"The Art of Football: Visual Culture and the Beautiful Game, 1992-2016"

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Contents

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Abstract

This thesis addresses relationships between art, aesthetics and men's association football, and seeks to frame the latter as a source and locus of aesthetic variation and dissensus, in opposition to its typical presentation as a source of fleeting and purely physical pleasures. Its focus is the contemporary scene of global elite football, whose roots I argue can most effectively be traced back to the creation of the English Premier League and the UEFA Champions League in 1992.

Through four chapters encompassing multiple case studies, I examine some of the aesthetic conceptions that are embedded within contemporary discourses around football, before analysing artworks and aesthetic practices that reproduce the game in various forms. Throughout the study, I am interested in bringing into focus the border-line between the cultural fields of art and football. I frame all of the objects, practices and artefacts that I analyse as sites of inter-section between these two rival sets of discursive formations, as well as offering theoretical and methodological reflections on the cultural dynamics that lead to these formations being considered as distinct fields in the first place. My principal research questions can be expressed as follows: what intellectual processes come into play when objects in the field of contemporary football approach the field of contemporary art and vice-versa, and what forces are active in each field that prevent this *rapprochement* from achieving total fulfilment?

In order to approach these questions, my thesis is effectively divided into two halves. In the first half I use concepts derived from the study of art and visual cultures to bring to light some of the aesthetic debates that occur within football's interpretative community. In chapter one I consider the manner in which aesthetics and sporting ethics become intertwined around the controversial issue of "diving", while in chapter two I demonstrate the ways in which the animated highlight GIF holds in suspension notions of novelty, boredom and individual genius. In the second half of the thesis I analyse a number of artistic projects which address football – Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's film *Zidane: a 21st Century Portrait*, Maider López's participatory performance *Polder Cup* and Craig Coulthard's landscape intervention *Forest Pitch*, among others – by reading their aesthetic propositions against some of those that are rooted in the game itself. Addressing the functions that these works apply to the popular expressive content that already adheres to football can, I argue, be instructive in considering the cultural politics of contemporary art more generally. Finally, I conclude that contemporary football is a prominent site of complex aesthetic negotiations that warrants greater attention from the inter-discipline of visual studies.

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Introduction: "the sorry tale of Kingsley, the mascot nobody loved"

'This is a book that no one will like, not intellectuals, who aren't interested in football, or football-lovers, who will find it too intellectual. But I had to write it, I didn't want to break the fine thread that still connects me to the world.'

–   Jean-Philippe Toussaint[1]

Football, art and naïveté

This thesis addresses relationships between art, aesthetics and contemporary men's association football, and seeks to frame the latter as a source and locus of aesthetic variation and dissensus, in opposition to its typical presentation as a source of fleeting and purely physical pleasures. Over the following four chapters, I examine some of the aesthetic conceptions that are embedded within discourses around football, before analysing artworks and aesthetic practices that reproduce the game in various forms. In the latter case, I discuss how certain intrinsic aspects of football's contemporary cultural field affect or determine the approaches crystallised in these objects and practices. Throughout the study, I am interested in bringing into focus the border-line between the cultural fields of art and football, framing all the objects, practices and artefacts in question as sites of inter-section between these two rival sets of discursive formations. My principal research questions can be expressed as follows: what intellectual processes come into play when objects in the field of contemporary football approach the field of contemporary art and vice-versa, and what forces are active in each field that prevent this *rapprochement* from achieving total fulfilment?

Since this thesis is concerned with a topic that belongs to the realm of popular culture, it is fitting to begin by referencing material encountered outside of academic labour. Specifically, the material with which I wish to open up this introduction was encountered during a period of what Lynda Nead, to whom I owe a significant methodological debt that will be outlined shortly, refers to in her own work as 'semi-attentive browsing'. [309] On the 23rd June, 2015, the *Guardian*'s prolific visual arts correspondent, Jonathan Jones, made a foray into the visual culture of football, in the

process providing a revealing example of the manner in which the relationship between sport and art is commonly construed. His short piece, published via the newspaper's web-exclusive "Comment is Free" section, marked the occasion of Partick Thistle F.C.'s unveiling of a new club mascot.

The club, based in the west of Glasgow, had commissioned the locally-based but internationally-renowned visual artist David Shrigley to design a character to replace the club's previous mascot, an anthropomorphic apoid named Jaggy MacBee. Shrigley's new mascot, Kingsley, marks a departure from the cutesy, animal-derived characters commonly found patrolling touchlines in the 21st century. Reflecting Shrigley's intentionally crude drawing style, Kingsley resembles an angry yellow star with legs and short arms. Kingsley's "face", featuring a gawping expression and single eyebrow, takes up the majority of the character's body, making it impossible for the mascot to wear a replica team shirt, as is customary at other clubs. [*Fig. 1*] Similarly, the character's perfunctory name, which echoes Kingsford Capital Management, the investment firm contracted to sponsor Partick's shirts from the start of the 2015-16 Scottish Premiership season, is distinguished from the bulk of mascot names in the United Kingdom, the majority of which employ rhyme, alliteration or punning (examples include Preston North End's Deepdale Duck, Manchester City's Moonchester and Scunthorpe United's Scunny Bunny). Even given the basic assumed level of novelty and eccentricity in the visual culture of football club mascotry, Kingsley registered an odd impression upon its unveiling, as evinced by a phenomenon typical of the present state of affairs in sports media: the mascot was briefly one of the most-discussed subjects on social media networks such as Twitter and Facebook, warranting an entry on the list of "trending" topics which appears to users of the latter site when they open their news feed.

The public reaction to the introduction of Kingsley was considered sufficiently notable for news outlets to report Shrigley's response: in a *Metro* article by Jamie Sanderson, the artist remarks that, 'I don't think there's anything especially different about it. Most projects you do pass under the radar but for some reason this has gone crazy.' An article from the *BBC* website published a day prior to Jones' cites numerous posts from social media sites to convey the supposedly controversial and divisive nature of Shrigley's design, reinforcing this impression in the headline, which describes Kingsley as 'terrifying'. It is this apparent public squeamishness over Shrigley's creation that Jones seeks to address in his article on the subject. Throughout the piece, Jones appears convinced of the idea –

Fig. 1: Kingsley, mascot for Partick Thistle F.C.

presented here without any really compelling evidence at all – that the Partick fan-base have rejected the mascot. In his opening paragraph, Jones suggests that, 'If you want proof that populism and good art are incompatible,' one need 'look no further than the sorry tale of Kingsley, the mascot nobody loved.' Partick fans, in Jones' account, were united in their condemnation of the character, 'complaining that it will scare kids and generally lamenting its lack of cuteness.' Contrastingly, Shrigley suggests in his *Metro* interview that 'Partick fans I go to games with are pretty happy.' For present purposes, however, the extent of Kingsley's actual popularity is immaterial. Judgements on the merits or otherwise of populism are frequently tied to particular ideological agendas, and what is most significant here is the way that Jones articulates the story to a more general judgement, already hinted at in his opening sentence, on the relationship between art and spectator sport.

Jones has used his *Guardian* column to reflect on the apparent incompatibility of art and populism on numerous other occasions, in relation to targets such as the work of photographer Andreas Gursky and the cartoons found in the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*.[2] In the Shrigley piece, the author explicitly recapitulates his consistent position on the responsibility of artists in the face of mass culture when he remarks that,

> Good artists don't design cuddly teddy bears, happy faces, kindly badgers or whatever else is thought to make an engaging football mascot. They don't please crowds. There is always a tension between the true artist, following her heart and imagination, and the public demand for stuff that is easy to assimilate and "like".[3]

For Jones, Shrigley is one such "true artist", an inspired demiurge who refuses to allow his issue to be diluted by the demands of a facile public. Kingsley's apparent lack of popularity is on this basis a fact to savour, since it suggests that a degree of aesthetic complexity has been introduced into the arena of football, a cultural practice which tends to elevate asinine, "crowd-pleasing" representations. Before he writes off football as a space of pure philistinism, however, Jones extends a patrician hand to the Partick Thistle fans, suggesting that their rejection of Kingsley indicates a mere failure of self-reflection. Jones goes on to assert that

> Kingsley resembles a grotesque and funny carnival costume. It is reminiscent of the monsters painted and sculpted by the great surrealist Joan Miró, which themselves grew out of European carnival traditions. What Shrigley is doing is to comically express the aggression in sport. The fans are being hypocritical […] Shrigley's demonic mascot is a fan yelling for its team […] – a roaring manifestation of soccer's energy. Fans are looking at a portrait of themselves and finding it "terrifying".

Jones' reading of Kingsley rests on something of a paradox. On the one hand, he suggests that football is a rich aesthetic field, since fan practices are mirrored – albeit in distorted form – by the figure of Kingsley, which itself harks back to an artist as revered as Joan Miró.[4] On the other hand, Jones is adamant that some reactionary force within the culture of football mobilises against recognition of this fact. Shrigley's creation is doomed to be misunderstood not because it is a bad representation of the game to which it is articulated, but because there is no room within the discourse surrounding that game for reflexivity, ambiguity and irony; football's popular foundations cannot bear the weight of representations that are not familiar and sentimental. Evidently, Jones considers it possible – at least for the sake of journalistic brevity – to write off Partick's fan-base as made of the same flesh as that public whose "demand for stuff that is easy to assimilate" is one of the main stumbling blocks for great artists.

Jones' association of football with a lack of aesthetic sophistication and self-reflexivity is far from *sui generis*. In an essay which I discuss at length in chapter four, Natasha Lushetich describes the 'traditional opposition between art and participatory entertainment in the form of games and sports' as 'none other than the opposition between transcendence/ideality and corporeality/materiality or between meaningfulness and meaninglessness.' [25] According to this conception, 'art offers durable aesthetic as well as intellectual satisfaction because it triggers a lasting shift(s) [*sic*] in consciousness; games and sports offer predominantly sensorial enjoyment and thus no more than instant gratification.' [30] The pointed division between these two facets of cultural life is maintained in academic scholarship. Searching for the key word "soccer" in the Arts & Humanities database of the Taylor & Francis online journal repository returns a total of three articles which deal with the sport in direct and extended fashion.[5] A similar online search across the entirety of the SAGE journals archive returns numerous articles on the sport in journals related to media studies and the social sciences, but none in journals focusing squarely on art and visual culture. In addition to this one finds several dedicated journals addressing sports medicine and health, science and coaching, economics and communication, sociology, history and philosophy, but none dedicated to its aesthetics.[6] Evidently, Jones feels that football *is* capable of prompting "durable aesthetic as well as intellectual satisfaction", or else he would not have deigned to use his column inches to describe a football mascot. In order for this value to be reaped, however, it appears that football must first be re-located to the "transcendent" field of art, whose population alone is capable of approaching cultural objects with sufficient reflexive distance for their most

enduringly compelling qualities to be savoured. It is as if one must first know the work of the "great surrealist" Joan Miró in order to fully understand the trans-historical cultural value of a Partick Thistle game; football fans are thus understood as thwarted or frustrated aesthetes whose failure to process their own vivid experiences through reference to key figures from the history of art results in a vulgar and stunted sentimentalism.

Jones' position is conventional enough to resonate with academic reflections on the relationship between aesthetics and populism. It finds an echo, for instance, in Thomas Crow's identification of the avant-garde's strategy of address towards the materials of popular culture. In his essay "Modernism and Mass Culture in the Visual Arts", Crow notes that,

> Though the experience of people whose horizons are closed by "low" culture is repeatedly used to lend shape and substance to powerfully self-conscious and revelatory art, we assume no audience *there* for the qualities of negation, allusiveness, willed moral transgression, refusal of closure, formal rigor, and self-criticism that variously characterize modernist practice – however much such people might "innocently" act out these qualities for the benefit of the artist. [258]

There is form, then, in the notion that the audiences for popular culture lack the aesthetic sophistication to comprehend unfamiliar, non-sentimental reflections on their pursuits. According to its own self-image, advanced art (at least from the advent of the Impressionist movement around which Crow develops his argument here) is dedicated to refreshing its own contents through the careful introduction of popular materials, but frequently performs functions on these materials that invariably entrench a separation between the new, "self-conscious" audience and the original, "innocent" one.

In *Distinction*, one of the most crucial twentieth-century interventions into the subject of divisions between "low" and "high" culture, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues that one cannot describe the gaze of the gifted artist 'without also describing the naïve gaze which it defines itself against, and vice versa', suggesting that

> there is no *neutral*, impartial "pure" description of either of these opposing visions (which does not mean that one has to subscribe to aesthetic relativism, when it is so obvious that the "popular aesthetic" is defined in relation to "high" aesthetics and that reference to legitimate art and its negative judgement on "popular" taste never ceases to haunt the popular experience of beauty). [32]

For Bourdieu, the perceived lack of self-reflexivity proper to "popular" tastes must be understood in relation to popular conceptions regarding the 'sacred character, separate and separating of high culture – the icy solemnity of the great museums, the grandiose luxury of

the opera-houses and major theatres, the décor and decorum of concert halls.' [*Distinction* 34] Both "popular" and "high" aesthetics are defined antagonistically, one against the other, and the lines between definitions that arise from within and without each grouping are inexorably blurred. If the general public defensively consider 'Formal refinement' to respond to an intellectualist 'desire to keep the uninitiated at arm's length', this is an evaluation which is imperfectly mirrored in the self-perception of certain artists: 'Detachment, disinterestedness, indifference – aesthetic theory has so often presented these as the only way to recognize the work of art for what it is, autonomous, *selbständig*'. [*Distinction* 34] Similarly, by searching in art for depictions of what Bourdieu refers to as 'the passions, emotions and feelings which *ordinary* people put into their *ordinary* existence', "popular" audiences may vindicate a certain intellectualist association between mass cultural expression and immediacy, wherein

> Everything takes place as if the "popular aesthetic" were based on the affirmation of continuity between art and life, which implies the subordination of form to function […] a refusal of the refusal which is the starting point of the high aesthetic, i.e., the clear-cut separation of ordinary dispositions from the specifically aesthetic disposition. [7] [*Distinction* 32]

The apparently greater self-reflexive capacity of denizens of the field of "high" aesthetics is understood here according to a distinction between what one may describe as formalist and functionalist approaches to cultural production. If visitors to museums or art-house cinemas are sensitive to technique-specific formal properties like the quality of draughtsmanship in a painted canvas or the effects of a dolly zoom, then this binary division suggests that popular audiences are comparatively ill-equipped to deal with such distinctions. Instead, popular audiences are perceived to favour a less reserved and less mediated relationship with the pleasures that may be functionally derived from what Bourdieu calls the 'expressive content that explodes in the expressiveness of popular language', such as the social relationships between individuals in a figurative painting, or the moral fibre of a film's protagonist. [*Distinction* 34]

In gravitating towards the figure of carnival, Jones appears to want to praise football in terms of its functionalist "affirmation of continuity between art and life", a notion which valorises mass cultural expression in the eyes of a certain tranche of intellectual culture.[8] At the same time, however, Jones vaunts the formalist qualities of "detachment, disinterestedness, indifference" in lionising Shrigley for his haughty refusal to kowtow to popular sentimentalism: football may provide a vibrant source of inspiration for art, but the

game must first be *alienated* from the relations in which it is ordinarily suspended; the artist must introduce a disjuncture between the mass audience and the "expressive content" that they ostensibly crave. The reputation of the artistic genius who works with material from the visual culture of football is gained by ignoring the demands that might accompany that material in its original context, demands which Jones caricatures as risibly sentimental. By contrast, I maintain that Jones' approach rehearses a regrettable series of lacunae regarding football and aesthetic discourse as the two have been conceived over time: it is my central contention in this thesis that, as a highly formalised kind of audio-visual spectacle, football *does* possess its own complex and variegated aesthetic culture, one that cannot be reduced to either the vibrant but unreflecting carnivalesque "energy" of the crowd nor to the anaemic sentimentality of club-related paraphernalia like mascots and souvenir scarves. Despite efforts on the part of cultural journalists like Jones to write off football supporters as an energetic but aesthetically undiscriminating mass, by considering a range of writings across the different registers of the field of football discourse itself we can see that the visual culture of football is as much a space of contestation as of consensus.

To take only one of the most famous examples to this effect, there are important distinctions to be made in Brazilian football between the "golden era" aesthetic of the so-called *joga bonita* ("beautiful game"), the playing style practiced by the national team during their appearances in the numerous Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cups between the 1950s and the 1980s, and what came after this period. David Goldblatt writes of the changes in Brazilian football that started to be recognised on a global scale around the time of their victorious 1994 World Cup campaign, noting that,

> A whole generation of Brazilian and other Latin American coaches have grown up telling ball boys to disrupt play and their own players to foul opponents who look like getting into space. Alongside *futebol arte* ["art football"], *futebol força* ["force football"] and *futebol de resultados* ["results football"], sadly Brazilians could now play *futebol brutal*. [781]

Goldblatt views it as a travesty that the Brazilian national team that became world champions in 1994 did so not by employing the 'fantastical and […] spectacular' style that had won them international acclaim at previous tournaments but by employing a slower and more conservative approach, defined by muscle, pragmatism and a "brutal" tendency to rely on breaking up opposition attacks as opposed to launching attacks of their own. [781] The sociologist Richard Giulianotti, writing in a less polemic vein than Goldblatt, has noted that Brazilian domestic football possesses a number of different regionally-coded

styles of play which co-exist on the national scene as a whole: 'In Rio […] the fluid and free-floating *carioca* style has cross-class support. In São Paulo, or especially Porto Alegre, the aesthetic is traditionally more pragmatic and combative.' [170] Mastery of these differences constitutes an important form of distinction within the field of football, comparable to a museum-goer's ability to distinguish between Romanesque and Gothic forms. Giulianotti notes the existence of 'numerous interactive strategies' employed by sports fans to test the knowledge of their peers regarding distinctions between 'specific techniques'. [170] In the case of the example just raised, there may be a great deal of cultural capital at stake within fan communities in being able to distinguish between players whose aptitudes lie in playing the ball with caution and consistency on the one hand, and verve and imagination on the other.

For Giulianotti, the aptitude of individuals to attain cultural capital by providing the most perceptive responses to these tests of distinction is articulated less to 'the external influences of wider social stratification' than to 'the distinctive social and historical relations within each sporting field.' [170] Seen in this light, the model of football as a mass cultural formation offering relatively simple pleasures by comparison with the more rarefied and sophisticated field of art and aesthetics is one which is less tenable than the simple discursive binary described by Lushetich and rehearsed by Jones would suggest. It can be safely asserted that football fans do not have the kind of naïve, unmediated relationship with their pursuit that is assumed in such accounts. Having opened up this issue anecdotally, it now remains to articulate this crucial assertion to existing scholarly work with which I share a methodological affinity.

Art and football as cultural fields

In asserting the complexity of the social and historical relations proper to the cultural field of football, I am expressing an allegiance with some fundamental claims advanced by a number of interrelated methodological formations in the Humanities. These influences can be arranged concentrically. In the centre is work by art historian Lynda Nead which specifically engages the question of sporting aesthetics as it relates to broader projects of visual studies. At the intermediate level, I am drawn to the methodological reflections that Martin Jay, Mieke Bal and W.J.T. Mitchell offer on the field of visual studies, a field which they have done a great deal to propagate, and to certain crucial Bourdieuian concepts that

resonate with their theoretical stance. Finally, at the broadest level of application, the methodological approach which I pursue in this thesis is informed by the late twentieth-century cultural theory of Michel de Certeau and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.

