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The affective atmospheres of nationalism

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Abstract

What would it mean to understand nationalism as an atmosphere? This article makes a theoretical contribution to cultural geographical works on 'affective atmospheres' as well as to critical approaches to the study of nationalism by addressing this question. It examines how nationalism operates affectively and atmospherically through a discussion of the event of the London 2012 Olympic Games and the 'happy atmospheres' of being together that circulated in the course of those Games. The key claim of the article is that addressing the nation's affective, emotional and atmospheric resonances is critical for understanding how nationalism endures and furthermore, how it appears especially difficult to critique. As such, the article points to different ways in which thinking about nationalism as an 'affective atmosphere' builds upon the notion of 'everyday nationalism' but also takes it further by inviting an attentiveness to the different tonalities and intensities of nationality and shifting the focus from a subject identity or bounded community to the question of how affective forces congeal around particular objects and bodies and echo as part of an assemblage. Finally, the article makes a contribution to debates around the relationship between affect, atmosphere and politics by asking how national affective atmospheres might be resisted.

Keywords Nation, affect, atmosphere, London 2012 Olympic Games, resistance.

Introduction

It was repeatedly said that there was something special, electric and moving about the 'atmosphere' of the London Olympic Games of 2012.ⁱ Such was the buzz about the Games that empty plastic water bottles containing 100% Olympic Bottled Atmosphere started retailing on Ebay for a buy it now price of £50.ⁱⁱ For this short period of time in the UK, the event of the Olympic Games permeated several different parts of everyday life as banks and shops displayed miniature versions of the British flag and Olympic themed events were introduced in schools and nurseries. What took people by surprise was just how popular the London Olympic Games proved to be, even with people who had been previously critical of them. As one commentator in *The Guardian* noted, the Games 'reminded those suspicious of raucous patriotism of how great the union flag suddenly looked when it was ripped out of the hands of the extreme right and wrapped around the shoulders of Jessica Ennis or Mo Farah'.ⁱⁱⁱ In this article, I reflect on the connection between claims about an 'extraordinary atmosphere' and this short period of happy flag-waving. I do so in order to ask what might it mean to think seriously about nationality as a set of feelings circling in the air? And significantly, how might thinking about nationality as something that is felt and experienced affectively help us in understanding the suspension of critique by those usually suspicious of raucous patriotism?

Drawing on the concept of 'affective atmospheres' currently circulating in cultural geographies, this article asks how ideas about nationality are felt and how they become 'installed in the soft tissues of affect, emotion, habit, and posture'.^{iv} It also addresses the spatial geographies of nationalism, and argues that national feelings cannot be traced back to a single sovereign source but rather emanate from multiple

constituencies as part of a nebulous, diffuse atmosphere. Taking these two points about the feelings and spatialities of nationalism together, the article examines how nationalism takes hold and becomes infectious, and asks how this makes it occasionally difficult to voice critical perspectives, as was the case during the ‘party atmosphere’ of the London 2012 Olympic Games.^v But this question has broader implications: take for example how difficult it is to voice critical perspectives against conditions of ‘heightened nationalism’ that follow terrorist events, as Judith Butler notes in reflecting on the collective moods that followed the events of 11 September 2001 in the United States.^{vi} As scholars of nationalism have long argued, the idea of the nation carries profound ‘emotional legitimacy’,^{vii} and forms a persistent ‘object of intimacy and affect’^{viii} - a point that has been especially well recognized by cultural geographers.^{ix} This article connects these points about the nation’s affective force to the challenge of asking how nationalism might be resisted.

[Insert image 1.]

London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony, 27 July 2012.

Joe Toth, via Corbis images.

Towards the atmospherics of nationalism

A burgeoning body of literature in Geography is asking how the notion of ‘atmosphere’ might enrich and enliven longstanding academic debates in cultural and material geographies.^x Such interest is partly inspired by the claim that the concepts of

air/atmosphere have been overlooked in favour of the study of earth,^{xi} and that geographies have dominated over what might be termed 'aerographies'.^{xii} The notion of 'affective atmospheres' presents an especially interesting provocation for cultural and political geographies and for the study of nationalism specifically as it brings together arguments in cultural geographies about the emotional power of national identity^{xiii} with insights from political geographies about the importance of developing a more relational understanding of national territories that is attentive to the associations between people and things.^{xiv} Whilst the concept of atmosphere can be used to point to a broad array of phenomena, including 'transpersonal intensity', 'environment', 'aura', 'tone in literature', 'waves of sentiment' as well as 'a sense of place',^{xv} I treat it as a provocation that invites us to address the role of 'moody force fields' in the making and shaping of collective publics.^{xvi} For example, nationality is often – if not mostly - experienced as a *feeling*.^{xvii} This might include feelings of togetherness experienced at a stadium or concert hall, the act of singing as part of a crowd noting the currents that pass between bodies, or the 'forcible affect' of sharing a language with others.^{xviii} None of these examples will seem especially surprising as sites of nationalist practice, and they may involve ambivalent relationships to any particular nation. However, foregrounding 'affective atmospheres' places such affective feelings centre stage and invites us to address how they matter politically.

Derek P. McCormack argues that the concept of 'atmosphere' can be understood both in its meteorological sense 'as a turbulent zone of gaseous matter', and in an affective sense as 'a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies whilst also remaining diffuse'.^{xix} The fact that these Olympics Games took place over a sunny two weeks in August (something that can't be taken for granted in the

UK) suggests that the meteorological and affective aspects of atmospheres are intimately connected. Furthermore, the fact that most people experienced these Games as a television event, and/or through social media, watching a crowd of bodies watching other athletic bodies move in synchrony, indicates that atmospheres must also be understood as sensed through technical objects.^{xx} Whilst these contributions help us consider what an 'atmosphere' is and how atmospheres are sensed, in this paper I raise questions about the politics of 'affective atmospheres'. For example, how do we account for the ways in which bodies are moved by national feelings circling in the air without dismissing such moments as examples of 'mass hysteria'^{xxi} or of the people being ideologically lured by the state? Whilst others have noted how these Olympic Games formed the 'most expensive security operation in recent British history',^{xxii} and that at an estimated cost of 11 billion (9 billion of which was public money),^{xxiii} they were obscenely expensive, such critical arguments, although powerful, fail to explain how so many people were moved by this event. For example, a Guardian/ICM poll carried out at the end of 2012 reported that 78% people were still happy with the £9bn price tag and that the Olympics 'did a valuable job in cheering up a country in hard times'.^{xxiv} Critical arguments based around costs seem to wash away under the emotional tides of sharing in a mass event with others. Likewise, whilst explanations of nationalism as a claim about territory,^{xxv} as an experience of time as linear,^{xxvi} or as the invention of tradition^{xxvii} are important and useful, none of these prioritises a 'sensorial approach' that addresses 'the mobilizing potential of a place', 'the articulatory value of a gesture' or 'the implicit in ordinary practices' in the way that J. P. Thibaud argues, the concept of *ambiance* does.^{xxviii} I use the idea of national affective atmospheres as an opening for engaging with the ways in which national feelings touch us, take hold and become infectious: how they are felt through bodies

but surpass any individual body. How might such seemingly 'banal' feelings – moods that we simply 'go along with' – be identified as always already political and as laden with power and resistance?

