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Anxious Speculation

Vancouver(ism), Indebtedness, and Everyday Urban Affect

In her 2012 sculpture, *49°14′29″N , 122°58′17″W (to describe space, to divide it, to name it),* South African-born and Vancouver-based artist Lyndl Hall reconfigured the Burnaby Art Gallery along both real and imagined lines by reconstructing the intersecting latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of the gallery through two small, crossing, white walls that meet on the gallery floor. The two walls then follow their precise coordinates out the door, across the lawn, and through the garden before disappearing over the horizon. Here the material remainder of cartography is made at once visible and impeding for the gallery visitor. By cutting through the middle of the gallery, these small walls force the viewer to consider both the real and conceptual spaces of the cartographic coordinates.

Beside these intersecting structures, Hall placed a large, 44″× 60″ digital print that reads from top down, "Latitudes and Longitudes of the Principal Ports, Harbours, Headlands, Etc., in the World—circa 1924—Longitudes are East and West from the Meridian of Vancouver," adding another possibility to the gallery's fixed lines. This second piece, titled *There are other ways of inhabiting the world*, reorients the grid that had just materialized in the gallery by shifting the centre of the system of coordinates from London to Vancouver. As an imaginary and novel way of organizing the world, the numbers on the print offer a glimpse into a different way of organizing, and creating, our everyday environments.

The timing of this particular piece, which opened in June of 2012, revealed more than just the historical connections between the two sites. The cities at the centre of this show were sharing an extended spotlight as Vancouver

had hosted the Winter Olympics in 2010, and London was preparing to host the Summer Olympics in 2012. In the run-up and drawdown of these events, each of these cities had been discussed as exceptional sites, as spaces of multicultural, liberal success, and yet both had, in the previous summer, undergone major moments of civil unrest and rioting. These moments of unrest, a riot that developed following a hockey game in Vancouver and several days of both protest and violence sparked by police violence in East London, are obviously very different in origin, yet they reveal an unease at work in the idealized image of each city. That is, these sudden eruptions of violence reveal another materialization of an anxious cartography.

This paper will chart this particular anxiety as it emerges within the fantasy, and reality, of Vancouver as both a model for urban planning and a material space. As Jeff Derksen argues, "The life of any city, and our lives within it, is always a dramatic testing of the possible against the contained, a friction of the imagined and what can be made material." By considering the city as both a discursive and material site, I aim to further our understanding of the particular mechanisms of both individual interpellation and social belonging that are written into our urban landscapes. As urban life is increasingly understood as a space for affective intervention, one where "the creation and mobilization of affect have become an integral part of the everyday urban landscape" (Thrift 58), this paper contributes to debates on the intersections of affective experience, discursive construction, and everyday urban life by paying specific attention to how the language and practices of urban planning are drawn into imaginations of the city. In particular, I focus on the moments when ideational and material structures collide, when affect and thought intersect, and when plan and reality come together and pull apart. Because one such moment, the 2011 riot that broke out in the downtown core of Vancouver following the Vancouver Canucks' loss in the National Hockey League's Stanley Cup Final, marked a rupture in the image of Vancouver as an exceptional site, my exploration of Vancouver's particular anxiousness begins in the urban history that preceded this riot. This history is a long and complex one, marked by colonial occupation, racialized violence, and capitalist expansion, and each of these forces intersected the morning following the riot when then-Premier of British Columbia, Christy Clark, joined a crew of volunteers in downtown Vancouver to board up smashed windows and sweep up debris. During this visit, she paused in front of the Hudson Bay flagship store and wrote, "This city belongs to us! Keep it Beautiful!" on the plywood covering a broken

window. As a message designed to distinguish the morning's volunteers from the previous evening's rioters, Clark's writing reminds those aligned with the colonial merchant that the city is, once again and as always, theirs to claim. In so doing, the history that preceded the riot is reimagined the morning after as a post-political urban experience where all conflict is transformed into potential partnerships.

