Jim Craine / Giorgio Hadi Curti

PROLOGUE: INTRODUCING THE FIGHT TO STAY PUT: SOCIAL LESSONS THROUGH MEDIA IMAGININGS OF URBAN TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE

I work for a man named Lenny Cole
And Lenny Cole has the keys to the back door of this booming city
Let me give you an example of how Lenny works his magic
Two years ago, this property cost 1 million pounds
Today, it costs 5 million
How did this happen
Attractive tax opportunities for foreign investment…
Restrictive building consent and massive hedge-fund bonuses
London, my good man, is fast becoming the financial and cultural capital of the world
London is on the rise
Property value has gone one way: up
And this has left the natives struggling to keep a foothold in the property ladder
I can't teach you how to skin a cat
But I can tell you a lot about the money in bricks and mortar
Like he said, it's going one way

The overarching theme of our book is very much apropos to the above voice-over by Archy (Mark Strong) opening the Guy Ritchie film, *RocknRolla* (2008). How media portrays the struggle of "natives" – with an overt recognition that this term is always heavily conflicted and politicized – "to keep a foothold in the property ladder" is a central concern of this collection, as is the role media plays as an effective and provocative force of resistance and resilience in the fight to stay put. As may be obvious to many, the title of this collection – "The Fight to Stay Put" – is both an homage to and a play on Chester HARTMAN's 1984 manifesto, "The Right to Stay Put." It is here where HARTMAN first makes the case that property 'ownership' must be approached as much more than simply a purely economic matter. How we affectively become connected to place – and place's most intensive zone of return: the home – indelibly matters. HARTMAN (1984, 308) explains:

> Property someone lives in but does not own engenders a special relationship between user and property – destroying bonds built up through usage (often long-term usage) – produces large individual and social costs.

The destructive social costs and constraints imposed on people may be economic in nature, they may be political, or they can be viewed simply as an interruption of

a social construct – whatever they are, they are always emotional and affective and, more often than not, indelible from historical and geographical legacies of privilege and marginalization.

Thus, on the one hand, fights to stay put can be seen as representations of struggles for social justice. On the other, they can be seen as the inevitable non-representational outcomes of territorial conflicts where fights for and over affective connections to place clash with those seeking monetary profit and power through re-productions of space and place. In a geographical sense, this collection considers how disadvantages suffered by certain sections of society relate to location. HARVEY (1973, 1996) characterizes such struggles as an attempt on the part of an oppressed or disempowered social group to play a viable role in the politics of spatial re-production and place construction. Standing formations of space and place provide some comfort of stability, a vibrating semblance of permanency that is always contingent upon social and spatial processes. Varying forms of institutionalized power, material practices and social relations all influence the degree of investment in a place, and when a group is forcibly distanced, displaced or unable to have a voice in spatial re-productions and place construction, conflict – the fight to stay put – intensively *and* extensively occurs (WILSON 1995).

Resulting fights highlighted in this collection point to how political, social and economic rights come to be and how necessary 'fights' for rights are not only captured, but work and are worked through various forms of media. In a world that is a continual battleground of social, political and economic injustices, the fights to stay put included here are some of the tools the disenfranchised or displaced have used in struggles against spatial misappropriation and redistribution. As forces of neo-liberal globalization continue to decentralize space and resultant redistribution of capital perpetuates various forms of inequality, struggles over property for the benefit of the few with the marginalization of the many will continue to occur. The trajectories of these struggles and how these struggles work through different concrete and imagined media landscapes form the basis of our chapters.

