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Paul Gilchrist and Guy Osborn

Introduction

Parkour burst into public consciousness a decade ago as viewers witnessed the bodies, primarily of wiry young men, running, jumping and leaping through urban environments in spectacular fashion. The display of seemingly impossible physical feats by traceurs became a staple feature of pop videos, film and advertising, as well as bearing its own films and documentaries (Mould, 2009; Chow, 2010; Angel, 2011). Since then parkour has matured, gripped in part by a process of 'sportisation' (Maguire, 1998) that has transformed an anarchic physical cultural practice into an organised sporting activity that bears many of the features of more established mainstream sport (Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2011; Wheaton, 2013). One key aspect of sportisation has been the production of distinct spaces for parkour training and performance, and this paper is focussed on these sanctioned parkour 'sportscapes' (Bale, 2001). Over the last decade, parkour has made a transition from a spatially antagonistic, even anti-authoritarian, informal sporting activity performed in a variety of urban locations to one where significant public sector funding has been leveraged for purpose-built facilities. As has been observed with other lifestyle sports such as skateboarding, facility provision has been closely related to social policy delivery in a range of areas, with literature on skateparks revealing their contribution to active citizenship agendas (Turner, 2013), health provision (Dumas and LaForest, 2009), and inclusive planning practices (Carr, 2010; Carr, 2012). The materialisation of new facilities for lifestyle sport in different locations and over time can therefore inform us of public policy priorities. Yet, as we highlight in this chapter, the provision of space and equipment is contingent upon evolving regulatory interventions; rules, standards and requirements evolve to assert moral claims to the use and ownership of space as well as to the management of safe practice. Various mundane technical devices, from instructional videos, codes of conduct to warning signs, help to instil practices of self-government, including risk calculation, that are critical to ingraining safe behaviours essential to the performative encounters with the space.

This chapter draws upon a longitudinal study of the evolution of parkour spaces in the UK in order to illustrate how parkour is being co-constructed with, and by, the law. We subject to close examination the information sign at the parkour park as a material and symbolic artefact

that can both illuminate the values and philosophies of the sport, as well as being a socio-legal artefact that may document processes of juridification; the enfolding of sport into legal and regulatory frameworks and modes of thinking (Foster, 2006). We read the sign as a 'text', albeit one that may include pictorial depictions, which makes known an underlying reality about the culture of parkour at a particular moment. The sign is read as a correspondence to truth in that we see it as reflecting an objective reality, anchoring key messages which are derived from the inputs of various actors – traceurs, parkour crews, coaches, local authorities, facilities providers – as they have come to reflect and debate the meanings of the activity. Signs are also viewed in explicitly cultural terms, informing us how parkour space is being imagined, how place is made and how cultural meanings are asserted. We also attend to the *contexts* of the sign, its changing form and content as different iterations of advice and guidance have appeared at parkour parks over time. In this respect, the sign is not only read for its prescriptions of behaviour occurring at the site and how it structures citizenship (cf. Parker, 2006; Brown, 2014), but also how it reveals evolving policies and adherences to legal stipulations around permissible risk and safe practice, in ways that can lead to a sharper legal contextualisation of parkour spaces.

Signs and the politics of lifestyle sport

Signage pervades the landscape. Signs intervene between user and place, telling us where we are welcome and where we are not, and have long accompanied the prohibition of, and prescription over, land use and access. We are all familiar with signs such as 'keep off the grass', 'no cycling', 'closed at dusk', erected in municipal parks, gardens and playgrounds. These are signs that enclose and regulate; texts that emphasise restricted access and what actions are permitted in public spaces. The 'no ball games' sign is an omnipresent feature of the public realm, often found planted on or near patches of communal grass to deter children from playing on it, or near streets, cars or properties to suggest that such activity should not take place. Piachaud (2008: 457) comments: "Playing outside is restricted because of concerns about safety, but also because areas for play are restricted and adults may be less tolerant of children – 'no ball games' is a depressing sign." For recreational users of the outdoors the 'no access' sign is often encountered. The sign marks who is entitled to enjoy the outdoors, who is 'in place' or 'out of place' (Cresswell, 1996). The material signboard bears explicit messages about territoriality and ownership, alerting users to the presence of jurisdictional regimes as rights of property ownership are asserted. Canoeists and kayakers, walkers and mountain bikers, all have shared examples of access signs that display the need for written consent, or

the processes of negotiation with landowners in order to enter space (Parker, 2007; Ravenscroft and Gilchrist, 2010; Layard, 2010). For other recreational users, particularly anglers and hunters, the 'no access' sign is a resource mobilised to affirm a hegemonic position vis-a-vis other recreational users, furthering claims to exclusive use in evolving contests over rights to enjoy natural resources (Church et al., 2007).