The first part of this paper will explore the relationship between the "communicative turn" in urban planning discourse, the increasing number of comparative and quantified metrics for understanding the city, and the development of a post-political image of the city. The following section considers how Vancouverism, as a model for urban planning, has come to be understood as a commodity within this post-political realm, and how this particular commodified and imagetic form of Vancouver is felt in the city as an anxious structure. Here, I will consider Vancouver's image in relation to both the particularly racialized imaginary landscape of empty condos and the ongoing indebtedness of a city where speculative real estate investment continues to dominate an already expensive housing market. Finally, by combining these discursive, ideational, and material realities, this paper concludes with a reading of Douglas Keefe and John Furlong's report on the June 15, 2011 Stanley Cup riot to consider the affective forces of both the riot and the response to the riot. As I understand this moment as one where the anxiety of the subject is snapped into a present material reality, I conclude this paper by considering the events of that night as a particular affective worlding; as a moment when the popular image of the city disappeared and a moment when the subject encountered the violent reality of present-day Vancouver.

1. Post-Political Plans

Increasingly, in some academic and popular spheres, the *city* has become identified as a repository of utopian hope and as the home of pluralism, liberalism, and tolerance. This uplifting and hopeful image of the city finds its genesis in at least two separate spheres: first, in the increasing presence of planning as both an academic and public endeavour, and second, in the discursive circulation of the planned city in an ever-increasing number of lists, metrics, and rankings in the public imagination.

These two spheres are obviously not mutually exclusive; rather, each benefits from the affective amplification of the other. Equally important to this amplification is that these two forces share a genealogy, as they are

both largely credited to the work of a generation of urban planners trained in the midst of their discipline's "communicative turn" in the 1990s.[1] This methodological turn, famously laid out by Patsy Healey in her oft-cited 1992 article, "Planning through Debate: The Communicative Turn in Planning Theory," aimed to incorporate Habermasian ideals of communicative action into the broader practices of urban planning in order to shake the image of planning as a particularly modernist, individualized, and rationalist field.[2] The goal was to open planning up to the very citizens it was planning for and to employ language that was "*future seeking* but not, like its physical blueprint and 'goal directed' predecessors, *future defining*" (158, emphasis original). This opening came in the form of an invitation for wider dialogue with all citizens interested in the future shape of the city. As a necessarily public process, the communicative turn shifted the image of planning away from the singular planner and towards a model of plurality and community. In short, as Healey explained in 1992,

> What is being invented, in planning practice and planning theory, is a new form of planning, a respectful argumentative form, of *planning through debate* [emphasis original], appropriate to our recognition of the failure of modernity's conception of 'pure reason,' yet searching, as Habermas does, for a continuation of the Enlightenment project of democratic progress through reasoned inter-subjective argument among free citizens. (160, emphasis original)

Through this democratization of planning practice and theory, the discursive tone of planning becomes equal parts public, egalitarian, and hopeful, while the goal remains necessarily utopian. Thus, where before a singular planner could draw evidence from within their particular ideological position—think of Haussmann's renovation of Paris, Le Corbusier's sketches of Chandigarh—the process of communicative planning instead creates an evolving array of metrics, techniques, and technologies that are presented as objective and non-ideological in order to rank the virtues of a given space.

As forecasts for a city's future are repeated, critiqued, questioned, re-evaluated, reimagined, and recycled again and again in the public debates, there is a particular affective amplification to the accrual of these ideas. In this sense, the ongoing construction and maintenance of dialogue around, about, and in the service of ranking cities further inculcates a normative image for all cities. This image is meant to represent not just what a city is, but also what a city should be. As Eugene McCann, Ananya Roy, and Kevin Ward explain of the list's aspirational, and prohibitive, functions:

> There seems to be an unending number of benchmarks, measures, metrics, and rankings produced by various sources, from international and national

> state agencies to NGOs, from activist groups to consultants and media outlets. All seek to *position* cities within a global frame. In some cases, the coordinates used to put cities in their (global) place are "aspirational," highlighting certain characteristics or features that cities *should* exhibit: the tallest building, the most creative "types," the most sustainable industries, the highest growth rates, or the most progressive social policies. (581, emphasis original)

