

And what does the Left do? Does it respond with the usual brew of high principle, piety and self-righteousness that it so excels at fomenting? No. Because "all it takes is a few nurses dancing round beds, some coloured lights spelling out the words NHS and we all go weak at the knees and collapse in the IOC's embrace".

The disconnect between reporting on the Olympics in the left-wing press before and after the ceremony is certainly remarkable. For weeks the Guardian had been providing regular updates on the Ministry of Defence's decision to place surface-to-air missiles on the roofs of low-income housing blocks close to the Olympic Park - a perfect example of what Stephen Graham describes as the "new military urbanism" that has led to the fortification of urban space around the world over the last decade or so. The newspaper also ran a piece for anybody who refused to have their TV tuned to the BBC for the following two weeks, and could barely control the "told-you-so" tone of its reporting on the failure of G4S to meet its contractual obligation to provide security at the Games. Still, the bile had apparently turned to booze by the time of the opening ceremony, and Peter Bradshaw, Tristram Hunt and Ai Wei Wei were soon falling over one another to toast what the former called the "biggest, maddest, weirdest, most heartfelt and lovable dream sequence in British cinema history".