Beyond everyday nationalism

The affective qualities of nationalism are best evoked by the literatures on 'everyday nationalism': take for example Michael Billig's comment that there is an 'aura [that] attends the very idea of nationhood'.^{xxix} As he notes, there is something affective and auratic about sovereign nationhood which makes it difficult to pin down and to resist. Approaching nationalism atmospherically builds upon Michael Billig's argument that nationalism shouldn't be understood as involving 'dangerous and powerful passions' and 'extraordinary emotions' but rather as a background noise that is always already there and which erupts from time to time.^{xxx} Whilst Rhys Jones and Peter Merriman argue that Billig is overly concerned with 'hot' rather than mundane instances of nationalism,^{xxxi} the London Olympic Games show us that distinctions between the 'hot' and 'mundane' are difficult if not impossible to maintain. These Games resonated with people in both spectacular and mundane ways and involved a combination of macro and micropolitical moments. As Achille Mbembe argues in his study of ceremonial displays in postcolonial Cameroon, occasions which 'state power organizes for dramatizing its own magnificence' reveal the difficulties of distinguishing between the 'the state' and 'civil society', 'resistance' and 'passivity', as well as between 'hegemony' and 'counter-hegemony'.^{xxxii} Indeed, what is interesting about the spectacle of the London Games is precisely the ways in which they seemed to draw so

many people in, albeit to different degrees, making it difficult to determine the boundaries between 'everyday life' and orchestrated displays of sovereign power. This suggests that binary categorisations would be better replaced by an attentiveness to the many varying tonalities and intensities of nationality. The concept of 'affective atmospheres' better captures 'the messy dynamics of attachment'^{xxxiii} as well as the messy dynamics of power.^{xxxiv} It also suggests that national feelings can tremble between the 'happy' and the 'ugly'.

Of course, not all of the feelings of being together unleashed by the London Olympic Games are reducible to nationalism: this event was performed through the co-presence of capitalist, militarist, cosmopolitanist^{xxxv} and neo-imperialist atmospheres, which all have their historic links with sport and nationalism.^{xxxvi} For example, the Opening Ceremony, directed by film-maker Danny Boyle, struck a cosmopolitan tone, but it also revived imperialistic themes about how the whole world could be visited through a journey to London.^{xxxvii} Whilst there are important points to be made about the representations of the nation (as well as the international) circulating in and through that ceremony,^{xxxviii} the provocation of 'affective atmospheres' prompts a renewed engagement with nationalism's 'everydayness' and 'everywhereness' at the time of these Games. It invites us to consider the ways in which sound, music, colours, patterns, postures and gestures worked to generate national affective experiences. It also suggests that collectivities do not *precede* but are produced through the circulation of emotions: for example, 'it is through the movement of emotions that the very distinction between inside and outside' emerges.^{xxxix} Finally, it prompts us to reflect on how the nation was not only seen but experienced and felt through the rhythms, memories and affects of this mass sporting event, and that these feelings

weren't simply orchestrated from the top-down but rather skipped between different sites and moments.

Studying affective atmospheres

Significant amounts of energy and capital were spent on securing 'happy feelings' at the London 2012 Olympic Games. From the British government's perspective, as well as the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG), it was critical that people enjoyed the Games. Given the lack of enthusiasm in the run-up to the event,^{xli} people's emotions needed to be worked upon, and in the course of the event they were continuously monitored and reflected back to 'the nation' by way of opinion polls, images, graphs, collected tweets and even art installations. For example, the 'Mood-o-Meter' formed a collaboration between McDonalds restaurants and *The Sunday Times* and was designed to record the emotions for each day of the Games, which could range between 'awestruck', 'delirious', 'drunk', 'jubilant', 'excited', 'hopeful', 'bothered', 'sulky', 'guttled' and 'inconsolable'.^{xlii} This resonated with an interactive online art installation by a group called EMOTO, which drew on twitter feeds to chart an emotion-graph, ranging from 1 ('slightly negative' to 6 ('enthusiastic').^{xliii} Sound was also an important atmospheric, and the BBC made regular reference to the decibel count in the stadium, and how close it came to the 140 decibels, or equivalent to a plane taking off.^{xliiii} These kinds of emotion graphs and polls resonate with new governing initiatives such as the 'well-being index' of the UK Office for National Statistics and the OECD's key priority of 'Measuring Well-being and Progress' and as such, can be understood as a mode of governing where 'affect

becomes a mode of categorizing, classifying and coding' populations.^{xliv} They weren't designed to register negative feelings about the Games and weren't able to record disinterest or silence. These examples point to ways in which national affects might be measured and therefore treat emotions and feelings as substances that derive from a community that is already assumed to exist.

The focus on affective atmospheres, on the other hand, attends to those unpredictable affective encounters that cannot be trace back to the feelings or emotions of *an* individual or (national) group. As other cultural geographers have argued, affect necessarily exceeds attempts at engineering and directing feelings and can, momentarily at least, seem outside attempts at control.^{xlv} This is why ideas about nationality can be mobilized through fun and laughter as much as through the politics of fear.^{xlvi} Literatures on affect therefore invite us to begin our analyses of national collectives not with the 'psychoanalytically informed criticism of subject identity'^{xlvii} or idea of 'human individuals coming together in community'^{xlviii} but with the 'the ebbs and swells of intensities that pass between bodies, enabling bindings and unbindings, jarring disorientations and rhythmic attunements'.^{xlix} This approach draws our attention to the transmissions between the singular and the collective,^l how 'waves of affect are [both] transmitted and received' and enables us to question how this comes to matter politically.^{li} It helps us to understand the 'the behavior of groups and gatherings'^{lii} but in a way that refuses the taken-for-granted notion that emotions and energies go 'no further than the skin'^{liii} – as most of the literatures on crowd psychology tend to assume. Attending to the affective transmissions between subjects means addressing 'surges of emotion or passion'^{liv} and their contagious qualities, and how, for example, smells, sounds, chemicals, rhythms and vibrations work to align

people with others and against other others.^{lv} These interventions are interesting and important for the study of nationalism which has struggled to break free of assuming 'national groups' that pre-exist political relations.^{lvi}

There is, then, a difference between studying attempts at stage managing an 'affective atmosphere' - such as at the Opening Ceremony, and examining those 'rhythmic qualities'^{lvii} that escape those highly orchestrated moments, but which nevertheless resonate alongside them. This demands that we address those unpredictable moments of attachment and detachment, generated through waves of intensity, which might include ways of being that are generous and hospitable as well as competitive and hostile.^{lviii} Take for example the moment when the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, when presenting the medals for the Men's 400 metres T38 Paralympic event, was booed by the crowd - 'the first booes to be heard all week'.^{lix} This moment formed a break from the codified emotions of the Games, and echoed with protests against the pressures of 'austerity' and cuts to disability benefits, driven by the Chancellor. Significantly, something unpredictable was escaping 'the overcoding machine' and disrupted the otherwise carefully choreographed atmospheres.^{lx}