By thinking about the accrual of lists in disciplinary terms here, as a field of comparison that creates "a space of differentiation and the principle of a rule to be followed" (Foucault, *Discipline* 182), the prospect of being acknowledged as an urban space worth visiting or living in is a potentially profitable one for the places included on the list in aspirational terms. Piled up again and again, the weight of these rankings, reactions, theories, and ideas becomes not just fodder for journalists, or even the disciplinary mechanism of policing good and bad cities that McCann et al. articulate, but they also become the discursive weight for a specific form of governmentality where this discursive circulation produces a regime of knowledge and truth for cities, planners, and citizens to work through.

In what we might consider the politics of good ideas, then, the popular image of urbanism today revolves around transforming these increasingly numerous metrics into a set of best practices that mix government and private industry, a particular urban lifestyle image, and a movement away from political antagonism. This image aligns historically with another 1990s political and economic development, when, as Slavoj Žižek proposes in a 1999 interview, there is a similar dissolution of political conflict in different spheres and a post-politics emerges that focuses on compromise, negotiation, and consensus. Alongside Heatley's call for a communicative model in urban planning, the post-political emerges in urban discourses as an appeal to more inclusive (i.e., consensus, compromise, and collaboration) and broader (i.e., sustainable, profitable, walkable) ideas that function by expressing a normative position as a common sense one. In the language of urban planning, then, conflict is foreclosed through a specific vocabulary of impossibly good ideas. As Phil Allmendinger and Graham Haughton explain, "Concepts such as 'sustainable development,' 'climate change,' 'zero carbon development,' 'urban renaissance' and 'smart growth' are post-political in that they encourage support (who could be 'for' 'dumb growth' or 'unsustainable development'?)" (94). The language and affects of communicative urban planning and post-politics take on similarly sensible tones, inviting the quick inclusion of divergent viewpoints that can be easily accommodated in the model.

This extension of planning shifts the post-political from the realm of the discursive to, as Jodi Dean has argued, a post-politics of life itself, where "[t]here is an attunement, in other words, to a micropolitics of the everyday" (57). As both a home for a growing number of people and a site of affective intervention, the city is increasingly conducive to governmentality where, as Jeff Derksen makes clear, the binding of affect and planning policy has opened up a space for neoliberal intervention to profit from popular desires for sustainable, ecological, or culturally vibrant spaces. Thus, inasmuch as planners understand cities largely as post-political spaces of (and for) economic development, the major civic activity becomes the harnessing of capital towards the city and the task of urban planning is to "lure highly mobile and flexible production, financial, and consumption flows into its space" (Harvey 11). In this sense, there is a parallelism between the turn to communicative planning, the post-political city, and the rise of the entrepreneurial neoliberal subject where, just as the subject "is an entrepreneur of himself who incurs expenses by investing to obtain some kind of improvement" (Foucault, *The Birth* 230), the city looks to harness these investments through an image that offers the imagined future, and the imagined income-stream, the subject envisions.

2. Mapping Vancouver(ism): Entrepreneurial Resonances/Material Remainders

As the inspiration for an urban planning model, Vancouver provides a particularly fruitful site of investigation into the affective anxiety emergent in the gap between imagined urbanism and present reality. The most oft-cited definition of Vancouverism comes from a laudatory *New York Times* article that explained the model as being "characterized by tall, but widely separated, slender towers interspersed with low-rise buildings, public spaces, small-parks and pedestrian-friendly streetscapes and facades to minimize the impact of a high-density population" (Chamberlain). This relatively benign set of principles has afforded Vancouverism great traction in its ability to travel from city to city as a potentially replicable system.

