacles are emblematic global events that offer a particularly lustrous—if somewhat insidious—space for the assertion, mobilisation, appropriation and reproduction of dominant power relations: they offer an emblematic laboratory for addressing important questions related to “the complex strategies of cultural identification, belonging and discursive address that function in the name of ‘the people’ or ‘the nation’ and make them immanent subjects and objects of a range of social and literary narratives” (Bhabba 1990: 292). Put simply, sporting spectacle is a central device in the control mechanisms inherent in social institutions and in the “growing culture/spectacle of fear and surveillance” (Author B 2012: 46) that encapsulates the current climate of global policing. In this regard, the sporting spectacle is fully bound with surveillance practices, new modes of technology that become infiltrated into processes of social control (Mattelart 2010), and, the accentuation and application of militarised systems of monitoring implanted to observe domestic populations (Wall and Monahan 2011).

To hold together our thoughts on surveillance, mediation, the global sporting spectacle, and the concomitant management, control and governance of *selected* bodies, citizens and civil liberties, we turn to Bigo’s (2006, 2011) Ban-opticon. 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. The Ban-opticon accentuates the requirement for a globalized approach to security and the control and management of a specific population. He suggests that the discourse of (in)security and the management of unease has become organised transnationally through an array of networked bureaucratic organisations implemented to identify and specify ‘significant others’, and thus manage the prevailing, and somewhat insidious, undertone of fear that has been propagated through a perpetual state of emergency (Bigo 2002). The focal analyses of Bigo’s

conceptualisation of contemporary surveillance places 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*.

In this paper, we further explicate this assemblage, suggesting that the sporting spectacle—framed by a coalescence of interest groups and power blocs including sporting, state, supra-national, corporate, philanthropic, military and who operate, often with a collective affinity to conjure up nation, (re-)define place and its citizenry, and (intentionally or not) to demonize and pathologise the abject in line with the logics of the market’—plays an important (if under theorised) role as avaricious accomplice to the social control of the city/nation and its subjects within a globalised frame of terror, fear and insecurity. To do so, and following Bauman and Lyon’s (2013) call for a contextualised approach to surveillance studies, we explore the motivations or ideologies that frame the imposition, and legitimisation, of certain methods of observation and social control. In so doing, we focus on “older methods, borrowed from the former societies of sovereignty ... but with the necessary modifications” (Deleuze 1992: 7) of surveillance practices as they are bound with discourses of unease and fear and managed by an assemblage of western political bureaucratic organizations, the military-industrial complex, the ‘logics’ of the market, and the supposed legacies that must be realised through hosting major sporting events. Such processes emphasise the politic-corporate-militaristic ‘logics’ of sovereign control, resultant in the accelerated deployment of surveillance technologies in society, and the legitimisation of such actions through rhetoric surrounding the heightened awareness of terror attacks and the propagation of unease that becomes embedded within the public consciousness (Bigo 2006, 2011). Thus, through the appropriation of Bigo’s (2006, 2011) Ban-optic metaphor, and the heightened sense of unease and (in)security located in the contemporary age of suspicion (Bigo 2006, 2011), we explore the prevailing discourses that enveloped London 2012, surveillance, the social and cultural—material and discursive—geographies of the capital city/nation, and the mediated selection of celebrated (and thereby pathologised) bodies and citizens. Moreover, through such theorising an explication of the ‘true’ legacy of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games can be discerned, identifying the articulations between sporting spectacle and the further legitimisation, and increasing normalisation, of surveillance practices and adapted regimes of observation and control in the wider realms of the public consciousness.

Securitising space: civil liberties, (the) capital, and surveillance

Transformations in the dominant mode of economic (re)production and regulation (e.g. MacLeod et al. 2003) have advanced a new epoch in the material (re)formation of increasingly differentiated urban landscapes under which 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 (Boland 2010; Harvey 2001; Judd and Simpson 2003; MacLeod 2002). 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, the (re)-imaging through the (re)-organization of spectacular urban space, and the attraction of (mobile) capital and people in a period of intense inter-urban competition and urban entrepreneurialism.