In urban environments, restrictions on skateboarding, cycling, rollerblading and now parkour are observed in many cities (Borden, 2001: 247-260; Vivoni, 2013). Signs are placed in city centres to deter informal sport activities. They are part of a set of repressive architectural and security measures designed to prevent loitering, discourage homeless sleepers, deter criminal damage, and to stop unlicensed cultural performances and unfettered play in regenerated areas, particularly squares, plazas and pedestrianised streets (Petty, 2016). Along with CCTV surveillance, interventions from police and security guards, and defensive architecture (skateboarders, for example, have to contend with anti-skate devices – metal protrusions from concrete – designed to disrupt the flow of movement along ledges and rails (Beal, 2013: 100; Vivoni, 2009)) – signs enact forms of social control on, and over, public space which can come at the expense of users seen as neither useful or productive to the functional operation of urban space. And yet, the social control of space is never complete. Stevens argues, signs with regulations prohibiting certain activities "make it starkly apparent that transgressions of behavioural norms either occur or are suspected; that serious, rational activities and play are in spatial tension" (Stevens, 2007: 217). Thus, whilst signs attempt to displace playful activities they also communicate opportunities for transgression, including subversive semiotic scrambles that encourage non-instrumental uses of public space (see Boykoff and Sand, 2008; Gilchrist and Ravenscroft, 2013).

The use of signs is not, however, always related to the repression of particular activities and the maintenance of exclusivity. Signs are one mechanism through which authorities can manage potential conflicts of use. For instance, advisory notices emerged in the Lake District National Park Authority as part of user-led, non-statutory, authority-approved management of mixed recreational use between walkers, mountain bikers and off-road drivers. The Authority in this case were reluctant to seek recourse to bans, instead using signs to indicate a hierarchy of trail routes that set out obligations for motorised users – giving them opportunities to demonstrate responsible behaviours toward the Park and the environment in general (Wilson and Robinson, 2005; Ravenscroft and Gilchrist, 2010). Signs have also been employed as cost-effective measures to manage recreational conflicts in coastal spaces. On popular beaches, where recreational users might include sunbathers, swimmers, divers, snorkelers, surfers,

windsurfers, kitesurfers, motorboaters, jet skiers and anglers, the pressures placed on natural resource use can be intense. As such, management strategies have been developed that involve spatial zoning and temporal segregation of incompatible groups, with signage used as part of awareness campaigns to communicate risks to users as they compete for space as well as risks posed to protected areas and species (McLachlan et al., 2013; Tymon and Gómez, 2012). In these examples signs are enfolded into the moral ordering of the environment, acting as prescriptions that aim to cultivate responsible recreational use and promote acceptable environmental conduct (Parker, 2006, 2007). Reading and obeying signs and ordinances, just like map-reading and route-finding, are just one of the technologies of discipline that recreationists are required and expected to possess as they venture outdoors (see Beedie, 2003; Brown, 2014).

However, there is an argument to be made that the acquisition of knowledge about risk and safe practice occurs beyond the purview of the sign. Lifestyle sport scholars have shown that participants develop heuristic knowledges about particular sites of practice which are essential to the performance of the activity (Lewis, 2000). The embodied encounter with the natural or built environment involves recognising 'affordances' (Gibson, 1979), as participants become attuned to possibilities for the corporeal appropriation of space. These capacities rely upon long-term tactile engagements with sites of practice so that hazards and risk become known and the limits of the body are realised (Saville, 2008; Angel, 2011). For many recreationists, the heuristics developed through bodily experience of the environment form the basis of tacit knowledges that guide them about when they are willing to conduct their activities and when they are not (Eden and Bear, 2012; Strang, 2005). Knowledge of risk is gained through unfolding phenomenological practices acquired over time; a feature observed of communities of traceurs, climbers and skateboarders, as well as immersive water users such as wild swimmers, surfers and kayakers (Ravenscroft and Church, 2011; Lewis, 2000; Borden, 2001; Saville, 2008). In this context, it is a moot point whether signs from the Environment Agency detailing environmental hazards have any real bearing upon the calculation of risk rather than simply discharging legal duties. In fact, within this context the role of law is marked and performs a crucial function in communicating the ways in which we encounter these spaces - spaces that are informed not only by the user's enmeshment with the environment, but also by the law and wider regulatory framework. To understand this we must unpack how the law understands signage and the legal function of the sign.