In this sense, the near full-scale replications of Vancouver-esque buildings and neighbourhoods in diverse sites—including Toronto's Cityplace neighbourhood and Dubai Creek in the United Arab Emirates—are like most commodities: they are couched in the language of exceptionality, where Vancouver's urban success is understood to have been the result of foresight, planning, and intelligent decisions that can be deployed in any given cityspace. Thus, Vancouverism melds the particular communicative turn in

urban planning with models of neoliberal subjectivity to offer an image of a city that is at once planned, democratic, and profitable. This image finds its way into popular press books about the city, such as Lance Berelowitz's 2005 *Dream City: Vancouver and the Global Imagination*, which begins by explaining that

> Vancouver has emerged as the poster child of urbanism in North America. In recent years, through a series of locally grown strategies, Vancouver has consciously willed itself into becoming a model of contemporary city-making. Like the most vivid of dreams, the city is reinventing itself: something curious, perhaps even miraculous, is happening here. The visitors—mostly from American cities seeking to find the key to their own urban renewal—come in steady droves, eagerly shepherded around town by local planners, politicians and academics. (1)

Vancouver, in this fantastical origin story aptly captured by Berelowitz, is a remarkable site willed into existence through the determination of its inhabitants and the foresight of its planners. Following this logic, Trevor Boddy notes in his review of Berelowitz's book that this moment in the mid-2000s was one where Vancouverism, first identifiable only in the sense that the city had the ability to build tall residential buildings, was "evolving a second or more interesting sense: that of latent character, the subjective quirks of urban identity hidden behind these shiny facades" (Boddy 18). This second sense, one that saw writers increasingly "producing books that capture this precious moment of self-knowledge" (18) acts as the moment where the planning model—a model built over decades, by dozens of people, with dozens of competing ideas, with dozens of political positions, and developed under the weight of federal and provincial budgets, a natural environment carved out of mountains, oceans and forest, and good old happenstance—becomes a noun and a commodity. That is, Boddy draws out the moment here where Vancouver's planning model, now in the form of Vancouverism, becomes as much an asset, in the Marxist sense as crystallized labour, as a vision of the city. Vancouverism becomes exchangeable, replicable, and profitable based on the perceived labour of its development, which allows for not just the replication of its relatively minimal design principles in different places, but also the exchange of Vancouverism for the profits of academics, planners, and architects.

In this sense, the circulation of Vancouverism as a planning model superimposes an image of Vancouver over the already existent space. This superimposition involves the recognition of a spatial imagination within everyday life and a type of satellite body for the city dweller. As Noriyuki Tajima explains, the satellite body is a type of doubling where everyday life in

the city is overlaid with an imaginary image of the city and the citizen moves between "the scale of the map and the scale of experiential perception" (84). The accrual of texts about Vancouver, in this sense, can translate into the accrual of material forms, and the space in between plan and reality becomes the affective world of everyday life.

This in-between-ness, a middle ground that is highlighted discursively in Vancouverism as the commingling of the public and the private in the name of the good, livable city, is equally manifested at the level of the everyday. As Matthew Soules has explained, Vancouverism operates materially as a "synthesis of formerly conflicting spatial ideologies—the urban and the suburban—[and] is the example par excellence of post-politics in the making of cities" (145). Making literal what an overarching plan can offer only theoretically, this compromised spatial form is articulated in attempts to combine urban levels of density and proximity with suburban images of space and leisure. Thus, Vancouver and its most emblematic and enthusiastically reproduced neighbourhoods offer a consistent and comforting repetition of podium towers, manicured lawns, and leisure space; a blend and reiteration that, as Soules notes, "forecloses spatial practices that have the potential to challenge existing frameworks: new and unforeseen programs and interrelationships, alternate ownership and rental structures, and the architecture that responds to these demands" (146). There is a mirroring effect, then, between Vancouver's spatial practices and planning model; just as the image of Vancouverism is meant to operate above the political fray through a narrative of planning and impossibly good ideas that foreclose discontent from the very beginning, the spatial, architectural, and material structure of the city equally closes avenues of possible conflict, and even politics, prior to their emergence.