We are aware that approaching weighty questions such as urban transformation and change, legacies of privilege and marginalization, and impacts of gentrification and displacement may raise concerns over the validity of analyzing these very material issues through media (re)presentations. Perhaps reflecting such concerns, inside the front dust jacket flap of the English version of Taiyo MATSUMOTO's *Tekkonkinkreet* (2007) *manga*, a brief explanatory message greets the reader: "'TEKKONKINKREET' is a play on Japanese words meaning 'a concrete structure with an iron frame,' and it suggests the opposing images of concrete cities against the strength of the imagination." What are we to make of this message hinting at an "opposition" between the imagined and concrete life of cities? Does its language of iron frames and concrete structures point to an obfuscating and illusory nature of the powers of abstract imaginings? Perhaps it is a reflection of MARX and ENGELS' (1986, 47) critique of the transcendental nature of thought in *The German Ideology*, wherein they press for the necessity of analyzing "real-life processes" to understand the development and nature of the

"ideological reflexes and echoes" that are imaginations and narratives.[1] Or maybe, like the massive body of urban literature influenced by MARX and ENGELS, it is suggesting that we must always work first and foremost with and through processes and structures of the "real-life" (i.e. grounded, material, concrete) city to impel or secure any hope of a real or potent politics of justice and emancipation.

Does media take us away from this possibility? In other words, is media simply another means through which we are drawn into ourselves, into our own myopic interests and withdrawn from the social world around us – in the process forsaking rights of community by arresting action and relation for matters of pure contemplation and isolation? Is media a tool of capitalist production through which its limiting and limited interests are perpetuated to separate powers and reinforce hegemonic ideologies of the existing order of things? In other words, are media objects merely productions of capitalist capture effecting a new religion of passivity – the latest and greatest opium for the masses? Does media remove us through imagined and narrativized urban fabulations from real material conflicts and concrete processes of alienation in the city? Is this collection – by realizing its life *through* media – dependent on a spectacular fetishism masking critical thinking and obfuscating true emancipation in, of and for the city? Is all of this, in the end, just a different form of commodity fetishism tenuously veiled in a not-so-thin sheen of academic jargon and ivory-tower pretentiousness which blinds us to the real-life processes and struggles of humankind? Is it a symptom of a life that has merely become "an immense accumulation of *spectacles*" where all that once that "was directly lived has receded into a representation" (DEBORD 1983, 7)?

Perhaps it all can be taken this way, but only if one chooses to ignore BENJAMIN's (BUCK-MORSS 1991, 265) position that the children in all of us have the creative power to engage with capitalist objects of production in different and differentiating ways; DELEUZE (1988, 1990) and NEGRI's (1991, 2004) liberating Spinozism which embraces the imagination as an immanent, political and embodied force inseparable from any constitution of human life; and MASSUMI's (1992, 101) argument that "[e]ven if a body becomes in the privacy of its own home, with no one else around…it is still committing a social act." Indeed, as Giorgio Hadi Curti explains in the opening chapter of this collection, *Tekkonkinkreet's* message of "opposition" is, in fact, far from a depreciation of the imagination. Rather, it is a reference to the principles of *yin* and *yang*[2]: a system of movement and mutual reciprocation – never domination – flowing through the parallel terrains of thought and action always (re)producing the concrete city.

---

1   The entire passage reads: "In direct contrast from the German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth we descend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real-life processes we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process" (MARX and ENGELS 1986, 47).

2   In Japanese: in and yo.

Underscoring the material significance of imaginings to the life of cities, Andreas HUYSSEN (2008, 3) argues that urban imaginaries are not simply dismissible or distancing "figments of the imagination." Rather, they are "embodied material fact[s]…part of any city's reality." He relates that "[w]hat we think about a city and how we perceive it informs the ways we act in it." Similarly, VIGAR et al. (2005, 1392) tell us, "[t]he city has always been an 'imagined environment'…Ways of seeing cities have long been critical in shaping the form, experience and governance of urbanity." As all of this suggests, the imagination is a vitalistic and constitutive force influencing perception, discourse, thought and action. As such, it is indelibly linked to political negotiations and social transformations of city life. Yet, we must take pause here: to consider the imagination as a constitutive force of life apart from the body threatens the possibility of falling into the all-too-common dualist trap of separating and privileging mind from body and thought from action. Thus, the question of how to approach the implications of the imagination in the concrete politics of urban life becomes a metaphysical one.