Law and signs

It is clear that signs can, and do, fulfil a number of functions. Signs may have both a prescriptive and proscriptive role, and in terms of the communication of safety information there are various stipulations that must be adhered to and the point is made clearly that 'safety signs are not a substitute for other means of controlling risks' (HSE: 1996, 7). At the same time signs may provide an educational element, perhaps by alluding to some underpinning rationale or ethos for the activity. In addition to this, through the lens of the law, these signs may have a very specific meaning and purpose. The information on a sign should, from a legal perspective, be unambiguous; '[t]o avoid ambiguity, the writer does not leave it to chance for the reader to make the connections. Associations are made explicitly, not implied' (Shuy, 1990: 296). This echoes the legal desire for certainty and clarity that runs through the law. In addition to this clarity, the cases that revolve around interpretation of signs focus on issues of appropriateness, placement, whether concerns could have been addressed before the sign was posted (Fried and Ammon, 2001) and whether the concerns are brought to the attention of the user. Crucially too, a sign, *of itself*, will not necessarily be enough to keep someone safe or absolve the person relying on it from liability – what may in fact be needed is a broader system of approach to safety which is supported by, and supportive of, the sign.

In terms of the role of the sign as a means of putting users on notice as to potential danger, Winter et al observe that "To have any impact on visitor behavior, signs must be noticed, read, understood, and presented in such a fashion that they have the potential to persuade individuals to conduct themselves in a desired manner" (Winter et al., 1998: 40). Adams, Bochner and Bilik (1998) similarly argue that the ultimate criterion of a good warning sign is its effectiveness, and that this should be gauged by the extent to which this leads to compliance. To be effective, they argue, the sign must fulfil a number of message components. The first of these is that it must *gain attention* – usually through specific signal wordage or the form of the sign. The sign ought also to be prominent – within the context of an indoor climbing wall, for example, it was suggested that the safety rules appertaining to it ought to have been more prominent (*Poppleton, 2008)*. This echoes the approach taken relating to incorporation of contractual terms, where clauses, especially where they are restrictive, need to be brought to attention in a very explicit way – Lord Denning famously suggested using red ink and a red hand pointing towards the clause to emphasize its impact and importance where it was wide ranging in potential effect and damaging in terms of legal rights (*Thornton, 1971)*. Secondly, the *nature of the hazard* must be highlighted - often this is self-evident. Thirdly there should be a *statement of consequences* - something that usually increases awareness and compliance.

Finally, good signs should contain *specific instructions for action.* This becomes even more important when we consider the challenges of designing signs that are intended for a specific audience, in this case largely a youth oriented one. Waern, Balan and Nevelsteen (2012) note the challenge of designing for a predominantly youthful audience, and that this calls for a consideration of how to communicate with various communities at a deeper level. Indeed, as can be seen below children are also statutorily privileged and occupiers of land must be cognisant that they are potentially less careful (Bennett 2010). The idea of signage, and the communication of the various messages that these signs might purport to fulfil, both proscriptive and prescriptive, need to be considered in this light. Below we deal with legal signage in terms of signs that purport to warn of danger, signs that seek to put users on notice that they consent to the risk, and signs that attempt to exclude legal liability.

Warnings for parkour are at the outset problematic. Bavinton (2007) noted that one of the key aspects of parkour is the very way in which it appropriates and interprets potentially dangerous terrain or objects, and flips these from obstacle to support. As such the traditional idea of a warning sign operating in that way, to warn the user of potential danger and to ensure they steer clear (**KEEP OUT!!**!), or navigate it carefully (**Beware of….**), are problematised. For the traceur it will be the case that a warning will potentially operate in a quite different way. As Borden (2001: 258) notes of skateboarding, "being banned from the public domain is simply another obstacle to be overcome." Interestingly, a parallel may be drawn here between this and the notion of allurement, that is to say the idea that certain spaces may be particularly attractive to certain people, children especially, and as such this needs to be taken into account when evaluating what steps or precautions need to be put in place. For the traceur to know that something is dangerous, or involve some element of risk, might in itself be attractive and act as such an allurement. Whereas usually such a warning might deter someone from entering, to the traceur this might provide more of an invitation, whilst an exhortation of consenting to risk (see below) might be a call to arms.