This act of booing may be understood as an attempt at contesting Osborne's claim to represent the nation. But in seeking to make sense of this moment, we might also miss that the participants didn't necessarily set out to stage a protest. Something happened, and as Derek McCormack argues, the work of 'interpretive sense making' can be 'inadequate to the task of apprehending the affective and processual logics of the spacetimes in which moving bodies are generative participants'.^{lxi} The collective affects, energies and noise of this moment might thus also be read as *generative* of

nationhood, of a banal sense of becoming ‘us’ against ‘them’, or what Kathleen Stewart describes as a ‘weirdly floating ‘we’ snap[ping] into blurry focus’.^{lxii} The question then becomes: how do we attend to *these* sorts of moments? Rather than seek to record and document feelings about a nation that is already assumed to exist, the provocation of affective atmospheres invites an alternative way in – one that requires a ‘haptic description in which the analyst discovers her object of analysis by writing out its inhabited elements in a space and time’^{lxiii} In the next two sections, on National Relays and National Attractors, respectively, I shift focus towards ‘writing out’ some of the affective atmospheres of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Writing affective atmospheres

National Relays

Although the London Games officially began with the Opening Ceremony held on 27 July 2013, they were preceded by the Torch Relay, which formed a countdown towards the Games themselves and toured all parts of the United Kingdom – from Derry to Aberystwyth to the Shetland Islands. The relay proved surprisingly popular, as enormous crowds gathered to watch it pass through towns and villages, and each street in the journey was mapped in advance on local authority websites as well as on the BBC and official Olympic Torch website with a precise timetable outlining when the torch would arrive at each location (e.g. Day one, 07:15 Land's End; 07:31 Sennen; 08:00 Newlyn; 08:20 Penzance; 09:01 Marazion; 09:26 Rosudgeon.) The 70 day relay began in Cornwall (having arrived from Olympia, Greece, on a British Airways

aircraft), travelled to 1,018 towns, villages and cities and was carried by '8,000 inspirational torchbearers'.^{lxiv} The torch came within 10 miles of 95% of the population^{lxv} and approximately one third of the British population watched the Torch visiting their communities.^{lxvi} By way of the torch, the idea of a bounded nation was performed through a journey, as it travelled to the most northern isles in Scotland, the deepest parts of Wales and Northern Ireland, and even crossed beyond UK borders from Belfast to Dublin.^{lxvii}

The torch relay worked to smooth over some of Britain's colonial histories yet it resonated deeply with echoes of the state's ambitions as a global power. Britain's current role as a colonizing force was seen and sensed in the injured bodies of soldiers back from Iraq and Afghanistan selected to carry the torch through their hometowns. Ideas of an 'imagined community' were performed by way of this journey which affirmed London's position – the torch's final destination - as the 'presumptive location of 'the national''.^{lxviii} Feelings of happy belonging were reinforced on the ground with bunting, flags and 'Your 2012' merchandise – supported by a £32 million 'Look and Feel' budget to dress town centres in the Olympic spirit.^{lxix} This 'atmosphere' wasn't produced within an architectural building such as a sport stadium or concert hall,^{lxx} and it didn't rely on 'being there' on the ground. Rather, the BBC played a crucial role in building the sense of excitement by showing pictures of the torch relay's progress on its daily news, launching maps and lists of street by street routes on their website, and blogging and tweeting about the torch's journey. In sum, the BBC played a significant role in 'semiconducting' the affective atmospheres of the Games.

The idea of 'semi-conducting', which Derek McCormack develops from Michael Serres's work, captures well the role of the BBC in this context. As McCormack argues, sport commentators don't simply mediate or represent a state of affairs to the viewer/listener; she (but more often, a he) leans into the flow of activity, and in doing so 'performs the liveliness of affective modulation by operating upon the virtual cusp of the event'.^{lxxi} We can read a similar process of performing the liveliness of the event in the blog updates from the BBC website as they followed the torch on its journey:

May 28, Day 10, Aberystwyth to Bangor

- . **0746:** Morning everyone...It's day 10 of the torch relay and we're still in a very sunny Wales, with the first flame hitching a ride on Aberystwyth's Cliff Railway... it's already 20C in in Aberystwyth so sun hats to the ready.
- . **0801:** We are relying, as ever, on you getting involved. Are you going to watch the torch today? Don't forget you can e-mail yourpics@bbc.co.uk or text 61124, tweet us at @BBC2012 or visit our Facebook page at BBC London 2012.^{lxxii}

Other corporations including relay sponsors Samsung, Coca-Cola and Lloyds TSB played similar roles - with Samsung inviting people to tag pictures and post videos of themselves with the Torch to their website. Newspapers including *The Guardian* and significantly, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office also blogged and tweeted about the Torch's journey. In this sense, the feelings of national belonging created through the Torch relay were produced and reinforced by several different institutions, each

with varied and complex relationships to the state, and it was enacted materially as well as virtually such as through hashtags including #olympic, #torch, #relay, #torchbearer, #london2012, #day35. What is significant here is that the feelings of national togetherness cannot be traced back to the work of a single sovereign authority directing people's feelings but rather must be understood as emanating from several different constituencies. They worked as part of what political theorist William Connolly describes as a 'qualitative assemblage', involving 'affinities of spirituality' that jump across 'different professions of creed, doctrine and philosophy' and acting as part of a 'resonance machine', drawing people together despite creedal differences.^{lxxiii}

[Insert Image 2.]

The Torch Relay, 28 May 2012, Aberystwyth.

Keith Morris.

Connolly's vocabulary becomes useful in considering the complex connections between austerity politics, capitalism, the British military, popular culture, the BBC and LOCOG over this particular summer, working in association to crystallize and amplify the affective atmospheres of the London 2012 Olympic Games. Arguing that it's insufficient to portray political leaders as manipulating their followers, Connolly points to the ways in which 'motivations and sentiments whirl in a 'hurricane out of heretofore loosely associated elements'.^{lxxiv} This concept of the 'resonance machine' and its spiritual dimension is in part developed by Connolly through the work of Max Weber, who famously described how nationalism emerges against the mounting sense of the rationalization of social and economic life and thereby offers a sense of *meaning*.^{lxxv} Of course, the contemporary conditions of capital are very different, but

Weber's attempt to situate the nation as a 'value orientation' that can provide meaning in meaningless times is significant for understanding the emergence of these Games against the backdrop of 'austerity'. For Weber, nationalism also emerges alongside the idea of the 'heroic individual', which is equally important in reflecting on 'London 2012'. An understanding of subjectivity based around 'striving', self-restraint and self-control works in tandem with ideas about nationality as well as neoliberal affects and continue to have enormous appeal. This was central to both the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, as ideas about self-determination and being a self-starter combined with governmental ideas about austerity, were anchored *physically* in objects such as the torch, and also experienced viscerally in the act of watching bodies move at speed and compete in carefully measured segments of time.