In their theoretical reflections, both Sedgwick and Certeau call for us to pay attention to cultural materials and processes without reducing their significance to that of placeholder in explicatory metanarratives like Karl Marx's theory of class conflict, Michel Foucault's idea of disciplinary society or Guy Debord's concept of spectacular society.[9] In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Certeau distinguishes individual "consumption" from the 'rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production' proper to capitalist modernity, describing the public forced to negotiate these conditions as 'Unrecognized producers, poets of their own affairs, trailblazers in the jungles of functionalist rationality.' [34] These individuals are seen by Certeau to 'trace "indeterminate trajectories" that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move.' [34] These trajectories are only meaningless when viewed through the lens of certain metanarratives, however: individuals can on inspection be seen to use "mass culture" in ways that are foreseeable neither to those controlling the means of production nor to researchers applying totalising theorems like the ones outlined above, and care must be taken when analysing these trajectories in order to '[ward] off the effects of an analysis which necessarily grasps these practices only on the margins of a technical apparatus, at the point where they alter or defeat its instruments.' [41] That is to say, aspects of mass culture must not be thought of purely as sources of oppression and alienation that become worthy of analysis only at moments of fissure or intense alienation, which has been a prevalent tendency in an academic establishment that has, for instance, tended to address football through an undue emphasis on issues like the problem of hooliganism that afflicted the English game in the 1970s and 1980s.[10] Instead, by boosting the volume of voices within football's interpretative community, spectatorship can be approached as a site of complex and localised negotiations and transactions with dominant forms of the game.[11]

Remaining for the time being at the level of general methodological overview, this approach resonates with what Sedgwick refers to as "reparative reading", which she differentiates from "paranoid reading", borrowing from Paul Ricoeur's description of Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud as proponents of a 'hermeneutics of suspicion.' [*Touching* 124] Sedgwick's intervention in the text from which these terms are

lifted may be illustrated through a consideration of some of the key ideas in Debord's seminal essay *Society of the Spectacle*, which opens with the proposition that Western society has become one in which 'life is presented as an intense accumulation of *spectacles*' and that 'Everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation.' [7] In Debord's vision, human relationships under capitalist modernity are uniformly mediated by images, owned and operated by those classes in control of the means of production. As Jay puts it, Debord's totalising conception suggests that 'perhaps all of our images in the age of global capitalism are mediated through and through by the commodity form.' [270] Particularly in the arena of mass culture, this theorisation has the effect of presenting enthusiasts for the products of capitalist modernity, like pop music and mass spectator sports, as mere dupes investing in their own alienation. Football fans in particular are framed as passive recipients of the dazzle of the sponsors' logos that adorn the shirt-fronts of their favourite players, or as supplicants to the financial demands of subscription television and expensive stadium season tickets.[12] To offer such a reading of the game would, however, depend 'on an infinite reservoir of naïveté in those who make up the audience' for the reading itself. [*Touching* 141] The growth of grass-roots supporter movements designed to contest various exclusionary forces operating in football leagues across the world over the past two decades demonstrate that football fans are all too aware of specific baleful effects that capitalism has had on the game; the fact that former FIFA President Sepp Blatter was loudly booed along with Brazilian President Dilma Roussef at the opening of the 2014 FIFA World Cup in São Paulo vividly evinced the degree of awareness possessed by football fans on a global scale.[13]

In order to attend to such specificities, we are ill-served by a "strong theory" like that offered in Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*. Such "strong theories" on Sedgwick's account are conceived defensively, designed to ward off unpleasant intellectual surprises by subsuming as great a range of objects as possible to one over-riding critical framework, producing an essentially "paranoid" position that sees evidence for a central theoretical tenet in every object that presents itself for analysis (although as Sedgwick points out, the cliché that "just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not out to get you" retains some value). [*Touching* 127] Where "paranoid reading" is reductive, Sedgwick's proposed project of "reparative" reading (Sedgwick chooses this designation on the basis that the project serves not just to identify ills but to provide resources which might allow the critical subject to flourish) is 'additive and accretive.' [*Touching* 149] It thrives not in applying consistent frameworks across a range of cultural objects and activities but in attending to the specificities of situational contexts and applying 'local theories and nonce taxonomies.' [*Touching* 145] While my methodological approach in this thesis involves the application of

a variety of "non-local" theories to my research objects, I nevertheless endeavour to do so in a manner which is inflected by local contexts, on the understanding that this kind of anti-reductive form of reading will effectively allow me to trace transactions between the "mass" cultural formation of football and the "high" cultural formation of art and aesthetic theory without suggesting that one side of this equation is necessarily more or less complex or oppressive than the other.

Zooming in from these more general theoretical reference points to the disciplinary area in which my research is conceived, it is important to note that one finds gestures towards "reparative" reading and against the dismissal of "indeterminate trajectories" in some key methodological reflections on the field of visual studies.[14] Rejecting the idea that an individual's interpretative capacities can ever be totally commensurate with the culture in which they have been raised, both Jay and Bal call for researchers of visual culture to attend to negotiations and transactions within cultural formations rather than relying on notions of subjection and determination; to apply, in other words, "weak" rather than "strong" theories. For Jay,

> no individual within such a porous container as a culture, at least once populations begin to interact, can be totally determined by it [...] This is not to say [...] that images can once again be seen as natural, unmediated signs, which can shed all their cultural encoding. It is rather that however much they are filtered through such a screen, however much they are connotatively deflected by the magnetic field of such a culture, they remain in excess of it. [273-35]

The most important figure in this formulation is that of "interaction": to return to Jones' article on Kingsley, the elevation of Shrigley at the expense of his audience relies on a notion that there is minimal interface between the kinds of people that would recognise Joan Miró and the kinds of people that would attend Partick Thistle games, a division which can be shown over and over again to be patently false, particularly in the era that is the focus of this thesis. For Bal, 'Any attempt to articulate goals and methods for visual culture studies must seriously engage both terms *in their negativity.*' [19] This means scrutinising visual materials for their interaction with other senses and discussing '"culture" as shifting, differential, located between 'zones of culture and performed in practices of power and resistance.' [19] Bal acknowledges that this process does not permit 'clear-cut distinctions' to be made between cultural formations – football fans over here, Miró enthusiasts over there – but can nevertheless 'help specify domains even if none can be delimited', and asks that practitioners of visual studies attend to 'the interdiscursive and intertextual relationships between objects, series, tacit knowledges, texts, discourses and the

different participating senses' as opposed to taking particular formations of these attributes as read. [23] What is significant for both Jay and Bal is the extent to which cultural domains are constructed relationally and contingently, in negotiations between what Certeau refers to on the one hand as "centralized production" and on the other as "poets of their own affairs".

To speak of distinct cultural formations like football or art as if these guaranteed a particular set of responses on the part of their inhabitants would be to subscribe to a "strong" theory that left little room for such negotiations. What is required instead is to present sites like the culture of football fandom as arenas for difference and contention, even if the "differences" present between competing voices in football discourse tend to betray more similarities than they would share with voices in other discursive formations. Here Bourdieu again proves a useful figure, in providing us with a description of cultural "fields" that are defined less by conceptual consensus than by the arrangement of conflicting voices around shared 'themes and problems of the moment, methods of argument, manner of perception, etc.' ["Field" 112] Jason Swartz provides a worthwhile gloss on this aspect of Bourdieu's thinking, noting that 'If Bourdieu has designed his concept in opposition to consensual views of the social world, he also sees his concept as distinct from views that stress total domination.' [121] His fields are 'sites of resistance as well as domination', although the tendency to gravitate towards similar lines of inquiry means that 'they seldom become sites of social transformation'. [121] Swartz continues,

> Both the dominant establishment and the subordinate challengers, both orthodox and heterodox views, share a tacit acceptance that the field of struggle is worth pursuing in the first place. Bourdieu refers to this deep struggle of fields as the *doxa*, for it represents a tacit, fundamental agreement on the stakes of struggle between those advocating heterodoxy and those holding to orthodoxy. [125]

We have already seen how Giulianotti, a sociologist whose work is significantly indebted to Bourdieu, considers discussions of aspects of football culture like the differences between adventurous and conservative styles of play to be sites where cultural capital can be gained and lost; these discursive manoeuvres however have to be considered in relation to the "tacit acceptances" which anchor discourse on the game, and which draw up the distinctions between heterodox and orthodox positions, just as the whole range of positions that have accrued over the course of art history's existence as a discipline are themselves articulated to a set of tacit acceptances with regards to which questions and which assertions are intrinsically important. Whereas a football fan's assumed authority on

a particular issue may be undermined in the event that they overlook a particular player's history of ankle injuries – this could be the difference between that player proving a valuable or wasteful signing for their club – the same oversight is unlikely to rebound with any real consequence on an art historian. When throughout this thesis I refer to football and art as "fields", then, it is this Bourdieuian concept that I wish to summon: neither cultural formation dominates or determines the enclosed individual in their entirety, and slippages between the two fields are possible, but these transactions entail a shift in register, the adoption of different problematics.

Following the lead set by these two key figures in the development of the discipline of Visual Studies and the consolidation of their ideas in the theoretical framework offered by Bourdieu, I do not wish to posit a hermetically sealed "visual culture of football" in the period specified, nor suggest that I am in a position to present a single coherent vision of the game's contemporary interpretative community. Errant trajectories through the body of cultural materials that football sustains are always possible depending on what other cultural affiliations football fans bring to the table, including different upbringings within the game itself: it is demonstrated in the first chapter, for instance, that Argentinian and English football fans tend to view the matter of "diving" in different ways. Throughout this thesis then I do not refrain from making substantial observations on the discourses and practices demonstrated by certain football fans, but the phenomena that I identify must be understood as contingent, relational formations that are carried out in local contexts. Likewise, I am interested in distinguishing art and football as distinct cultural fields to the extent that it enables me to describe slippages between them, as well as to illuminate the forces that block or disturb these interactions, following W.J.T. Mitchell's assertion that 'the boundaries of art/non-art only becomes clear when one looks at both sides of this ever-shifting border and traces the transactions and translations between them.' ["Seeing" 173] Each of the four chapters I present in this thesis are in some sense concerned with these transactions and translations, which I hope lends my project a resonance beyond the sport with which it is immediately concerned; I will shortly discuss this desire in relation to Nead's attempts to read sporting imagery through art historical concepts.[15] Before doing so, however, a brief contextualisation of the rarity of Nead's intervention within the broader field of visual studies is necessary.

Introducing football to visual studies

Despite the recognition on the part of Jay, Bal, Mitchell and many other key theorists of visual culture as to the importance of attending to interactions between different zones of culture, or to transactions and translations between the field of art and fields of non-art, there has been very little work to date in the key sites of visual studies regarding the field of sport, much less football. *Critical Inquiry*, edited by Mitchell and offering a platform for researchers of visual culture like Horst Bredekamp, Lev Manovich, Georges Didi-Hubermann and Thierry de Duve, all of whom are referenced in this thesis, has carried only one article primarily focusing on sport in its four-decade history, namely an essay by Michael Mackenzie on the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. The *Journal of Visual Culture*, from which the methodological reflections by Jay and Bal cited above are drawn, has been no more prolific in this regard. *Visual Studies*, a publication whose outlook leans towards the Social Sciences, published a special issue on the Olympic Games in 2012, and also published the article by Amelia Yeates concerning queer readings of David Beckham that is referenced in my first chapter, but is still arguably operating at a deficit when one considers the relative centrality of spectator sports in contemporary culture.

In terms of the study of football itself, the journal *Soccer & Society* was founded in 2000 with the self-stated "Aims and scope" of 'covering all aspects of soccer impacting society from a wide array of perspectives – anthropological, cultural, historical, sociological, political, economic and aesthetic.' In recent years it has published a number of articles that resonate with my approach in this thesis, although a larger number of articles from this journal that address visual or aesthetic matters do so in ways that do not seem to me to be sufficiently grounded in the kind of sensitivity to local discursive contexts and exchanges called for by Jay and Bal. Such articles include a semiotic analysis of club kits and badges and a sociological reading of the circulation of illustrated published materials through fan communities; these approaches run the risk of eliding conflicts between orthodox and heterodox interpretations within particular interpretative communities in the one case and considering aesthetically-coded material as a neutral nexus for social exchange in the other.[16]

Due to the difficulty in gathering up large amounts of material addressing precisely the areas of cultural interchange that are my focus in this thesis, it has thus been necessary to plot a course through a wide range of disciplines, even while consistently attending to the kind of research questions that are typically central to projects in visual studies. Namely,

the subjects at hand have led me into social and materialist histories of sport, sociology, media studies, histories of pre-twentieth century art, historical and theoretical reflections on modern and contemporary art, and continental and analytical philosophy. I am aware, however, that this is not an unusual experience for researchers in visual culture. Mitchell describes visual studies as an 'interdiscipline' that is constructed in such a way as to permit researchers to call upon the resources of existing disciplinary approaches regarding objects of aesthetic significance, whether these objects belong to the domain of art, non-art, or, perhaps most pertinently, at the borderline between the two. ["Seeing" 179] Mitchell's concern for the transactions and translations that occur across this borderline is conceived in line with what he refers to more specifically as the 'inside-out' interdisciplinarity of visual studies, which concerns itself not just with opening up means of shuttling between academic disciplines in order to do justice to new research objects, but with events of 'turbulence or incoherence at the inner and outer boundaries' of existing disciplines, which for both Mitchell and myself means first and foremost engaging critically with the disciplinary parameters of art history. ["Indicators" 1027] In attending to episodes of "turbulence" on the borderline between the field of art and the field of football, it is possible both to expand the set of questions we apply to objects drawn from the former domain, and to draw more non-art material into touching distance with potentially fruitful methods and lines of inquiry associated with the discipline of art history. With regards to sporting material, these objectives have been effectively approached by Nead in her 2011 essay "Stilling the Punch: Boxing, Violence and the Photographic Image".

Nead's concern in this essay is to open up a space in the academic study of the history of photography for a subject that has been barely approached in that field, namely snapshots of sporting contests. Nead notes that where

> sports photographs are the subjects of exhibitions, as, for example, in the exhibition of photographs of boxer Muhammad Ali in London in 2010, it is usually because of the identity of their subjects, in which the nature of the image changes from sports photograph to portrait. [309]

For Nead, this is an oversight which appears most regrettable when one considers the 'continuity between pre-photographic images of atrocities and the photographic and digital representation of violence' that one frequently encounters in the 'weekly and monthly boxing press'. [307-09] Responding to the opening of "Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera", an exhibition at Tate Modern (28 May-3 October, 2010) which brought together artistic, journalistic and amateur approaches to the photographic representation of sex and violence, Nead regards curator Simon Baker's stated concern for the 'complexities

of showing photographs of violence specifically in the art museum' with curiosity, given that the 'the Tate, like other major world art galleries, is full of paintings of atrocities drawn from mythology, classical history and religion, in which violence is more or less explicitly delineated.' [307] Nead is subsequently prompted to reflect on the overlaps that exist between the images of boxing violence that she encounters during periods of "semi-attentive browsing", owing to her specialised but non-professional engagement with the sport, and the depictions of violence that one finds in these more elevated contexts, to which end she engages with art-theoretical writings by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Aby Warburg.

What is most pertinent for present purposes is the manner in which Nead seeks to address these instances of overlapping aesthetic tendencies without assuming hierarchical arrangements of "high" and "low" culture. Nead does not intend precisely to use art historical precedents to read boxing snapshots in a more informed manner, but rather aims to stage 'a form of productive collision between the rough banality of boxing and its aesthetic expression, between the base and the elevated, the grotesque and the classical.' [311] While other academic commentators on the culture of boxing have spoken of the manner in which certain ways of depicting the sport through photography constitute a form of "aestheticisation", Nead claims that 'in nearly all these accounts it is assumed that the category of the aesthetic is a given, that its meaning is understood and shared and that it simply implies a degree of formalization or that it involves visual pleasure.' [313-14] For these writers, Nead suggests, talking of the aesthetic qualities of boxing snapshots amounts to discussing the extent to which they are "'a bit like art'", which elides the 'long and contradictory' history of debates over the meaning of the aesthetic that have taken place in Western thought. [314] There are resonances that can be felt with the context of football here: for many commentators, the "embourgeoisement" of football in England that occurred after 1990 (and which I discuss in more detail in the next section of this introduction) is associable with the decision on the part of the BBC to use opera music to soundtrack their coverage of that year's FIFA World Cup, a seemingly unprecedented aesthetic strategy that is perceived to have pre-empted an *art-ification* of the game. [Taylor 364] Approaching football as a source of aesthetic richness frequently appears to necessitate the subsuming of players to character types drawn from the canons of Western art and literature: the title of Ian Hamilton's essay *Gazza Agonistes*, which occupied an entire issue of the literary journal *Granta* in 1993, is an example of this kind of *rapprochement*.[17]

Nead's counter-proposal to these strategies of "aestheticisation" is 'to use the contradictions within boxing itself to redefine our understanding of the aesthetic and to allow the tensions to feed into what we might imagine as the aesthetic in this context.' [314] That is to say, boxing discourse has its own manner of framing aesthetic propositions like "beauty" and "violence" that can be juxtaposed with, not just subsumed by, the analogical terms found in discourses around canonical western art: as Nead argues, if art is 'historically a discourse of the body and subjectivity, so too is boxing', and allowing discursive formations drawn from the latter to enter into conversation with discursive formations from the former could prove productive for both fields. [314] Here Nead applies to this specific context a fundamental tenet of visual studies, identified by Keith Moxey in response to the *October* journal's Visual Studies Questionnaire of 1993, namely that 'a conception of visual studies as the study of images identified with cultural value must re-articulate the idea of aesthetics as something concrete, specific, and local rather than indefinable, ineffable, and universal.' [Alpers et al. 57-58] Different cultural fields articulate different categories of aesthetic value to different objects in different ways at different times, and we ought to allow these differences into conversation with one another, disregarding the hierarchical protocols intrinsic in the distinction between "high" and "low" culture.

I agree with Nead that the idea of bringing sport and art together on a relatively equitable basis, without assuming that the latter is especially qualified to explicate or elevate the former, presents a set of 'exciting' possibilities. [314] In this thesis, I thus wish to use some of the contradictions and tensions that exist among (to paraphrase Bal's list) the objects, tacit knowledges, texts and discourses that constitute the contemporary experience of engaging with football to generate my own set of local theories about how football's visual culture is constituted in the broader picture. I will outline the specific aspects of this visual culture which are addressed in each chapter shortly; having outlined my methodological commitments, it now remains to attend to the task of accounting for my periodisation.

The question of periodisation

Each of the following four chapters feature reflections on specific aspects of the period of football history to which my research relates, since there are important phenomena discussed there – phenomena such as the perceived feminisation of football crowds after the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, the rise of individual naming rights for elite players and the social impact of increasingly diasporic national teams – that require more sensitive and detailed contextualisation. There are certain more general phenomena, however, that can be drawn upon to describe the period of football history that is the focus of this thesis. First and foremost, as Tom Evens and Katrien Lefever argue, one of the definitive features of the period of football that stretches from the end of the 1980s to the present is its 'high dependency on cable and broadcasting revenues', constituted in a relationship of mutual benefit: 'While sports act as a pool for content and audience for television, the latter serves as a revenue source and marketing means for sports.' [34] The creation of the English Premier League in 1992 is a model for this kind of relationship: the sale of exclusive broadcasting rights for the top division of English football to Rupert Murdoch's company BSkyB was a foundational moment in the establishment of that division as a breakaway league that would no longer be required to pool its resources with the divisions below it.[18]

Television had a distinctive role to play in re-modelling the image of English domestic football after the tribulations of the late 1980s: as Garry Whannel puts it,

> At the start of the 1990s, Sky Television was losing around £1 million a week, and English football was only just recovering from two decades of problems with crowd behaviour, the Bradford fire, the Heysel Stadium incident and the Hillsborough Stadium disaster. By the end of the decade, football was earning hundreds of millions in rights payments from television, its new chic appeal had impelled almost all papers to launch massive football-dominated sport supplements, and a highly profitable Sky was making more and more inroads into BBC's diminishing sport portfolio. [*Stars* 38]

The mutually-beneficial relationship between Sky and the top clubs in English football that was developed during this period is one of the most crucial motors behind some of the more recognisable aspects of contemporary football on the wider European and global scene. The increasing gulf between the money invested in the Premier League and the rest of the English football pyramid has led to the play-off final of the Football League Championship, a match which secures promotion to the top flight, being referred to as the "richest game in football".[19] The inequality between elite and lesser clubs is wider in domestic competitions like Spain's La Liga Primera, where broadcasting rights are

negotiated on a club-by-club as opposed to a collective basis, inevitably leading to greater revenues for more storied teams such as Real Madrid and Barcelona. Europe's most successful clubs, including some of the five that petitioned the English Football Association for a breakaway division that could ring-fence its own financial resources prior to the establishment of the Premier League, also tend to accrue large amounts of additional revenue through participation in the UEFA Champions' League, a competition created out of the old UEFA European Cup in the same year as the founding of the Premier League. As Evens and Lefever report, the 2010 final of this competition, which saw Internazionale of Milan beat Bayern Munich 2-0, received a global television audience of 109 million, a figure with which only a select few sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup and the Summer Olympic Games, can compete. [37] The nature of these figures means that television networks and advertisers are willing to pay large sums of money to acquire rights relating to the competition, varying percentages of which are returned to the participating clubs.[20]

In some of Europe's smaller leagues, individual clubs have begun to monopolise league championships as a result of these revenues: international television exposure through participation in the Champions' League puts clubs like Glasgow's Celtic F.C. at a distinct financial advantage over their opponents that accrues with each season, meaning that over the past fifteen years of Scottish football Celtic have been league champions eleven times. After the sovereign wealth fund Qatari Sports Investments become sole shareholders of French club Paris Saint-German in 2012, the team have gone on to feature in the later stages of the Champions League in each subsequent season, and have most recently won all three of France's major competitions for two years straight. Ahead of the 1999-2000 season, the G14 organisation of elite European clubs successfully lobbied UEFA to increase the number of teams participating in the Champions League from 24 to 32; this meant the creation of an extra round between the group stages and the quarter-finals, allowing those clubs that were most likely to make it to these later stages of the competition to further maximise their revenue. As European clubs have spread in profile through expanding television coverage of domestic competitions and the global popularity of the Champions' League, leading to figures such as Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi becoming household names on every continent, so too have financial resources in the game tended to concentrate around these clubs and players, potentially harming the infrastructure required to maintain football on a less glamorous domestic level.