If Vancouver(ism)'s successes, as both a city and a plan, are predicated on a cohesive binding of the plan to the place and an equal binding of the entrepreneurial subject within the entrepreneurial city, it is in the speculative resonances, in the imagined futures, of these bindings that the city's anxiety is manifested. Matthew Soules has further noted that one of the main criticisms of Vancouver(ism) is that it is boring: that for a city built on livability, it is equally "bland, conformist, and oddly quiet and inactive, especially given its exceptional density" (146). This eerily quiet sensation, often called *empty condo syndrome* in reference to the lack of people, and even lights, in certain high-density parts of Vancouver, complicates the city's livable status. This strange nothingness that can be palpable amongst some

of Vancouver's tallest residential towers has been the site of great speculation for the city's residents. While Soules points specifically to the architecture and plan of the neighborhood as the cause of this creeping anxiety, some have speculated that this vacancy has to do with the particular recreational activities available to Vancouverites, and still others place blame on foreign speculators for snapping up condos as investment opportunities and leaving them empty while waiting for a profitable return.

It is this third theory—speculation of potential speculation, speculation that links Vancouver as a city to its wider reputation as a model for urban life and planning, and speculation that seeks out foreignness in the everyday cosmopolitan space—that most clearly resonates with a specific urban anxiety of the entrepreneurial subject and city, and, furthermore, a specific urban anxiety drawn from an enduring history of racialized panic. Here, speculation that searches for the number of foreign, and especially Asian, investors in a given development is complicit with the historic, and racist, fears of foreign invasion that marred local, provincial and national politics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[3] These politics are laid bare in historic events such as the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War and in racialized legislation such as the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 that placed a head tax on Chinese migrants or the British Columbia Elections Act of 1895 that denied the vote to persons of Asian ancestry. Such historical events are disposed of by the careful dialogue of communicative urban planning and post-politics, yet they remain a persistent spectre in contestations over urban space; they remain a haunting force and an affective resonance on quiet city streets.[4] Consider the particularly fearful language that Vancouver journalist Frances Bula deploys in describing the atmosphere of one Vancouver neighbourhood often cited as evidence of a foreign takeover:

> Take a walk through Coal Harbour after dark and you'll see some lights in the towers along the water, but many windows are dark, silent. We can believe they are all owned by foreign speculators, as empty sidewalks away from the seawall suggest. We can believe that few are so owned, since few notices overall are mailed out of country. But we know that's fear in our hearts, a fear that needs more than one lonely researcher looking for answers. (4)

Capital, and speculative capital in particular, haunts both the image, and the affective resonance, of Vancouver's oddly quiet streets. Bula's piece, in which she chased this resonance by combing through the mailing addresses of owners used by the city to release annual property tax assessments for

two Coal Harbour condo buildings, revealed only a small minority of out-of-country addresses on the list. This seeming lack of foreign ownership failed to necessarily dispel any anxiety on her part, though, because no matter the level of foreign investment in new buildings, the amount of overall speculative investment in downtown Vancouver is enormous. As she explains of the Woodward's conversion on Cordova Street:

> But as it turns out, only 153 of 367 units in the taller of the complex's two towers were bought by people planning to live there themselves. The other 214, aside from nine units of social housing, are owned by a breadth of investors—from big to penny-ante, foreign to local . . . The vast majority are testament to the hold that investment culture has on Canada's middle class. (Bula 5)

Working through a particular post-political lens here, Bula draws attention to the amount of speculative investment taking place as an everyday phenomenon in Vancouver. The anxiety of life in Vancouver, marked here by the evacuation of social life in the city because of the force of this speculative capital, is often processed as a racialized threat of foreignness that, rather than confronting the effects of capital, reinforces an exclusionary sense of who can claim ownership over a civic space. Thus, in the buildings Bula describes, we see the gap between the plan—the image of Vancouver as exceptional, multicultural, and diverse that is being bought by investors in the hopes of a making a profit—and the reality—an increasingly siloed and unaffordable city which reinforces an enduring, racialized imaginary.