Antonio NEGRI (2004, 13) explains that "in the history of western thought and particularly in the history of the bourgeoisie, metaphysics and politics are constructed together" and "all philosophies that fail to consider the fabric of human passions as the sole effective reality upon which political analysis can operate" (NEGRI 2004, 14) neglect the constitution and collective life of real, concrete power. What NEGRI is getting to here is that it is a metaphysics that takes into account the immanent and embodied materiality and power of the passions – including their indelible connections to imagination, thought and action – that "is the terrain on which the history of political thought must work" (NEGRI 2004, 13). In agreement with this, it is our position – and this collection's most intensive thrust – that different media experiences are central to both (re)formations and revolutions of exclusionary processes of urban life and to their perpetuation, because not only do they provide imaginative glimpses and insights into how passions and their affections conflict and relate, but, more vitally, because they produce passions and imaginations which can affectively (be)come to connect or disconnect (in) us.

To this end, Colin Gardner explores the creation of a specific collective utterance through a close reading of ALEA's seminal and paradigmatic film *Memories of Underdevelopment* (1968), itself adapted from Edmundo Desnoes 1962 novel "Memorias del Subdesarrollo." As Michael CHANAN (1990, 3), explains:

> Underdevelopment is an economic concept, referring to the relationship between a country with the status of an economic colony and the metropolis that colonizes it. The title therefore claims that now colonization is over. Underdevelopment has been replaced by the Revolution. But it turns out that the new title is somewhat ironic, for what the film shows is the way that people continue to carry the mentality of underdevelopment within them, how it weighs them down, and how it becomes a problem.

The film's main character, Sergio, exercises through his own fight his singular right to "stay put," and thus ends up as a case study in geographical limbo but also

as the catalyst for a new form of cinematic 'ethics.' For Gardner, ALEA's film is structured dialectically via two parallel trajectories that both inflect and ultimately *infect* each other as we are forced to negotiate the creation of a new form of de-territorialized text and urbanity that defies easy resolution.

Following the theme of urban transformation and change further, Stuart C. Aitken discusses Maryhill, a traditional working-class neighborhood on the northwest side of Glasgow, where filmmaker Lynne Ramsay was born and spent her childhood. The neighborhood developed during the industrial revolution along a corridor that focused on Maryhill Road and included the Forth and Clyde Canal. In the 1970s, the neighborhood became a Comprehensive Development Area (CDA) to help alleviate housing pressures in inner city Glasgow slums. Ramsay's *Ratcatcher* (1998) documents a summer in Maryhill during the 1974 dustbin workers' strike. The young protagonist in the film deals with violence and death while fantasizing about relocating to a more peripheral housing estate and a house with "a bathroom, a toilet, an' a field." Aitken uses *Ratcatcher* as a foil to under-stand larger issues of permanency and desire, and the ways these contexts are thwarted by grand, over-coded and under-designed urban spaces like CDAs.

Building on the themes of violence and desire, Fernando J. Bosco looks closely at the plight of the 'disappeared' during the military dictatorships of Argentina. *Crónica de Una Fuga/Buenos Aires 1977* (*Chronicle of an Escape*) is a recent example of a film genre that seeks to document the abuses committed by the military government of Argentina between 1976 and 1983. The film recon-structs, through a script in part based on a memoir and historical research and in part fictional, the story of a group of young men who are abducted, imprisoned, and physically and psychologically tortured in an illegal detention center in sub-urban Buenos Aires during several months in 1977. It is an intimate film in which the emotional geographies of four men – and the socio-spatial relations they de-velop in the small confines of the prison/home they are forced to share – speak to larger issues of urban violence and resistance that were not only characteristic of Buenos Aires and Argentina during those turbulent years, but that speak in many ways to current urban conditions the world over.