The year of 1992, in which these two immensely popular and glamorous European club competitions were created, thus serves as a useful date to mark the beginning of the period of football we are currently living through, one which is defined as much by media relations as by anything happening on the pitch. There is however a longer context for some of the phenomena I have outlined above, one which requires us to also take note of such landmark years as 1974. This was the year that the Brazilian João Havelange was confirmed as President of FIFA, an event which presented in Goldblatt's historical account as marking the end of "football's short twentieth century". [261] Goldblatt attributes a great deal of historical importance to the scene of Havelange's first official dinner after taking office, noting that 'the core concern of the discussion was clear. How could they catalyse the intersection of the World Cup, the growing television market and corporate sponsorship to generate a vast revenue stream for all of them?' [524] The vision of football set out at this meeting is one that is very familiar to followers of competitions like the UEFA Champions League. Their solution to the above conundrum was four-fold. Firstly, only the largest multinational corporations would be approached to become official sponsors of the World Cup. Secondly, these sponsorship arrangements would be broken up into a series of deals exclusive to product type, meaning the World Cup would have among its official sponsors only one beer company, one sportswear manufacturer, and so on. Thirdly, FIFA would take total control over television and advertising rights for their tournament, usurping existing deals with national networks and in-stadium advertisers. Finally, FIFA would use an intermediary to sell these rights, the now-defunct International Sports & Leisure (ISL). [Goldblatt 524-25] To controversial effect, FIFA retain their right to take total full control of stadia and to impose broadcasting and advertising deals on national markets to this day.[21] The relationship between football and the body of major multinational corporations that was struck up under Havelange's reign also persists outside of the World Cup, as evinced by the prominence of advertisements for Gazprom and Heineken in UEFA Champions League television broadcasts.

As a testament to the impact Havelange's legislative changes had on the landscape of elite football, Goldblatt notes the differences that were visible across the two World Cups held in Mexico: the first in 1970, four years prior to the end of Stanley Rous' tenure as President of the Federation, and the second in 1986, just over a decade into Havelange's twenty four-year reign. In the first competition, such little thought had been put into football's potentially-lucrative relationship with multinational brands 'that a single menswear shop on Carnaby Street – John Stephens – could afford to take up a quarter of

Guadalajara stadium for the Brazil-England clash.' [638] By contrast, by the time the second competition came around,

> things were different, with the whole show being reserved for the multinational corporate sponsors that FIFA had now signed up. More tellingly, the crowds were well down on 1970 and ticket prices significantly higher. When criticized for the high cost of tickets, [former FIFA vice-president Guillermo Cañedo de la Barcena] tartly replied, "People have TV". [638]

In many commentaries, football's courting of strong relationships with corporate commerce – which extends to filling large sections of stadia with guests of high-ranking sponsors – has been presented as acting to the detriment of the more committed fan. This phenomenon is particularly marked in the case of the creation of the Premier League in England, a move which, as will be discussed in the next chapter, was expressly conceived with the intention of making stadia more attractive sites for the media and for sponsors. Liz Moor critically gestures towards the popularity of what she calls the "bourgeoisification thesis" in both academia and journalism, wherein the late twentieth-century move towards increasingly close relationships between football, the media and multinational corporations is viewed as having led to an alienation of the game from its working-class fan-base in favour of a more affluent public with stronger ties to the kinds of high-cultural activities against which football has typically been defined.[22] Regardless of its actual truth-value, this discursive formation is a significant one in the period with which we are concerned, and receives further attention in my account of English football's changing conditions after the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, which I offer in chapter one.

The unprecedented levels of wealth that course throughout the upper echelons of the present-day economy of football as a result of Havelange's intervention and more recent developments are credited as possessing a great deal of explicatory power: observations regarding wealth distribution can predict champions (although they failed to account for Leicester City's remarkable title-winning campaign in the 2015-16 Premier League season), can account for football's likely future trajectories (although the huge and growing audiences for the game in East Asia have failed to materialise in a surfeit of internationally-recognised talent emanating from that part of the world), and can be used to argue for the game's recent moral decline (although it remains as popular as ever). Even the materialist Goldblatt, however, is drawn to remark that 'the wider social significance of European football at the turn of the millennium cannot be explained, despite the centrality of economic forces and pressures, by recourse to the dismal science alone.' [686] Noting that

this time period has been one in which 'The sheer quantity of football in Europe's public sphere and conversation, in the print media, television and Internet has grown immensely', Goldblatt remarks that, 'In the realms of pleasure and pain, meaning and vacuity, identity and idolatry, the economist is mute'. [686] While certain economic arrangements are thus crucial to understanding what makes the present period of football history different from previous periods, these arrangements engender unexpected by-products, rogue trajectories, pirate economies and varied forms of aesthetic and critical reflection that also require our attention. It is to some of these phenomena that I wish to attend over the following four chapters.

The first of these chapters considers the manner in which aesthetics and sporting ethics become intertwined in contemporary football in relation to the controversial issue of "diving", and how credited commentators and official spokespeople for the game respond when the actions of players stray too close to something that can broadly be understood along the lines of artistic representation. My second chapter seeks to demonstrate the ways in which commentators in football's on-line fora are prompted by the new media image technology of the animated GIF to adopt conceptions of authorship that can be compared to those which were formulated in certain moments in the history of art, and reflects upon the extent to which this process is aided or disrupted by the contexts in which this image format is typically encountered. My third chapter focuses on artistic and literary treatments of the French forward Zinedine Zidane to address the artistic strategies which are adopted to negotiate the discursive pressures that surround this particular international superstar. Finally, my fourth chapter concerns flows and blockages between football and four different participatory aesthetic practices that seek to re-imagine the game, taking account of the manner in which these practices maintain a sense of alterity in relation to the professional mediatised construction of football in the twenty-first century. There is therefore a clear divide between the two halves of the thesis, since chapters one and two concern aesthetic discourses and practices that arise from within football's cultural field, while chapters three and four are related to practices that are conceived in relation to football but play out in the field of artistic projects and commissions. Throughout the thesis, however, the borderline between these fields will remain in sight, and I will continue to allow conceptions gleaned from football's own cultural field to feed back into my approach to the artworks I discuss in chapters three and four. Ultimately, all the phenomena I discuss in this thesis are rooted in or respond to the media ecology discussed

above, and, owing to football's contemporary cultural centrality, may thus be used to pose broader questions regarding to composition of visual culture in late modernity.

Notes

[1] Toussaint, Jean-Philippe. *Football*, trans. Shaun Whiteside. Fitzcarraldo Editions, 2016. p. 7

[2] These articles, entitled "The $6.5m canyon: it's the most expensive photograph ever – but it's like a hackneyed poster in a posh hotel" and "Charlie Hebdo: cartoon satire is a more potent weapon than hate" were published on the *Guardian* website on 10 December 2014 and 8 January 2015.

[3] The scare quotes around '"like"' are presumably intended to indicate that Jones is referring to the "Like" function on Facebook.

[4] The Catalan painter and sculptor Joan Miró was a highly successful fellow-traveller of the Surrealist movement that emerged from Paris in the 1920s, although he never actually became an official member of the group administered by André Breton.

[5] Of these three articles, two are bound up with discussing football as it appears in artworks: In "Kicking with Another Foot: Contesting Memories in Marie Jones's A Night in November and Dermot Bolger's In High Germany" (*Performance Research*, 5:3 (2000), pp. 76-81), Tom Maguire discusses two Irish playwrights presenting football as a theme in their work, while Andy Birtwistle offers a reflection on *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* that I reference at length in the third chapter of this thesis. The remaining article, Mikita Hoy's "Joyful mayhem: Bakhtin, football songs, and the carnivalesque" (*Text and Performance Quarterly*, 14:4 (1994), pp. 289-304) addresses football terrace songs through the lens of Mikhail Bakhtin's conception of the carnivalesque. Although I use the word "football" in this thesis to refer to the association game, "soccer" is the more internationally-applicable word since, unlike "football", it does not carry disparate geographically-specific meanings, hence my decision to use "soccer" as a search term.

[6] While the lack of a dedicated journal covering aesthetic matters within sport and overlaps between sport and art is significant in terms of my intervention here, this is not to suggest that academia is entirely uninterested in this area of research. A number of such approaches are catalogued by Mike Huggins in his essay "The Sporting Gaze: Towards a Visual Turn in Sports History–Documenting Art and Sport", including some projects touching on football, such as Mike O'Mahony's book *Sport in the USSR: Physical Culture – Visual Culture*. Much of the research in question is however of limited use for my area of focus.

[7] In the first extract cited in this sentence, Bourdieu borrows his description of popular art from José Ortega y Gasset's 1925 essay on "The Dehumanization of Art", in which the author presents the Modernist art of his time as 'unpopular in essence', designed to provide maximum confusion and antipathy among the masses in order to consolidate the intellectual elite. [66] The twentieth century is however littered with example of avant-garde artists seeking to create work which off-sets the effects of their purportedly elite social status and to embrace the "continuity between art and life" which is supposedly inherent in mass cultural expressions like carnival or spectator sports. Bertolt Brecht, for example, maintained that the boxing arena provided a model of the ideal audience for his epic theatre. Earlier in the century, the art critic and Soviet People's Commissar of Education, Anatoly Lunacharsky, oversaw the creation of Mass Festivals in the years following the Russian Revolution, enlisting artists such as Vladimir Tatlin and Lyubov Popova. In post-war Brazil, Hélio Oiticica produced objects designed to be used by performers from the Mangueira Samba school in Rio de Janeiro, one of the pioneering institutions in the development of the Rio Carnival. In roughly the same period, Allan Kaprow and George Maciunas were engaged in radical movements seeking to diffuse the boundaries between art and everyday life, movements which I will reflect on at greater length in my fourth chapter. These are just some of the more famous examples, but the avant-garde embrace of the "popular aesthetic" can be seen as one of the great currents of twentieth-century art history.

[8] As suggested in the previous note, the mass public exuberance of carnival provided a key figure for some of the more pro-populist landmarks of the twentieth-century avant-garde, particularly interventions by Popova and Oiticica. For a highly influential twentieth-century account of the radicalism of carnival see Bakhtin 1-58.

[9] Giving a full account of these three highly influential sets of ideas is beyond the remit of this introduction, though I will now attempt to parse these metanarratives very briefly. I understand Marx's theory of class conflict as one which posits that struggles over economic inequalities between different social groupings have had and will continue to have a driving influence on world history. I take Foucault's model of disciplinary society, which I will briefly return to in the introductory section of Chapter 2, to be one in which certain social institutions proper to the eighteenth and nineteenth century (first and foremost the hospital, the mental asylum and the prison), are seen to produce a particular kind of human subject, one whose boundedness to the exercise of power is determined by these institutions' ability to categorise the given individual according to certain social and medical pathologies. Finally, I understand Debord's theory of the society of the spectacle, which is perhaps the most pertinent of three to my own research, as an attempt to read capitalism's hold over the individual through the privileged locus of the sense of sight, and through the mollifying allure of the highly-commodified form of cultural production that emerges from Hollywood and the advertising industry. Regardless of their differences, all three metanarratives are united by their totalising and deterministic representation of power.

[10] The phenomenon of hooliganism within English football is roughly concurrent with the rise of Cultural Studies in U.K. universities. During this period there was a marked interest in bringing the topic of football into the fold of academic research, but contemporary conditions in the game meant that it was often discussed in terms of the violence of its communities. Writing in the inaugural issue of *Soccer & Society* journal, Dominic Malcolm, Ian Jones and Ivan Waddington lamented on this basis that 'The literature on football spectators is relatively plentiful by comparison with data on spectators at other sports', but that this literature provides 'detailed information on a minority of football fans.' [129]

[11] I borrow the phrase *interpretative community* from a round-table discussion featured in a 2005 issue of the *Journal of Visual Culture*, involving Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey, all three of whom worked as editors on the influential visual studies anthology *The Subjects of Art History* (1998). Here, Cheetham discusses the notion of 'localized, specialized interpretative communities' as a way out of attempting to understand aesthetic value and experience as a universal set of concepts. [79]

[12] Moor offers a useful account of the many attempts on the part of academic researchers to discuss football fandom in terms of enforced consumerism. Acknowledging along with this group of researchers that football is indeed a privileged site for the promotion of consumerist culture, Moor nevertheless argues that some of these accounts may be guilty of conflating 'the fact that it is possible to read many aspects of everyday life in marketized language with the belief that every facet of life is now commodified.' [134] In other words, although football is clearly impacted by market forces, there is no evidence which can conclusively prove that these forces have decisively shut down other aspects of fan experience.

[13] This negative reaction was a response both to the perceived corruption of FIFA and to a more widespread sense that the ruling Workers' Party were guilty of under-investing in key public services in order to enable Brazil to host the World Cup and Olympic Games in 2014 and 2016 respectively; for an account of this protest see Glenny.

[14] I follow Mitchell's formulation of the field here in 'distinguish[ing] between visual studies and visual culture as, respectively, the field of study and the object or target of study.' ["Seeing" 166] Mitchell considers the term "visual culture" to be broad enough to encompasss

> Not just art history and aesthetics, but scientific and technical imaging, film television, and digital media, as well as philosophical inquiries into the epistemology of vision, semiotic studies of images and visual signs, psychoanalytic investigation of the scopic drive, phenomenological, physiological, and cognitive studies of the visual process, sociological studies of spectatorship and

display, visual anthropology, physical optics and animal vision, and so forth and so on. ["Seeing" 167]

Many of these research areas are reflected in what follows, though my fourth chapter adds a further term in considering phenomenological and philosophical accounts of participation.

[15] In thinking of football and art as cultural fields that overlap and interpenetrate, my approach to the question of football-art relations is crucially distinguished from earlier interventions by the likes of David Best, who used methods derived from analytical philosophy to discern whether football could be defined as a form of art-making. For a useful account of this scholarly trajectory see Kreft.

[16] Respectively, the articles alluded to here are Michailidis et al. and Guschwan.

[17] Hamilton's essay follows the career of mercurial Newcastle United, Tottenham Hotspur and England midfielder Paul Gascoigne, often referred to by the nickname "Gazza". Gascoigne was a major part of the English national team in the 1990 World Cup and one of the most charismatic and enigmatic stars of the early Premier League era; his tears in the World Cup semi-final against Germany, prompted by the recognition that the yellow card he had just received ensured his suspension from appearing in the final, are a much-discussed cornerstone moment of recent English football history. Hamilton's title is a riff on John Milton's poem *Samson Agonistes*, which deals with a similarly talented figure laid low by fate.

[18] For a thorough historical account of this split between the top flight of English football and the remainder of the Football League, see Conn, particularly 38-53 & 100-107.

[19] For an example of this cliché in action, see Brand.

[20] Goldblatt notes that the distribution of this money is affected by the size of each given team's national television market; thus 'when Porto won the competition in 2004 they received less than half of the money received by Manchester United, whom they had knocked out in the second round.' [695]

[21] As an example of FIFA's local power during major tournaments, the Federation was able to over-ride the ban on the sale of beer in Brazilian stadia for the duration of the 2014 World Cup, at least in part in order to appease Budweiser, one of their major sponsors. The ban had been introduced as part of an initiative to address violence among supporters; for the response of erstwhile FIFA General Secretary Jérôme Valcke to criticisms of the Federation's decision see "Beer 'must be sold' at Brazil World Cup, says Fifa".

[22] The idea that football's aspiration to capture the audiences of more traditionally middle-class pursuits has in turn alienated its working-class fan-base is a thesis which is notably advanced by Giulianotti in his 2002 essay "Supporters, Followers, Fans, and Flâneurs". Here Giulianotti notes that 'Football's modern move into the market and its more recent hypercommodification have served to dislocate players and club officials from supporters, particularly in the higher professional divisions', and that, 'Consequently, football fans resemble the fans of leading musicians, actors, and media personalities, through their largely unidirectional relationship towards these household names.' [36-37] Giulianotti acknowledges that older patterns of support co-exist with this model, but the suggestion is that they are being squeezed out by more media-inflected modalities.

1. Drawing the Foul: The Scandalous Visuality of Diving

'Scherzon nel petto per lo vento averso:

La vesta ondeggia, e in drieo fa ritorno'

–   Angelo Poliziano[1]

This chapter addresses a form of visual production that is integral to the field of football, but which opens itself out to aesthetic discourse in an especially complex manner. Images of footballers caught in the act of "diving", or "simulation", to use more official terminology, are highly expressive visual artefacts that lend themselves well to certain methods of analysis proper to the history of art, or more precisely to the area of study pursued by Aby Warburg and referred to as *Bildwissenchaft*, or "picture science" (although the term "visual studies" is a rough analogue for this, Horst Bredekamp notes that 'Because the meaning of the German word Bild includes image, picture, figure, and illustration, the term Bildwissenschaft has no equivalent in the English.' ["Bildwissenschaft" 418]).[2] Simulation is an offense prohibited following a ruling of the International Football Association Board (IFAB) in March 1999. In that year, the twelfth of FIFA's seventeen Laws of the Game was changed to include a clause stating, 'Any simulating action anywhere on the field, which is intended to deceive the referee, must be sanctioned as unsporting behaviour.' [27] Since then, it is required that a player guilty of simulation be shown a yellow card.[3] In almost every instance of simulation, the deceit in question relates to the feigning of fouls or injuries, which often entails the player leaping through the air in response to a challenge by an opposition player, hence the colloquial nomenclature "diving".[4]

As I will demonstrate in this chapter, players who are perceived to simulate the violent effects of a hard tackle in order to gain on-field advantages can be understood as subjecting their own bodies to what Warburg famously described as "pathos formulae", meaning figures of bodily movement chosen more or less consciously by artists in order to convey emotion. The action, in other words, entails the individualistic adoption of certain ingrained expressive iconographical flourishes during the course of play. Through the figure of diving, Warburgian method finds resonance within certain tacit and critical discourses proper to the cultural field of football. However, while applying these methods to the diving image, we must also take account of the ethical tone displayed by many of these discourses, since the diving image becomes prevalent in the British mass media at the end of the twentieth century, a period in which distinct *iconophobic* forces can be identified. Conceptions regarding the artistic resonances of diving are necessarily inflected by this local context, and thus the remarkable

relevance of certain concepts from Warburg's body of work to these images must be conveyed with sensitivity towards the perceived illegitimacy of this connection.

In the United Kingdom at this moment in time, diving images are highly likely to be encountered first and foremost as digitised images on the internet. As will be addressed at greater length in the following chapter, the rise in micro-publishing and the steady decline of print media ensures that the density of audio-visual and textual material related to football is much greater in the "virtual" space of the internet than the "material" world on the other side of the computer screen. The image that opened up my thinking around the issues discussed in this chapter – Dusan Vranic's press photograph of Côte d'Ivoire striker Didier Drogba diving during a 2006 FIFA World Cup game against Argentina [*Fig. 2*] – was found through a Google search, and entering a copy of the image as the search term into the same website's image search function returns an extensive tapestry of identical thumbnails, testifying to the photograph's frequent (and usually uncredited) reproduction on sports news websites and blogs. It is however in print media that the format has its origins, and in order to do justice to the specific historicity of the diving image this chapter will attend primarily to that context. What I refer to as the "diving image" is a coherent visual format that is brought about by a particular conjuncture in the history of British football, as reflected first and foremost in the tabloid media. It is in the context of this particular mode of production that the diving image is produced as a significant sub-genre of sporting visual culture, precipitating the recognition of what Natalie Alvarez refers to as a 'fulsome repertoire of diving behaviours'. [12] The continuing resonance of the kind of visual formula seen in Vranic's image of Drogba – a formula which, as will be made clear over the course of this chapter, enables us to state with little ambiguity that an otherwise unlabelled snapshot is a "diving image" – is attributable to framing efforts made in the pages of these publications. Crucially, these framing efforts mean that the "diving image" is frequently encountered as an object that is already coded as scandalous, prior to any editorial embellishment. Over the course of this chapter, I analyse both textual and visual sources to argue the case for this thesis. I make frequent reference to materials which contextualise the phenomenon of diving as it is understood in late twentieth century and early twenty-first century English football, before applying ideas drawn from disciplines relating to visual culture which help to bring other significant aspects of the diving image into focus. The diving image is an artefact suspended between the fields of sport and art, and the tensions in this arrangement are palpable in the mass-media commentaries which have helped to shape public conceptions of the act of diving.