The torch relay's popularity cannot simply be understood as a state engineered affect. Although it required enormous amounts of state sponsorship, corporate funding, and media support, the fact that exceptionally large gatherings of people went to see it, and got up at dreadfully early hours in the morning in order to do so, suggests a coming together of micro elements that flowed beyond a centralising machine. How can we appreciate the collective enjoyment experienced at national events such as this one whilst simultaneously developing an argument that such moments matter politically? We might say that people didn't necessarily see the torch relay as a state-organised event so much as a local attraction, thanks in part to the 'local heroes' selected to carry the torch. Yet the relay worked because it followed a recognisable national-territorial journey and offers a good example of how the spectacles of state nationalism cannot be separated from 'everyday life'. In the case of the torch relay, the macro and the micropolitical operated together: whilst the journey wouldn't have

been recognizable without macropolitical elements including state sponsored marketing campaigns, as well as the work of semiconducting carried out by the BBC among other institutions and corporations, it took hold through affective forces which resonated in excess of attempts at engineering feelings. As the anthropologist Kathleen Stewart puts it, 'a world of shared banalities' can simply appear as the relief of being 'in' something with others^{lxxvi} and these 'little experiences' of feeling part of a 'we' take place before any conscious 'decisions'.^{lxxvii} The micropolitical moments of feeling part of a collective 'we' might therefore be prosaic and ordinary, but the fact that so many seem ready to follow suggests that they also matter politically. In the event of the London 2012 Olympic Games, it was these 'little experiences' of 'shared banalities' that enabled the sense that national affective atmospheres were penetrating 'every cell of society',^{lxxviii} and making it difficult to imagine going against the national mood.

National Attractors

Key figures such as Mo Farah, winner of the 10,000 metre and 5,000 metre races at the London 2012 Olympic Games, emerged as central to ideas about British identity in cosmopolitan times of austerity. Farah was born in Mogadishu, Somalia and moved to the UK when he was eight years old to join his father who was born and raised in London. He emerged as an 'attractor', to borrow Jasbir Puar's term,^{lxxix} that focused ideas about the national imaginary and also anxieties about difference – ideas that are more powerful than him, and which of course, have complex histories. For example, Farah was repeatedly asked in television interviews about his feelings of belonging to

Britain. The social commentary wavered between celebrating him as *emphatically* British and yet queried him about the *depth* of his Britishness, confirming Stuart Hall's point that ideas about difference vacillate between the positive and the negative.^{lxxx} It also shows how racism works in accordance with the nation-state and with capital, seeking to determine a 'stable distribution of places, times, identities and competencies'.^{lxxxii} The shift to affect enables us to extend these critiques: for example, Jasbir Puar draws on Sara Ahmed's work to discuss how emotions 'stick' to certain bodies, materials and objects under particular conditions, which displaces the idea that particular bodies will *in each case* be understood as potentially other – be that as high achieving, or threatening. In the case of the London Games, ideas about striving, working hard, and playing by the rules temporarily stuck to images of Farah's highly athletic body, to the perceived sensation of pressing a body to its limits, and combined with flashes of red, white and blue in a swirl of ideas about 'British values'. But there is also a specific temporality to the process of othering in this context. Celebrating Mo Farah as a Black British athlete tapped into familiar 'racially-coded regimes of intelligibility'.^{lxxxii} And in the constant questioning of his feelings about 'home', he was pre-empted and anticipated as *potentially* other,^{lxxxiii} in a swirl of attempts to fix the lines between inside and outside.

In addition to these high profile figures, seventy thousand people worked as volunteer 'Games Makers' at the London Olympic and Paralympic Games and were honoured by the British Prime Minister David Cameron for their contributions towards citizenship and nationhood.^{lxxxiv} Alongside objects such as the torch, and figures such as Mo Farah, the Games Makers gathered and radiated particular ideas about belonging, nationhood and responsible citizenship, ideas that of course travel beyond the specific

individuals themselves. This was all useful in a context where the current Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in the UK is celebrating ‘strivers’ and divesting the work of running local libraries and children’s centres onto volunteers in the name of ‘austerity’. But the idea of ‘ordinary people’ taking their place and playing their part is of course central to the activation of nationalist feelings.^{lxxxv} For example, consider the list of ‘ordinary people’ read out by the US President Barack Obama in the aftermath of the bombings in Boston on 15 April 2013:

The brave first responders...

The race volunteers...

The determined doctors and nurses...

May God bless the people of Boston and the United States of America.^{lxxxvi}

‘We’ residents of ‘Western’^{lxxxvii} nation-states are accustomed to the familiar words deployed in response to terrorist events because of the work they do in conjuring an imagined national community. But such speeches are also familiar because they rely on a recognizable cadence, and a distribution of accents, syllables and silences that form a distinctive rhythm: ‘we...pre-hear...a foreseeable sonic context’.^{lxxxviii} As Gearóid Ó’Tuathail’s argues in his discussion of the affective politics of songs sung to entertain American troops in Afghanistan and the Middle East in 2001, a focus on text and language doesn’t fully capture how such songs move people.^{lxxxix} ‘We’ – national audiences – are moved and also created through such speeches and songs. Focusing on rhythms helps explain why the speech given by Obama in response to the bombings

in Boston echoes with the rhyming couplets of a McDonalds advert that ran throughout the London 2012 Olympic Games.

This television advert, which formed part of a broader marketing campaign titled 'We All Make The Games',^{xc} operates a distinctive rhythm of accents, sounds and silences; it also evokes distinctive 'national groups' and formed another element in the machine that activated and amplified national feelings during the course of the London 2012 Olympic Games:

The punchers, the peekers, the hero-meeters;
the snogger, the blogger, the relive the week-ers;
the clapper, the napper, the 'xcuse-me-squeeze-paster;
the whistlers, the quenchers, the sat-down-at-laster;
...the glued-to-the-screen-er, the edge-of-seat-leaner,
the snapper, the chatter, the not-really-keen-er...
We All Make the Games'.

The sounds, silences and accents in the text that accompanies this advert work to configure space, 'displacing and replacing the lines between inside and outside'.^{xcii} Only some listeners will note the reworked version of the *Tears For Fears* song, 'Everybody Wants To Rule The World' that accompanies the visuals; but this hardly matters because many more people will know the song by anamnesis – that is, by the 'effect of reminiscence in which a past situation or atmosphere is brought back to the listener's consciousness, provoked by a particular signal or sonic context'.^{xcii} For some viewers/listeners then, this song will evoke pictures, sensations and memories of the

political and cultural lives of 1980s Britain – memories which will be entirely missed on others, as it works to position some as insiders and others as outsiders. The advert is expertly designed to evoke, stir and produce the sense of a distinctly national audience, but the key point here is that any sense of *disagreement* evoked by the atmospheric memories of 1980s Britain is forgotten as the affective national community is in this case affirmed as a space of ‘happy feelings’.^{xciiii}

‘We All Make The Games’ offered a powerful television advert but as with the torch, it must also be read in the context of a broader ‘resonance machine’,^{xciv} and thus, not as a straightforward source or cause of national affects. For example, the refrain ‘We All Make The Games’ echoed with the British Chancellor George Osborne’s claim that, under austerity, ‘We’re All In This Together’.^{xcv} None of us can position ourselves as untouched by these sorts of refrains and we may all find ourselves moved by them from time to time: indeed, they are designed to move us. But adverts such as this one do not straightforwardly represent the nation: it ‘semiconducted’^{xcvi} the particular affective atmospheres of London 2012 by performing the liveliness of the event. In a further example, these adverts were deliberately produced using hand-held cameras, which were used to record spectators in different parts of the country enjoying themselves in real time. This ensured that the adverts had an improvisational tone. The digital images were then used to revitalize the original advert, as new versions of the basic melodic rhythm, sequence of images, and final closing motto were released at distinctive stage during the course of the Games to coincide with and magnify key moments, such as ‘Super Saturday’ – when Britain won its highest number of Olympic medals in one day. New text was added to the lyrics to capture the event as it unfolded, as with ‘The 9.63ers’, to acknowledge Usain Bolt winning the 100m sprint.