Broadly speaking, under the *Occupiers' Liability Act 1957* (OLA 1957), the occupier of land owes a duty of care to lawful visitors, the extent of the duty is defined thus; 'The common duty of care is a duty to take such care as in all the circumstances of the case is reasonable to see that the visitor will be reasonably safe in using the premises for the purposes for which he is invited or permitted by the occupier to be there' (OLA 1957 s2(2)). This section raises a number of interesting issues. First and foremost, the duty is not absolute – it is based on what is reasonable *in the circumstances*. What this means in practice is that a whole raft of considerations will be taken into account when evaluating this, including the likelihood of the

risk, the magnitude of potential harm and the practicability of taking precautions (Greenfield, Karsterns, Osborn and Rossouw, 2015). Second the liability is limited in that this standard only applies whilst the visitor is lawfully there – if the visitor goes beyond what s/he is permitted to do, s/he will no longer be protected in this capacity but will have lesser protection as a trespasser under the *Occupiers' Liability Act 1984* (OLA 1984). Under the occupiers' liability provisions there is a distinction traditionally made between lawful visitors and trespassers, although in terms of personal injuries the difference between the respective standards owed seems minimal (Hopkins, 2002). The legislation details a number of other key factors to be taken into account when evaluating liability. Importantly the issue of warnings is raised specifically, and this is one area where the issue of the sign is important. Under OLA 1957 s2(4) a warning *of itself* may not be enough to absolve the occupier from liability, unless in all the circumstances it was enough to enable the visitor to be reasonably safe.

A good example of the legal approach to warnings is provided by the case of *Tomlinson* (2003). The claimant was rendered tetraplegic when he dived into a shallow lake breaking his neck. He sued the local authority, and one of the key issues was the presence of notices stating 'DANGEROUS WATER. NO SWIMMING'. Originally a quarry, the park lay derelict for a number of years until the borough council bought the land in 1980 and reclaimed it for municipal recreation. Whilst derelict the land had been used, without permission, for a variety of activities including swimming. Once the space had been taken over by the council they found it hard to eradicate certain types of behaviour that had previously persisted. From 1983 onwards the authority were keen to eradicate swimming and if swimmers could not be dissuaded by other means including leafleting and continued use of notices, then other options should be considered to achieve this. In 1990 the council's water safety officer recommended reducing the beach areas by growing reeds as a defensive precaution. Generally his view was that swimming in such situations should be discouraged, relying upon guidance noting; 'We do not recommend swimming as a suitable activity for any of our managed sites. Potential swimmers could be dissuaded by noticeboard reference to less pleasant features, eg, soft muddy bottom, danger of contracting Weil's disease, presence of blue green algae' (*Tomlinson*, 2003: 713). Whilst the costings for the work were prepared, it was never actualised due to funding cuts. Tomlinson argued that the notices had been ineffectual and that further measures should have been taken to prevent people swimming, however, in a judgement seen by some as applying a brake on compensation culture, his claim was unsuccessful with the court finding that the risk was not one to which he should have been afforded protection as the dangers were perfectly obvious.

Within the law consent is a problematic construct generally (Beyleveld and Brownsword, 2007). For our purposes we are particularly concerned with the idea that one might consent to the risk, the concept of *volenti non fit injuria,* and its application as a defence to the tort of negligence. Literally this means that if the person has willingly accepted the risk of injury, then they cannot bring a claim if injury later accrues, and has been subject to much academic debate as to scope and application (Jaffey, 1985). Indeed Buckley (2006, 206) noted that whilst the assumption of risk defence is still extant, it is '…only for use in the rare cases when its elaborate requirements have actually been fulfilled'. There are a number of requirements to make out the defence; consent must be voluntary, informed, and only inherent risks are covered. This creates a lacuna for the parkourist – the norms of parkour mean that the boundaries of inherent and unacceptable risk are blurred, these are concepts that for the traceur are self navigated, problematizing the issue of consenting to risk (Kidder, 2013a, 2013b). This is further complicated by the potential difficulty of showing that young people fully understand risk and understand the legal consequences, and particularly this nexus between inherent and unacceptable risks (Hartley: 2009, 70). In terms of occupiers' liability, the area that will most overtly apply to providers of parkour parks, the defence of volenti, is preserved for both lawful visitors (OLA 1957 s2(5)) and trespassers (OLA 1984 s1(6)). A key requirement of volenti is that the risk is willingly accepted, and as noted above, this is something that is interesting in the specific context of parkour and the very particular way in which risk is considered and negotiated.

Various cases have examined the volenti doctrine in terms of these statutes. In *Ratcliffe* (1999), the claimant suffered tetraplegia after diving into a swimming pool. The court held on appeal that the danger was obvious; 'It seems to me that it is a danger which is obvious to any adult and indeed to most children who were old enough to have learnt to dive' (*Ratcliffe*, 1999, 680) and that it was clear that the claimant was both aware of the risk and had willingly accepted it. Similarly in *Geary* (2011), a case that literally tested the famous aphorism of Scrutton LJ to distinguish between visitors and trespassers and when a licence might be exceeded ('when you invite a person into your house to use the staircase, you do not invite him to slide down the banisters') with the claimant here suffering tetraplegia when she fell from the banister at The Union Rooms public house having attempted to slide down. Again the defence of volenti was fatal to her claim; 'The claimant freely chose to do something which she knew to be dangerous…She knew that sliding down the banisters was not permitted, but she chose to do it anyway. She was therefore the author of her own misfortune. The defendant owed no duty to protect her from such an obvious and inherent risk. She made a genuine and informed choice

and the risk that she chose to run materialised with tragic consequences' (Geary, 2011, para 46).