Pascale Joassart-Marcelli expands on themes of emotion, desire, violence and permanency in her exploration of the ways in which undocumented immigrants fight to stay put – that is, how they negotiate and resist the multiple boundaries that preclude belonging and citizenship – through Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's *La Promesse* (1996) and Tom McCarthy's *The Visitor* (2007). In the face of intolerance and cruelty, both films acknowledge the multiple spaces and openings where belonging can occur and illustrate the role of emotions and social interactions in defining these spaces. We find that citizenship can consist of multiple layers (ethnicity, religion, race, gender, etc.) and intersecting scales (home, neighborhood, city, nation, global communities), and Joassart-Marcelli uses the two films to show a different immigrant politics that moves the struggle beyond traditional rights and duties toward what Young calls "differentiated citizenship" (1999, 264), which acknowledges and respects the different positions, interests and identities of citizens. The fight to stay put thus demands a new

politics of citizenship that focuses on creating and preserving places of belonging that affirm difference.

Turning our attention to representations of the city, Amy Siciliano and Paul S. B. Jackson explore the role of *Sesame Street* as an American cultural response to urban crises of the 1960s. Specifically, the authors consider how the urban fantasyland projected through this children's educational television program helped reshape meanings associated with the city and urban social identities. The authors suggest that *Sesame Street's* sanitized 'ghetto' aesthetic and sterilized social scripts helped to generate a new image of the city as a desirable locale for the white middle class. In projecting an idealized New York streetscape into the homes of millions of Americans, it helped alter public discourses and representations about urban space and middle-class identification with these spaces.

A companion piece is Steven M. Graves' discussion of gentrified televisual landscapes. Several widely popular TV programs airing during the 1970s helped bolster the potential ground rent of urban housing stock by altering the symbolic value of specific housing types. Demand for late 19th and early 20th century Victorians, Brownstones and the like was enhanced by TV programs that housed highly charismatic television characters, who were often young, chic, professional and childless. Simultaneously, television producers frequently placed TV families from other points in their life cycle or career arc in landscapes and housing stock that were clearly not gentrified. Thus, as Graves indicates, television programming has been a significant factor in the generation of demand for specific types of housing stock, and perhaps the diminution of demand for other types of housing. For the masses accustomed to viewing American landscapes from the comfort of their homes, television made gentrified living appear highly desirable without ever exposing the many hidden costs associated with the gentrification process.

Expanding on these themes of media, its material connections to urban transformation and change and the fight to stay put, Rachel Goffe and Todd Wolfson look at the unfolding practices of an organization based in Philadelphia to explore how building a media and communications infrastructure can begin to collapse the material and discursive distances between people while connecting the struggles they face in their everyday lives. The Media Mobilizing Project (MMP) engages poor and working people in telling the untold stories of their lives to each other through web, radio, video and TV platforms, as well as through face-to-face meetings and media-making; building an infrastructure of technology and relationships between people and groups; while also creating access to media, technology and the means to distribute information and stories. The fight to stay put here is broadly conceived by Goffe and Wolfson as the rejection of a future for Philadelphia shaped by the needs of capital rather than those of people. The statement, "Movements begin with the telling of untold stories," is used by MMP in describing a vision for media's role in movement building. The day-to-day sharing of information between organizations and individuals thus forms the basis for lasting relationships, a shared leadership and a shared strategy, out of which

grounded and concrete institutions of representation can emerge – institutions that can help upset capitalism's subordination of life to its role as the source of value.

The next chapter further explores relationships between media technology and social movements and connections. Maude Ontario is author Amanda Huron's DJ name. She is a founder and active member of Radio CPR and in her chapter she discusses the use of microradio as a weapon in the fight to stay put. As Huron states, a radio wave appears to be fleeting – it cannot be seen or touched, apparently ungrounded, an ethereal presence detached from the earth. Yet radio in its smallest forms can be deeply connected to the land. Huron examines the case of one contemporary microradio station in its struggles against neighborhood displacement and finds that the particular geography of microradio can be a powerful tool for fighting for the right to be in a certain place: the right to stay put over time, to create culture, to dwell.