The idea of a national community was in these ways produced through a 'repetitious' and 'performative' experience of time, and by tapping into historical moments, refrains and moods it produced the sense of a 'continuist, accumulative' temporality.^{xcvii} National life was presented as a performative iteration of present atmospheres shot through with affective feelings about the past. Whilst McDonalds, a restaurant that serves fast food, might not seem an appropriate sponsor^{xcviii} for a global event celebrating fitness, physique and health, this relationship worked because both McDonalds and the Olympic Games share 'the shape of a dominant cultural form'.^{xcix} This much is understood by the advertisers – who worked to position McDonalds as 'The People's Restaurant', as 'democratic' and 'populist', and who significantly, understood that the Games 'were about more than sport'.^c

In contrast to studies of nations and nationalism which approach particular images, bodies or objects (e.g. the flag) as symbolic of the nation, and thus as necessarily nationalistic, the provocation of 'affective atmospheres' suggests ways in which we might think about the circulation of key figures, images, sounds, and moving images as more than symbolic. Firstly, rather than read the emergence of nationalist affects as traceable to an essence, we can read them as a temporally and spatially specific encounter of swirling affects, memories, sounds, rhythms and images sticking to particular assemblages of bodies and materials.^{ci} Secondly, we can say that images, songs, lyrics, bodies or objects don't operate in isolation, in that they don't in themselves project a national aura. Rather, they work as part of an assemblage of constituencies and assume different intensities at various moments and localities.^{cii} This means that an image or an object does not assume the same political charge in each context, and may not be charged at all. It also implies that national feelings and

affects can stick to many different kinds of objects, materials and bodies – far beyond the familiar examples of flags, monuments and memorials offered in most studies of nationalism. Ideas about nationality, autonomy, austerity and self-determination didn't simply congeal around one object – such as the torch - but rather worked by 'skipping from point to point',^{ciii} resonating and amplifying in relation to different parts and constituencies.

The affective atmospheres of the Games echoed further in gestures such as Mo Farah's trademark 'M' victory sign, which was copied and performed in several sites including children's playgrounds and workplaces. This 'M' gesture took off in a way that was not predictable in advance and which is not reducible to nationalism. However, it activated particular ideas about being with others that resonated alongside the national affective atmospheres of the Games. Together with the objects, materials, sounds and gestures discussed, we glimpse some of the ways in which the nation is seen, heard and felt. But none of these examples can be understood as simply symbolic in that their meanings were multiple. They carried their own affects^{civ} and if and when they assumed an affective charge, they did so because of the reverberations that jump between the different parts of the assemblage, activating national feelings in contingent atmospheric bubbles. Finally, it is important to note that the reverberations didn't in each instance play into, or heighten a national affective atmosphere; they also, occasionally, cut out, or dispersed in the formation of other affective communities, as was the case with the 'M' gesture, which pointed towards potentially alternative experiences of being together, which were co-present throughout the London Games, and which troubled attempts at containing feelings within a coherent national sphere.

Nationality, affect, resistance

What happened to the atmospheres that were formative of the London Olympic Games of 2012? On the 7th of February 2014, Prime Minister David Cameron returned to the Olympic Park in East London to make a speech to the people of Scotland in advance of a Referendum on the 18th of September asking whether the people of Scotland wanted it to become an independent country. In his speech, David Cameron decided to spell out the 'emotional, patriotic case' for staying in the UK, by stating: 'We want you to stay'.^{cv} National leaders are well aware that the nation has a profound 'emotional legitimacy'.^{cvii} But Cameron's decision to return to the Olympic park also suggests that the idea of putting some of the atmospheres of the London 2012 Olympic Games in a bottle is not so far-fetched. The feelings of nationality associated with 'London 2012' can be recalled and claimed for other political causes. National feelings take hold because they are familiar, and because they tap into past emotions and affects, which return in a swirl of pictures, musical refrains, key colours, gestures and postures. The provocation of 'affective atmospheres' offers ways of loosening the grip of the language of identity, essence and belonging in the study of nationalism, and attending to the currents and transmissions that pass between bodies and which congeal around particular objects, materials and bodies in specific times and spaces. But bearing in mind that we all find ourselves touched and moved by national affects from time to time, and that we cannot position ourselves as 'for' or 'against' nationality, we are still left with the question of how we might challenge national affective atmospheres at work.

[Insert image 3.]

Swandown, Directed by Andrew Kötting, Written by Andrew Kötting & Iain Sinclair.
Anonymous Bosch.

In order to respond to this question, I want to turn to a more unusual critical response to the Games - a short experimental film project called 'Swandown', developed by the film-maker Andrew Kötting and the psycho-geographer Iain Sinclair. In it, Sinclair and Kötting set sail on the back of a giant fiberglass swan (called Edith), from Hastings to Hackney and the site of the Olympic Park.^{cvi} This voyage, via canals and eventually the river Thames, forms an alternative kind of Olympic journey which could be followed on facebook, twitter, and the project website. Although it drew on similar mapping tools to the Torch relay, it questions the sovereignty of that vision. For example, although the Swan's journey had to be scheduled to time, this was not a military-inspired schedule but a celebration of slow time, evident in the fact that they keep getting stuck on mudbanks and that the swan is at the beginning of the film overtaken by a UK Border Agency boat. Pedalling this plastic swan is visibly hard work, but it is not hard work that has recognition as a 'sport'; it nevertheless draws gasps of delight from those who encounter it and indirectly raises questions about the absurdity of many of the Olympic competitions. Whilst both this film and the London Olympic Games celebrate endurance, they do so in different ways. In the film, this concept is more about humility than super strength. Kötting argues that the journey does not represent a protest against the Olympics so much as a reflection on the ridiculousness of pedaling a plastic swan. But the film does of course form a critical act, in that it reveals the difficulties of resisting the all-encompassing atmospheres of the London 2012