Returning to the case of *Tomlinson*, in the House of Lords Lord Hoffman made the point that Mr Tomlinson was someone of full capacity who voluntarily engaged in an activity with an inherent risk, he knew the lake well and it contained no dangers which he would not have expected. As such Lord Hoffman rejected his claim on the basis that there was no risk due to the state of the premises that gave rise to liability. He did however go on to examine the situation if a duty *had* been held to exist. Hoffman noted that the question of standard of care needed had to be evaluated as to what was reasonable in all the circumstances including likelihood of injury and seriousness of potential harm but also what the cost would be to take preventive measures and, crucially the social value or utility of the activity (more broadly on this within context of parkour see Gilchrist and Osborn, forthcoming). So the fact that willing acceptance of the risk may annul any potential liability, or even prevent a duty to take care even arising, means that signs that exhort something on the lines of 'enter at your own risk' or similar are actually only putting potential claimants on notice of the fact that this may affect their status and possibility of claiming if something goes wrong.

Both warnings, and attempts to evoke the idea that the person consents to the risk, are separate to the notion that there might also be an attempt to exclude liability, and that this might be detailed on the signage. There may of course be some overlap between the coverage and effects of these statements. An occupier does have the ability to attempt to limit or exclude liability in terms of lawful visitors via OLA 1957 s2(1), and the visitor does not need to have actual notice of the exclusion as long as reasonable efforts have been made to bring it to their attention. For business occupiers their ability to restrict liability is curtailed by the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977, where liability for death and personal injury cannot be excluded at all and other purported exclusions are subject to a test of reasonableness (see UCTA 1977 s 2(2)). Business includes activities of government departments and local services, but businesses can exclude liability where visitors enter for educational or recreational purposes in certain circumstances. As regards trespassers, OLA 1984 is silent as to whether the duty can be excluded, UCTA 1977 does not apply to the 1984 Act but some have argued that, as the statute is silent as to exclusion, you should be able to do this. Others argue that the OLA 1984 provides a minimum base line standard and therefore this duty cannot be excluded:

> 'The underlying rationale of allowing exclusion in the case of lawful visitors would appear to be that the occupier is, in effect, demanding exclusion of any potential liability

> as a condition of permitting entry, a rationale which cannot apply to trespassers whose entry is, by definition, forbidden.' (Buckley: 2006, 213)

This does of course create the potential anomaly where it may be possible for a trespasser to be better off than a lawful visitor in certain situations, which seems somewhat incongruous. In any event, all of these legal devices are attempts to somehow limit or curtail any potential liability that might exist and, as we have noted, might not be applicable or enforceable. In terms of lifestyle sports, there is a useful literature documenting the experience of liability and the surf in Australia (Fitzgerald and Harrison, 2003; Mooney, 2005) that helps us in terms of how we frame parkour. Whilst some of the cases relate to surfers being injured whilst surfing and attempting to find someone liable for their injuries, there is also the issue of liability of surfers to others, especially swimmers or other surfers. More importantly for our purposes, there have been a number of cases brought alleging negligence on the part of either a local authority or a life-saving organisation, revolving around the issue of adequacy, appropriateness and relevance of signage. These have often centred on issues such as the imprecision of a warning on a sign, failure to warn of an impending danger or erect some protection from this, or the complete absence of a sign warning of danger. These approaches are, in fact, very much located within the broader approach to liability in negligence generally, but here applied in a more specific context, in this case with regard to surfing. What the literature does neatly illustrate is that the culture of surfing is one where the element of danger or risk is something that adds to the enjoyment of the practice. As such often any such 'dangers' would be obvious and common, and something that is an accepted part of the practice itself, and as such warning signs should be utilised in situations where such dangers were peculiar or specific (*Agar*, 2000). In addition, the particular subculture of surfing has created its own set of norms and behaviour, a working culture of customary rules that had even resulted in periodical charters being issued outlining acceptable conduct as part of Surfrider's broader work on the protection of coastline and beaches. Mooney (2005:9) takes this further, delineating the formal law and human lores and conventions on the beach, arguing that only by distinguishing them can we see their interdependence and interrelationship. Mooney does make a clear distinction between the spaces of beach and surf, and found that whilst as regards beach lore or codes of conduct her interviewees were unforthcoming, when it came to surf lore the 'rules' were readily identified and identifiable;

> 'Most surfers would acknowledge that there is a code of conduct expected of surfers in the water and that this lore handed down through generations emanates from a core

notion of respect for surfing, the safety of others and the environment' (Fitzgerald and Harrison, 2003: 12).