Fig. 2: Didier Drogba dives following a challenge by Gabriel Heinze

(Fast) Bei der Geburt getrennt
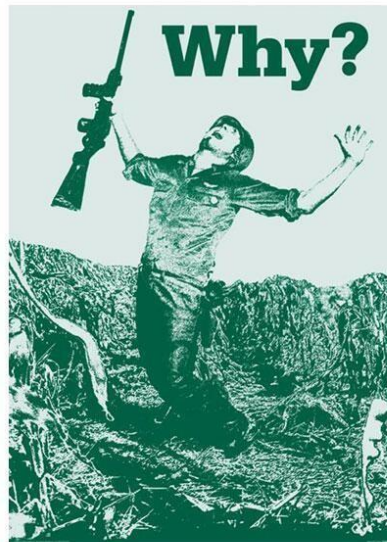
Fig. 3: Image uploaded to *11Freunde* Twitter account comparing Wayne Rooney and an American pacifist poster

My argument in this chapter is to a certain extent already crystallised in a post made by the Twitter account of the German football magazine *11Freunde* on 2 April 2014. On this night, *11Freunde* tweeted one of their occasional "Bei der Geburt getrennt" vignettes, which typically attempt to milk humour from visual comparisons of footballers and other public figures from culturally disparate fields. This diptych concerned the European Champions League quarter-final match between Manchester United and Bayern Munich played earlier that evening. Late in the game, the referee had made a controversial decision to send off Bayern's Bastian Schweinsteiger for a sliding tackle on United's Wayne Rooney – his second bookable offence. Rooney was widely judged to have made Schweinsteiger's tackle look more brutal than it really was, and thus stood accused of simulation. The team behind *11Freunde*'s Twitter account rendered their own accusation by juxtaposing a press photograph of Rooney's supposed dive with an image of a dying soldier depicted in an anti-war poster. The legend "(Fast) Bei der Geburt getrennt" ["(almost) separated at birth"], printed above the diptych, ironically suggests a kinship between these two images. [*Fig. 3*] These two images do indeed contain a common gesture: like the soldier, Rooney's arms are extended behind his body, his knees buckled, and his face arranged in a grimace. The spirit of this gag is clear to anybody acquainted with football in the twenty-first century, however: it suggests that Rooney had no need or right to assume the posture of a dying brother-in-arms, and is a pompous fraud for having done so.

Two crucial points which I present in this chapter are concentrated in this throwaway image. Firstly, I wish to develop the thesis that when footballers dive, they intentionally resemble figures from the wider world of visual culture. A Twitter search for other uses of the phrase "Bei der Geburt getrennt" in posts by the @11Freunde_de account demonstrates that the resemblances noted in these vignettes are usually less voluntary: Arsenal midfielder Mesut Özil is shown to share facial features with German broadcaster Hans Rosenthal and motor racing luminary Enzo Ferrari in a post from 27 September 2013, for instance, while in a post from 20 November 2015 the curly-haired Schalke 04 player Roman Neustädter is compared to a llama. The Rooney vignette is an exception in that the resemblance is actually initiated by the player in question: this will to resemblance is crucial both to the humour of the post and to an understanding of the phenomenon of diving in general. Secondly, and as stated above, I argue that at the level of media representation this resemblance is invariably riddled with guilt, a thesis which is also condensed in the *11Freunde* image. This ephemeral digital artefact then anticipates in drastically reduced form the overall trajectory of this chapter, but its reading of the diving phenomenon is confined to the level of suggestion and innuendo.

I maintain that while the analysis I offer in this chapter regarding diving's place within visual culture may in some sense already be known to football's fan community, a more nuanced version of the two fundamental theses contained within the *11Freunde* image lies on the other side of a substantial scholarly intervention. Working outwards from the basic assertion crystallised in the *11Freunde* post, and following Warburg's lead, I will examine the mechanics whereby "diving images" like the ones featuring Rooney and Drogba open themselves up to visual analysis and reach out to visual cultures beyond the pitch. Subsequently, considering textual sources that frame the diving image as a scandalous artefact, I discuss how the sense of guilt that animates these images is predicated on a historically contingent conception of the relationship between gender and display. Firstly, however, it is necessary to provide a more detailed account of diving's recognition by football's governing bodies, and the explosion of representations of the phenomenon which occurred in the United Kingdom in the last decade of the twentieth century.

Perceptions of diving in English football 1975-2016

While no clear first instance of "diving" used in the present sense is forthcoming, one may speculate that the term is borrowed from boxing: the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* entry for "dive, n." notes that the phrase "taking a dive" was used to describe "phantom knockouts" in that sport from as early as 1942. As will be discussed shortly, discussions of "diving" so called can be found in British tabloid press sources dating back to 1975, though references can be seen to multiply significantly throughout the 1990s. Although the wording of FIFA's prohibition on "simulation" suggests a need to protect referees from deceptive action of all kinds, there are only so many actions that players are able to mimic on the field of play, so that while "simulation" could hypothetically refer to all manner of offences, it is in practice all but synonymous with attempting to trick the referee into awarding fouls against rival players. This, furthermore, is how simulation is represented in a FIFA press release published on 22 February 1999, to mark the first meeting of the FIFA Football Committee, two days after IFAB's decisive meeting on the matter. The document notes that 'the International Football Association Board last weekend had taken stricter measures against players cheating by simulating fouls, with a yellow card obligatory.' A second press release, published ahead of the change to the Laws on 12 March 1999, contains FIFA President Sepp Blatter reflections on IFAB's ruling. This press release is noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, we glimpse an indication of the FIFA President's belief that 'women offend [the spirit of sportsmanship] far

less than men' [1]. A sense of diving as an "un-gentlemanly" but fundamentally male problem fits neatly into a broader worldview that has frequently been espoused by male commentators on women's football: Jean Williams reports that an understanding of women's football predicated on 'an essentialism combining moral virtue with femininity' can be felt in commentaries on the women's game from the mid-1970s onwards. [74-75][5] Secondly, Blatter acknowledges that while the resolution to punish players guilty of simulation may go some way towards eradicating the phenomenon, there is also a consensus among the game's protagonists that needs to be challenged. His appeal to footballers to take their own action to 'preserve the values' of their game suggests that in 1999, within the (male) playing community, simulation was somewhat normalised.

An increasing tendency among professionals to accept diving as a legitimate gambit has indeed been noted in recent years: as Steven Connor observes, 'The rule that you must not kick the man rather than the ball is gradually evolving into the tactical principle that you should avoid any kind of contact with your opponent that he or she might be capable of amplifying through pretence into a punishable offence.' [*Sport* 181] Fittingly, the effort of players to deceitfully turn contestations over the ball into situations from which they can reap advantages is known colloquially as "drawing the foul", "drawing" being used here in the sense of "pulling" or "dragging", but also suggesting a certain degree of visual artifice. In a package for an episode of *Monday Night Football,* broadcast during the 2011-12 English Premier League season (subsequently edited and uploaded to Youtube by user Horatio Spear), the presenter Gary Neville was invited to analyse whether simulation had become more widespread in the game in recent seasons, and responded along the lines that Connor identifies. Presenting a clip of Manchester United midfielder Ashley Young taking a dive in a game against Aston Villa, Neville chastises Young's opponent for being insufficiently nimble on his feet and presenting the opportunity for a form of bodily contact that Young was able to amplify, before stating that Young merely 'did what 95% of players do, and that is go to ground to win a penalty.' This view is re-affirmed when Neville's co-presenter reads out a statement prepared by Gordon Taylor, Chief Executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, who claims that 'as a player, if contact was made and you felt you had lost control, or you were not in a good position as you were, then you were not exactly told but, as a professional, would be expected to try to make the most of the opportunity.' In a similar way, West Ham United manager Sam Allardyce is quoted in a 2014 article by Darren Lewis as having argued that that, 'For every team, when you stay on your feet, particularly in the penalty area, it's a critical decision so you have to make the referee's mind up', suggesting that

simulation can be a legitimate on-field strategy if it helps to make small infractions more clear to the referee.

Many other examples could be given of this turn towards openly admitting and accepting active exaggeration or pretence on the part of a tackled player. However, they would be easily counterbalanced by polemics in which more stringent punishments for players found guilty of diving are sought. The *Daily Mail*, for example, ran a campaign called "Stand up for sportsmanship" in 2003, with columnist Ian Ladyman inviting readers to e-mail in the names of footballers guilty of diving for 'naming and shaming' [92]. *The Times* and the *Daily Express* followed suit in 2006, with *Times* journalist Kaveh Solhekol going as far as to contact every club in the Premier League and offer them anti-diving posters to be placed 'up in dressing rooms all over the country'. [110] Affirming Alvarez's assertion that the phenomenon is bound up with 'anxieties concerning cultural difference' [13], the latter of these campaigns was launched under the rubric of a "Crusade", linking the *Express*' editorial distaste for diving to an ideal of Englishness; this legend, accompanied by an image of a knight bearing a shield emblazoned with the cross of St. George, appears on the back page preview of Harry Harris and Matthew Dunn's article "Crackdown on cheats" [104]. Broadly, the divide on this issue seems to place professionals on the side of acceptance and journalists on the side of rejection. This is not uniformly the case, however: former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, for instance, consistently meted out a line about foreign players blighting the English game with their diving antics.[6] Liverpool head coach Brendan Rogers, meanwhile, occupied something of a middle ground when defending his Uruguayan striker Luis Suárez in a 2012 interview with David Maddock, suggesting that his charge was an 'easy target' for vilification on the issue of diving, adding that 'In Spain and South America…, it's almost seen as an extension of a striker's skills', while at the same time maintaining that 'of course, we don't like it when it's blatant.' [64] There is an emphasis on cultural difference foregrounded here too, but in this case it is used to offer an excuse for a player's actions on the basis of cultural conditioning.

Likewise, the reception of diving in English football journalism does not possess a single outlook; acceptance of the inevitability of gamesmanship can be read throughout the journalistic spectrum, matched in mass by a righteous indignation which portrays diving as uniquely perverse. For every scurrilous cartoon like the one of Didier Drogba discussed later in this chapter, there are examples like Tim Bradford's own take on Drogba from the calendar distributed in the August 2010 issue of *When Saturday Comes*. Here, alongside an image closely resembling the Vranic snapshot, Drogba is lampooned for his tendency to dive, though this is
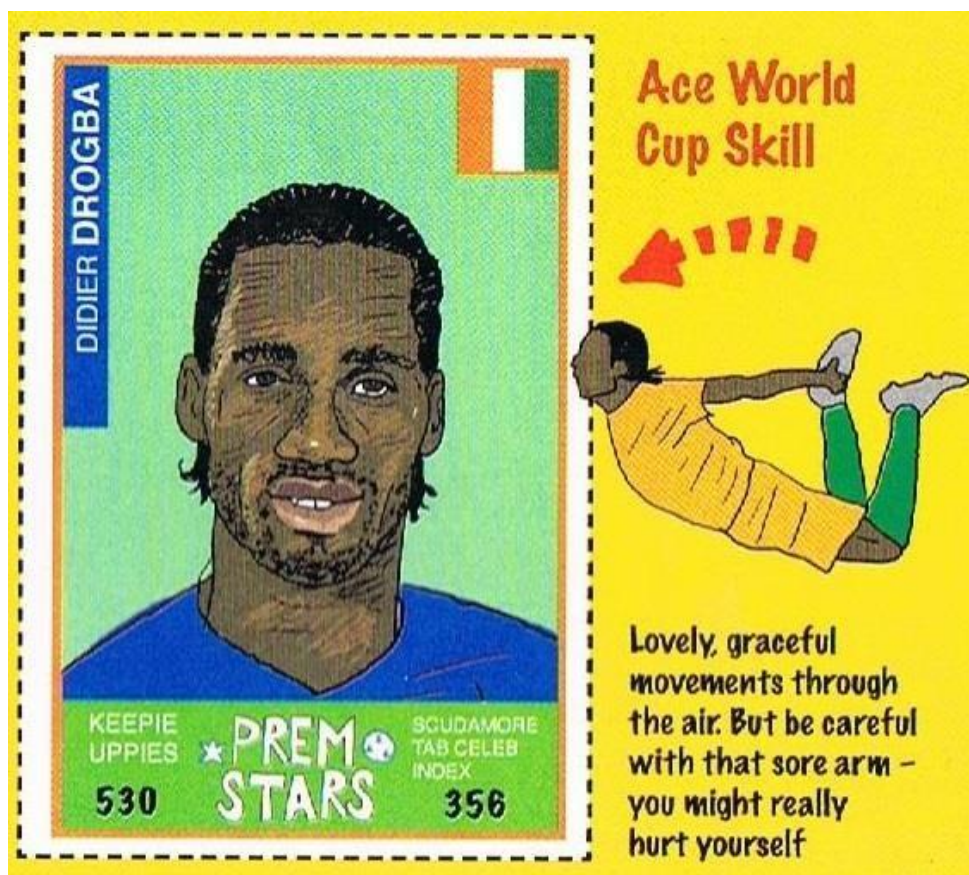
Fig. 4: Cartoon by Tim Bradford for *When Saturday Comes* addressing Drogba's diving antics at the 2010 FIFA World Cup

Fig. 5: Cartoon by Matt Johnstone for *The Guardian* depicting Luis Suárez

carried out in the same breath that various other Premier League stars are lampooned for their poor performances at the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Under the ironic rubric of 'Ace World Cup Skills', the poster "credits" Drogba with 'Lovely, graceful movements through the air', just as it "credits" England and Tottenham midfielder Aaron Lennon with 'Running down blind alleys really fast while the manager shouts and swears at him', and France and Chelsea striker Nicolas Anelka with 'Raging against the world because he's not appreciated, then sloping off in a big huff.' [*Fig. 4*] Here, diving is a target among many others which seems to embody the entitled, egoistic spirit instilled in elite players by the ethics and economics of the Premier League. The tone of the poster, matching *When Saturday Comes*' overall irreverent editorial attitude, is one of all-encompassing mockery, with diving not singled out as a unique debasement of the spirit of the game.

In a similar vein, *Guardian* columnist Barney Ronay claimed in 2013 that he could not sympathise with the 'current state of trigger-ready Suárez fury' which accompanied the striker's admission that he had dived to win a penalty in a Premier League game against Stoke City. Suggesting that diving has 'become a convenient muster point for inflamed and moralising self-assertion as English football finds itself ushered towards the status of a minor guest at its own cosmopolitan feast', Ronay argues that while Suárez possesses both a great deal of talent and a tendency towards dishonesty, these two sides of his personality are 'inexorably related'. This *rapprochement* is reflected in Matt Johnstone's illustration for the piece, which on the one side depicts Suárez in a characteristic diving posture and on the other side represents the player demonstrating his supreme skill with a football. The expressions of the opposing players are similar on both sides of the image, and the end result is delight on the part of the single fan depicted. [*Fig. 5*] A tendency to dive, this cartoon implies, might simply be the obverse of Suárez's improvisatory and imaginative footballing capacities.

These presentations which play down the exceptionalism of diving are at odds with one offered by Des Kelly in a column for the *Daily Mail* dated 29 December, 2004. While diving has been more prominent as a phenomenon since the beginning of the 1990s, the term does appear in the British press some decades earlier. A *Daily Express* article by Alan Thompson from 5 November 1975 responds to the Huddersfield player Bryan O'Neil's 'cheerful' admission 'that he had dived to win a penalty' by suggesting that with this admission football has been 'sent hurtling faster still towards complete moral decay'. [18] Four years later, in a *Daily Mail* article published on 22 October, Jimmy Hill's accusation that Manchester United's Mickey Thomas had dived to win a penalty prompts author Ronald Crowther to reflect on the

idea 'that the con trick has become an everyday practice in modern soccer'. [46] What is most noteworthy about this article is the manner in which it presents diving as equivalent to a form of "con trick" that is barely discussed in the present day: a second controversy in Manchester United's game against Ipswich was provided when '[Lou] Macari obstructed Frans Thijssen as Sammy McIlroy supplied the cross for Ashely Grimes to score'. [46] Similarly, the "moral decay" angle expounded in the 1975 *Express* article is compounded by 'the bloody brawl between Francis Lee and Norman Hunter' occurring at Derby County's Baseball Stadium on the same weekend. [18] The *Express* article makes no qualitative distinction between diving and genuine violence such as that drawn by Kelly in his 2004 column: where Bryan O'Neil's dive and Francis Lee and Norman Hunter's scrap are equally ignominious for Thompson, Kelly notes that '[s]cuffles on the pitch and confrontations in the tunnel happen during the heat of battle and, when the red cards and suspensions are being doled out, we even acknowledge the machismo of it all.' [55] Meanwhile, divers 'are vile aberrations. Like Emily from *Little Britain*, they flutter their scented handkerchief and squeal "I'm a lady" as they swoon to the floor.'[7] [55] Diving is hereby singled out from other forms of skulduggery, and in this case the crucial axis around which this distinction is arranged is one relating not to anxieties over cultural difference, but to anxieties over gender.

To attempt to decide between cultural difference and gender as the crucial formation underpinning commentaries on diving would however produce a false dichotomy, as the two are frequently related. Firstly, following Alvarez's suggestion that diving is associated with 'xenophobic rhetoric', it needs to be stated that diving is indeed congruent with certain footballing cultures, or at least fits more seamlessly into unwritten codes of behaviour that form the basis of the self-representations of certain nations with regards to football. [21] Brazilian football culture, for instance, picks up on the concepts of *jeitinho* ("little attitude") and the *malandro* ("trickster"), which run throughout Brazilian culture more broadly. The former refers in Lívia Neves de H. Barbosa's words to 'a flexible way of dealing with the surprises of daily life, a way of humanising the rules that takes into account the moral equality and social inequalities of persons in society', and the latter in the words of Roberto DaMatta to 'a personage who characteristically knows how to transform every disadvantage into an advantage.' [qtd. in Dennison & Shaw 21-22] These codes of conduct license diving as a means of making the most of unfavourable on-pitch situations. In a similar vein, Eduardo P. Archetti has demonstrated the importance of the concepts of the *pibe* ("lad") and the *baldío* to football in Argentina, a country with close geographical and sporting ties both to Brazil and to Luis Suárez's native Uruguay. The *baldío*, literally a patch of urban wasteland between two

Fig. 6: Diego Maradona dives in the 1986 FIFA World Cup final.

buildings, is a space 'associated with the experience of freedom and creativity', and radically disassociated from authoritarian spaces like schools or sports clubs. [191] It is from these spaces that the *pibe* emerges: such figures include Diego Maradona, the so-called *pibe de oro* ("golden *pibe*"), and Carlos Peucelle, whose style of play, for Archetti, 'transmits the idea that soccer is a game and, as such, can only be fully enjoyed when one has pure freedom.' [192] The *baldío* is a space that is not dominated by 'mature hard men' but by 'naughty, wilful and crafty boys', and it is in these spaces that Argentina's greatest talents have historically been nurtured. [192] The archetype of Argentinian football culture is thus permitted to attempt to gain advantages through trickery and deception, and a famous image of Maradona diving in the 1986 FIFA World Cup final illustrates the player's propensity to exploit this license. [*Fig. 6*]

Contrastingly, English football can be identified as adhering to codes of behaviour that are relatively ascetic and conservative, and thus aligned with a different image of masculinity. For David Winner, the prevailing mood of English football over the last century-and-a-half of its existence is reflected in an episode from Sir Walter Scott's novel *The Talisman*, bringing together the English crusader King Richard "the Lionheart" and the Ayyubid Sultan Saladin; in Winner's words

The great men exchange pleasantries in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Then they show off their martial skills. First, Richard hefts his giant, glittering broadsword overhead and smashes a big iron bar in half with a single mighty blow…Saladin responds in a thoroughly un-English manner: he places a silk cushion on end, then deftly slices it in two with his razor-sharp scimitar. [*Feet* 6]

In Winner's analogy, Saladin plays the role of the generic "foreigner" who is routinely pilloried by the British tabloid press as unnecessarily flamboyant. For Winner, 'English footballers are expected to display Lionheart qualities: strength, power, energy, fortitude, loyalty, courage', rather than "foreign" values such as 'delicacy, sleight-of-foot' and 'imagination'. [*Feet* 7] As a case in point, Winner cites the example of a raft of 'extraordinary mavericks' from the 1960s and '70s, 'players such as Rodney Marsh, Peter Osgood, Charlie George, Alan Hudson, Tony Currie, Stan Bowles and Frank Worthington', who failed to make an impact on the English national team because coaches Don Revie and Alf Ramsay favoured 'dull, brutal "hard-men" like Peter Storey.' [*Feet* 32] As well as being professionally marginalised, these "mavericks" were subjected to homophobic taunts, a current which still ran strong in the 1980s when 'Glen Hoddle was called "Glenda" because his visionary passing and perfect technique marked him out as a "poof" and a "big girl's blouse".' [*Feet* 35] In line with the suggestion made above, this episode demonstrates the manner in which foreignness and effeminacy are elided by certain commentators on the game.