In this way, speculation, and its necessary indebtedness, most clearly functions as an attempt to bridge this gap between an imagined and lived reality without falling into paranoid racialized imaginary. Just as city planning and subject planning involve a speculative investment in the future, a different type of indebtedness, in order to achieve a desired outcome, the accrual of financial debt in the city marks the aspirational hopes of its inhabitants. Debt-based speculation—whether in the form of distant or suburban investors snapping up downtown condominiums, local buyers saddled with swollen mortgages, or students taking on larger and larger loans in the face of growing educational costs—can be understood as an engagement with the future. Going back to school, buying a house, starting a business, extending lines of credit, refinancing a mortgage, and deferring payment for a brighter future can all be read as modalities of anxiety because they are ambitious leaps at negotiating, or merely outlasting, present uncertainties.

The uncertainty of this leap is lived in the city proper, as mapping debt across Vancouver reveals that it is both Canada's most indebted metropolitan

area at an average household debt load of 266.2% of disposable income, and also a city where this debt is concentrated in the outer suburbs and newly gentrifying areas of the inner core.[5] As incomes have failed to rise with the growth in housing costs, the imagined promise of Vancouver(ism) becomes a distant possibility in the everyday lives of most of the city's inhabitants. In place of the promised everyday experience, the entrepreneurial subject and city are left only with the speculative future of the plan and pure speculation on space itself.

3. "A Positive Anxiety"

But what happens when the plan never materializes? Or when the promised return is stolen from those most invested in the imagined future? Alongside the ongoing speculation on the future of Vancouver's housing market and as the spectre of capital that haunts the city demonstrates, the structure and saturation of Vancouver's debtscape reveal a city deeply invested in a future arrival. At times, these investments might emerge in different forms—in the cumulative shaping of the desires of the citizens for a reward, or in the hopes pinned to a shared civic object. In this sense, hope in the face of an anxious future, or a speculative housing market, or an indebted investment remains a vital force in the fabric of a city.

Manifestations of hope arrive in the present through a historical channelling, attaching themselves to objects and orienting these objects to an emergent future. The utopian desires of planning are invested in the creation and accumulation of hopeful objects, and the 2010-2011 Vancouver Canucks operated as just such an object, as a historically meaningful and sentimental force whose emergence offered hope for a novel future arrival. Already deeply engrained in the community, as is typical for a professional hockey team in a major Canadian city, the 2010-2011 version of the Vancouver Canucks offered a particularly hopeful and optimistic object for the collective attachment of the city's population. As John Furlong and Douglas Keefe explain in their report following the June 15 rioting, the franchise's forty-two-year history without a Stanley Cup championship seemed to be culminating in this particular season: "For years, supporters yearned for a Stanley Cup victory. In 2010/2011 the team enjoyed its best regular season ever, winning the President's Trophy as the NHL's top point getter and qualifying for the Stanley Cup Finals. Anticipation in the community was palpable" (127). Coming off the success of the Olympics and experiencing unprecedented winning on the ice, the Canucks' victory in the finals seemed predetermined, and as the team moved towards this

inevitable end, the city became a playground to celebrate each of the team's victories. At the same time, though, this anticipation was marred with a particular anxiety—the city had been home to famous hockey losses, and famous hockey riots, before. In 1994, following a loss in the deciding game of the Stanley Cup Final, fans in Vancouver rioted and, as Furlong and Keefe note in reviewing recommendations for future events, "The long shadow of the 1994 Stanley Cup riot falls on this issue . . ." (101).