Under the aegis of neoliberal economic and political rationalities, and fully in line with market-led approaches to housing regeneration that are predicted on assumptions that British urban social ills are found primarily in working class districts and council estates (Paton et al. 2012), London 2012 acted as de facto shorthand for regeneration, inward investment, consumption and corporatism. The Games were predicated then, paraphrasing Debord (1967: 169), as part of a larger process through which capitalism remakes the totality of space in its own setting, one which is directly regulated by the imperatives of consumption and in which the building of frenzied temples of consumption lead the city, literally, to the point of *consuming itself*. When visitors—read ticket holders—arrived at the Olympic Park, they were funnelled out of the new Stratford station onto the prescribed walkway through Westfield Stratford City; going ‘off-piste’ was ‘vigorously discouraged’ and access routes were ‘neurotically planned and policed’ (Mieville 2012 in Gibbons and Wolff 2012). Indeed, so keen were organisers to ensure visitors did not stray from the sanitized and 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—was erected to separate the rescrubbed 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 volunteers (*responsible* ‘gamesmakers’) happily warned of the dangers of the ‘native other’ lurking behind the screen, suggesting visitors would be far more ‘comfortable’ on the 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 and Wolff 2012). To further mark the distinction between the valorised spaces of consumption—and associated visitor—and pathologised 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). Similar to the gated communities of suburban white middle-class America, the architectural dominance of London 2012 exemplified the social splitting of community and the purification of space, further discouraging interaction with, and enhancing suspicion of, an identifiable “other”, perpetuated by the dystopian image of municipal life saturated with reference to terrorist threats and exemplifying the call for an enhanced civic militancy (Low 2009).

These strategies formed part of the process that attempted to “tame London” (Gibbons and Wolff 2012: 442), or more accurately, incorporate a specific pocket of London that hitherto did not form part of a sparkling global neoliberal metropolis. This material refashioning of place is one that utilized gentrification *as governance*: these spaces of post Olympic consumption provided 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 et al. 2007). With a festival space, high-end rents, luxury apartments, Ikea and Tesco ‘towns’ⁱⁱⁱ dominant in these post-Olympic spaces, we can argue that such processes contribute towards a social and cultural urban apartheid of spatially concentrated practices of regenerative investment, belonging, displacement, urban neglect and the disrepair of built environments, human experiences, and the ‘right to citizenship’.^{iv} The uneasy juxtaposition between those served by “capital space” (Harvey 2001) and those either servile to, or shunned by, its over-determining consumerist logics, suggests that London 2012 contributed to on-going processes through which urban populations, urban spaces, and national citizens became bifurcated in ‘scary cities’ (England and Simon 2010; Kern 2010) between: the generative

affluent and the degenerative poor; the private consumer and the public recipient; the civic stimulant and the civic detriment; the socially valorised and the socially pathologised (see also Davidson and Wyly 2012; Graham 2012).

The material and symbolic representation of place—underpinned by the market-led ‘logics’ of spectacle—projected the city and indeed its homogenous (if undefined) populous as a harmonious, diverse and plural space/citizenship of opportunity devoid of contemporary antagonisms (Davidson and Wyly 2012); representing London however as a space of elective belonging performs a terrifying and fetishistic politics (Whittaker 2011). As Whittaker (2011) argues, this fantastical geographical utopia is one that is only *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” (:125). 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: a narcissistic imagining of Britishness 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).

Further, the re-imagining of place (as a form of classed based regulation, see Paton et al. 2012; also Boland 2010), 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 such neoliberal projects and the neoliberal moment has allowed for the development of new discourses that reinforce this process; it reconstructs immigrants and non-whites through common sense discourses (Roberts and Mahtani 2010) such as the sporting spectacle. That is, displaced from formal mechanisms and regulation of government rule, such (sporting) discourses and material processes 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 2012; race was, following Nayak (2011), brought to life in time and space, concretised in place through the contested geographies of the London Olympics.

Following Susan Giroux (2010), these material and symbolic sporting geographies 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, control and management. As Bigo (2002: 80) suggests, 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.