In a review of the book from which these quotes are sampled, Harry Pearson suggests that Winner overstates the case for the hostility shown by English audiences towards unusually skilled players, noting that 'the two most talked-about League players of all time are Stanley Matthews and George Best', both of whom were noted for their flair. However flawed his diagnosis of English football's aesthetic imperatives may be, Winner's account nevertheless helps us to make sense of such phenomena as the *Daily Express*'s self-announced "crusade" against diving, or former England captain John Terry's assertion in a *Guardian* article by Mikey Stafford that 'I can speak about the England lads and I think it is something we don't do […] I think we're too honest, sometimes even in the Premier League you see the English lads get a bit of contact and stay on their feet and try and score from the chance they have been given.' [3] Diving is a form of "sleight-of-foot" which is routinely considered a foreign contagion in the British press, and the values that supposedly keep the English game "honest" are, as will be further explored over the course of this chapter, often more or less explicitly bound up with certain gendered expectations.

Diving and spectatorship after Hillsborough

Having given an account of diving's contemporary reception in the English press, it remains to account for the explosion of commentaries on diving occurring around the beginning of the 1990s, and which I have already suggested is at the root of the fixing of the "diving image" as an identifiable *topos* within football photography. Alvarez notes that 'The question remains whether the perceived surge in simulation is a result of an increase in the use of HD cameras and Skycams that allow heightened picture quality and flexible camera angles enabling viewers to watch and review footage with greater detail and ease', attributing to colleague Nicholas Hanson the observation that 'With the quality of today's cameras, it's hard to imagine a repeat of the "Hand of God" – the infamous moment during the Argentina versus England match at the 1986 FIFA World Cup when Maradona used his hand to score a goal.' [12] This latter point seems misguided in light of the fact that the "Hand of God" incident *was* caught by numerous cameras – and has produced an iconic image testifying to Maradona's status as the greatest *pibe* of them all – as well as FIFA's continued reluctance to use video replay technology to support or overturn refereeing decisions in the course of the game (the most that might have happened were today's video apparatus brought to bear on the incident would have been a retrospective suspension for the deliberate handball, but the goal would have stood). Nevertheless, at least with regards to the English context that is this chapter's concern, Alvarez is correct in her general insistence on considering the expansion of the media apparatus around football as a spur for diving's increased recognition.

It almost goes without saying that an increase in both the number and the quality of cameras trained on football has produced more opportunities for new visual *topoi* to emerge within the field of football photography. It is possible to take Alvarez's observation beyond these mechanical grounds, however. There is a socio-political aspect to this new media ecology: the broad tendency towards increased visibility afforded by the expansion of television coverage of English football since the birth of the Premier League in 1992 is articulated to a perceived loosening of local embeddedness as it relates to spectatorship. A teenager watching Manchester United games via an online live stream in Jakarta experiences the same mediated access as a hypothetical lifelong United supporter living in Stretford who, due to the inflated ticket prices occasioned by numerous economic forces, now prefers to watch the games on television.[8] The ease of access of the remote fan is acquired by turning the club into a global brand, occasioning a more ruthless marketization of the club in question and

thus necessarily realigning the club's relationship with their more geographically- and genealogically-rooted clientele.

The end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s is the site of a major realignment of the culture of football spectatorship in England. As David Webber discusses, there is an almost seamless relationship between the tragic events that unfolded at Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough stadium on 15 April 1989 and the establishment of the Premier League as an entertainment vehicle separate from all other divisions of English football in 1992. The ninety-six deaths that occurred as a result of a human crush on the terraces of the Leppings Lane stand during an FA cup semi-final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest marked a watershed in terms of negative perceptions of football spectators by the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher, in spite of the fact that the disaster has since been officially attributed to poor practice by South Yorkshire Police and not – as was the line of Thatcher's government and supportive media outlets – to the conduct of the fans themselves.[9] The Hillsborough disaster occurred as part of a conjuncture where the privatisation of public resources had become economic orthodoxy and where networks of working class solidarity were being dismantled. At the same time, football hooliganism was attracting widespread condemnation in light of earlier tragedies like the Heysel Stadium disaster of May 1985, where clashes between fans of Liverpool and Juventus brought about the collapse of a wall, killing thirty-nine people. Furthermore, football stadia were being revealed as inadequate and unsafe, the worst of these revelations coming less than three weeks before the Heysel incident, when 56 people were killed in a stadium fire at Bradford City's Valley Parade ground. As Webber reflects, these high-profile calamities were seized as a means of forcing a renewal of English football along the lines of a 'market mentality'. [9]

Two documents were crucial in bringing about this transformation. First, the Hillsborough Stadium Disaster Inquiry report of 1990, known as the "Taylor Report" after the name of its overseer, Lord Taylor of Gosforth, is most notable for its recommendation, subsequently enforced by the English and Scottish Football Leagues, that stadia be converted into all-seater venues. Clubs playing in the top two divisions in English football received state support to remove the terraces that had been a fixture of the spectator experience since football's initial rise to mass popularity at the beginning of the twentieth century, but which in light of recent events in the Leppings Lane Stand were now considered unsafe. Jean Williams notes that this shift in stadium infrastructure has become associated with a 'presumed feminisation of football.' [66] The provision of seating in grounds across the country was in

William's words widely supposed to 'represent a move towards a more civilised era of support', perceived as a smoothing-out of football spectatorship's more hyper-masculine and aggressive aspects. [66] Since those behavioural traits were considered culpable in some quarters for the Heysel and Hillsborough stadium tragedies, the move to all-seater stadia was presented as a desirable move towards providing stadia fit for women and families, thus opening the men's game out beyond its narrow spectator demographic.[10]

The second of these documents is more explicit about changing the social basis for football at the turn of the 1990s. In 1991 the English FA published their *Blueprint for the Future of Football*, which Webber views as an attempt to ensure that a 'market imperative would […] be *embedded* within the sport'. [10] Moving away from football's traditional basis in working-class communities, this *Blueprint* proposed a strategy for attracting more affluent fans to matches, suggesting that stadia refurbished in light of the Taylor Report could,

> [1] attract to football matches additional supporters, whose choice of attendance is more greatly influenced by the quality of the facilities than the football itself…[2] charge higher admission prices to those seeking greater levels of convenience and comfort…[3] increase the levels of catering and merchandising sales…[4] raise additional income from hospitality, conferencing, banqueting and executive facilities…and [5] derive income potential from non-football related sports and entertainment activities. [qtd. in Webber 10]

In this proposal, the renovation of stadium architecture is explicitly bound up with the re-orientation of the game away from working-class publics and towards the affluent middle-classes, as well as with an economistic attitude that seeks to encourage clubs to reap larger profits from their infrastructure and support base. As Webber notes, the new direction prompted by the Taylor Report and *Blueprint* in turn created an opening for the increased television coverage of elite clubs that ushered in the new era of the Premier League: the taming of the most unruly aspects of football spectatorship in stadia alongside the 'newfound market mentality' proposed in *Blueprint* helped to make football 'a far more attractive proposition to outside investors', ultimately resulting in the 'initial £305 million five-year deal' made by Rupert Murdoch's Sky Television plc for exclusive coverage of Premier League games. [11] Webber asserts that this deal 'ensured that…the top echelons of the game would suddenly be awash with money' and as a result sealed 'English football's "great transformation".' [11] The strategic alienation of football's traditional supporter base through architectural reconfiguration and the attendant ticket price rises were accompanied by a more expansive and glamorous presentation of English football's top division on television, and it is at this point that football in England may begin to be identified first and foremost as a media

spectacle, as opposed to the stadium-based working-class entertainment that it had been perceived to be throughout most of the twentieth century.[11]

The increase in television coverage of top-flight games that occurred in the early 1990s self-evidently created more opportunities for diving to be spotted and commented on. The traditional kick-off time of 3 P.M. on a Saturday has become increasingly irrelevant in the Premier League, which now staggers fixtures from Friday to Monday in order to allow for more games to be shown on television. Whereas earlier rhythms of spectatorship were focused on a couple of hours on a single afternoon, Sky's partnership with the Premier League made it possible to watch matches across the weekend, enabling fans to spot and remark on more of *everything*. Furthermore, instant replay and slow-motion technologies have played a major role in this kind of television coverage, enabling commentators like Gary Neville to produce packages which pick over in fine detail the anatomy of dives. However, Alvarez's suggestion to this effect needs to be qualified with an acknowledgement of the politics that underwrite this increased visibility. The improved visibility of present-day Premier League football did not appear in neutral circumstances but rather emerged from a moment of crisis with regards to long-established modes of spectatorship. The rise in commentaries on diving is coterminous with this emergence, and these commentaries tend towards a narrative of decline that is articulated to ideas about nationality and gender. Greater income from television enabled Premier League clubs to invest in talent from overseas, to which narratives about diving as a foreign contagion can be seen to respond in kind.[12] Furthermore, in line with Williams' suggestion that the changes wrought by the Taylor report were perceived to have effected a "feminisation" of football, numerous commentators have used diving as a lynchpin in their arguments that football is no longer, or is in danger of losing its status as a "man's game".[13] With football being squeezed by forces which threatened to alter its traditional make-up, diving emerged as a convenient peg upon which a reactionary commentariat could hang their fears of decline.

At the same time as this emergence there is a corresponding growth in diving imagery: the articles from the 1970s quoted above lack the kind of images, capturing guilty players mid-dive, that were touched on earlier, but as commentaries on the diving phenomenon increased with fans and pundits adjusting to the new terms offered by the Premier League, images of players leaping through the air with their arms outstretched and legs and head tilted backwards proliferated in the press. An article published in the 19 January, 1999 issue of the *Daily Express*, for instance, is accompanied by no fewer than four separate images of Tottenham's

Fig. 7: Spread from the *Daily Express* featuring David Ginola

Fig. 8: Spread from *The Mirror* featuring Gareth Bale

French winger David Ginola, each one replicating variations on this posture. [*Fig. 7*] From the outset, this visual formula was overdetermined, crystallising the anxieties outlined above, and by the second decade of the twenty-first century, the posture was so entrenched as a symbol of diving that editors could expect it to resonate without any other supporting visual cues: we see this in the case of Oliver Holt's column on page 59 of the *Daily Mirror* from 10 October 2012, where an article criticising the phenomenon is embellished with an image of Gareth Bale caught in the posture described above, his body cut out from the remainder of the image so that he appears to float against a background of text and white space. [*Fig. 8*] As we have seen, Bale's posture mirrors that of Rooney in the *11Freunde* vignette, Suárez in the cartoon that accompanied Barney Ronay's article on the striker, and Drogba in Vranic's photograph, which is in turn echoed in Tim Bradford's cartoon for *When Saturday Comes*. Owing to its frequent repetition in the contemporary visual culture of football, I maintain that this posture can be described and examined as a *pathos formula*, and it is to this art historical idea that I now turn.

The diving image as pathos formula

Pathos formula is a crucial term in the work of visual historian Aby Warburg, best known for his research on the re-emergence of visual themes from pagan art in the Italian Renaissance. Taking a contrasting stance to theories of Classical revival derived from the work of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, who argued that Greco-Roman forms were influential primarily on the basis of their 'noble simplicity and sedate grandeur in Gesture and Expression' [30], Warburg offered an account of Renaissance art in which the Classical heritage was presented as a source of tempestuous dynamism. In the prefatory note to his 1892 dissertation on Sandro Botticelli's paintings *Spring* (c. 1482) and *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1486), Warburg writes that

> It is possible to trace, step by step, how the artists and their advisers recognized "the antique" as a model that demanded an intensification of outward movement, and how they turned to antique sources whenever accessory forms – those of garments and of hair – were to be represented in motion. [89]

In the dissertation, Warburg uses a variety of sources – not just the Botticelli paintings but poetry by Angelo Poliziano and prose by Francesco Colonna – to demonstrate the tendency of these Quattrocento figures to 'turn to the arts of the ancient world whenever life was to be embodied in outward motion.' [108] In later writings, Warburg specifies that what these figures reproduce in their works can be referred to as *pathosformeln*, translated in the Getty Research Institute's collected edition of Warburg's writings as "emotive formulae" but

referred to in much of Anglophone academia as "pathos formulae". A striking example of this concept in action can be found in Warburg's discussion of the use of gestures derived from ancient representations of maenads, female worshippers of the god Dionysus, in a depiction of Mary Magdalen weeping under the cross by the Florentine sculptor Bertoldo di Giovanni. [Gombrich 247] The difficult fit between these two figures – on the one hand orgiastic revellers pursuing chthonic religion and on the other a woman whose mortal sins were redeemed by the love of Christ – is central to Warburg's overall understanding of how pathos formulae are preserved and transmitted.

As Warburg habitually presented his research through presentations and lectures as opposed to writings, much of his legacy was concretised through the efforts of E.H. Gombrich, who brought together many of Warburg's notes on pathos formulae in his 1970 book *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, and by later scholars such as Giorgio Agamben and Georges Didi-Hubermann. Agamben describes the pathos formula as 'an indissoluble intertwining of an emotional charge and an iconographic formula.' [90] In coming to terms with the concept of the pathos formula it is essential to understand that it is rooted in affect as much as cognition. In reproducing gestures associated with Dionysian ritual, Bertoldo di Giovanni is to some extent *undone* by the charge that these emotional gestures carry forward into his day and age. Warburg's words to this effect, reproduced by Gombrich, are worth quoting at length:

> It is in the zone of orgiastic mass-seizures that we must look for the mint which stamps upon the memory the expressive movements of the extreme transports of emotion, as far as they can be transplanted into gesture language, with such intensity that these engrams of the experience of suffering passion survive as a heritage stored in the memory.[14] They become the exemplars, determining the outline traced by the artist's hand as soon as maximal values of expressive movement desire to come to light in the artist's expressive handiwork. [245]

In Warburg's view, the kinds of bodily passions proper to Dionysian ritual are stored in the physical memory of humanity and can be activated as formulae for artistic representation as and when the need arises, occasionally in contexts that are radically at odds with the roots of the formula, as is the case with Bertoldo's maenadic Magdalene. According to Gombrich, Warburg maintained the need for decorum in such activations, claiming that 'The artist who uses the dangerous "superlatives" of thiasotic origin may draw on the full energy of these symbols without at the same time giving rein to their archaic mentality', and that 'Unless the artist handles these "memories" with care and keeps them at a safe distance, he will be overpowered by the intense life they radiate.' [247] Didi-Hubermann argues the

case for understanding pathos formulae 'according to the dialectical perspective of repression…and of the return of the repressed', using Warburg's phrase "plastic formulae of compromise" to designate the former pole and "maximum degree of tension" for the latter. [627] In Renaissance art, pathos formulae are reproduced as a result of stirrings of atavistic bodily tension, but always entail a degree of compromise on the level of cognition as gestures of "thiasotic origin" are translated into plastic forms suitable for a Christian epoch.

My intention in discussing Warburg here is not to suggest that the kind of posture noted in images capturing players mid-dive derives from "thiasotic engrams" (although such an analysis would not be out of the question) but to emphasise this dialectical perspective as a potentially important figure for understanding these images. Lacking Warburg's philological acumen, I am unable to trace the posture in Vranic's image of Drogba to any particular Classical source, but I am nevertheless able to identify it as an established pathos formula which is repeated frequently within the visual culture of contemporary football, and which resonates with other images of postures drawn from quite alien contexts. Furthermore, there are clearly issues of decorum at stake in the reproduction of these postures, with many commentators frowning upon diving as an unethical or immoral gesture.

A second example from the small set of academic interventions into the subject of diving furnishes us with some crucial terms for describing the formula in question. In Paul H. Morris and David Lewis's behavioural psychology study "Tackling Diving: The Perceptions of Deceptive Intentions in Association Football", the researchers compiled clips and conducted a series of experiments in order to compile a taxonomy of simulation in football. Their coding consists of four categories which purport to offer clear guidance to referees in deciding between simulation and genuine foul play. In order to be safely identified as a dive, Morris and Lewis suggest, the incident in question must lack "temporal contiguity", "ballistic continuity" and "contact consistency". [8] In addition, Morris and Lewis identify a fourth category, which they call the "archer's bow", and which is noted as a behaviour 'unique to deception'. [8] In 'its most complete form', the authors state, 'the tackled player resembles a drawn bow: the chest is thrust out; the head is back; the arms are fully raised and pointing upwards and back; the legs are raised off the ground and bent at the knee.' [8] On the page over from this list of categories, one of the researchers provides an illustration of the posture, which closely resembles Vranic's snapshot of Drogba. [*Fig. 9*]

Morris and Lewis' identification of this fourth category, and their illustration of its form, advances the notion that diving has its own proper formula of expression, arising
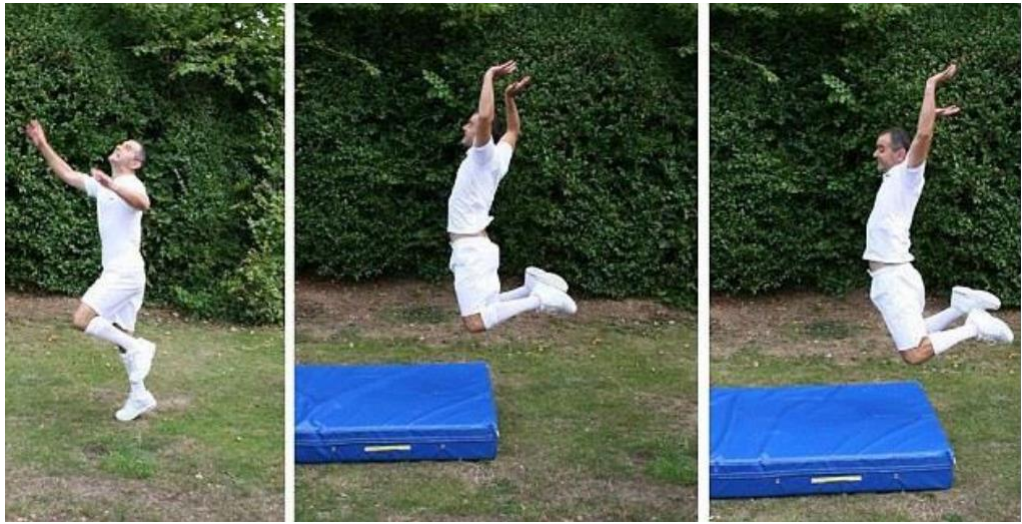
Fig. 9: Paul H. Morris and David Lewis' illustration of the "archer's bow"

Fig. 10: Robert Capa, *Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death, Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936*, 1936. Photograph.

Fig. 11 : The *arc de cercle*; plate from Paul Richer's *Études cliniques sur l'hystéro-épilepsie ou grande hystérie* (1881)

Fig. 12: Louise Bourgeois, *Arch of Hysteria*, 1993. Bronze with silver nitrate patina.