In this way, Furlong and Keefe's report, controversial for both its enormous budget and city-friendly conclusions, can be read as a particular testament to modulations of hope and anxiety in the city.[6] In a document designed to investigate both the causes of, and the city's preparedness for, the riots, Furlong and Keefe open up the very affective gap between plan and outcome, and between expectation and reality, that mirrors the city's anxious relationship to planning, speculation, and investment. In their introduction to the report, the authors find themselves repeating a now familiar refrain of Vancouver's successful planning, noting the confluence of the city's space and the citizens' anxiety:

> That day, the city was filled with a positive anxiety for the team as anticipation grew to sometimes frenzied levels that this would be the year the Canucks would finally debut as National Hockey League champions. By some estimates, there were nearly 200,000 revelers downtown.
>
> But by the early afternoon people began to feel a sense of unease.
>
> Vancouver is a great city that has managed to get a lot of things right. It has a clean and efficient regional transportation system; a large, tech-savvy, and diverse cadre of young people; and a downtown entertainment district that is lively and attractive with major sports venues nearby. . . . That night, however, these strengths combined to produce a bad result. (Furlong and Keefe 7)

Highlighting the successful labour of building the city, and making visible its seeming ability to attract an equally successful, tech-savvy and diverse labour force, Furlong and Keefe parrot the language of inter-city competition before folding the virtuous into the riotous. Two insights are quickly gleaned from this rhetorical device, though: first, that the city's strengths are located in its centre—in its commercial- and consumer-focused core and entertainment district—and second, that the population that fills this core arrives from outside through a clean and efficient public transportation system. These two particular characteristics of the city are more than just the typical language of Vancouverism, as here they operate as the particular channels of both the riots' physical and temporal unfolding and the public reaction in the following days.

Specifically, the riots' physical expansion through the consumer channels of the city, moving up West Georgia Street towards Granville Street and avoiding less desirable areas for looting, gives a sense of the structured spontaneity of the crowd. As the game on the ice and the riot outside unfolded largely in synchronicity, it wasn't until the game seemed lost that the first report of looting was heard over police radio.[7] This attack, reported at 7:33 p.m. and a full twelve minutes before the end of the game, targeted the Gucci store on West Georgia. As the riot unfolded after the game, it spread from the stadium along this same channel, connecting the crowds in the entertainment district on Granville Street with those that had surrounded the stadium, and allowing for increased looting of everything from department stores and drug stores to tuxedo rental shops and hair salons. This channelling, as a disgruntled sports fan turns into an opportunistic consumer, reveals an affective alignment to the violence: it reveals that the anger apparent here was attached not just to the symbols of the city, but rather it was focused on the material stuff of the city, on the matters left unfulfilled and the promises deemed broken. As Peter Darbyshire explained in a *National Post* piece, the geography of the riot is marked through the space of products:

> The commercial district ends a block away. Where the stores stopped, the rioters stopped, even though there were plenty of other symbols ripe for attack nearby—the *Province* and *Vancouver Sun* newsrooms, the transit stations, government offices, the convention centre. It was like the only symbols worth attacking to them, besides the police cars, were the brands of capitalism. (Darbyshire and Taylor)

In this sense, the affective alignment here is an anger that attempts to reclaim a debt. By reaching for the very stuff of the city, the commercial products and inventory that is otherwise untenable, the violence of these riots is a material response to an unfulfilled fantasy. If the Canucks came to stand in for the positive anxiety of hope in the city, the response to their failure to live up to this emotional investment was to reclaim the stuff. Divorced from the ideational awards promised by the city that quelled these anxious investments, the rioters momentarily reimagined the materiality of the space as just that, as simple matter.

Alongside this consumerist channelling, though, is the secondary flow of people into the city, and the riot, from the outer suburbs. As Furlong and Keefe describe by introducing the value of the city's transit system originally in aspirational terms, only to see it as a drawback on this particular evening, the many public buses and trains that connect Vancouver to its suburbs were moving at an astonishing clip that day: "Crowds poured into downtown

most of the day at a rate of up to 500 every 60–90 seconds from trains alone, effectively filling 'the stadium' beyond capacity. Huge numbers of people took the day off from work, a unique factor compared to the previous six games. History was unfolding and almost everyone wanted to be part of it" (113). As the city channelled people into the streets in anticipation of an event, it acted as a particular type of stadium for Furlong and Keefe. That is, while the title of the report, *The Night the City Became a Stadium*, at first glance indicates the movement of the spectacle from inside Rogers Arena to outside as the riot develops, effectively transforming the rioters into participants in this unfolding history, Furlong and Keefe are instead deploying the city as a stadium, as the very physical space to house a larger audience. The history unfolding in this moment is one that invites viewership and not participation—the crowds joined together to watch the Canucks make history are invited into the city as observers, but are never folded into the process of history-making. The flow of citizens from across the Lower Mainland into the core is meant to be purely circulatory here: it operates not as an invitation and engagement to shape the city, but only as a moment of urban consumption and tourism.

