



STREAM

S10. Exercising Corpo-Realities

STREAM ORGANIZER(S)

Paul Bowman

Cardiff University
BowmanP@cardiff.ac.uk

DESCRIPTION

Why do we exercise, and how do physical practices shape our identity and ideology? Every physical practice creates distinct ways of experiencing the body—different ‘corpo-realities’—which impact how we feel, what we believe, and how we relate to the world. According to Lauren Berlant, affect studies can be regarded as an extension of ideology studies, as it moves further into the realms of lived, embodied life.

We exercise to change. Exercise changes us. We change our exercises—depending. On what? Some approaches may see only ideological capture. We are certainly affected by the structuring forces of pre-personal discursive energies, tendencies and trajectories. But we form agency within structuring structures. We craft our activities on the basis of changes they themselves have produced. Things change, so we have to. We change, so things have to. New vistas open. We can now do different things, or the same things differently.

Across the disciplines, many methodologies are used to try to capture these complex dynamics. Meanwhile, untold numbers of people have agonising or delightful conversations with themselves about their identities, orientations, hopes, dreams, fantasies, and fears; move the pin up or down the stack; tighten their running shoes; ponder a kettlebell; or lightly touch a punchbag and take a barely conscious sniff. Countless reels tell us we must change our life. Some arrest us. Some irritate. Others excite. All are potentially powerful interventions.

This stream explores ways we might grasp the exercise/affect nexus. How can we comprehend and conceptualise affective atmospheres, felt and lived through media and movement? What can the relations hope to be between scholarly knowledges, practitioner knowledges, and dispersed and profuse discursive energies?

We invite contributions that explore:

- Methods to identify and analyse what Lauren Miller has called ‘affective habitus’;
- The retooling of discourse analysis to gauge atmospheres and structures of feeling at the interface of social media and embodied activities;

- The use of textual analysis to identify the ideological imperatives of embodied practices;
- Ways of disambiguating between inherent affective capacities and externally imposed ways of feeling and experiencing them. (Consider: might pranayama or qigong have inherently or immanently 'self-mystifying' trajectories, or are such dimensions imposed by an attending discourse that provides interpretive scaffolding? Or: does bodybuilding necessarily produce predictable forms of the simultaneous erosion and intensification of gender, or are the specific features of its 'capacity to affect' determined entirely by 'context'?)

The panel is open to papers that explore the affective dimensions of different corpo-realities from across the landscape of exercise practices. We anticipate papers on affective habitus (Lauren Miller), the interface of social media, ideological fantasy and affective exercise (Paul Bowman), and the use of textual analysis to examine embodied affective ideology (Peter Katz). The stream is open to contributions from any discipline that engage with exercise and corpo-realities in creative and insightful ways.