Independently of the bodily postures which might be found in the rest of the game, and which is occasionally "perfected", as I would argue is the case in the Drogba image. Morris and Lewis confess that 'The origin of the set of behaviours we name the "archer's bow" is to a degree puzzling', before noting that the most straightforward motivation is communicability: 'the behaviour is clearly noticeable.' [11] Remarking that the position adopted in players performing the "archer's bow" is contrary to the momentum which challenges would ordinarily create for the tackled player, as well as offering little by way of self-protection, the researchers surmise that 'the "archer's bow" is used by the player to convey the extreme nature of the collision; the collision is so extreme that all the normal self-protection mechanisms involved with preparing for the fall cannot be utilized.' [12] Players diving in this manner cut off their natural urge to attempt to position their body in such a way as to break their fall, in order to emphasise their own vulnerability; in reaching for the apex of expressive representation, the "archer's bow" thus reveals its own falsity. Morris and Lewis subsequently compare their *ur*-image of the "archer's bow" to Robert Capa's famous 1936 photograph of a dying Spanish Republican soldier, a juxtaposition intended to connect their own material to a visual tradition of hyperbolic suffering. [*Fig. 10*] This, of course, is an almost identical gesture made by the *11Freunde* diptych discussed earlier in this chapter.[15]

What both these comparisons miss, however, is the unusual enveloping circularity of the "archer's bow" posture as found in Vranic's Drogba image. It is not just that Drogba's knees are buckled and his arms thrown back in a gesture of helplessness, but one end of his body also appears to be trying to meet the other in mid-air. I would suggest that what this image most resembles is the *arc de cercle* or *opisthotonos* noted in hysteric patients by the 19th century French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot, and reproduced in an illustration from anatomical artist Paul Richer's book *Études cliniques sur l'hystéro-épilepsie ou grande hystérie* (1881) as well as a Louise Bourgeois sculpture from 1993 entitled "Arch of Hysteria". [*Figs. 11 & 12*] In his work on the populations of the Salpêtrière mental hospital in Paris, Charcot worked with Richer to derive stable visual categories of the various symptoms that hysteric patients presented in the midst of their illness, ultimately presenting these visual categories as photographs in the multi-volume book *Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtrière* (1876-80). An extract from Charcot's description of a male patient known as "Gui" furnishes us with a description of hysteric symptoms that resonate closely with the "archer's bow":

> He assumes very bizarre postures and attitudes…From time to time, the contortions described above stop for a moment and give way to the distinct position of the *arc de cercle*. This sometimes involves a true opisthotonos, in which the loins are separated

from the plane of the bed by a distance of more than fifty centimeters, with the body resting on the head and heels. [qtd. in Micale 152]

The "body resting on head and heels" describes with some accuracy the posture struck by Drogba in the Vranic image, if one rotates it by 90 degrees and imagines that the figure is resting on a bed rather than leaping through the air. The poses struck by Drogba in this photograph and the patient "Augustine" in the illustration by Richer are also uncannily alike.

In addition to his insights on Warburg, Didi-Hubermann has offered a compelling account of the culturally-constructed nature of late 19th-century conceptions of hysteria, and his work on Charcot's attempts to create visual taxonomies of hysterical symptoms helps us to further comprehend the resonance between the "archer's bow" and the *arc de cercle*. In the obituary he wrote for his teacher, Sigmund Freud described Charcot's work like so:

> In his mind's eye the apparent chaos presented by the continual repetition of the same symptoms [eventually] gave way to order […] The complete and extreme cases, the "types", could be brought into prominence with the help of a certain sort of schematic planning, and, with these types as a point of departure, the eye could travel over the long series of ill-defined cases – the "*formes frustres*" – which, branching off from one or other characteristic feature of the type, melt away into indistinctness. [12]

Photography was viewed by Charcot as a means of recording symptoms with accuracy and objectivity, but the doctor's ability to draw medical understanding from the images he captured of the various symptomatic stages of hysteria relied on a crucial level of schematisation. The *formes frustres* that patients presented (the term *frustre* evokes the blurred appearance of drawings made by rubbing crayon or graphite onto paper placed on top of a coin or medal) needed to be brought into a greater level of coherence: Charcot's studies were predicated on an attempt to locate, by means of photography and with reference to figures from the history of artistic depiction of bodily extremes, a series of ideal types that could provide a pedagogical tool for recognising the various waves of symptoms proper to an attack of hysteria. As Didi-Hubermann notes, at the same time that Charcot was making this effort to reify a set of orthodox symptoms, 'every hysteric had to make a regular show of her orthodox "hysterical nature"…to avoid being transferred' to the division of the hospital set aside for 'so-called incurable "alienated women."' [*Hysteria* 170] Hysterics, on this account, retained some mastery over their violent bodily displays, pressing them into the most stereotypical forms when doing so enabled them to gain some small amelioration of their miseries. This transference between patients and doctors, for Didi-Hubermann, 'is how hysteria, at the Salpêtrière, always went on *repeating itself*.' [*Hysteria* 174] The viability of Charcot's wards depended upon a correlation between his painstakingly-constructed schema

and the symptoms that actually presented themselves, and patients were given incentives to oblige their doctors. The comparison between the *arc de cercle* and the "archer's bow" is strengthened by this interpretation: as with all of the more well-defined symptoms of hysteria, the *arc de cercle* is a behaviour which is designed to be "noticeable", in the sense of fitting into a schema of bodily postures. The posture proves an effective pathos formula for individuals to express a formulaic kind of bodily torment both in the Salpêtrière and on the football field.

Whatever the origins of the *opisthotonos* posture are – the medical researchers Jean-Pierre Luauté, Olivier Saladini and Olivier Walusinski cite descriptions of the posture dating back to the 2nd century A.D. [391] – it can certainly be argued that it picked up an association with femininity after appearing in Charcot's work. While the description of the *arc de cercle* cited earlier described a male patient, hysteria retains mostly feminine associations in the cultural imaginary: Mark Micale notes its reputation as a 'classically "female" disorder', [5] while Didi-Hubermann describes it as 'the symptom […] of *being a woman*.' [*Hysteria* 68] As Luauté et al. remark, the *opisthotonos* pose has become an 'emblem of hysteria' and correlatively a 'cliché of a compelling feminine desire'. [391-92] We can see the former association in the title of Louise Bourgeois' *Arch of Hysteria*, which actually depicts a male body, and the latter association in the description given for the work on the website of the National Gallery of Canada, where the sculpture resides:

> While working at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, Charcot sought to represent hysteria by documenting the performances of his female patients. The physical tension of the hysterical arch - an intense muscular contraction, resulting in immobility and paralysis of the limbs - is emblematic of an equally extreme emotional state. Bourgeois makes this highly vulnerable position even more so by suspending her male figure from the ceiling. In choosing to represent him in an attitude traditionally associated with the female, the artist transgresses the social and sexual roles assigned to women, challenging the misconception of hysteria as a female malady.

This blurb reproduces the conventional wisdom that the *opisthotonos* posture, seen in both the *arc de cercle* and the "archer's bow", is a characteristically feminine one. The posture is thus a disruptive one in which to find Didier Drogba, a player well known for his physically commanding style of play, to the extent that his name 'has become a synonym for "strong" in the nouchi language, the Ivorian slang based on French.' [Künzler & Poli 208] Crucially, what is dramatized in the pathos formula common to both the *arc de cercle* and the "archer's bow" is an evacuation of masculine self-sufficiency and equilibrium: in Vranic's image, Drogba's body appears to be seized by a violent influence from which it cannot protect itself. The result is an emasculating sense of passivity, abandon and abasement.

Fig. 13: Arjen Robben celebrates Netherlands' victory over Mexico in the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

It is here that Warburg's dialectic of "tensions" and "formulae of compromise" can be re-introduced. Like Bertoldo di Giovanni's maenadic Magdalene, there is an awkward fit between the associations of Drogba's pathos formula and the performative context into which it is inserted. Particularly in Britain, football has historically been coded as a masculine activity in which the physical characteristics of strength and self-control have been considered crucially important. In the Vranic photograph, Drogba can be seen replicating a pathos formula which expresses the antithesis of these characteristics. These kinds of bodily display are not absent from the rest of the canon of football photography, as players frequently strike similar poses when celebrating goals. [*Fig. 13*] What differentiates images of such moments from Vranic's is their relative degree of "compromise": with some notable exceptions that will be introduced shortly, there does not appear to be a widespread backlash against players celebrating goals in ostentatious fashion, while players channelling pathos formulae associated with bodily abandon in order to win advantages from the referee are pilloried for failing to keep these overdetermined expressive forms "at a safe distance". As is crystallised in *11Freunde*'s take on Wayne Rooney's dive against Bayern Munich, the diver's guilt revolves around their having been overpowered by a will-to-resemblance in indecorous circumstances.

As is the case with Charcot's movements from *formes frustres* to clinical categories, a willingness to schematise unruly physical phenomena underpins Morris and Lewis' identification of the "archer's bow". Alvarez suggests that 'Morris and Lewis' schema seems to exist in a naïve relation to the idiosyncrasies of bodily form that are always already at play in the repertoire, which is one of the reasons – beyond the speed of play and distance on the pitch – referees have such difficulty in discerning fake from foul.' [19] Although "naïve" does not seem to me an adequate label for Morris and Lewis' self-acknowledged efforts to sift through the *formes frustres* and distil diving behaviours into an standardised set of categories, Alvarez is correct to cast doubt on the potential pedagogical efficacy of their research given the speed at which a behaviour like the "archer's bow" occurs in real time. On the other hand, as Lynda Nead notes in the essay discussed in my introduction, well-timed sporting snapshots offer 'a delay, an extraction from the ceaseless motion of the [contest] that allows a contemplative and perhaps critical spectatorship.' [310] The agency that enables me to contemplate and critically discuss Vranic's image of Drogba in terms of the historicity of the pathos formula it puts on display belongs partly to the player and partly to the photographer. Briefly then, I wish to introduce a set of further images in which the "archer's bow" is spectrally present but which would not necessarily have led me to the same conclusions as the Vranic photograph.

Firstly, there are two snapshots from the Getty Images archive depicting the same passage of play that is caught in the Vranic image, but at comparatively inexpressive interludes. In Alex Livesey's image of the dive, Drogba's arms are not yet extended behind his back or have perhaps been withdrawn from their position in the Vranic image, denying the kind of enveloping circularity that makes the latter so reminiscent of Bourgeois' *Arch of Hysteria*. [*Fig. 14*] David Hecker's shot is further removed from the gesture's expressive apex: neither set of limbs is aligned, and the player's back is comparatively straight. [*Fig. 15*] While the Vranic image provides a more or less perfect expression of the *opisthotonos* posture that Morris and Lewis refer to as the "archer's bow", these alternative takes reveal the extreme ephemerality of that gesture in real time. Timing is clearly a significant factor in producing the kinds of snapshots that can provide a prototype for the diving image, as I have suggested the Vranic snapshot does. We can further reflect upon the relationship between the ideal time of maximum expressivity and the "idiosyncrasies of bodily form" that are felt in a wider time frame by considering the episode of Arjen Robben's dive to gain a match-winning penalty for the Netherlands in their 2014 FIFA World Cup quarter-final match against Mexico. Of three images by Press Association photographer Wong Maye-E which are explicitly identified by

Figs. 14 & 15: Two alternative views on Drogba's dive against Argentina

Fig. 16: Arjen Robben dives in Netherlands' match against Mexico at the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Fig. 17 (below): Piñata representation of Robben produced by angry fans of the Mexican national team after this match

their captions as depicting Robben's penalty-winning dive, only one resonates fully with the "archer's bow"; the other two show buckling knees and outstretched hands but crucially lack the bent-back posture seen in the latest image in the sequence. [*Fig. 16*] Unsurprisingly, it is this last snapshot that supplies the prototype for a piñata produced by fans of the Mexican national team, modelled on Robben's figure in the aftermath of the game as a humorous means of redress for the Dutchman's transgression, images of which were shared widely on social media platforms. [*Fig. 17*] The appearance of this accusatory piñata demonstrates that the uptake of the "archer's bow" as a recognisable *topos* in vernacular visual culture is dependent on photographers being able to catch the pathos formula employed by diving players in their deceptive performances at its expressive apex.

To return to the distinction made earlier in the chapter between the technical means which allow diving images to be captured and the cultural context which allows them to spread, however, it should be noted that this capacity for capturing dives at their expressive apex has existed since the very beginnings of sports photography. It is the re-alignment of English football's values at the end of the twentieth century that lifts these press photographs out of the vaults of the Press Association, Getty Images and other agencies and onto the pages of newspapers and blogs. Whether the editors reproducing this material are aware of Charcot and the *arc de cercle* or not, what a well-timed snapshot like those produced by Vranic and Wong captures is an accusation of *will-to-resemblance* on the part of the leaping player. In these images, Drogba and Robben are caught reaching out to facets of visual culture which lie outside football's sphere of influence, and the pathos formulae which they appear to be seeking to reproduce are either intrinsically debasing – as is the case with the decidedly feminising *arc de cercle* – or at least resonate with the footballer's own actions in an ironic fashion, as we see in the *11Freunde* vignette. Beyond specific resonances, however, I argue that *will-to-resemblance as such* is bound up with questions of gender in some of the English commentaries on diving that I have previously alluded to. The "archer's bow" is a pathos formula which communicates a disintegration of masculine somatic self-sufficiency, but the *communicativity* which Morris and Lewis identify as a determining force for this posture is itself already at stake in criticisms of players like Drogba and Ginola, and can be addressed using frameworks derived from certain theorisations of gender. It is to these notions of the relationship between gender and display that I will now attend.

Diving, metrosexuality and excessive display

Ginola, seen performing four variations on the "archer's bow" in the aforementioned article from the *Daily Express*, is notable for his role in the development of an unorthodox way of displaying the male body which became an increasing fixture in English media culture over the course of his involvement with English football. In the late 1990s, Ginola starred in numerous advertisements for the French cosmetics company L'Oréal, employing his long hair and good looks to help sell various shampoo products. In a television advertisement for the L'Oréal brand Elvive from 1997, uploaded to Youtube by user happyhero1985, Ginola is presented in an empty football stadium, declaring that "he just wants to feel good about the way he looks". The camera lingers over Ginola's features, before he finally delivers the company's tagline, "I'm worth it". From the perspective of 2016, there is nothing terribly unusual about this kind of presentation of a professional footballer: other figures to since appear in advertisements for hair products include Cristiano Ronaldo, Luis Figo and Joe Hart, with each advertisement featuring close-up shots of the respective players grooming themselves. [16]

Numerous scholarly interventions have nevertheless suggested that the time period in which Ginola produced his L'Oréal advertisements was a "historical moment in the representation of masculinity." This phrase is lifted from the title of Momin Rahman's 2004 essay on the figure of David Beckham, a contemporary of Ginola and an early icon of what had by Rahman's time come to be referred to as "metrosexual" identity. This popular term, first coined by the writer Mark Simpson, entered the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 2001, where it refers to 'A man ([especially] a heterosexual man) whose lifestyle, spending habits and concern for personal appearance are likened to those considered typical of a fashionable, urban, homosexual man.' Writing in the wake of this entry, Rahman observes a 'current cultural fascination with Beckham' as well as a 'constant mediatized reproduction of him', suggesting that these phenomena are related to a 'convergence' between 'the dislocation of masculinity from its traditional referents' and 'the emergence of masculinity as a commodifiable identity.' [231] Earlier in the article, Rahman states that

> Beckham is a public figure of some controversy and contradiction, captain of the England football team […] and international model (for Police sunglasses until 2003), fashion dandy and sarong wearer, and extravagant, even by footballer and/or celebrity standards, whilst hailing from good working-class roots. [220]

In this description we can gauge some sense of Beckham's "dislocation of masculinity from its traditional referents", which rests on his unusual and ostentatious dress sense, as well as his

"commodifiable identity", evident in his modelling deal with Police sunglasses. Rahman also quotes a paragraph from a 2002 *Gentleman's Quarterly* (*GQ*) article on Beckham which ends, 'He is, surely, the only heterosexual male in the country who could get away with being photographed half-naked and smothered in baby oil for *GQ* and still come over as an icon of masculinity.' [220] The contours of "metrosexuality" can be further glimpsed here: Beckham is evidently a heterosexual male but is comfortable with presenting himself for admiration in a manner more readily associated with women or queer men. Even when not hawking products, Beckham's heterodox presentation in the pages of publications like *GQ* has roots in the culture of consumerism: as Rahman puts it, 'Beckham as subject matter sells, precisely because he is constructed and represented with reassuring and dissonant elements of masculinity.' [231] Reinforcing this latter point, Sarah Gee claims that 'Beckham's flexible masculinity' is 'almost exclusively driven by the political economy of consumer culture' and is 'given credibility within the context of global consumer capitalism.' [930] Following Rahman's reading, it can be stated that the "historical moment in the representation of masculinity" underway during Beckham and Ginola's playing careers is one in which the heterosexual male body became available for commodified display in a manner that had previously been unthinkable, or at least highly unusual.

Using David Coad's work on metrosexuality as a reference, we can qualify these remarks by suggesting that the manner of display identified by Rahman has been particularly unusual in the context of professional sport. For Coad, the conception of sexuality historically reproduced in commentaries around sports like football 'highlights and exacerbates ambient gender and sexual mythologies', particularly ones that are built upon a foundation of 'homophobia and misogyny'. [17] Offering a comprehensive demonstration of this thesis is beyond the remit of this chapter, though we can find useful evidence of it in a 1981 article from FIFA's in-house publication *FIFA News*, where a homophobic conception of the desired code of conduct among players is articulated to a particular conception of bodily display. The article is written by Rene Courte, then PR and Press Officer for the Federation, who describes the resolutions of a meeting of FIFA's Technical Committee, placing particular emphasis on the idea that players ought to act as role models for the general public. As Courte recounts,

> Members of the FIFA Technical Committee expressed their concern about the excessive demonstrative attitude of some players and teams when a goal is scored. For several years various National Associations have attempted to subdue the un-manly behaviour of some football players who embrace, kiss and hug each other in an over-emotional fashion after scoring a goal. [461]

Courte's words in this passage explicitly associate demonstrativity with male effeminacy. Horst Bredekamp notes that the attempted implementation of the prohibition discussed in this meeting was badly received, arguing that 'Barely one announcement of recent times has been met with such unanimous refusal as this ban on body contact.' [*Bilder* 159] Describing the game as it is played in the twenty-first century, Connor remarks that goal celebrations are still an occasion in which 'the careful quartering and quarantining of territorial position which characterizes modern soccer, with each player responsible for patrolling a particular zone of play' gives way 'to a tangle of limbs as the scoring team fling themselves on the scorer, in a wriggling mass of limbs and extremities.' [*Sport* 116] At the same time, one finds evidence of FIFA's attempts to police visual display in their prohibition against players celebrating goals by removing their shirts, climbing onto the perimeter fences that surround the pitch, or performing gestures 'which are provocative, derisory or inflammatory', added to the Laws of the Game in 2004 [39] This regulation, which appears in the same section of the document as the prohibition on "simulation", reproduces one of the terms that appears in the 1981 report: referees are advised that 'While it is permissible for a player to demonstrate his joy when a goal has been scored, the celebration must not be excessive.' [39] The emphasis on gender is absent from this document, replaced by a concern for "timewasting", but the repetition of the word "excessive" gestures towards the earlier, more explicitly homophobic context in which this regulation was first mooted. [39]

The FIFA Technical Committee's notion of an "un-manly" "excessive demonstrative attitude" resonates with an influential theorisation of the relationship between gender and visual display, presented by John Berger in his 1972 book *Ways of Seeing*. In an essay dealing with the sexual politics of the nude as it appears in the history of Western and non-Western art, Berger offers a summary of the scopic conditions proper to patriarchal society. 'While 'A man's presence' is for Berger expressive of 'what he is capable of doing to you or for you', the conventional presence of a woman 'expresses her own attitude to herself, and defines what can and cannot be done to her.' [45-46] Berger goes on to suggest that while according to patriarchal convention 'Men survey women before treating them', woman by contrast 'comes to consider the *surveyor* and the *surveyed* within her as the two constituent yet always distinct elements of her identity as a woman.' [46] Berger concludes the introductory section of the essay by suggesting that

> One might simplify this by saying: *men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women.
> Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations
> between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor

of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight. [47]

It is important to note here that Berger is not promoting an essentialist reading of the differences between the male and female psyche but describing normative conceptions of scopic relations between men and women. The act of becoming an "object of vision" is one which is contingently but consistently coded as feminine: this reading of normative scopic relations is supported by the *FIFA News* article cited above, where demonstrativity and effeminacy are explicitly yoked together. The notion of "metrosexuality" as a variant form of heterosexual masculinity can also be read in the terms set out by Berger in this essay: for Coad, metrosexuality 'offers males roles' which enforcers of normative gender relations have typically 'ascribed exclusively to women: vanity, narcissism, exhibitionism, and passivity in front of the male gaze.' [34] Ginola's shampoo advertisement, seen in this light, represents a heterodox performance of masculinity, in which the footballer assumes a kind of scopic positioning more readily associated with femininity.

In line with this, the identification of figures like Ginola with the rise of sporting metrosexuality in the 1990s produces a reactionary backlash against such figures in which diving, as a different kind of "excessive demonstrative attitude", is prominently figured. Des Kelly, whose conservative sexual politics were established earlier on in this chapter, wrote about Ginola's tendency to dive in a column for *The Mirror* dated 22 January, 1999. Kelly references Ginola's shampoo advertisement and his dives in consecutive paragraphs:

> Whenever Mr. Ginola pops up on TV with his shampoo bottle to declare: "I'm not a movie star, I'm a footballer…" remember why. It's because he's such an appalling actor.