Olympic Games. This slow journey forms a perturbation that briefly escapes the 'overcoding machine' of the 2012 Olympic Games^{cviii} This is because it is unrecognizable within the terms of order, precision, speed, reason, heroism and sovereignty promoted by that event. This act of resistance doesn't rely on the language of uniting *against* the Olympics, and thus reproduce the us/them logic that is constitutive of nationalism. Rather, it launches a humble yet defiant disturbance into the consensual affective atmospheres of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

In reflecting on the broader question of the relationship between affect, atmosphere and politics, I want to argue that it's not so much the 'Left' that is the problem, as others have claimed.^{cix} Oddly, these Olympic Games kept being referred to as a 'good games for Lefties' – perhaps because of the ways in which an image of cosmopolitan Britain was mobilised. Taking this point seriously would mean arguing a critical politics needs to take charge of national affects – ensuring that these are mobilized for progressive rather than exclusionary causes. However, in reflecting on the event of the London 2012 Olympic Games, I've suggested that firstly, these fine distinctions between the happy and the ugly, the hot and the mundane, are slippery and we cannot with any confidence suggest that we inhabit one of these forms rather than the other. Furthermore, nationalism operates *by way* of these distinctions – in the very suggestion that happy feelings are secured inside and ugly feelings come from outside, and thus cannot be resisted by reproducing the logic. Secondly, a political atmosphere is diffuse and nebulous, and there is no single sovereign figure that we can identify and hold responsible for an ambiance. The problem, therefore, lies with this model of the political as anchored in the nation – a model that we're all heavily invested in, which recurs and takes hold at particular moments, and which has a persistent affective

force.

We are not invested in the nation because of a traceable series of decisions, then. As Lauren Berlant argues, we are invested because people will mostly 'ride the wave of the forms they know, even when there is no water beneath them not air to float them'.^{cx} Given this point, Berlant claims that the political task lies in developing alternative compelling forms of sociality which can tempt people to take a chance on a world beyond their familiar comforts. What is needed is 'a projection that reorients us to a different, better mode of the reproduction of life, a different *sensus communis*, a different structure of feeling associated with the good life'.^{cxii} Berlant's comments chime with a point made by Nigel Thrift about how 'the move to affect...allows us to...brew new collectives in ways which at least have the potential to be progressive'.^{cxiii} Similarly, Amin and Thrift conclude their book on affect and politics calling for the 'active cultivation of alternative feelings so that new affective connections can be forged and a general desire for other ways of being in the world can emerge, and can be built into new political causes'.^{cxiii} These comments tap into the question of how we might resist particular affective atmospheres and broadly suggest that we need alternative structures of feeling that will help brew other kinds of political community. But what the Swandown journey shows us is that other structures of feeling are already present or latent, even when particular politicized atmospheres seem pressurised and overbearing. Significantly, the Swandown journey doesn't rely on cultivating a new collective 'we'. It doesn't therefore mimic the sovereign logics of nationalism so much as break or interrupt intensified national affects at work. In conclusion, nationalism cannot be resisted with calls to identify another set of affective forces that will hold us all together. Other affects are always

already present, shadowing and troubling unifying affective atmospheres. The joy of the Swandown journey is that it evokes a line of flight cutting through the intensified nationalist atmospheres experienced at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

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Notes

ⁱ Sebastian Coe, Chair of LOCOG repeatedly referred to the 'extraordinary atmosphere'. See for example <http://www.olympic.org/news/coe-praises-london-2012-s-extraordinary-atmosphere/170292>.

ⁱⁱ This story was reported in the Daily Mail on 9 August 2012 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2185951/Olympics-2012-How-Olympic-spirit-Games-fan-sells-bottled-100-atmosphere-day-British-gold-rush-began.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ 'London 2012: This closing ceremony was a raucous pageant of popular culture', The Guardian, 13 August 2012, <http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/aug/13/olympic-games-closing-ceremony-culture>. This was surprising as opinion polls taken four months before the Games began indicated that more than half of respondents were not interested in the Olympics: YouGov poll, 30th March 2012 <http://yougov.co.uk/news/2012/03/30/interest-london-olympics/>

^{iv} W. E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style* (Durham, London: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 44.

^v This was the term used long in advance of the beginning of the Games, such as by the Mayor of London Boris Johnson, speaking in 2008 about the 'party atmosphere' that the Games would bring to London, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/oct/07/olympics2012.boris>.

^{vi} J. Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (London: Verso, 2006), p. xi-xii; 1-3.

^{vii} Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p.4.

^{viii} A. Appadurai, *The Future as Cultural Fact* (London, New York: Verso, 2013), p.109.

^{ix} In Cultural Geographies, questions about the emotional force of nationalism have been foregrounded by N. Wood in 'Playing with "Scottishness": musical performance, non-representational thinking and the "doings" of national identity', *Cultural Geographies*, 19(2), 2012, pp. 195-215 and T. Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2002).

^x P. Adey, L. Brayer, D. Masson, P.K. Murphy, P. Simpson, N. Tixier, "'Pour votre tranquillité": Ambiance, atmosphere, and surveillance', *Geoforum*, 49, 2013, pp. 299–309; J. Allen, 'Ambient power: Berlin's Potsdamer Platz and the seductive logic of public spaces', *Urban Studies*, 43(2), 2006, pp. 441–455; B. Anderson, 'Affective Atmospheres', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 2, 2009, pp. 77–81; J. Ash, 'Rethinking affective atmospheres: Technology, perturbation and space times of the non-human', *Geoforum*, 49, 2013, pp. 20–28; Bissell, D (2010) 'Passenger mobilities: affective atmospheres and the sociality of public transport', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28, 270 – 289; M. M. Degen and G. Rose, 'The sensory experiencing of urban design: the role of walking and perceptual memory', *Urban Studies*, 49(15), 2012, pp. 3271–3287; T. Edensor, 'Illuminated atmospheres: anticipating and reproducing the flow of affective experience in Blackpool', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 30(6), 2012, pp. 1103 – 1122; D. P. McCormack, 'Engineering affective atmospheres on the moving geographies of the 1897 Andrée expedition', *Cultural Geographies*, 15, 2008, pp. 413-430; A. Kanngieser, 'A sonic geography of voice: Towards an affective politics', *Progress in Human Geography*, 36 (3), 2012, pp. 336-353; R. Shaw, 'Beyond Night-Time Economy: Affective Atmospheres of the Urban Night', *Geoforum*, 51, 2014, pp. 87-95; Shanti Sumartojo, 'Dazzling Relief': Floodlighting and National Affective Atmospheres on VE Day 1945', *Journal of Historical Geography*, Volume 45, 2014, pp. 59–69.

^{xi} L. Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1999); P. Sloterdijk, *Terror from the Air*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009).

^{xii} M. Jackson, M. Fannin, 'Guest editorial', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29, 2011, pp. 435 – 444.