Many of these issues noted as regards surfing could be applied to the case of parkour. Parkour has its own working culture, one which encourages the individual to plot their own relationship with the environment, and negotiate risk. As such signs denoting issues such as consenting to the risk, and warnings of dangers may be counterproductive for the traceur. In addition, in terms of signage, many of the signs used in parkour parks are designed to be proscriptive not prescriptive, in line with the participatory, non-hierarchical and supportive culture of parkour, and are broadly educational, drawing heavily upon the culture and ethos of the practice. Examples of signage, drawn from the longitudinal study are detailed below.

Signs and the Practice of Parkour – Case Studies

Parkour parks and training areas are new additions to the built environment. The first parkour parks opened in 2009 in Finland, Denmark, Poland and Britain (Ameel and Tani, 2012). These early parks were predominantly responding to demands from emerging parkour communities for dedicated space, though reflected in some cases attempts by town planners keen to make improvements to the urban and suburban fabric by providing space for young people (Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2011). The early parks were experimentations with form. Traceurs were eagerly involved in the design and placing of obstacles and the flow between elements. The first dedicated UK parkour training area opened in Crawley, West Sussex, in July 2009, and there are now over 40 purpose-built outdoor areas for training parkour, each designed to bespoke formats. In the evolution of these spaces signage has been a limited concern. Signage in the first phase of parkour parks tended to ally closely with the evolution of movements and risks and so with the evolving physical culture of the activity.

Parkour parks were opened at Clayton Brook, near Preston, in October 2009, and in Leicester in July 2010. These parks included the involvement of Urban FreeFlow in the design and consultation phases. Urban FreeFlow were the earliest commercial group of traceurs operating in Britain and were responsible for a popular website about parkour (Kidder, 2012) and the organisation of the Barclaycard-sponsored 1st World Freerun Championships held in London in September 2008. Now defunct, Urban FreeFlow have been recognised as adopting an overtly commercial orientation to parkour in which core members were seeking to develop business models to sustain a living from the sport (Wheaton, 2013: 84). With Lappset Playworld Systems, a worldwide commercial play equipment manufacturer, Urban FreeFlow worked with local traceurs to realise new facilities. At the time of their construction knowledge about

parkour amongst the wider public was low. Signs were placed around each obstacle and were designed to educate users on appropriate use. Yet, they also communicated a semiotics of action and adventure that reflected the media representation of parkour at the time. The signage reproduced 'superhero' tropes, including a non-gender specific action figure jumping through a high-rise skyline. The element symbols reinforced the exoticism of the sport and signalled the arrival of an alternative culture at these suburban locations. First and foremost, though, the signage encourages potential movements, educating novice users on the types of equipment and how to perform on it, with the management of risk implied by proper execution of manoeuvre. As can be seen in the example below, the signs are essentially practice-oriented giving some guidance as to how to perform a particular move such as a Precision jump or how to use a particular obstacle such as the underbar.

(INS figure 1 - Underbar - Leicester)

Here the sign is purely expository and practice-led, solely designed to enable use of, and engagement with equipment. This is even more specific in the detailed Parkour Moves outlined by the sign in Skoglund Park, Finland, where rather than the individualised approach of Urban FreeFlow, a visually attractive overview compendium of moves is presented, which sends a clear message about movement and performance.

(INS Figure 2 - Skoglund Park)

In a recent move, Freemove, one of the pre-eminent providers of parkour equipment and training facilities in the UK, has incorporated QR codes onto obstacle modules for its latest generation of parkour parks – examples can be found in Loughborough and Bexley. QR codes can be scanned by mobile devices, leading users to instructional videos that show the safest and most efficient way to use the equipment. The videos reflect the seriousness of training and safety precautions taken by participants (Kidder, 2013b). Through the videos users are shown how to progress from beginner to advanced, to master equipment and learn the limits of their bodies, before more advanced techniques are countenanced. The QR signs have little legal significance apart from enabling practice and engagement and are further evidence of how parkour is embraced by digital and screen culture (see Kidder, 2012; Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2013).

Other signs are more complex and may attempt something different. The signs may, for example, additionally outline some of the theoretical or philosophical underpinnings of parkour. This can be seen in the first paragraph on the sign at Bewbush parkour training area in Crawley, West Sussex. The sign is located on the perimeter of the training area, close to an adjoining footpath to the site.