> On four separate occasions against Wimbledon last weekend, Ginola went down quicker than Monica Lewinsky in the Oval Office. And at least she waited until she was inside the box. [53]

Having thus questioned Ginola's sexual orientation by comparing him to the female intern who had lately achieved infamy as a result of a series of sexual encounters with then-President of the United States Bill Clinton, Kelly goes on to do so several more times over the course of the article. Discussing an interview for *Football Focus* in which Ginola confessed that while playing in France he was known by the nickname "Little Prince", Kelly quips '"Little Ponce" more like.' [53] Kelly then accuses Ginola of possessing the 'morals of a pop tart', and intimates that the player had been offered a part by gay film director Pedro Almodóvar, known for his works exploring various aspects of Spanish LGBT experience. [53] Here the old scopic order which was in the process of being renegotiated outside of queer culture by

metrosexuals is reasserted, as Kelly forcibly elides Ginola's metrosexual bearing with stereotypical conceptions of homosexuality.

In her 2013 essay on queer scopic engagements with David Beckham, Amelia Yeates employs the term "retrosexual" to describe this kind of reaction, a reaction which Kelly attempts to justify by offering an account of where Ginola's value as a player truly lies. [114] As Kelly remarks in his column on Ginola, the player

> is revered by the Spurs fans, not because he has mastered the careful flick of the locks, the Gallic shrug, or the winning smile for the camera. He is lauded at the club because he is a footballer who has the ability to make the White Hart Lane admission charge seem worthwhile with one scintillating run, a jaw-dropping turn or a searing shot.
>
> Sadly, he does not seem to understand that one pitiful somersault with pike over an imaginary leg destroys that magic.

Unlike the homophobes that, in Winner's account, taunted Glen Hoddle for his skilful technique, what is taboo for Kelly is not Ginola's playing style but his inability to sustain the kind of "magical" investment which he is capable of inspiring in fans. In this passage there is a clear juxtaposition between modes of performance in which Ginola *solicits* the visual attention of those around him and modes of performance in which he *earns* that attention. Kelly is not averse to the idea of positioning Ginola as an object of scopic attention – his actions on-field are described as justifying the price of admission – but problems arise when the player becomes aware of his own positioning as such. That is to say, Kelly posits a situation in which, against the grain of the scopic relations theorised by Berger, men are acceptably watched by other men, but further posits that the participants in this situation are protected from self-reflexivity by a kind of "magic" veil engendered by the player's dazzling skill. Kelly's "retrosexuality" can be understood as a disavowal of the extent to which football's scopic conditions elide a species of gaze normatively coded as feminine or homosexual with what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes as "homosociality", a form of relationality exemplified by activities of "'male bonding," which may […] be characterized by intense homophobia, fear and hatred of homosexuality." [*Men* 1] Diving highlights the potential overlap of these phenomena through an "excessive" form of demonstrativity in which players, rather than getting their heads down to focus on the next "scintillating run", actively seek out the gaze of others, thus rendering the non-normative circuitry of men-watching-other-men unacceptably visible.[17]

Fig. 18: Cartoon by Graham Allen for the *Daily Express* depicting Didier Drogba

A second cartoon of Drogba, created by Graham Allen to accompany a Gideon Brooks article from the 31 March 2006 edition of the *Daily Express*, helps to reinforce this point. [*Fig. 18*] The article in question is prompted by Drogba's admission during the week that he 'sometimes dives'. The author sees the striker's confession as a step towards 'stopping the rot' of dishonesty in the game: this article is one of the ones emblazoned with the legend of the Express' "Shame the Cheats" campaign. [77] Drogba is the subject of the image which takes up a large part of the page. He is depicted in swimming trunks, about to jump from the diving board into a pool of ordure, from which the word "Cheating" bubbles up in lumps. In preparing his dive, Drogba offers his rear to the befuddled-looking BBC reporter on the poolside, holding out a large, phallic microphone in a suggestive manner. Movement lines give the impression that Drogba is not just offering his behind the reporter, but waggling it

invitingly, an impression bolstered by the striker turning his head to face the reporter. This perhaps incidental or accidental evocation of anal eroticism is striking. As with Ginola in Kelly's Oval Office scenario, Drogba is seen here not just as a homosexual but as a homosexual in a specifically submissive, pleasure-giving capacity. The "exhibitionism and passivity in front of the male gaze" that Drogba employs when he dives finds in this cartoon a defensive, homophobic expression. In self-consciously adopting postures that are "clearly noticeable" to the referee, Drogba brings to the surface an aspect of football that is normally disguised by its masculinist and heterosexist veneer, namely that the twenty-two avatars of masculinity arrayed on the field exist precisely to be "surveyed". Allen's cartoon and Kelly's article, alongside all cultural texts which use misogynistic or homophobic expressions to describe diving footballers, appear as a kind of rear-guard against the changing relationships to this fact that were developing throughout the 1990s. By straying close to the borderline between sporting competition and artistic representation, diving footballers thus reveal some of the limits that are placed on football's aesthetic constitution at this particular historical and geographical conjuncture, limits that are in the process of being tested and stretched by football's increasingly intimate relationship with television, the commodification of the male body and the culture of celebrity.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the diving image provides a durable and historically-significant example of an aesthetic object which is responsible for both an expansion and a contraction of the set of aesthetic concepts that can be contained within football's cultural field. The agents behind these images reach out to the visual historian by using their bodies to produce *pathos formulae* which resonate strongly with other prototypes from the broader history of the representation of bodily extremes. Their rationale for carrying out this act of *autopoeisis*, or (re-)production of the self, relates to an integral aspect of the on-field practice of football, namely gamesmanship. It is this fact that accounts for the initial ethical concern over diving, though the nature of the discourse which is used to justify proscriptions on the act reveal the extent to which diving's "excessive" visuality is also related to gendered conceptions in certain contexts. As well as reaching out beyond the immediate cultural field of football, then, these images come to play a central role in reactionary discourses which seek to contest the gradual change of gender roles within the sport. The diving image thus attests to the degree of dissensus over specifically aesthetic matters that is present even in very quotidian commentaries on the game. In the next chapter, the animated highlight GIF provides a further example of a kind of visual object that offers new possibilities for participants in football's visual culture, while simultaneously re-entrenching or re-fashioning older ones, but whose

emergence is a question of technological rather than iconographic innovation.

Notes

[1] Quoted in Warburg, p. 98. Warburg cites this verse (translated as 'Sports in her bosom, caught by the opposing breeze; / Her garments flutter, wafting back behind') as an example of how Poliziano, a poet of the Florentine Quattrocento, conforms to the tendency in that period to describe 'accessory forms in motion' through 'words modeled on those of the ancient poets, Ovid and Claudian.' [98] The ancient words in question are taken from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the poet writes '*Obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes / Et levis inpulsos retro dabat aura capillos*', and '*Tremulae sinuantur flamine vestas*' ('And the opposing breezes made her garments ripple as they met her, / And a light air sent her hair flying back'; 'Her fluttering garments billow in the wind.') [qtd. in Warburg 99] The philological work that Warburg carries out in the essay on Botticelli from which these quotations are lifted is of great importance to the development of his concept of the *pathos formula*, and furthermore I find these particular descriptions to resonate strongly with the examples of the "diving image" that I discuss in this chapter.

[2] Horst Bredekamp notes that Warburg self-defined as a "picture-historian" rather than an "art historian". ["*Bildwissenschaft*" 423] The distinction between the two identities hinges on a move on the part of other early twentieth-century German scholars of visual culture towards '[embracing] the whole field of images beyond the visual arts, and, secondly, [taking] all of these objects seriously.' ["*Bildwissenschaft*" 418) It should therefore be added that in addition to the lack of precise semantic equivalence between the terms *Bildwissenschaft* and "Visual Studies", they are also historically distinct, with the latter emerging in late twentieth-century Anglophone academia.

[3] While FIFA is football's primary governing body, IFAB, established eighteen years prior to FIFA in 1886, holds jurisdiction over the game's Laws. The Board consists of the Football Associations of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, along with FIFA itself.

[4] This nomenclature varies geographically: in the United States simulation is more likely to be referred to as "flopping".

[5] The 1970s are a highly significant decade in the history of women's football in England. In 1972, the English FA repealed the ban on the women's game that had been in place since 1921, although growth was slow in the following decades and the women's game is still yet to return to its inter-war peak, when teams like Preston's Dick, Kerr's Ladies were capable of filling large stadia like Everton FC's Goodison Park.

[6] See Jackson.

[7] Kelly refers here to the sketch comedy show *Little Britain*, which ran on BBC radio and television between 2000 and 2007. The male transvestite Emily Howard was a character played by one of the series' creators, David Walliams.

[8] For an extended reflection on this phenomenon see Conn, particularly 65-75.

[9] Following an inquest held at Warrington High Court, this reading of events was finally vindicated on 26 April, 2016, when the jury returned a verdict of unlawful killing for all ninety-six victims of the disaster.

[10] A campaign to re-introduce "safe standing" to English stadia in the form of terraces fitted with so-called "rail seats" has gathered momentum in recent years; common to such calls is the idea that mandatory seating diminishes the "atmosphere" of grounds. For more on this, see Timbs.

[11] As suggested in my introduction with regards to Liz Moor's critique of the "bourgeoisification thesis", an important caveat to observations such as this is that there is much research to suggest that older practices of fandom have been able to co-exist with this post-1990 paradigm. I do not thus wish to posit any real eradication of these sites of social consolidation, but rather to point to discourse which hinges on the perception that this eradication is a genuinely occurring process. For a useful account of the leftist activist response to the changes effected by the Taylor Report and *Blueprint*, see Martin.

[12] In addition, the so-called Bosman Ruling of 1995, named after the plaintiff, Belgian midfielder Jean-Marc Bosman, prohibited leagues in the European Union (E.U.) from placing restrictions on the number of E.U.-raised players their teams were permitted to sign. This ruling opened the floodgates for free trade of players across Europe, contributing to the growing cosmopolitanism of the Premier League.

[13] For examples of this kind of discourse see Speck & Biggs [89] and Paskin [67].

[14] The concept of "engrams" derives from the work of German zoologist and evolutionary biologist Richard Semon. Gombrich offers a useful explanation:

> Put in a nutshell, Semon's theory amounts to this: memory is not a property of consciousness but the one quality which distinguishes living from dead matter. It is the capacity to react to an event over a period of time; that is, a form of preserving and transmitting energy not known to the physical world. Any event affecting living matter leaves a trace which Semon calls an '*engram*'. The potential energy conserved in this 'engram' may, under suitable conditions, be reactivated and discharged – we then say the organism acts in a specific way because it *remembers* the previous event. [242]

As Gombrich reflects, Warburg took up this theory and combined it with ideas from other theoreticians of psychology, such as Karl Lamprecht, in developing his concept of an 'archaic strata of the mind' impressed with the trace of the 'intense basic experiences which […] make up the life of primitive man', traces which are then made manifest in the expressive formulas that some artists adopt to convey bodily movement. [Gombrich 243]

[15] Though it is unclear precisely where Morris and Lewis stand on the issue, the authenticity of this image has been a contentious question for some time, with numerous historians suggesting that it was staged. Of course, were the image in fact a case of "simulation" this would make Morris and Lewis' comparison doubly appropriate. For an account of debates over the image, see Rohter.

[16] Ronaldo's advertisement, entitled "Pinball", was made by Sunny Productions for the Italian cosmetics brand Clear in 2014 (see: Best Ads Channel. "Cristiano Ronaldo New CLEAR Anti Dandruff Shampoo Commercial 2014", *Youtube*. Online video (accessed 16/01/17)). Figo appeared in an international spot for Just For Men in 2011 (see: Ebiquity Global Insight. "Cringe-Worthy Sports Endorsements – Just for Men (2011)", *Youtube*. Online video (accessed 16/01/17)). Hart was enlisted to advertise Head & Shoulders to UK audiences ahead of his participation in England's FIFA World Cup campaign in 2014 (see Head & Shoulders. "Head & Shoulders Joe Hart Ad – The Walk (full length)", *Youtube*. Online video (accessed 16/01/17)).

[17] It is Sedgwick's over-riding hypothesis in her book *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* that there exists 'the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual – a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted.' [1-2] In her introduction, Sedgwick notes that 'it has yet to be demonstrated that, because most partriarchies structurally include homophobia, therefore patriarchy structurally *requires* homophobia.' [4] Her examination of the imbrication of sexual desire in homosocial relationships is carried out in reference to English literature, specifically the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century English novel.

2. "Hours and hours of mundane moments and then you get this": Temporality and Authoriality in the Football Highlight GIF

'Everywhere *surfing* has already replaced the older *sports*.'

— Gilles Deleuze[1]

T his chapter concerns the animated GIF (Graphics Interchange Format), a digital image format which is typically encountered online in the form of short, low-resolution looping video clips. Frequently used to reproduce highlights of goals or other significant moments from football matches, the animated GIF is rooted in a framework for media consumption of the game post-dating the tabloid and television coverage that provided the material context for my previous chapter. As in that chapter I will focus here on one small area of this new media apparatus as a means of discussing the manner in which aesthetic concepts play out within the everyday conversations of football's interpretative communities. Although I attempt to characterise the aesthetic properties of the GIF through intellectual frameworks derived from art history, visual studies and aesthetic theory, I also grant a significant amount of authority to casual fan commentaries on the game, some of which were initially encountered over the course of my own semi-attentive browsing, holding up posts written for social media websites as examples of the kind of discourses and tacit assumptions that structure the football fan's encounter with the image form in question. It is the framing of highlight GIFs that takes place among members of football's interpretative community that I wish to build upon in this chapter, even if the texts that I use to analyse and evaluate these exchanges are necessarily non-local to that community.

The quote from Gilles Deleuze that provides the epigraph to this chapter is one such non-local text. In the essay from which it is drawn, this line is preceded by the observation that 'The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network.' [5-6] Over the course of this short essay, Deleuze suggests that Michel Foucault's model of "disciplinary society" no longer holds the explanatory capacity that it once had, and that there exist new dynamics of power which structure subjects under late

capitalism. Whereas Foucault's concept of disciplinary society, elaborated first and foremost in his 1975 text *Discipline and Punish*, placed a great deal of emphasis on the power of institutions like the prison and the mental hospital to rule and administer the population at large, Deleuze argues that the ruling classes no longer rely to the same extent on these kinds of 'internments or spaces of enclosure through which the individual passes' in order to enact their powers of subjection. [4] Where Foucault's disciplinary institutions enacted power in a "discontinuous" fashion, the model of society that Deleuze refers to as the "society of control" does so through a kind of perpetual motion that suffuses all aspects of everyday life.[2] An example of this difference is the distinction between the factory and the corporation: whereas the factory made a clear and simply-structured division between bosses and workers that enabled the boss to '[survey] each element within the mass', imbalances of power in the corporation are found at every point of the division of labour, with potentially greater chances for mobility through the corporate hierarchy off-set by a loss of potential forms of worker solidarity, since 'the corporation constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within.' [5] As the operation of power ceases to take place in easily-definable locations, individuals become subject to a more continuous and insidious form of control.

We can parse the analogy that Deleuze draws between this situation and the image of surfing with reference to another passage from Deleuze's writings that Steven Connor cites in *A Philosophy of Sport*. In the essay "Mediators", Deleuze writes that,

> We got by for a long time with an energetic conception of motion, where there's a point of contact, or we are the source of movement. Running, putting the shot, and so on: effort, resistance, with a starting point, a lever. But nowadays we see movement defined less and less in relation to a point of leverage. All the new sports – surfing, windsurfing, hang-gliding – take the form of an entering into an existing wave. There's no longer an origin as starting point, but a sort of putting into orbit. The key thing is how to get taken up in the motion of a big wave, a column of rising air, to "get into something" instead of being the origin of an effort. [qtd. in *Sport* 209-10]

If the kinds of institutions described in Foucauldian theory comprise a "point of leverage" for the subjection of individuals, then the "continuous network" operative in the society of control is closer to the image of a "big wave", where the operation of power is so suffused into the matter of everyday relationality that the act of being swept up in it becomes effortless and frictionless.[3] In Connor's words, the transition that Deleuze seeks to draw from "sports" to "surfing" is a transition 'from a movement induced in a static and discontinuous field of action, in which force is applied in a determinate fashion at a fixed point', to 'a movement within an

interactive and contagious field of movements'. [*Sport* 210] Ideas of "continuity" and "contagion" are paramount: it is the willingness of individuals to reproduce structures of subjection at each level of the division of labour that enables power to be exercised in more nimble and far-reaching ways throughout the social body.[4]

I offer this context for the chapter's epigraph on the basis that the sentiment of the extract could easily be misconstrued. However, for reasons that were expressed in my introduction, I am less interested in the nuances of Deleuze's theory of social control than I am in the resonances that this epigraph possesses with some of the reflections on football and new media that I cite in this chapter. "Surfing" is of course another word, albeit one that feels slightly antiquated in 2016, for the practice of browsing the internet, and in a superficial sense the phrase thus sets up a juxtaposition between traditional and web-based forms of engaging with sports. The resonance of Deleuze's terms with the content of this chapter goes beyond the superficial, however: it is my contention that owing to rapid recent developments in digital technology the experience of online engagement with football possesses a continuous and undulatory quality, in contrast with the more static and discontinuous identity of pre-digital fandom, when engagement with the elite game was restricted to special broadcasts or live attendance, which is to say, to relatively privileged spaces of enclosure.

Through social media applications on smart phones and the proliferation of websites aggregating live streams of matches from across the world, it is now perfectly feasible to be hailed by professional football and its surrounding discourse at every waking hour. Nicholas G. Carr suggests in his polemic essay "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" that this shift from discontinuous to continuous media engagement leads to a new kind of attention, one that covers a good deal more ground but is comparatively superficial and diffuse: 'Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.' Comparing the experience of reading online articles to pre-digital forms of reading, Carr argues that 'what the Net deems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation. My mind now expects to take in information the way the Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles.' While Carr's essay has proved highly contentious in the field of research regarding new media and its effects on mental concentration, these provocative observations capture something crucial regarding the temporality of online engagement, particularly in the era of smartphones and social media.[5] In this chapter, through the figure of the animated highlight GIF, I bring together discourse from football supporters with theoretical approaches to attention and temporality in order to broach a series of questions which engage the terms of Carr's

argument: what does the normalisation of "surfing" as a form of engagement with sports do to our aesthetic conceptions of football? Which specific aspects of image formats like the animated GIF are paramount in generating the kind of experience that Carr describes in his analogy, and which aspects challenge Carr's terms? In what senses does this shift in media technology encourage new readings of the game, and to what extent does it re-affirm old ones? Before answering these questions, however, it is first necessary to establish what is distinctive about the particular media form that is my focus here, and how these images are typically encountered.

The Cruyff turn GIF and the exercise of creativity

On Thursday 24 March 2016, an event transpired which, to use a term developed by Gary Whannel, drew in the attention of football fans and media outlets 'as if by a vortex', leading to 'short-term compression of the media agenda': the death of the much-admired former Ajax, Barcelona and Netherlands forward Johan Cruyff. ["Vortextuality" 71-72] Images of Cruyff as a young man captaining the Netherlands national team in their losing effort against West Germany in the 1974 FIFA World Cup final, coaching at Barcelona in the early 1990s, and as an elder statesman retired from the profession, began to circulate widely on social media and on the websites of news outlets, alongside written testimonies to the man's physical and tactical brilliance and impact on the game. Official obituaries and related retrospective features appeared within twenty four hours both online and in print. By way of introduction to this chapter, I will make a twofold observation on this particular "vortex": firstly, I note the preponderance of one particular GIF in the initial social media response to Cruyff's death, and secondly, I consider the language used in some of the written pieces which emerged later, after the initial flurry of responses had died down. As this chapter progresses, I wish to demonstrate the connections that can be drawn between the degree of appropriateness with which GIFs are attached to certain elite players in the second decade of the twenty first century and the nature of the language used to describe those players in other media: it can be argued that Cruyff's presentation in other media entails a high level of suitability for being represented in GIF form.