The anticipation of risk—especially as it dovetails with race, religion and fear—and the projection of a harmful “other” however was manifest in the Games beyond just the material (re)invention of secure space. Legitimizing such neoliberal gentrification/governance processes, we suggest that the mediated representations of nation/national identity through London 2012 formed part of the surveillant assemblage. That is, within the following section, we aim to reveal how these narratives formed part of a complex security assemblage that assembled and normalised a safe and secure vision of multiculturalism and enhanced the distinction between the ‘high’ and ‘low’ risk individual (see Monahan 2011). To develop this argument, we turn to perhaps the most ‘popular’ space for the performance of—at times conflicting and competing—relationships between material transformations of place, contested signifiers of the (national) past, discourses of fear, regulation and security, and the attendant, mutual, constitution of bodies and place: the London 2012 Opening ceremony directed by Danny Boyle. Through consideration of the dominant narratives within the Opening Ceremony, we aim to demonstrate how London 2012 delivered a utopic *national fantasy* (Berlant 1991) that further (dis-)connected (selected) bodies to the social and cultural geographies of place and further legitimised Draconian forms of security architectures and practices under the global rubrics of terror, ‘othering’ and fear^v.

‘Isles of Wonder’: The mythopeia of multi-ethnic Britain

The performative segments of sporting spectacles has frequently been discussed as a potent space for the conveyance of very particular or selected *narratives of nation* (Hall 1992) resultant in viscerally affective and effective processes of subject formation (e.g. Hogan 2003; Author B 2012; Author B and Falcous 2005; Waitt 2000). Directed by film director Danny Boyle—most known for his adaptations of *Trainspotting* and *Slumdog Millionaire*—the London 2012 opening—Isles of Wonder—was designed to address “where were we [Britain], where have we come from, what is the heritage, the historical, what are we now and where are we going; and on that journey what are the values that we hold up as being valuable?” (Boyle 2012) in a context in which British national identities—and anxieties over her significance and place within a post-colonial global order—are historically fraught and uncertain (cf. Aughey 2010; Kumar 2010; Savage et al. 2010). In line with pre-existing games narratives embedded within bid documentation which was centred on the global *advantages* of diversity, harmony and multiculturalism (see Falcous and Author B 2010), the ceremony offered a refashioning or resculpting (often through a careful revision of the past) of British national fantasies. This (re-)positioned subjects in relation to complex issues, and hierarchies, of being and (be)longing within contemporary Britain; discourses that at their heart raise important questions over the power to disseminate the past, the distortion, disappearance, or staging, of the ‘authentic’ in the name of *capital* (Chhabra et al. 2003), and the constitution of fear, terror and the need for, and legitimation of, ‘security’ relational to the pathologised other.

The ceremony began with a prologue, 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). Quickly giving way to *Pandemonium*—a term invented by Milton as the name for the capital city of Hell in *Paradise Lost*—50 Isambard Kingdom Brunels’ oversaw the dismantling of the meadows and fields that were replaced by signifiers of the industrial age—vast smoking chimneys, steam engines and spinning jennys, culminating in the forging of the Olympic rings. As the scene