(INS figure 3 - Crawley)

Here the initial thing that the sign does is make an attempt to define parkour; 'Parkour, Free-Running, Art Du Déplacement – the discipline of overcoming obstacles with efficient movement is an art of self expression and exploration. It is based upon a philosophy of training yourself to become useful to others and being able to react to a dynamic and changing environment'. This sign is far more complex and sophisticated than The Urban Freeflow and Skoglund Park examples above. The sign (Figure 3) is important as a symbolic boundary marker, and within it are clues to the evolution of parkour during the early phase of its development in the UK. The parkour park emerged from a series of initiatives led by Crawley Borough Council's arts and dance development teams to provide positive activities for boys and young men aged between 11 and 18 years outside of formal education. A parkour dance project emerged in 2005 which engaged around 60 boys all keen to develop parkour skills and to improve confidence, self-esteem, team-work and communication skills. However, the project was unable to sustain interest without a dedicated facility on which to practice and perform. With the help of the Urban Playground team from Brighton, a team of professional dancers and performers, the Borough Council worked with the young men to design and construct the UK's first purpose-built parkour training area (see Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2011, for more context). Urban Playground are a company that have pioneered the diffusion of parkour around the UK (and abroad) and who promote an artistic and non-competitive version of parkour (O'Loughlin, 2012; Wheaton, 2013). Urban Playground worked with Gravity Style on the park design, a parkour performance team including two of the nine Yamakasi; co-creators of the sport who were the first organisation to offer formal coaching of parkour (O'Loughlin, 2012). The sign articulates Gravity Style's promotion of a philosophy of creative self-expression and social utility. These are aspects that repeat central tenets of Georges Hébert's 'méthode naturelle', training methods that combine physical, mental and emotional development, which are credited as the philosophical foundation of parkour (Atkinson, 2009). It is telling that the second paragraph of the sign emphasises the non-competitive, less risk-taking version of parkour. It reads:

> "Parkour is not ever about taking unnecessary risks, neither is it an "adrenaline sport". Parkour is non-competitive. It celebrates each individual's style and achievement. Parkour's creators have been training daily for twenty years and are still capable of great physical feats because they have remained cautious and considerate in their practice."

Through its valorisation of the qualities of commitment, dedication, caution and responsibility the sign establishes an *injunctive norm* (see Winter et al., 1998) which specifies approved behaviours to be adhered to, with an inference that injuries may accrue if these qualities are not cultivated.

From a risk/benefit perspective, signage provides an opportunity to convey the approach the provider has adopted with regards to risk management and safety (Gilchrist and Osborn, forthcoming; Ball et al, 2008). This type of approach is squarely aimed at explaining and stressing that the provision has been designed with an element of risk built in to it and that there are in fact 'good risks' worth taking. As Kidder (2013b) notes, traceurs make sense of their risk taking and the adventure is part of 'rites of risk'. This is clear in part of the signage at Crawley and also reproduced at a further site in Rugby, at Addison Road, both signs noting for example that '**Users of this site do so at their own risk, and Parkour is never about taking unnecessary risks…**' (our emphasis). Indeed, in the latter case, the local authority, Rugby Borough Council, was seeking to implement Play England's *Managing Risk in Play Provision* (PSF, 2008, now 2012) recommendations through action plans that encouraged adventurous play, involving a degree of risk-taking, when providing new play spaces, as well as creating a diversity of spaces for risky play in supervised and unsupervised settings (Rugby Borough Council, 2011; personal interview).

The first part of the signs at Crawley (Figure 3), and at Rugby are attempts to tap into the legal defence of *volenti non fit injuria*. The sign goes on to outline, in considerable depth, the relationship between parkour and risk and how the individual should engage with that, whilst also providing further links to resources. What the sign does not do, at least explicitly, is provide a warning. The nearest it gets to this is its exhortation to not attempt anything beyond your ability without thinking about health and safety. The Valley Road Parkour site in Newhaven, East Sussex, goes slightly further, as whilst it also has the general background concerning parkour philosophy, and a volenti clause as we saw above in the examples from Crawley and Rugby, it goes further by specifying that young children should use other equipment in the park more suited to their abilities and that in addition children should be supervised at all times.

