

Special Issue of Emotion, Space and Society

Liminoidal Spaces and the Moving Body: Emotional Turns

. . . within the liminal frame, new subjunctive, even ludic, structures are then generated, with their own grammars and lexica of roles and relationships. These are imaginative creations, whether attributed to individuals or “traditions.”
—Victor Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance* 1987, p. 107

With the perception of more time and disposable income for many “first world” nationals, sports and physical activities, in early 21st Century global culture, have become structured, surveilled, and significant modes of personal expression. Both spectators and participants have (both consciously and unconsciously) begun to question and celebrate many of the spaces (and places) providing and facilitating their sporting experiences, and have also realised their own emotional linkages with sport and physical activity. Their emotional and affective physical performances, found in times, places, and spaces of the liminoidal, serve as rich landscapes that bring emotions and affect into raw relief.

In contrast to the liminal, what is the “liminoid”?ⁱ The liminal, structured with clear spaces for breakage from the ritualistic, “describe[s] and define[s] the in-between status of initiates during rites of passage” (Coman, 2008, p. 94). The liminoid, somewhat differently, according to Graham St. John,

. . . occurs within leisure settings apart from work, is voluntary, plural, and fragmentary, with liminoidality associated with marginality, conditions fomenting social critique, subversive behaviour, and radical experimentation. (2008, p. 9)

In other words, the liminal is a relatively formal space where ritualistic practices occur; the liminoidal is an informal space where change is simply possible. Foster and

Little (1987) call the liminal and margins the “threshold” (p. 96). This time, and space, is a singular turning point, the realization of which others may call an epiphany (cf., Denzin, 1989). However, Turner suggests that the liminoid is the “successor of the liminal in complex large-scale societies, where individuality and option . . . have in theory supplanted collective and obligatory ritual performances” (1987, p. 29). Thus, the liminoid represents, in some ways, a looser, more open and less structured space for individual movement.

The liminoidal is not always ritualistic, like the liminal, but offers opportunities for critical engagement, subversion of normative ways of being, and the trying out of non-dominant values and systems within public, albeit less rigid and proscriptive, spaces. The liminoid is mundane space; it is ordinary; but it is also, as Adams St. Pierre (2008) reminds us of “home,” “a point of rupture” (p. 121) for small, albeit significant, change. Each of the papers in this volume, in its own way, privileges this sense of the liminoid space.

What these authors bring to readers of *Emotion, Space and Society* is the sense of this space of/for rupture, housed within a variety of methodological and content stances. The study of emotions—and affect—has long interested sport studies’ scholars, who bring both public and personal epistemologies to their research interests.

Several sub-disciplinary areas within kinesiology, human kinetics, physical education, and/or sport studies have delved into the sport/emotion area, but often in very positivistic and deterministic ways—and often, in applied forms, with instrumental intent. Sport psychology studies, for example, have looked at linkages between “emotions,” roughly wroughtⁱⁱ—such as anger, frustration, arousal and anxiety, joy and “flow”—often describing relationships between these variables and sport perfor-

mance as discrete categories (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Hanin, 2000; Vallerand, 2000). As well, they have attempted to discover how the emotions interact with performance enhancement, while following relatively positivist traditions. This has been effective, to a point. But there are, of course, weaknesses in creating a model where the body is not seen holistically.ⁱⁱⁱ

As well as the applied kinds of studies, there have been, of course, largely theoretical studies examining how emotions and sport/physical activity interact, coalesce, and relate to one another. Certainly before sociologists like Durkheim (cf., Tiryakian, 2009) discussed concepts such as “collective effervescence” (which could be applied to sport fans’ behaviours), various writers were aware of the relationships between passions and physical exertion—both in war and in competitive games and play (cf., Huizinga, 1970; Sun Tzu, 2003).

Sport (and leisure) sociologists have studied the body in space in a variety of ways. For example, Jayne Caudwell (2011) has pointed out that several sports scholars have examined political uses of space:

The authors demonstrate how leisure (Aitchison, 1999) and sport (van Ingen, 2003) spaces are hierarchically structured and how space is fundamental to the ideological and material production of the dominant and normative. Social power relations, therefore, infuse and suffuse space, and, it is the human body that helps construct hegemonic – and counter-hegemonic – identities and subjectivities within space. (p. 124)

Caudwell also highlights early contributions by John Bale (1993), in particular when he “argues that football stadia are intentionally territorialised spaces, which are busy with ‘socio-spatial interactions’ (Bale, 1993, p. 130)” (in Caudwell, 2011, p. 125).

Scholars, in some cases borrowing from geography, have envisioned space in more esoteric, less grounded, often imaginary and imagined spaces than ever before.