In Furlong and Keefe's report, then, the city is understood as an image itself; it is the backdrop for planned events where the duty of civic workers, volunteers, and citizens alike is to ensure the seamless production of these spectacles. Participation in both the historic events and the future developments of the city is relegated only to the plan and its few actors. And while dialogue, public consultation, and open spaces are included, this inclusion is permanently at arm's length, demanding a type of vicarious participation as spectators in the imaginative, and not physical, space of the city.

That so many of those seen participating in the riot were deemed outsiders to the city brought in to celebrate, but not participate, fuelled a sense of release for many observers in the popular press and reconnected this suburban invasion with the enduring history of racialized panic over foreign speculation. The images of the suburbanite destroying the city that were repeated in social media and the press allowed for Vancouver proper to maintain an image of tolerance, sophistication, and acceptance while pushing the violence of the city towards its outer edges. This movement operates under particular classist and racist structures to dissuade the aspirational desires of those outside of the city's financial flows. As one particularly well-circulated article from *Scout Magazine* exemplifies in its portrayal of the rioters:

> Look at the age bracket, the haircuts, the shades at 10pm, the clothes, the shoes, the gold chains and the irrational steroid + Red Bull + cocaine rage. These aren't kids from East Van, Kits or the West End, and that guy with the skateboard isn't a skateboarder. . . . I reckon the overwhelming majority were Skytrain and souped-up Honda Civic bandwagon imports from the strip malls of Maple Ridge, Surrey, Burnaby, Coquitlam and other points beyond our city limits . . . (Morrison)

Morrison's language here constructs these outsiders as the source of intolerance and violence that plagued the otherwise idealized space. The meeting of these multiple channels, the flows that brought the outsider into the city and the flows that moved the rioting along the city's commercial channels, meet headlong with the enduring history of racialized panic around foreign invaders and the haunting force of speculative capital in the city to give a sense of everyday life in Vancouver. Objects of hope, imagined futures of life in the idealized city or of celebrating hockey championships, are modulated through anxiety and can come back to hurt us. The material remainders of these objects are made present when the plan falls apart and the object fails to meet our expectations. In these moments, the search for a material present and a new object of hope begins and the city, however temporarily, is opened up to a riotous crowd that reimagines, and reinvents, the urban landscape.

NOTES

1 See Allmendinger and Haughton, p. 90.
2 See Healey, pp. 145-50.
3 As this paper concludes with a reading of the 2011 riot, it is worth drawing a parallel to the 1907 anti-Chinese riot in Vancouver. In each of these cases, the racialized figure of foreign otherness is embedded within discourses on urban life in Vancouver; where the 1907 riot was an explicitly racist act, the 2011 riot relives this enduring history in popular press attempts to link the riotous crowd to the cities surrounding Vancouver in the Lower Mainland. For more on the connection between the 1907 riot and the present moment, see Sismondo.
4 For a concise history of anti-Asian racism in the late-nineteenth and twentieth century in British Columbia, and Vancouver in particular, see Wang, pp. 52-55.
5 See Walks, p. 165 for a complete picture of the spatial distribution of Vancouver's debt load and, for more recent reporting on interurban debt comparisons, see Ferreras.
6 For information on the cost of the report, see Mackin. For broader evaluation of the report, see McMartin.
7 The timeline of events that follow in this paragraph are taken from Furlong and Keefe, Appendix I, pp. 3-6.

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