progressed, Boyle contemplated the ‘problems’ that arose in Britain during the industrial revolution (gendered, raced, classed) and centred on the ability of working people “through trade unionism and protest to solve many of the problems” thrown up by Britain as the “workshop of the world” (LOCOG 2012: 22). In this regard, such divisions were somewhat problematically given *closure*—historical artefact’ as opposed to ‘present reality’ (Kane 2004)—as they were ‘solved’ through the abilities of working people—suffragettes, trade unions, descendants of the *Windrush*, Pearly Kings and Queens, Chelsea pensioners and a squadron of Sgt. Peppers era Beatles and inflatable yellow submarines. The emphasis on literary *fantasy* provided Boyle with an escape from Britain through parody and a means for negotiating changed conceptions of Britishness (Cecire 2009; Savage et al. 2010). Historical or future referents—such as the array of fantasy characters from children’s literature in the ceremony^{vi}—acted as ‘literary myths’ (Aldridge 1995 in Savage 2010) that offered the means for viewers to negotiate with, and parody, the altered position of the UK in the broader European, post-imperial, global context (Savage et al. 2010). Indeed, the array of abject characters—such as the darkness of Voldemort from the Harry Potter novels—were the antithesis of the idealised Anglicised history and landscape within children’s literature. Through the gentle sterilisation/neutering of these dark fantasy characters by NHS nurses (literally), and as with the academic discussion of Harry Potter, squelched markers of difference that define both citizens and non-citizens with dangerous xenophobic connotations reaffirmed the desirability of an exclusive traditional Britishness, and re-centred whiteness and the perpetuation of extant hegemonic power blocs (cf. Cecire 2009; Pugh and Wallace 2006). With Bigo’s (2006, 2011) Ban-opticon, and through the appropriation of Bauman and Lyon’s (2013) reading of such surveillance philosophy, the mediated messages surrounding Boyle’s opening spectacle served to ‘fence in’, or confine, an accepted notion of ‘ethnic Britain’, whilst simultaneously excluding, or ‘fencing out’, that which does not belong. That is, following Cecire (2009: 403), Boyle evoked a fantasy predicated on an idealised Britain which offered reassuring assertions of tropes of the past that confirm and celebrate ‘native’ Britishness; the “natural” hierarchy of Boyle’s fantasy world was threatened but undisturbed by the demands of cosmopolitan mores, with intruders/undesirables identified and neatly controlled by ‘normal’ members of British society.

With the *common* mooring of bucolic Britain established, class, race and gender relations presented as historical artefact, and a ‘natural ethnic Britishness’ normalised and ‘fenced-in’, Boyle connected the past to a vision of the present/future. As we aim to demonstrate, this present/future—one that paid respect to the founder of the world-wide-web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee and addressed the integration of technology into everyday life—acted to further exclude, or ‘fence-out’, abject bodies. Set in an “ordinary house, the kind in which most British people live” (LOCOG 2012: 30), the performance depicted the development of a teenage relationship between two protagonists, Frankie and June.^{vii} Boyle’s ‘ordinary household’ showcased a mixed-race family; further, the 1427 young volunteer dancers (especially the principals) were from a range of (undefined) racial and ethnic backgrounds^{viii}. Critical reaction from the ‘left’ heaped praise on “Boyle’s impassioned poem of praise to the country he would most like to believe in. One that is tolerant, multicultural, fair and gay friendly and holds the principles of the welfare state stoutly at its heart” (Higgins 2012). For others, such as Adrian Burley, a Conservative Party Member of Parliament, it was “leftie multicultural crap” (in Zirin 2012). The Daily Mail, perhaps unsurprisingly, conflated the ‘crisis of the NHS’ with one of multiculturalism and immigration (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” and for the unlikelihood 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.”

Rather than a simplistic retraction to an essentialist core, *Frankie & June*, was emblematic of a ‘pride politics’ that asserted a mythic, inclusive ‘multiculturalist nationalism’ and tolerance which necessitated ‘interpellating “others” to be seen to speak out as proud subjects of multicultural [British]’ (Fortier 2005: 562). Indeed, within a climate of ‘unease’ and (in)security, we argue that this performative segment—when held together with the common histories that had been previously presented—acted to identify and specify ‘significant others’: both those interpellated to the ethnic core and those whom we should ‘remain fearful of’. In this regard, the performance 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 a multi-ethnic British society (e.g. Savage et. al., 2010; Yousuf, 2007).