Researchers from a variety of fields have interrogated the physical embodiment of “emotions” in a variety of ways. For example, Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank (1995) resurrected studies of Sylvan Tompkins’ work to look at shame and its affective presence in individuals’ lives, while naming pairs of variables in the process (e.g., interest-excitement, surprise-startle, shame/humiliation-contempt/disgust). Elspeth Probyn (2005) has also delved into aspects of shame, but from a more holistic vantage point: hers is an explication of “shame” in its many embodied forms.

As such, our project in this special issue more closely aligns with Probyn’s cultural studies approach, probing into what Tarrant (2007) terms “affective studies”. Rather than examining a singular emotion as a “variable,” we encouraged authors to look more holistically at lived lives within movement practices and cultures. As well, we asked authors to creatively interrogate methodologies that would mirror their topical areas.

In keeping with fluid meanings and political, ideological, and materialisation of space, the pieces in this special issue work to stretch the tangible, explode the simplistic, and complicate the mundane. The collection, “Liminoïdal Spaces and the Moving Body: Emotional Turns” derive from a sociological standpoint. The connections between papers run deeply: whether discussing emotional nuance and its (emotional and affective) effect upon dance or football audiences; the deep connective passions of (predominantly) male sporting culture; feminist and pro-feminist anger and frustration at exclusionary practices within surfing spaces, site-specific outdoor dance performance, or the support of a sports team; a critical resistance to the hegemony of dominant sport practices; or the interactionist teasing out of sporting practices and

research issues within a co-authored paper, these works all discuss very specific places (e.g., gardens, fields of play, table tennis hall, surf beach, stadia), spaces (e.g., virtual, active, participatory, hegemonic, counter-hegemonic, oppositional, minority), and sport practices.

However, they also demonstrate the rich methodological ranges that sport scholars have appropriated to examine such practices and emotional engagements. Authors borrow from autoethnography, photo elicitation, poetry, stories, co-enacted engagements, communal writing, performativity, and internal monologue to query the intersections of emotions, space and sport practices. For example, a discussion of intentionally seeking “failure”—within both academic and sporting cultures—works to disrupt typical responses to competition, success and physicality.

The authors in this special issue embraced the messiness and incompleteness of their own and others’ lived lives, examining both emotion and affect from personal and public displays of lives. The easy bifurcation of public and private (cf., Mills, 2000[1959])—clearly untenable in the 21st Century, if it ever was—is simply a starting point for discussion of rupture—of liminoid experiences—which captures many of the open-texted tensions of enacted life.

More specifically, the chapters unfold with a move through a critique of competitive sport, men and women’s spectatorship of sport, women’s participation, and collaborative research projects concerned with a range of physical activities, but especially dance. We begin with Kalle Jonasson’s lively and unusual exploration of table tennis participation within a recreational league in Sweden. Jonasson draws from his own active involvement and his specific style of playing table tennis to reveal the subtleties of emotion, affect and atmosphere. In his attempts to subvert major competitive

sporting styles and ethos, Jonasson plays defensive table tennis strokes throughout the league games. His physical movements - to defend and not attack - instigate visible emotional responses, which help produce an atmosphere within the spaces of competition. He draws on Deleuze and Guattari's (1986) notion of 'minor' to help explain the table tennis as a research context and the assemblages of emotion, affect, atmosphere, competition and communality he observes.

Similarly, Jason Laurendeau adopts narrative and auto-ethnography to interrogate his own active participation in a range of sporting activities -predominately team games. He melds together a series of stories dating from the late 1980s through to the present, all of which are mostly based in Canada. These narratives focus on his sporting experiences throughout his boyhood and manhood, and offer a reflexive act of writing the masculine self into a critical framework. Through his evocative and animated text, he aims to tap the emotional aspects of male friendship, male rivalry, competition, play, pain and injury. We learn about the acts of violence and aggression that are bound into men's competitive sporting participation, specifically the emotional dimensions of Laurendeau's embodied im/mobility.

Alan Bairner recounts his emotional involvement with football and football stadia, as a spectator of the game in Scotland, Northern Ireland (socially, culturally and politically complex) and England. Memory becomes central to the intimate affects of his fandom, thus complicating the temporality of his felt emotions. Selectively tracing his spectatorship from 1958 East End Park, Dunfermline through to 2012 Pride Park Stadium, Derby, Bairner intertwines spectator spaces with the people, occasions and architectures of football. Previously, fandom has often been represented by storytelling and Bairner adopts a similar approach. And yet, his storytelling is not the familiar

quantitative recounting of fixtures, players and score-lines. Instead, he unearths one male football fan's intimate and sensual experiences throughout his lifetime.