^{xiii} S. Ahmed, 'On Collective Feelings, or the Impressions Left by Others', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 20, 1, 2004, pp. 25-42; S. Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*; L. Berlant, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1997); L. Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); A-M. Fortier, *Multicultural Horizons* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008); I. Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Durham; London: Duke University Press, 2005); C. Hemmings, 'In the Mood for Revolution: Emma Goldman's Passion', *New Literary History*, Vol 43, Iss 3, 2012, pp. 527 – 545; R. Pain, 'Globalized Fear? Towards an emotional geopolitics', *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(4), 2009, pp. 466–486; C. Pedwell, *Affective Relations: The Transnational Politics of Empathy*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); J. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham NC, Duke University Press, 2007); S. Sumartojo, *S, Trafalgar Square and the Narration of Britishness, 1900-2012: Imagining the Nation*. (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2013); N. Wood, 'Playing with "Scottishness"'.

^{xiv} M. Coward, '[Between us in the city: materiality, subjectivity and community in the era of global urbanization](#)', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30(3) 2012, pp. 468-481; R. Jones, P. Merriman, 'Hot, banal and everyday nationalism: Bilingual road signs in Wales', *Political Geography*, 28, 2009, pp. 164-173; R. Jones, P. Merriman, 'Network Nation', *Environment and Planning A*, 44, 2012, pp. 937 – 953; J. Painter, 'Rethinking Territory', *Antipode*, 42, 5, 2010, pp. 1090-1118, V. Squire, 'Reshaping critical geopolitics? The materialist challenge', *Review of International Studies*, 2015, (published [online](#) 2014).

^{xv} B. Anderson, 'Affective Atmospheres', p. 78.

^{xvi} Amin, Thrift, *Arts of the Political*, p. 161.

^{xvii} Wood, 'Playing with "Scottishness"'.
^{xviii} D. Riley, *Impersonal Passion. Language as Affect*, (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2005), p.1.

^{xix} D. P. McCormack, 'Engineering affective atmospheres', p. 413.

^{xx} J. Ash, 'Rethinking affective atmospheres'. 431 million visited the Olympics website and 150 million tweets were sent about the Olympics worldwide. See LOCOG (2011-12) Report and Accounts http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/2012-local-olympic-legacy/-/journal_content/56/10171/3877079/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE.

^{xxi} L. Blackman, V. Walkerdine, *Mass Hysteria. Critical Psychology and Media Studies* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).

^{xxii} S. Graham, 'Olympics 2012 security Welcome to lockdown London', *City: analysis of urban trends, culture, theory, policy, action*, 16, 4, 2012, p. 446.

^{xxiii} For a breakdown of the costs of the Games, see

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/datablog/2012/jul/26/london-2012-olympics-money>

^{xxiv} 'Britain's end-of-year Olympic verdict: it was worth every penny', *The Guardian*, 25 December 2012,

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2012/dec/25/britain-end-of-year-olympic-verdict>.

^{xxv} O. Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

^{xxvi} Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

^{xxvii} E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

^{xxviii} J.P. Thibaud, 'The horizon of urban ambiances, séminaire du 11 et 12 juin 2012', *MUSE*, 2012, p. 96.

^{xxix} M. Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage, 1995), p.4.

^{xxx} Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, p. 5; see also T. Edensor, *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*.

^{xxxi} Jones and Merriman, 'Hot, banal and everyday nationalism'.

^{xxxii} A. Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 102-104.

^{xxxiii} L. Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p.15.

^{xxxiv} J. Allen, 'Ambient power: Berlin's Potsdamer Platz and the seductive logic of public spaces'.

^{xxxv} D. Bulley, D. Lisle, 'Welcoming the World. Governing Hospitality in London's 2012 Olympic Bid', *International Political Sociology*, 6 (2), 2012, pp. 186-204. This cosmopolitan emphasis didn't so much temper ideas about nationhood as provide a renewed theme through which the nation could be articulated – one that was already present from at least the time of the London bombings in 2005. See A. Closs Stephens, '7 Million Londoners, One London': National and urban ideas of community in the aftermath of the 7 July 2005 bombings in London, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 2007; 32, pp.

155-176.

^{xxxvi} The turn of the century Olympics were often housed within World Expositions (such as the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1900 and the *Franco-British Exposition* in London in 1908) and served as key sites for displaying the cultural advancement of the nation as well as a faith in progress, as enormous effort put into comparing and classifying human types by measuring height, weight, head shape and size. See D. Lunt and M. Dyreson, 'The 1904 Olympic Games: Triumph or Nadir?' in *The Palgrave Handbook of Olympic Studies* (Basingstoke, Hamps: Palgrave, 2012), p. 48.

^{xxxvii} Felix Driver and David Gilbert discuss a turn of the century London Underground poster campaign inviting people to visit the empire by taking a journey on the tube, where 'Australia could be reached via Temple or the Strand, India via Aldwych, and much of the rest of empire via South Kensington'. F. Driver and D. Gilbert, 'Imperial cities: overlapping territories, intertwined histories', in F. Driver and D. Gilbert, David (eds) *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999, pp. 1-20), p.1.

^{xxxviii} See C. Baker 'Beyond the Island Story?: the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games as Public History', Forthcoming in *Rethinking History*; D. Williams, 'Single nation, double logic: Ed Miliband and the problem with British multiculturalism', *Open Democracy*, 2012
<http://www.opendemocracy.net/ourkingdom/daniel-g-williams/single-nation-double-logic-ed-miliband-and-problem-with-british-multicu>

^{xxxix} S. Ahmed, 'On Collective Feelings, or the Impressions Left by Others', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 20, 1, 2004, pp. 25-42. I'm choosing to overlook here the distinction between emotions and affects. For more on how this distinction operates in the discipline, see L. Bondi and J. Davidson, *Lost in translation*. A response to Steve Pile, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (4), 2011, pp. 595-598.

^{xl} See note iv.

^{xli} 'How was it for you?', *The Sunday Times*, 19 August 2012
<http://www.thesundaytimes.co.uk/sto/Magazine/Features/article1104115.ece> (Paywall)

^{xlii} The raw data included 12 million English language tweets that included sentiment values, sent from around the world. Created by Moritz Stefaner, Drew Hemment, Studio NAND. A FutureEverything project with MIT SENSEable City Lab for the Cultural Olympiad programme and London 2012 Festival.
<http://www.emoto2012.org/>.

^{xliii} 'London 2012 Olympics: the wonderful and the weird', 14 August 2012,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19166071>

^{xliiv} A-M. Fortier, 'Proximity by design? Affective citizenship and the management of unease', *Citizenship Studies*, 14 (1), 2010, p. 22. See also E. Isin, 'The neurotic citizen', *Citizenship Studies*, 8(3), 2004, pp. 217-235 and Amin and Thrift, *Arts of the Political*.

^{xliv} D. Bissell, M. Hynes, S. Sharpe, 'Unveiling seductions beyond societies of control: affect, security, and humour in spaces of aeromobility', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30, 2012, pp. 694 – 710.

^{xlvi} B. Anderson, P. Adey, 'Affect and Security: Exercising Emergency in UK Civil Contingencies', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 29, 2011, pp. 1092-1109.

^{xlvii} P. T. Clough, 'Introduction', in P. T. Clough, ed., *The Affective Turn. Theorizing the Social* (Durham

and London: Duke University Press, 2007), p.2.

^{xlviii} N. Thrift, 'Intensities of feeling: towards a spatial politics of affect', *Geografiska annaler* 86B, 2004, p.60.