These selective post-colonial imaginings—in stark contradistinction to the histories of the *Green & Pleasant Land* and *Pandemonium*—were represented without struggle or contestation, or indeed, without reference to colonization or empire. In a context in which the constitution of self and other has been defined in relation to colonization and while certain racial categories are still discussed in terms of a ‘threat’ to the nation, this performance of ‘self’ is part of a wider shift in the ways in which the categories of ‘British’ have been opened up (Skey 2010). Based on a notion of ‘integration’, ‘respect for British values and way of life’ and the building of a single nation’ (Shadow Home Secretary David Davis 2005, in Yousuf 2007), the re-imagined idea of Britishness posits ‘shared values’ as opposed to ‘colour or unchangeable institutions’ as defining a contemporary civic identity (Gordon Brown 2005, in Yousuf 2007). Following 9/11 and 7/7, this fostered a new emphasis on integrating minorities to British values, part of an *exceptional* need to restrict ‘normal’ democratic expressions of difference by assimilation to *required* shared values (Kundnani 2012). The representations of harmonious, youthful multiculturalism and the provision of ‘ideal’ multicultural subjects within this production performed this neo-ethnic version of national identity in which ““minority groups” were not only be let in, but redefined as integral to the nation” (Fortier 2005: 561). Represented as *legitimate* multicultural racialised subjects, they are given by Boyle—as auteur—an entitlement to belong to the national community and to speak in its name.

Frankie & June then is emblematic of the discourse of multiculturalism becoming marked by liberal themes such as secularism, individualism, gender equality, sexual freedom and freedom of expression (Kundnani 2012). Perhaps better put, and in the case of *Frankie & June*, the body politic of civic multiculturalism is marked by *perceived* forms of secularism, individualism, gender equality, sexual freedom and freedom of expression. Minority groups—exemplified in this performance—were not only be ‘let in’, but redefined as integral to the nation; standing as exemplary embodiments of multicultural Britain. Critically however, their role—their everyday existence—is contingent on toeing the line(s) in several ways—corporate, nationalist, conservative, and gendered—as ‘appropriate’ national subjects: not least through being concretely grounded within a pre-told narrative (the *common* ground) of bucolic and Industrial Britain, the ‘closure’ of protest and *problems* brought about through cultural change, and the literal embodiment (through dance) and material manifestation of contemporary (post 1960s) British popular culture. Such attempts to create a “culturally neutral British identity based on the idea of political citizenship assume a *utopian abstraction of the nation*; in this imagined community of

shared allegiance, ‘differences’ are transcended at the level of action” (Yousuf 2007: 363 our emphasis) and any harsh realities of diversity are simply effaced. Any racist reaction—as seen in various columns and public blogs—simply becomes reinterpreted as majority’s *natural* reaction to a minority’s rejection of its national values (Kundnani 2012). With Brown (2008, in Kundnani 2012), such fantasies of national purity literally screen out confrontation with structural inequalities (spatial concentration, social injustices such as disproportionate levels of unemployment, displacement health, 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), 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), and deny both the dependency of the privileged on that structure and of competing legitimating discourses. This reproduction of co-opted citizens (Kundnani 2012), which by its nature is predicated on the rejection of one’s 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 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 post-colonial Britishness.

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 Britain was *given* no past: differential legitimating discourses, histories, belongings and identities were simply absent or silenced. The past—the commonalities—in which Boyle’s multi-ethnic present were concretely grounded were those of *Green & Pleasant Land* and *Pandemonium*: Anglicised, simple, stable, safe and pure. This utopic abstraction of nation—and the accompanying logics of assimilation to core British values—was supplemented by a lack of specificity in both the historical positioning of those represented (Macdonald 2011) and in the vagueness of the performative multi-ethnic corpus—they were, as Zirin (2012) suggested, ‘undefined black and brown bodies’. Thus such performances provided acquiescence, celebrating a ‘safe’ multiculturalism, enabling integration whereby minority pasts, especially religious pasts and presents—which were turned into an arena of potential threat—were simply silenced.

However, these ‘threats’ were by no means absent: the reconfiguring of surveillance in the post 9/11 and 7/7 moment around the management of terrorist activity—both in terms of the physical apparatus and the discursive constitution of selected pathologised others—rubbed against the sanitized multiculturalism alluded to above. In conjunction with the discourses of securitisation, terrorism and safety that dominated news stories in the lead up to the Games, and with a safe or sanitized multicultural present/future established, the media coverage of the Olympic opening ceremony also served as a powerful and insidious space in which to manage multiculturalism and the undertone of fear propagated through the post 9/11 / 7/77 perpetual state of emergency (Bigo 2002). Directly following *Frankie & June* was a segment entitled *Abide with Me*, a short dramatisation of the “struggle between life and death” (LOCOG 2012). Beautifully sung by Emeli Sande and choreographed and led by Akram Khan (born in London to Bangladeshi parents) the hymn was integrated into the ceremony given its “honest expression of the fear of approaching death [which] has made it popular with people of *all religions and none*” (LOCOG 2012, our emphasis) and utilised powerful images of