Matthew Klugman's paper turns the lens on the emotional and the affect of fans of Australian Rules Football. He explains the colloquial term, barracking, which is verbal and gesticular demonstrations of fans' anger and frustration with 'their' team, the team they support. Klugman makes clear the intensity and absurdity of barracking through a focus on the embodied and visceral coagulations of anger, love, hate, hope, faith and frustration. Relying on interview findings and existing literatures, he convincingly shows the extent of spectators' emotions at men's Australian Rules football fixtures. In a novel turn (for sport studies scholars) to psychoanalysis (e.g. Lacan) and religious studies (the sacred and profane), Klugman traces the resultant affective flows.

Georgina Roy provides a critical analysis of gender relations within predominantly male sporting spaces. The sporting space is surfing, a sport that has developed from non-traditional sporting cultures. Roy argues for accessing emotions as a form of [feminist] methodology and goes on to present some of her research findings from her ethnographic research of 4 surf spots in the UK (South West, South Wales, North East and South Coast). She focuses on women surfers' feelings of fear, anger, frustration, comfort, joy and pleasure as they 'paddle out', sit 'out back', 'line up' and ride waves. Bringing the ocean spaces to the reader, Roy weaves together affect, embodiment, emotions and gender to demonstrate how women's surfing is a transhuman affective field in which affects move between surfers and within surfing bodies.

Picking up on feelings of anger and frustration, Katie Fitzpatrick and Alys Longley write about a large, multi-disciplinary research project that created moments of palpable fury for the authors. The research project - set in Auckland, New Zealand

- involved architects, artists, dancers, educators and scientists. It was concerned with environmentalism and sustainability and the paper starts by describing a public dance performance, which aimed to raise the public's awareness of the project. Fitzpatrick and Longley, through narrative and poetry, make visible the injustices, exclusions and apparent failures of the project. By engaging with notions of fury and failure they open new ways to understand these seemingly negative affective flows as potentially creative and, therefore, ultimately generative. The authors acknowledge that large-scale research projects are often represented as neat and complete. Instead they argue for a view of the emotional, chaotic and messy, which they have witnessed as successful in the artistic realms of theatre and dance performance.

William Bridel, Zoe Avner, Lindsay Eales, Nicole Glenn, Rachel Loewen Walker and Danielle Peers present another collaborative paper that relies on narrative and the colliding of multiple stories. Through poetry, reflexive prose and vignettes, the six authors present a paper that reflects their on-going group debates (during and post-PhD) surrounding physical activity (including softball, rowing, figure skating, wheelchair basket ball, dance, triathlon and spinning in a field) and physical inactivity. As with the paper by Fitzpatrick and Longley, the consequences of their written dialogues—perhaps multi-logues in this case—has led them to a methodological point of the possibilities of messiness in excavating the complexities of emotion and affect. In addition to and continuing a theme running through all papers, the visceral emerges as significant; towards the end of the paper one of the authors asks: “Any of you up for collaborating on a six-person dance-performance-ethnography of this paper?”

The final paper does attempt a dance on its pages. Karen Barbour and Alex Hitchmough, through photography and vignettes, aim to capture the embodied affects of a site-specific dance performance. Dance is presented as an embodied art work and

an aesthetic of embodiment, which often illicit heightened emotional levels. The dance that is discussed constitutes a public performance within a Hamilton, New Zealand art festival. The site for their performance was a themed public garden. The phenomenological and feminist approach running through the paper brings to the fore the shared experiences of the dancers and members of the audience. In this way, affect becomes relational, collective and intermingled. As with Roy's work, affect is viewed as transhuman. Instead of the watery spaces of the swelling ocean, this paper centres upon the peaceful and meditative spaces of a themed garden. The harmony and calm of the occasion are palpable; the site-specific affect is remarkable.

To date, very little has been written of the connections between sport (in the broadest sense of embodied movement), emotion, space and society. The papers in this special issue represent the ways scholars of sport, dance and physical activity/education might engage with the turn to emotion and affect. Human movement provides fertile ground for examining the socio-cultural-political dimensions of emotion. And, we argue, such examinations benefit from qualitative research methodologies that favour the personal and sensual, that bring the body back into the embodied.

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ⁱ For further discussion of Victor Turner's concepts of the liminal and the liminoid in sport, see Sharon Rowe (2008).

ⁱⁱ Many studies have conflated these kinds of affective responses with emotions. For a clear discussion of some of the differences, see Wetherell (2012).

ⁱⁱⁱ While this is a fascinating discussion, the pros and cons of applied and theoretical (even these divisions are arbitrary) are beyond the scope of this introduction. We recommend the reader to early sport psychology papers, such as discussions by Rainer Martens (1979), regarding sport psychologists working in 'the field'.