Bringing together themes of city representation, social movements, emotion and passion, Ryan J. Goode, Kate Swanson and Stuart C. Aitken engage neo-Marxist theorizing from Benjamin and Williams to Deleuze and Lefebvre to trace media culpability in the continuing transformations of Rio de Janiero's favelas. Using *Cidade de Deus* (*City of God*; 2002) as a starting point, the authors outline a corporate global media blitzkrieg that flows through Rios' successful attempt to attract the 2016 Olympics to a point where institutional authorities are able to place Pacification Police within *favelas*. With a specific focus on the *favela* of Santa Marta, the authors examine the ways pacification is about occupying streets and reigning in youthful passions, while also pointing to how young residents fight back through the media components of *Visão Favela* – a grassroots organization that moves beyond Santa Marta to embrace a larger swathe of Rio's social and spatial *favela* life.

Michaela Benson and Ed Jackiewicz explore the prospects of 'the right to stay put' as a concept for explaining the impact(s) of lifestyle migration and residential tourism development, a matter indelibly entangled in urban representations presented through and promoted over internet websites. With an empirical focus on migration and development in Panama, the authors question whether 'the right to stay put' can adequately account for the various impacts felt on a local level. Benson and Jackiewicz find some evidence of displacement coinciding with the recent in-migration of North American and European populations, but understanding this phenomenon within the wider context of social and economic change in Panama reveals that the reality is far more complex than 'the right to stay put' paradigm allows.

Continuing with the theme of media representation in a different way, Brenda Kayzar suggests that representations in the media depicting philanthropic work as having saved neighborhoods overlooks the continued injustice in planning practice and the efforts of community members to agitate for some reasonable level of justice in the provision of municipal services and maintenance. Using the City Heights neighborhood in San Diego, California, Kayzar juxtaposes the ways in which the media represented the community and reinvestment outcomes once a philanthropic organization was enrolled in improvement efforts. Kayzar demon-

strates that amidst a long struggle for justice, community members overcame language and cultural differences and banded together in activism. They established a community development corporation (CDC) that informed the city of the community's needs through small-scale efforts such as organized clean-up, neighborhood watch programs, a community garden, and an annual street festival. The CDC was also the portal through which the community strongly expressed their needs for a police station and schools, and these needs were represented in a community plan and during 'retreats' with civic leaders. All of this represents the 'groundwork' laid for ongoing changes in the community. The groundwork demonstrates that the citizens of City Heights were not simply a community out of control, as was suggested in media accounts that focused on crime and poverty. Citizens were active and had expectations and they expected equitable treatment in planning practice and service provision. Yet from the privileged site of the media, the accepted discourse credits the philanthropic organization for procuring necessary city resources, thereby becoming the activist and savior of the community.

Jason Dittmer brings the world of comic books into our discussions of urban representations, race, space and violence. Using a later version of American comic book hero Captain America, he addresses the ways in which race inflects both representations of displacement and gentrification in American popular culture and also the ways in which a 'right to stay put' might be implemented in the United States. In so doing, Dittmer highlights the potential for inequality should such a right be theorized and implemented strictly on the basis of neo-Marxist understandings of class.

Weaving together several themes of this volume, we consider in our final chapter how 'monstrous' bodies and landscapes in David Cronenberg's film *Videodrome* are created and how desires, subversions and violence are inscribed in bodies and the city – metaphorically and literally. The main question moving us through this chapter is: how are *we* created in and through our connections to media? The fight to stay put is different in *Videodrome* insofar that we must not only reinterpret new realities because they are constructive processes, but must fight with the production of our own selves to materially perform difference through activity and creativity. In other words, this fight is about the greater need to confront, encourage, and/or challenge different technological and scientific realities and their capacities to impel new geographies of monstrous effect and desire. Doing so provides us with a double understanding of how the science and technologies of media work as creative, but also limiting, manipulative and hegemonic, forms effecting economic, spatial and social influence in (if not control over) the changes and transformations of our cities and our world(s).

By approaching urban transformation and change through media's imaginative capacities to bring about different social lessons and material connections of and to urban life, we wish for this collection in both its component parts and as a collective whole to add to critical perspectives on the life of cities through what Brian MASSUMI (2002, 12–13) calls "a productivist approach," or affirmative methods and techniques "which embrace their own inventiveness and are not afraid to own up to the fact that they add (if so meagerly) to reality." Part of this

inventiveness is to not simply be content with established codings of concepts (e.g. "the right to the city"; "the right to stay put"; "gentrification and displacement"; "class", etc.) but, instead, to "uproot" them and experiment with the "residue of activity from [their] former role[s]" (MASSUMI 2002, 20) by "reconnect[ing them] to other concepts, drawn from other systems, until a whole new system of connection starts to form" (MASSUMI 2002, 19).