^{xliv} G. J. Seigworth, M. Gregg, 'An Inventory of Shimmers', In M. Gregg, G. J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010, p. 2.

^l Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, p.53.

^{li} Amin, Thrift, *Arts of the Political*, p. 167.

^{lii} Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, p. 20.

^{liii} Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, p. 2.

^{liv} Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, p. 5.

^{lv} This is Sara Ahmed's phrasing in 'On Collective Feelings'.

^{lvi} R. Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 2004).

^{lvii} Thibaud, 'The horizon of urban ambiances'.

^{lviii} E. Isin, 'Theorizing acts of citizenship', in E.F. Isin, G. Nielsen, eds., *Acts of citizenship* (London: Zed Books 2008, pp. 15–43), p. 19.

^{lix} (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/2012/sep/03/george-osborne-booed-paralympics>), (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qqM0Ube0oLs>)

^{lx} G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London, New York: Continuum, 2008), translation by Brian Massumi, p. 238.

^{lxi} D. P. McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2013), p. 118.

^{lxii} See K. Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham and London: Duke University Press 2011), pp.27-28.

^{lxiii} K. Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 445. See also, Michael Taussig, *The Nervous System*, (Routledge, New York, London, 1992, p. 10) and D.P.McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies*, p.118.

^{lxiv} Locog press release, 'LOCOG publishes 2011-2012 report and accounts', 8 February 2013, p. 33.

^{lxv} 'London 2012: Joy of sport-mad torchbearer', BBC News, 19 March 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-17387140>

^{lxvi} Locog press release.

^{lxvii} This was on 6 June, Day 19 of the Relay. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/torchrelay/day19>

^{lxviii} A. Amin, D. Massey and N. Thrift, 'Regions, democracy and the geography of power', *Soundings*, 25, 2003, p.61.

^{lxix} Budget managed by the Greater London Authority, DD414 'Look and Feel', Borough Funding for Your 2012, <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/gla/governing-organisation/executive-team/directors-decisions/DD414>.

^{lxx} See for example P. Sloterdijk, 'Foam City', *Distinktion*, 16, 2008, pp. 47-59.

^{lxxi} D. P. McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies*, p. 136.

^{lxxii} <http://www.bbc.co.uk/torchrelay/day10>

^{lxxiii} W. E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*, p. 40. This cross-reference is also made

by Peter Adey in 'Security Atmospheres or the Crystallisation of Worlds', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32(5), 2014, p. 840.

^{lxxxiv} Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity*, p. 52.

^{lxxxv} M. Weber in P. Lassman and R. Speirs (eds) *Weber: Political Writings* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University, 1994), p. 429.

^{lxxxvi} Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p. 27.

^{lxxxvii} Stewart, *Ordinary Affects*, p.63.

^{lxxxviii} Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 236.

^{lxxxix} J. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, p. 175.

^{lxxx} See also Stuart Hall's discussion of Ben Johnson and Linford Christie as 'spectacles of the other' at the 1992 Olympic Games, in S. Hall, *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: The Open University, 1997).

^{lxxxii} S. Okoth Opondo, 'Cinema-Body-Thought: Race habits and the Ethics of Encounter', in A. Saldanha and J. M. Adams (eds) *Deleuze and Race* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 248.

^{lxxxiii} S. Okoth Opondo, 'Cinema-Body-Thought', p. 248.

^{lxxxiiii} J. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, p. 185.

^{lxxxv} 'Games Makers win Big Society Award', Prime Minister's Office press release, 29 November 2012, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/games-makers-win-big-society-award> Several thousand more volunteered at the ceremonies and as part of 'Team London'.

^{lxxxvi} Smith, N (2011) 'Ten Years After', http://neil-smith.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/Neil_Smith_Ten_Years_After_rev.pdf

^{lxxxvii} US President Barack Obama's weekly address, 20 April 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-22234291>

^{lxxxviii} I use this term to refer to a dominant culture and not to describe a geographic location.

^{lxxxix} Jean-François Augoyard and Henry Torgue (eds), *sonic experience. A Guide to Everyday Sounds* (Montreal & Kingston, McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011, p. 25. Trans. Andra McCartney and David Paquette.

^{lxxx} G. Ó Tuathail, 'Just Out Looking for a Fight': American Affect and the Invasion of Iraq', *Antipode* 35, 2003, pp. 856-870.

^{xc} Produced by Leo Burnett for McDonalds.

^{xcii} Brandon Labelle, *Acoustic Territories/Sound Culture* (New York, London: Continuum, 2010), p. xxi.

^{xciii} J-F Augoyard and H. Torgue, *sonic experience, A Guide to Everyday Sounds*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press), p. 21

^{xciv} S. Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*.

^{xcv} W. E. Connolly, *Capitalism and Christianity, American Style*.

^{xcvi} See for example Chancellor George Osborne's speech to the Conservative party conference on 8 October 2012 in Birmingham, and before he was elected, at the Conservative party conference on 6 October 2009 in Manchester.

^{xcvii} D. P. McCormack, *Refrains for Moving Bodies*.

^{xcviii} H. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004).

^{xcviii} McDonalds has a long-established relationship with the Olympic Games; in London 2012 it was one of the select group of 'Olympic Partners' (one of 10 key sponsors).

^{xcix} Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 66.

^c <http://www.imediaconnection.com/content/34691.asp>

^{ci} D. Swanton, 'Flesh, metal, road: tracing the machinic geographies of race', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 28, 2010, p. 448.

^{cii} See R. Shaw, 'Beyond Night-Time Economy'.

^{ciii} Term lifted from Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 236.

^{civ} B. Anderson and J. Wylie, 'On Geography and Materiality', *Environment and Planning A*, 41, 2009, pp. 318 – 335.

^{cv} Speech of 7 February, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/feb/07/david-cameron-scottish-independence-referendum-olympic-park>

^{cvi} B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 4.

^{cvii} <http://swandown.info/>; 'Swandown: two men in a pedalo', The Guardian, 18 July 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2012/jul/18/swandown-ian-sinclair-andrew-kotting>. Iain Sinclair's critiques of the Olympics also include *Ghost Milk: Calling Time on the Grand Project* (London: Penguin, 2011) and *Diary London Review of Books*, Vol. 34 No. 16 · 30 August 2012, pp. 38-39.

^{cviii} Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 238.

^{cix} This is Amin and Thrift's argument in *Arts of the Political*. Berlant, in the interview discussed in this conclusion, concurs that the left or old left is not the problem.

^{cx} G. Helms, M. Vishmidt, L. Berlant, 'Notes on Affect & the Politics of Austerity. An interview exchange with Lauren Berlant', *Variation* 39/40, 5 August 2012. No page numbers.

http://www.variant.org.uk/39_40texts/berlant39_40.html

^{cxii} Helms, Vishmidt, Berlant, 'Notes on Affect'.

^{cxiii} Thrift, 'Intensities of Feeling', p. 58.

^{cxiiii} A. Amin and N. Thrift, *Arts of the Political*, p. 158.