mortality (the setting sun, dust). Yet, despite the images on the memorial wall which accompanied the performance being relatives of opening ceremony ticket holders (including Boyle) who had passed and were thus absent, it was widely misinterpreted (by the media and the public) as a homage to the victims of the London bombings of 7/7. The media's (re)presentation provided the narrative—at least for British viewers—for a wistful harking back to Second World War 'glories', a Manichean reassertion of *our* values and how *we* differ from others. It was a narrative in which questions of belonging morphed insidiously into questionings of loyalty, with its constructed dichotomy between commitment to undefined British values *or* Muslim values (Macdonald 2011).^{ix} These slippages, and indeed, the seemingly 'natural' response that this melancholic performance by Khan was somehow—by necessity—articulated with discourses of terror, threat and loyalty, speaks to a far wider demonization, and indeed homogenising, of British Muslims (see e.g. Gillespie 2007; Kundnani 2012; Macdonald 2011; Meer and Modood 2009; Murthy 2007; Skey 2010). Thus, within a context of the Blitz narrative, of 7/7, and indeed of the agrarian and industrial economies, *Frankie & June* celebrated *our* apparent 'tolerance' and *our* apparently unproblematic diversity and inclusivity: an inclusivity contingent upon a conformity to an 'appropriate' and 'legitimate' British way of life; the corollary of which is fear, unease and the legitimation of managing both. In this sense, the Games offered insight into the hierarchies of belonging (Back et al. 2012; Macdonald 2011) and surveillance within this particular conjunctural moment in Britain. In this regard, it was not so much the presence of the other (rather, emphasis is on the necessity of the other to the functioning of dominant forms of life) that can serve to create tension and unease, but about how that 'otherness' is kept in place or controlled (Skey 2010). Those who do not get to play a role in defining 'our way of life' and who are not deemed to be *properly British* (Stephens 2007) are thus perceived to be, and made to feel, more or less national than others given that they embody, or not, sanctified and valued social and physical cultural styles that constitute national capital (Hage 1998 in Skey 2010)^x.

Anchoring relations between 'them' and 'us', the Games provided powerful, concrete and historically entrenched signifiers that made it clear who controlled the process of boundary maintenance, defined the conditions of belonging, that which ethnic minorities *unconditionally belonging* to, and the *rightful managers* of, nation (Skey 2010: 728). Not only does such rhetoric position the ethnic majority as "*belonging without question*" and "with a more secure sense of identity" (Skey 2010: 730), it provides us with an understanding of the position of minority communities within *new hierarchies of belonging* that replay aspects of colonial racism but in a particular spatialised form: one in which "black, Asian and Bengali presence is tolerated as long as it does not challenge the terms of the hierarchy itself" (Back et al. 2012: 140). In this sense, and in the "recovery of national greatness *in the imagination*" (Gilroy 1992: 53) through the Olympics, racism (and for that matter, class antagonisms and gender politics) is rendered dead, yet the echoes of colonial racism are at play in the 'limit points of multiculturalism' that filters and orders immigration, identities and minorities in Britain (Back et al. 2012). This paints an all too familiar, and highly troublesome, picture of post-Olympic Britishness that is all too suggestive of "neo-imperial hierarchies of belonging that corrode the quality of our social interactions and the possibility of humanity" (Back et al. 2012: 151); hierarchies that only serve to legitimate the global apparatus and practice of security, risk, surveillance and pathologisation of the 'non-compliant' *other* within nation states (Bigo 2006; Chan 2007, 2008).