(INS Figure 4 - Valley Road)

As detailed above, children are a privileged group and particular attention needs to be paid to them, and any warnings that are used that purport to talk to children must be cognisant of this fact, and that children may be using the facilities. In terms of the 'text' of the sign pictorial representations may be particularly apposite here. It is evident in the construction of more

recent parkour parks that a spatial zoning policy is being implemented in terms of the location of parkour facilities in proximity to children's play equipment. At the Straight Bit Recreation Ground in Flackwell Heath, Buckinghamshire, the site is positioned 200 yards away from play equipment at the opposite end of the site. The sign bears warnings that the area is 'designed specifically for parkour' and is inappropriate for children: **'It is NOT a children's playground'**. A similar warning is found at Newhaven where young children are asked to use other play equipment in the park that is 'better suited to their age and ability'.

(INS Figure 5 – Flackwell Heath)

An equally significant aspect is the use of signs to profile the positive social attitudes of young people. At the Addison Road site in Rugby, the successful partnership arrangements between the young traceurs and Rugby Borough Council are flagged as it notes four young men are recipients of a community volunteer award. In conversations with the Council's sport development officer, the award demonstrated senses of responsibility and respect that had been acquired through involvement in the design of the facility (see Gilchrist and Wheaton, 2016) as the local parkour community had been deterred from training in inappropriate locations, on the roofs of industrial warehouses and in local cemeteries (personal interview). At Leicester, the sign does not flag the presence of local authority intervention but shifts a sense of ownership onto the Leicester Parkour crew. It is a call to respect the facility; an important injunction as the site fell victim to anti-social behaviour as damage was caused the evening before the scheduled opening.

Conclusion

As has been established in the chapter, signs erected at parkour parks and training areas are multi-faceted and fulfil various functions, some that discharge legal duties, others bearing meaning systems inherent to the evolving philosophies, values and practice of the sport. The sign can have a significant symbolic resonance. Attempts to define parkour and to assert a lineage back to the sport's founders can be read as claims to 'authenticity', communicating to outsiders that the space is a local manifestation of a globalising cultural form. That the signs were erected at a time when there was anxiety over the development of different codes, styles and approaches, each of which mobilised discourses of authenticity (see O'Loughlin, 2011; Wheaton, 2013), shows how even mundane objects are enrolled into subcultural contestation and fragmented institutionalisation. Outside of parkour, for the public authorities funding purpose-built facilities the sign bears other symbolic resonances. As the local sport development officer in Rugby told us: "Parkour is different. It's inspirational. We realised it

can make a difference to Rugby and its place on the map. It can put it on the map for young people." Parkour provides opportunities for youth-oriented place-making. This is very apparent when the wider semiotics of the parks are read. Some obstacles, especially walls, exhibit street art that evoke transitions fantasies for small town suburbia, yet they also signal a determination to own and define cultural space beyond the purview of adults.

There is a problem when signs attempt to do too much in that their core message may be lost. This was observed by Bennett in a case study of a paddock next to a pub and how over a 10 year period and a number of landlords, via a process of sedimentation and passive perpetuation, the signs become an accumulation of layers of warning. Bennett's analysis looks closely at how abstract concepts of law are translated and applied by lay communities. He notes the persistence of etymologically incorrect 'Trespassers will be prosecuted' type signage which '…create (and defend) territory as much by their normative appeal to moral and habitual (i.e. learned) notions of public and private space than to those signs' (correct or incorrect) appeals to the authority of law' (Bennett, 2011: 19). Bennett goes on to say that the signs must either spell out the rules explicitly or the person reading the sign must have a 'habituated pre-understanding' of how to respond to the sign – and that these signs will be noticed, but not read. This is rather like the idea of how consumers engage with mobile phone contracts, or travel terms and conditions, and beg the question as to what these signs are actually for. Fried and Ammon (2001) note that signage can be improved by considering issues of information overload and it is arguable that many of the parkour signs we have analysed try to achieve too much. Indeed, our study illustrated that not all parks do in fact carry signs. Of the 25 outdoor purpose-built parkour parks and training facilities around the UK visited as part of the study, only half had signage. Freemove, a leading facility provider, state that there is technically no requirement to have a sign at a parkour facility, although they are able to provide examples and suggestions if requested (Freemove, undated). It is clear that in terms of management, where parks do have signs, and if the warning element is to be the key message, it should appear as early in the sign as possible and be made prominent. More broadly, much of the legal detail on a parkour sign may be counter-intuitive – a sign that warns that a site may be dangerous may not be a warning to a traceur but a challenge (see Angel, 2011: 172), and the notion of consenting to risk may be a superfluous one where the practice of parkour is largely predicated on an individual's attempt to negotiate their own understanding of risk. And, as we have observed, at this stage, the presence of signs are not over-directed attempts to control and contain but communicate risk to users through normative injunctions specific to the culture and practice of parkour communities. It remains to be seen whether signs will reflect more fully concerns over occupier liability, how this materialises in new parkour spaces and how traceurs will respond to the behavioural interventions.

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