To be productivist is to be creative; and to be creative is to be critical. However, as MASSUMI (2002, 12) warns, if it is difference we desire to make, that is, if our move is towards a material and spiritual human emancipation of greater relational capacities between people and people and people and things, the "critical thinking" of convention and tradition is of little value as it "disavows its own inventiveness as much as possible" and "it carries on as if it mirrored something outside of itself with which it had no complicity." In this sense, conventional critical thinking does not and can not be a move of or towards human emancipation because it re-produces, and in the process rationalizes and validates, the limiting bonds of the very material and capacitational boundaries it seeks to subvert.

To be critical, then, cannot be to work through closed and pre-established codes, transcendent rules of action or in the interests of already-constituted groupings. Rather, it must be to confront the poverty of both political and creative imaginations and joyfully become through the emergence of differentiating relations between people and people and people and things: a cultivation of good bodily affections and affects through the milieu of the social as "more than human" (WHATMORE 2002). As Spinoza tells us, it is such cultivations of joy that allow us to think, feel, accomplish, know, create, *do* more in and as a community of a multitude; and as DELEUZE and GUATTARI (1994, 48) tell us, it was Spinoza who first "discovered that freedom exists only within immanence." Thus, to be critical – and for media to work as a critical machine materially opening up new possibilities and potentialities of emancipation – we must not engage with or approach media merely as matters of description, representation, production or ideological critique, but, to productively and contextually borrow from Warren MONTAG (1999, 21), as "a body among other bodies, and, if it is effective, 'moves' other bodies to act or to refrain from action, or, more properly, moves bodies and minds…to act and think simultaneously."

REFERENCES

BUCK-MORSS, S. (1991): The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project. Cambridge.

CHANAN, M. (1990b): Tomás Gutiérrez Alea: A Biographical Sketch. *Memories of Underdevelopment, Rutgers Films in Print Series, Vol. 15.* New Brunswick & London, 15–22.

DEBORD, G. (1983): *Society of the Spectacle.* London.

DELEUZE, G. (1988): *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy.* San Francisco.

DELEUZE, G. (1990): *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*. New York.

DELEUZE, G. AND F. GUATTARI (1994): *What is Philosophy?* New York.

HARTMAN, C. (1984): The Right to Stay Put. GEISLER, C. C. and F. J. POPPER (Eds.): *Land Reform, American Style*. Totowa, 302–318.

HARVEY, D. (1973): *Social Justice and the City*. Cambridge.

HARVEY, D. (1996): *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge.

HUYSSEN, A. (2008): Introduction. HUYSSEN, A. (Ed.): *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age*. Durham.

MARX, K. and F. ENGELS (1986*): The German Ideology*, ARTHUR, C. J. (Ed.).New York.

MASSUMI, B. (1992): *A user's guide to capitalism and schizophrenia: deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*. Cambridge.

MASSUMI, B. (2002*): Parables for the virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Durham.

MATSUMOTO, T. (2007): *Tekkonkinkreet: Black & White*. San Francisco.

MONTAG, W. (1999): *Bodies, Masses, Power: Spinoza and his Contemporaries*. London.

NEGRI, A. (1991*): The Savage Anomaly: The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*. Minneapolis.

NEGRI, A. (2004*): Subversive Spinoza: (Un)Contemporary Variations*. Manchester.

VIGAR, G., S. GRAHAM and P. HEALEY (2005): In Search of the City in Spatial Strategies: Past Legacies, Future Imaginings. *Urban Studies* 42 (8), 1391–1410.

WHATMORE, S. (2002): *Hybrid Geographies*. London.

WILSON, D. (1992): Urban Conflict Politics and the Materialist-Poststructuralist Gaze. *Urban Geography* 16 8*, 734–742.