Concluding Thoughts

Within this paper, we have positioned London 2012 as part of the global apparatus that manage, contain and control minority populations, justifying restrictions on the movement of those deemed as a ‘potential threat’ to the security of nation states. Through a mediated mode of ‘soft surveillance’, the Games provided a stage upon which accepted forms of ethnicity could be played out, further distinguishing and stigmatising the suspicious, undesirable, or ‘dirty’ (Patel 2012) body. Fully cognizant with immigration policy which is centred on a rhetoric of hospitality and tolerance (and one which welcomes some but expels others), the dominant material transformations and discursive constructions that were weaved into the fabric of London 2012 contributed to the production of a permanent state of anxiety: a state dominated by a localised global ‘threat’ and constant reference to ‘terror talk’ that serves to further justify, or normalise, the escalating use of surveillance and social control (Graham 2006; Giulianotti and Klausner 2010).

With Bigo, the Games offered an insidious space in which the “*surveillance of everyone is not on the current agenda* but that the surveillance of a small number of people, who are trapped into the imperative of mobility while the *majority is normalized*, is definitely the main tendency of the policing of the global age” (Bigo 2006: 35, our emphasis). In this sense, London 2012 was part of a delocalized, decentralized and omnipresent approach towards disciplinary surveillance, allowing for the normalized exclusion of specific individuals, groups and organizations targeting those perceived as a danger to (trans)national security. Further, through sustaining a post 9/11 and post 7/7 narrative of unease and fear, the media coverage was able to provide legitimation for security measures that seek to monitor and control a *targeted population*—those clearly deemed irrelevant to the multi-ethnic national fantasy of London 2012—and which pursue and observe the movements of an increasingly transnational, yet localised, threat. In this regard, the management of fear—of those in the urban periphery, or the significances of the jilbab or niqab—is utilised as a rationale to instigate methods of surveillance and securitisation (such as in the ‘safe’ and sanitised enclaves of gentrification), accelerating the collation of databases for government agencies to enhance administrative efficiency and promote the segregation of the normalized majority from the ‘abnormal’, or those identified as ‘undesirable’ (Bigo 2006).

The consequences of such actions enable nation states to effectively manage a population whilst simultaneously, but rather surreptitiously, impinging upon the civil liberties and privacy of those who are perceived to be ‘innocent’ citizens (Ball 2006; Lyon 2007). That is, such material and discursive actions serves to ‘justify’ authoritarian modes of control sustained through urban geographies of fear (see England and 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 and Theodore 2002). This may well be our post-Olympic reality: the ‘legacies’ and longer term liberty-costs (Raco 2012) of hosting the Games may well resemble lockdown London (Graham 2012) as opposed to Landmark London in which a range of new punitive measures and 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 and Wolff 2012: 441). This brings with it a quiet accretion of restriction that will likely have a harsher and longer lasting legacy on minorities and the poor: a massive police presence for Black and Asian youth in the surrounding

communities, new policing techniques such as stop and search, 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 heart of the city (Gibbons and Wolff 2012; Graham 2012; Lindsay 2013; Paton et al. 2012). 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, experienced (England and Simon 2010), and most crucially *controlled*. Poor and minority multi-ethnic bodies who border the space of the post-Olympic Park (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 identified as a ‘threat’ or an unwanted ‘other’ and subject to increased regulation and surveillance, policing techniques, displacement or ‘civilising’ (Bosworth and Guild 2008; Gibbons and Wolff 2012; Mottin 2012; Paton et al. 2012). With Bigo (2011) then, London 2012 operated as a method of governance that insisted upon, “the success of the differentiation between a normalized population which is pleased to be monitored ‘against danger’ and an ‘alienation’ of some groups of people considered as dangerous ‘others’” (:63).

