

2012

# Introduction: Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice Volume 4 No.1 2012

Andrews, H

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/11583>

---

Journal of Tourism Consumption and Practice  
University of Plymouth

---

*All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.*

## **Introduction**

**Hazel Andrews**

This volume is the 'sister publication' to an edited collection based also on the theme of liminal landscapes. The papers in both the journal and book emerged from a symposium held at Liverpool John Moores University in 2010. The focus of linking the concept of liminality arose from an interest by Les Roberts and me in the seemingly all too easy associations of pleasure, leisure, beaches and the liminal. This concern was inspired by our visits to Margate and its beach on the north east coast of Kent in the south east of England for our own leisure pursuits; but, as is often the case in academia, also became the focus of thinking through theoretical issues with which we were then engaged. It is not the intention to detail here the direction that the visits to Margate lent to the theoretical perspectives because these are closely examined in the monograph. However, it became clear that the marginality of Margate was complex and involved different types of marginality based on the specific practices enacted along the sea front. At the same time we were aware that the concept of liminality had found its way into the tourism studies literature notably in Nelson Graburn's (1976) seminal paper about the parallels between tourism and processes of ritual. In terms of specific locations Rob Shield's (1991) *Places on the Margin* invoked the concept of liminality to understand how some particular spaces gave rise to and sanctioned behaviour that was seen to be outside normative everyday conventions. In his use of the word margin Shield's effectively made it synonymous with liminal and this in turn became entwined with ideas of place. Our questions then were based on whether being on the edge geographically would necessarily translate to liminal and in what other ways were such landscapes characterised. That is the association with holidays detracted from the ideas of danger and death closely linked to the concept of liminality and as such we felt that the study of peripheral areas was not being given the attention they deserved within the framework of a discourse on liminality.

As such we draw attention to the centrality of the notion of liminality to shaping discussions around the uses and practices of space in tourism. Victor Turner's

writings on ritual and *communitas*, and the aforementioned theories of tourism as a sacred journey, and ideas of 'places on the margin' are well established in the theoretical landscapes of travel and mobility. The singular features of liminal landscapes, explored by these and other writers on the subject, are generally linked to ideas of the ludic, consumption, carnivalesque, inversion or suspension of normative social and moral structures of everyday life, deterritorialisation and 'becoming' etc. While these arguments and tropes remain pertinent, and their metaphorical appeal increasingly attractive, the extent to which these spaces engender opposing ideas of social control, terror, surveillance, production and territorialisation, invites an urgent call to re-assess the meanings attached to ideas of the 'liminal' in tourism studies. The deaths of 23 Chinese migrant workers in Morecambe Bay in 2004 has prompted a sobering re-appraisal of the coastal resort as a site of tourism, leisure and consumption. The shifting social geographies connected with these landscapes means that the example of the beach may equally be looked upon as a space of transnational labour, migrancy, racial tension, death, fear, uncertainty and disorientation. In this example, the precarious and un-navigable natural landscape of Morecambe sands becomes a metonym for the increasingly destabilising landscapes of trans- or post-national capitalist mobility. Further, the settlement of asylum seekers and refugees in UK coastal resorts such as Margate has exposed the underlying tensions and social divisions between representations that play on the ludic, touristic heritage of these resorts and those which address the marginality and exclusion that characterises the other set of mobilities and meanings evoked by these spaces. In addition, the appropriation of liminal landscapes by, for example, local authorities, commercial bodies and marketeers constructs an increasingly mediated or textualised space of performance that re-fashions the embodied spaces as lived by those who make up their diverse social fabric.

The call for papers for the symposium was made with this context in mind and it attracted a number of abstracts. We had deliberately not restricted the focus of enquiry to tourism studies and thus received papers from a range of subject and disciplinary backgrounds and this variety is reflected in the edited collection. However, the papers we find in this special edition of the *Journal of Tourism*

*Consumption and Practice* are specific to tourism studies and engage with different aspects of liminality in terms of experience and landscape.

The paper by Brendan Donegan and Sameena Dalwai focuses on the Development and Human Rights Institute (DHRI), based in India. The DHRI is a youth travel movement which facilitates the travel of young westerners in a form of volunteer tourism that allows participants to work in socially deprived areas of the less developed world. The authors argue that DHRI seeks to capitalise on the liminal moment that travel experiences can offer. The article offers an analysis of the experiences of the travellers from the two different perspectives of the authors and whilst one is more optimistic than the other in terms of the concept of liminality Donegan and Dalwai draw attention to the fact that it is not necessarily infused with the ludic and carnivalesque but is in fact a more 'messy encounter.'

Anna Thompson's article takes us to New Zealand and the Aoraki/Mt Cook landmark in the Mackenzie Basin area located on the country's south island. This paper focuses more on the physical landscape and the places between or 'betwixt and between' main tourist attractions. It notes how these inbetween places are undervalued in terms of for example their scenic beauty. The environmental degradation that such zones often suffer detracts from their value as tourism spaces and the contribution that they can make to the overall tourism experience. In short such spaces are not recognised in terms of their contribution to tourism.

Bjorn Thomasson's and Maja Balle's paper brings the focus once again back to experience and performance. In this case the discussion is based within the practice of Bungee Jumping. Linking this pass time (often an enterprise entered into as part of the backpacker adventure tourism endeavour) to jumping and suspension found in different cultural practices the authors explore how bungee jumping can illuminate the concepts of both liminality and the liminoid in tourism and leisure practices.

The short film *Another Space* (Les Roberts and Hazel Andrews, 2010) about Crosby Beach on the north west coast of England was made as part of a project that was

assessing not only the concept of liminality in relation to the beach but also the role of an art installation (by Antony Gormley entitled *Another Place*) sited there has on how people use and react to the space. A more detailed discussion can be found in the companion chapter in the edited collection. The film (which can be viewed on our youtube channel, see link below) is included here not just to depict reactions to a landscape that is often connected with ideas of the liminal as expressed in the voices of the film's participants but also as a demonstration of visual research methods and the use of ethnographic film to enrich enquiry into issues relating to not only theoretical concepts but the practices and performances of those engaged with 'visitor attractions'. Les Roberts provides an introduction to *Another Space* and reflects on the liminal qualities of the beachscape and installation, relating the film to a broader set of social and cultural practices focused on 'gleaning the urban littoral'.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/TourismConsumption1?feature=mhee>

### References

Andrews, H. and L. Roberts (eds.) (2012) *Liminal Landscapes: Travel, Experience and Spaces In-between*. London: Routledge.

Graburn, N H H. (1976) 'Tourism: The Sacred Journey', in Smith, V (ed) (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed) *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Shields, R. (1991) *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, London, Routledge.

**Author details:** Hazel Andrews is Senior Lecture in Tourism, Culture and Society at Liverpool John Moore's University and is joint editor of this journal.