Following Kern (2010), such an institutionalised culture of fear 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, our 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). That is, the very notion of unease and potential threat from terrorist attacks has contributed towards an increase in the demand for surveillance by those who feel increasingly more at risk (Haggerty and Gazso 2005)—this is perhaps especially the case for the majority middle-class populations moving into the scrubbed spaces of gentrification, and perhaps even more so, for those targeted in the promotional campaigns for such sanitized spaces; white middle-class females positioned as most ‘at threat’ (see Kern 2010). With Vaughan-Williams (2007: 186), London 2012 can thus be read as part of an attempt to “reproduce and secure politically qualified life of the *polis*” underpinned by an assumption that terror is certain to strike at any particular moment; such material and discursive rhetoric, temporally, nullifies threat, reinforces the pre-emptive actions of the state, and accentuates the culture of surveillance and the perpetuation of fear as a normalised—if not expected—part of civic life that becomes integrated into the architectural composition of London’s cityscape (Vaughan-Williams 2007). Simply put, the soft-surveillance embedded within the narratives of London 2012, and the culture of fear ingrained in the architectures of the Games, points to the attenuation of the poor/impoverished/‘other’, to the degree that they are denied the basic *human rights to exist* in public [spectacular] space (Rose 2000)

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Notes

ⁱ The day following the announcement that London had been awarded the Games (met with huge celebrations in Trafalgar Square), a series of coordinated suicide bombs were detonated on London's transport system. Killing 52 and injuring 700, the bombings gave weight to ongoing reassessments of 'Britishness' placing renewed emphasis on a quest for *the* core national values. The fact that three of the four suicide-bombers were young, middle-class, British citizens intensified media and political commentaries (from all points of the spectrum) surrounding security, national identity, and multiculturalism (see Falcous and Author B 2010).

ⁱⁱ Mann et al (2003) explicate how the reclaiming of surveillance technologies can, at least momentarily, allow citizens to invert the gaze of traditional authoritative regimes of control, a concept that is demonstrated by the practice of counter-surveillance whereby, "activists resist surveillance (or other forms of coercive state power) by deploying their own surveillance regimes" (Koskela, 2011 p. 273). Through the use of wearable computing, such sousveillance, can create a sense of emancipation as it allows the individual to utilise technologies of control to project a mode of surveillance back onto the watching authorities, as Mann et al (2003: 347) indicate, "the social aspect of self-empowerment suggests that sousveillance is an act of liberation, of staking out public territory, and a levelling of the surveillance playing field" (cf. Wilson and Serisier 2010).

ⁱⁱⁱ Here we refer to the purchase of large pockets of land, neighbouring the Olympic Park, by Inter Ikea (who plan to build a village of Ikea housing, a 'new Covent garden in the East End' [Bennett 2010]) and Tesco (the development of a supermarket suburb).

^{iv} A fuller account of the geographies of exclusion at London 2012 is explored in more detail in author B (under review a) in *Social & Cultural Geography*

^v A fuller 'reading' of the opening ceremony is discussed in author B (under review b) in *Social Identities*.

^{vi} Voldemort (Harry Potter), Cruella de Vil (101 Dalmations), Captain Hook (Peter Pan), the Childcatcher (Chitty Chitty Bang Bang), the Queen of Hearts (Alice's Adventures in Wonderland) were all vanquished by a fleet of Mary Poppins.

^{vii} With McRobbie and Garber (1991 [1976]), the scene was underscored by consumptive and heterosexy discourses in which the body becomes a site of both public and private investment and commoditised self-transformation).

^{viii} Frankie was played by Henrique 'Cel' Costa, a mixed-race immigrant from Portugal (who wore his hair in an African style 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.

^{ix} Along with NBC (who controversially cut the segment from their broadcast), the BBC's Hazel Irvine similarly misinterpreted the performance as such: "The excitement of that moment in Singapore 7 years ago when London won the Games was tempered with great sorrow the very next day with events on the 7th July that year. Moving wall of memory remembering those who are no longer here to share in this wonderful event. This is a calming and reflective pause after the exuberance." Irvine was continuing the narrative set earlier in the BBC's Opening ceremony countdown show, in which Andrew Marr gave a potted history of London that focussed on the blitz and 7/7: conflating the reactions to both, he suggested these moments were, a la Gilroy (2004), models of commonality, of Britishness at its best, to which people should aspire: the dominant trope through which to understand contemporary national 'struggle'.

^x With Savage (2010), there was a sheer invisibility of cultural referents in Boyle's British imagination from vast areas of the world, specifically China and Asia in general, Africa and South America and Eastern Europe.