The GIF in question was initially posted to Twitter by the account @90sfootball at 12:39 P.M., thirteen minutes after the official announcement of Cruyff's passing had been posted by @JohanCruyff, the player's official Twitter account. Within one hour, the post had received fifteen thousand "retweets" and the GIF itself had been copied and posted by dozens of other accounts, including ones belonging to the *Evening Standard*, ITV and the bookmarkers Coral and

Stan James.[6] Under the heading 'RIP Johan Cruyff. A true legend of the game', the post features a looping three second video clip lifted from footage of a match between Sweden and Cruyff's Netherlands at the 1974 FIFA World Cup, showcasing the first iteration of Cruyff's most famous contribution to the game: the skilful manoeuvre known as the "Cruyff turn". Seeking to shake off the attention of Swedish defender Jan Olsson, to whom Cruyff's back is momentarily turned, the Dutch captain shapes to side-foot the ball into space on his left, only to tap the ball back through his own legs and accelerate in the opposite direction once Olsson has fallen for the feint. As the action cuts off, Cruyff is seen dribbling the ball into the Swedish penalty area while Olsson stumbles, attempting to regroup.[*]

There is much to admire in this GIF. The pivot that Cruyff makes on his right leg to reverse the direction of play is smooth and economical, reflected in the movement of his outstretched arms, which snappily trace an imperfect half-circle. The way the player moves his left leg first to control the ball and then to reset his posture from a defensive one to an attacking one is a thing of rare precision and physical intelligence. Cruyff's subsequent dribbling also briefly demonstrates the player's ability to closely control the ball while running at speed. All of these attributes are made clearer by the repetitious nature of the GIF format, which enables the viewer to focus on each part of the movement in turn as well as creating a certain rhythm that sustains extended viewing. The sense of Cruyff's genius that is discernible in this loop is compounded by the comic ineffectiveness of his Swedish counterpart: Olsson falls for the faked move whole-heartedly, turning his head downfield to where he expects Cruyff to momentarily appear before performing an ostentatious double-take and losing his balance in an effort to track the now-unmarked forward. On the day of Cruyff's death, and in relation to this clip, numerous posts appeared on Twitter exhorting readers to, as *Times* journalist Kaya Burgess (tweeting as @kayaburgess) put it, 'spare a thought' for Olsson, though the defender in this clip already offers much greater potential for sympathy than the striker, given the extent to which this clip's power is based around a sense of surprise concerning Cruyff's ability to pull off such a skilful manoeuvre. With the clip distilled down to its utmost expressive value thanks both to the temporal truncation and the ceaselessly-looping repetition of the GIF format, we are invited to take the place of the bamboozled defender: in a reply to the post by @90sfootball, Twitter user @tiernagekicks writes 'imagine seeing that for the first time, revolutionary', while @mcevoy_tony observes that 'The first time I saw him do this I was mesmerized'. This

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[*] To view this GIF go to http://gph.is/291cLX1

mesmerism, which we as viewers share with Cruyff's on-field opponent, is evidently re-awakened by the clip, whose repetitions over time prove not just rhythmic but somewhat hypnotic.

In viewing this GIF, any momentary bond the viewer might strike up with Olsson acts as a means to a greater appreciation of Cruyff's gift. In an article for *The Guardian* published the day after Cruyff's death, Richard Williams writes that the "Cruyff turn", which was reprised in a game away to England three years later, when 'there was still enough surprise in the trick to make Wembley swoon', is a manoeuvre which betokens 'football from another planet, football as reimagined by a master choreographer assigned to strip it down, discard the rusted and outmoded components and reconstruct it in a way that was not just more aesthetically pleasing but more lethally and unanswerably efficient.' Writing for the same publication, and echoing this sentiment, David Winner notes that 'Cruyff clashed with football authorities, inspired, astonished and delighted his contemporaries and smashed old patterns of deference.' Both articles frame Cruyff as both an all-time great of the game and as a kind of experimental artist: Williams notes that the forward 'treated football as, above all, an excuse for exercising creativity', while Winner proposes that, 'Emerging at the same time as the Provos and hippies, he embodied the spirit and ideas of the 1960s as much as John Lennon did.' This kind of language routinely attaches itself to a select band of gifted footballers, though Cruyff's career lends itself particularly well to notions of creative breakthrough on the basis of his crucial role in the development of the radically new tactical system of "Total Football" during his playing career, as well as the foundations he helped to lay for the "Tiki-Taka" system, mastered by the Barcelona and Spanish national teams in the first two decades of the twenty-first century.[7] As evinced by the viral success of the original @90sfootball post, for many Twitter users seeking to mark Cruyff's impact on the game, the GIF lifted from the 1974 World Cup broadcast demonstrating one of the most acute creative breakthroughs of Cruyff's career provided a serviceable fulcrum around which the player's identity, synonymous with notions of forward-thinking artistry, could be articulated. Over the course of this chapter, I aim to demonstrate the extent to which the animated GIF lends itself to this especially well to these kinds of conceptions: it is an image-format which, through both its temporal truncation and its potentially-endless repetitiousness, allows for notions of advanced artistry to crystallise around particular elite players. In order to give a proper account of these functions, however, we must also understand the context in which such GIFs have typically been encountered; one which I suggest limits their efficacy in advancing any strong aesthetic claims whatsoever. This is the context of online "Jet Ski-ing" described by Carr, where objects like the Cruyff GIF inevitably appear as droplets in a vast ocean of visual and textual material.

The experience of encountering an object like the Cruyff turn GIF is bound up with the act of scrolling through social media news feeds, which means moving from micro-sensation to micro-sensation, ranging across tonal registers. My own Twitter feed has been curated over time so as to include a daily stream of brief commentaries and critiques of current affairs, alongside links to articles on subjects ranging from trans-gender liberation struggles to the history of fried chicken burgers in Pakistan, alongside video clips taken from Japanese professional wrestling matches and photographs of footballers with their dogs, alongside huge quantities of jokes, conversations and arguments exchanged by friends and acquaintances. Even in "vortextual" situations like the hours surrounding the announcement of Cruyff's death, it is likely that any given football fan's social media feed will include contributions from voices that are stationed well outside of the game's interpretative community, so that the possibility for skimming on past even an object as magnetic as the "Cruyff turn" GIF to the next, unrelated sensation is always present. Likewise, on websites specialising in football highlight GIFs, such as 101greatgoals.com and reddit.com/r/soccer, any given GIF is invariably suspended in a web composed of myriad other hypnotising objects; these sites give a great deal of their overall architecture over to directing visitors on to the next clip, and the next, and the next. It is in this sense, I argue, that the highlight GIF possesses a paradoxical temporality: on the one hand it contains a singular moment that has been removed from the *longueur* of game-time in order to be consumed in a more aesthetically-focused manner, while on the other hand it is almost always found in online contexts which deflect this kind of focused viewing, creating an inexorable sequentiality that itself becomes a kind of *longueur*.

My argument to this effect is formed around a triumvirate of theoretical reference points. Firstly, I introduce the GIF's place within the economies of visual culture by considering Stuart Hall and Hito Steyerl's work on the cultural politics of popular culture and web-based "poor images". Secondly, I seek to frame the divergent temporalities proper to the GIF and its online habitats respectively by focusing on Roland Barthes' work on the affective and temporal fields generated by photography in *Camera Lucida*. Thirdly, I discuss the work of visual historians Alexander Nagel, Christopher Wood and Hans Belting, who together offer a conception of artistic authorship which is predicated on a set of temporal co-ordinates that can be mapped onto the one developed by Barthes. Two key strands run throughout this admittedly eclectic assortment of material. Firstly, as was just suggested, Barthes is connected to Nagel and Wood by their overlapping taxonomies of temporality. Secondly, Barthes, Hall and Steyerl alike are attuned to the affective vicissitudes of cultural productions that fall outside the scope of "art" proper: Barthes' concepts of *studium* and *punctum*, and Hall and Steyerl's accounts of the ever-

present struggle between resistance and acquiescence in popular reception of the most widespread artefacts of "low culture" each enable us to think through the kinds of affective response that GIFs might be said to generate. As a compliment to these theoretical approaches, it is also necessary to draw on discourses that are more closely focused on the matter at hand, beginning in the next section with a brief history of the highlight GIF.

A brief history of the screengrab GIF

The GIF belongs to a constellation of visual modes and conventions which together represent a significant aspect of football's mediatisation in the early 21st century. It is part of a representative ecology, centred around online social media networks, that includes other such interventions into football's visual culture as the analytical "heat map", the wittily-captioned "meme", and Youtube compilations recording individual players' "Goals, Skills, Assists".[8] As an image format suitable for sharing short video clips, it sits alongside other formats made available by services such as Vine and Streamable, the latter of which operates within web browsers and the former of which is available as an application on smartphones possessing the correct operating systems. In a rapid rise and fall typical of the speed with which technologies relating to social media platforms can be adopted and subsequently jettisoned, it can be argued that, between the commencement of this research project and its final iteration, the GIF has been usurped in certain functions by these latter technologies. Whereas in January 2014 the prolific American GIF producer Timothy Burke could state that GIFs were at present 'the main way people are sharing sports highlights in comment sections', by August that year the *Daily Telegraph* blogger Adam Hurrey could assert with equal confidence that the GIF had run its course as a device for disseminating clips. Hurrey's article on "The awkward, unstoppable rise of the football Vine and what it means for us all" discusses the GIF in the past tense: while GIFs 'were an evidently impressive way to disseminate new football clips', Hurrey notes, 'they could be time-consuming to make, lacked sound, and often proved to be unwieldy – waiting for a 3MB beast to load in a crowded webpage would stretch internet impatience to the limit.' What Hurrey refers to as the typical twenty first century football fan's 'unquenchable thirst for up-to-the-minute football clips' is, the author argues, better suited to Vine, a free video sharing service which enables users to produce and upload seven-second video clips (complete with sound) from their smartphones. Both formats provide looping video content, but the more recent technology (Vine was launched by Twitter in 2012 whereas the GIF has a much longer history) appears to have bettered its elder in certain crucial respects.

A glance of the top hundred entries on r/soccer, the dedicated football section of the user-generated "social news" site Reddit reveals that since the publication of Hurrey's blog post the situation has developed yet further.[9] At time of writing (6:40 P.M. on 28 March 2016), a total of eighteen posts out of the hundred are links to moving image content. Of these, two link to GIFs, two link to videos hosted on Instagram and Twitter respectively, six link to longer videos posted to YouTube, and the remaining nine connect to clips uploaded on the Streamable site. All of these Streamable clips are highlights lasting under a minute, including the top post on the site, a bizarre clip of West Ham United goalkeeper Adrián running the length of the pitch to score a goal in a testimonial game held in honour of West Ham veteran Mark Noble. As with Vine, these Streamable clips play on a loop and come complete with sound. The reasons why users might, since Hurrey was writing in 2014, have made a decisive move in favour of Streamable over Vine and GIFs are beyond the scope of this chapter: rapid obsolescence is a typical characteristic of digital visual culture, so that what began life as a research project on a currently-popular format can now be considered as more of a retrospective survey. Regardless, this chapter marks the first attempt to my knowledge at theorising the aesthetic properties of the football highlight GIF and its cultural impact within its moment, and one of only a handful of substantial academic interventions regarding the animated GIF in general.

Taking into account the remainder of this handful reveals that there are three crucial formal aspects to the football highlight GIF, not all of which are shared with every other genre of the format. These can be simply (and alliteratively) expressed as animation, anonymity and appropriation. When we load a football highlight GIF on our online devices, what we are seeing is the output of a data format which was originally intended to enable the online storage and transmission of still images. As Daniel Rourke notes, what determined the early popularity of the GIF following its invention in 1987 was its incremental loading mechanism, which enabled early internet users to view still images more rapidly by dissolving the file into separate units and progressively loading layer after layer, starting with the most important details and ending with the most dispensable. [2] Jason Eppink relates that an update made to the format in 1989 enabled users to 'specify the duration (in 100ths of a second) that each image should display on screen', and that this development crystallised the GIF as a moving image technology, although at this stage it was not coded to loop. [299] Rourke attributes this latter development to 'avid web hackers', indicating the GIF's inescapable relationship with a democratised and de-centralised conception of the Internet. [2] In line with this, Eppink notes that the GIF was published from the outset as an *open format*, meaning it could be used for free by any programmer that wished to insert GIF files into their web pages. [300] So too were individual GIF images

often shared by large numbers of users; as a result of poor bandwidth provisions in the early days of the Internet, users wishing to reproduce a particular GIF file on their own personal web page were encouraged to do so by saving copies of the GIF to their own servers and hosting the file themselves, a practice which continues to this day, as demonstrated by the many uncredited re-postings of the "Cruyff turn" GIF discussed above. Individual GIFs thus spread under the banner of anonymity as their sources became all but impossible to trace.

As Eppink relates, authorial attribution could be embedded in GIF files, but 'no web browser rendered this information and few makers took advantage of this.' [301] Today, popular GIFs are occasionally watermarked with the name of the website that hosts them, but usually display no information beyond that with regards to provenance. In place of a marked authorial origin, many animated GIFs can be said to possess what Giampaolo Bianconi has referred to as a 'performative authorial focus'. A known performer – an actor, musician or sports star – usually commands the foreground of the GIF both literally and figuratively, and the GIF induces us to close attentiveness regarding their gestures: as Bianconi puts it, 'the GIF is not *by* them, it is *of* them.' The manner in which animated GIFs are capable of producing "authorial focus" is demonstrably a key attribute of their appeal to football fans, and is an issue I will return to shortly.

GIFs as we encounter them in 2016 often appropriate material from film or television. The family of GIFs to which the football highlight GIF belongs is known as the "screengrab" GIF. Owing to the ease with which they are created, this type of GIF has flourished on social media: anybody with an internet connection can currently produce screengrab GIFs by running Youtube videos through the free software available on websites such as imgflip.com, or by capturing the video playing on one's desktop using free applications such as Gyazo. As Bianconi notes, Tumblr, founded in 2007 and significant as the first major social media platform to host GIFs, became one of the driving forces behind the phenomenon whereby screengrab GIFs began to be used in their now-customary application as 'reactions, illustrations, or expressions.' The most readily intelligible example of this are so-called "reaction GIFs", usually consisting of a single individual's gesture or facial expression, used in response to some verbal prompt: taking a break from writing this chapter I open up Twitter to find at the top of my feed a post by user @SamDiss, consisting of the line 'watching that Madonna and Drake kiss like', accompanied by a GIF of the rapper Nelly grimacing in disbelief.[10] What is most significant about posts such as this one is the variety of clips that could have been selected to offer a similar reaction; there is no intrinsic connection between Nelly, Madonna and Drake, but the connection that is made holds

together on the basis of the effectiveness with which the rapper's facial gesture expresses the Twitter user's own distaste at the kiss in question. Indeed, in early 2016 Twitter introduced a "GIF search" function to their website and smartphone application, enabling users to select appropriate "reaction GIFs" from a wide variety of categories, including "Agree", "Shocked" and "Yawn". The vast majority of these GIFs are "grabbed" from television and film: the "Agree" category features clips from the likes of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, the *Pokémon* anime series and *Seinfeld*. With regards to this form of usage, it is clear that some media personae possess more of what Bianconi calls "GIFability" than others: the author goes as far as to suggest that some media producers have already begun crafting their material with an eye to the subsequent circulation of screengrab GIFs through fan communities, singling out the American television producer Dan Harmon in this respect.[11]

Contrary to this usage, the football highlight GIF is created and shared in almost every instance to illustrate nothing more than that a particular player has achieved something noteworthy on the pitch. There is of course a long history behind the circulation of highlights in media presentations of sports. Whannel notes that the edited presentation of 'peak moments of action' has traditionally been a site in which 'character and narrative come together with great significance.' [*Fields* 203] Compilations of these moments – Whannel lists 'knock-outs, boundaries being hit, wickets taken, goals or tries scored, fences cleared, balls potted, matches won' – invariably isolate and abstract decisive actions from the *longueur* of game-time. [102] In team games, this also means abstracting individual players from the ongoing collective effort. A goal in football always comprises an effort of at least a handful of outfield players, who are responsible for working the ball out of defence, for completing passes in the midfield, for creating openings through movement off the ball and finally for laying on the assist. By contrast, when goals appear in edited highlights packages, and when they are subsequently compiled into 'title sequences' and 'retrospective celebrations of great moments', they tend to come attached to a single name, that of the goal-scorer: as Whannel argues, 'It is at these moments, which make up the pantheon of sporting memories most firmly inscribed into sport history and link achievement firmly to the individual, that the individualist character of television's representation of sport is most clearly foregrounded'. [103] The football highlight GIF follows the precedent set by earlier presentations of highlights, isolating moments of breakthrough from their build-up in order to create a "performative authorial focus". Furthermore, these GIFS possesses less polysemic capacity than other screengrab GIFs: it would be difficult to represent the sentiment "agree" through the medium of a GIF of a Lionel Messi goal, for instance. I will reflect further

on the heightened individualistic quality of the medium in question in the next section of this chapter.

Football highlight GIFs are however connected to other forms of screengrab GIFs by their shared status as what Hito Steyerl calls "poor images". In his book *Football*, Jean-Philippe Toussaint describes the experience of watching a FIFA World Cup match on a beIN Sports online live stream as one characterised by poor image resolution:

> what I was watching there […] were matches which, independently of the real weather conditions prevailing in Brazil, invariably played out in fog. From time to time, after a hiccup in the picture and a brief pause in the broadcast, everything stopped and the sibyilline message appeared in the middle of the screen: *buffering...*The application was trying to find a second wind, or fresh inspiration and, after a brief gargle, an electronic baby-burp, the game resumed as it might have done after a throw-in, almost in the same place where I had left it (sometimes, in the interval, a goal had been scored). Often, too, the ball disappeared completely from view into the bright pixelated pea purée of the electronic nebuliser that I had in front of my eyes. [71]

Although Toussaint had paid for the privilege of this low-grade visual experience, his description is familiar to denizens of the vast pirate image economy that the internet has opened up since its inception. In a 2009 essay for *e-flux journal* written in "defense" of this economy, Steyerl characterises the most portable digital image formats, referring in this case to JPEGs and AVIs but also implicitly including such formats as the GIF, as 'copies in motion': the poor image is in Steyerl's words 'an itinerant image distributed for free, squeezed through slow digital connections, compressed, reproduced, ripped, remixed, as well as copied and pasted into other channels of distribution.' Poor images are as such quite palpably opposed to spectacular capitalism's high-end media production apparatus and its 'cult of film gauge', carried through following the demise of film in favour of digital image technologies into the ongoing development and distribution of high-definition cameras and screens.

Poor images are a piratical intervention into the capitalist image economy which carry their "pea purée"-like lack of resolution as a marker of their redistribution outside of the official channels through which television and film production companies generate revenue. This is as true for an illegally downloaded AVI file of the latest blockbuster movie release as it is of a reaction GIF or screengrab GIF captured from the television broadcast of a football game: all three are means of handing cherished or desired sequences of moving images over to audiences that no longer need to pay their dues to the likes of 20th Century Fox or Sky Sports (or indeed beIN Sports). It is in this sense that Steyerl refers to poor images as being 'about defiance and appropriation'. At the same time, however, Steyerl notes that poor images are also 'about

conformism and exploitation', since they represent a challenge to the apparatus of spectacular capitalism that is not predicated on radical counter-cultural formations but on heterodox means of consuming the already-existing figures of dominant mass culture. Crucially, while constructing their own, perhaps more democratised and less alienated forms of distribution, the purveyors and champions of poor images do so in obsessive reference to the material handed them by the most commercially-successful media entities, helping the likes of *Star Wars* or Sky Sports' football coverage to propagate further.

Steyerl's essay concludes with a suggestion that since it is "about" both conformism and defiance, the poor image is ultimately 'about reality.' This idea that some degree of oscillation between acceptance and evasion of hegemonic forces is endemic to popular culture bears a strong resemblance to the influential argument made by cultural theorist Stuart Hall in his 1981 essay "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular". Hall's preferred method of studying the products of popular culture 'recognises that almost *all* cultural forms will be contradictory…, composed of antagonistic and unstable elements.' [449] Rejecting, as was the case with the texts by Sedgwick and Certeau cited in my introduction, studies which emphasise either 'pure "autonomy" or total encapsulation' of mass audiences to the detriment of the other, Hall argues that

> there is a continuous and necessarily uneven and unequal struggle, by the dominant culture, constantly to disorganise and reorganise popular culture; to enclose and confine its definitions and forms within a more inclusive range of dominant forms. There are points of resistance; there are also moments of supersession. This is the dialectic of cultural struggle. In our times, it goes on continuously, in the complex lines of resistance and acceptance, refusal and capitulation, which make the field of culture a sort of constant battlefield. [447]

According to Steyerl's account, poor images embody this "dialectic of cultural struggle" to a marked degree. They represent forms of resistance – to the economic model of image distribution favoured by film studios and television companies – that at one and the same time capitulate to the influence of "dominant forms". Where Steyerl and Hall differ in these passages is that the former situates "dominance" more squarely on the side of the consumers of popular culture than the producers, since much of the content she is discussing – content which Hall could hardly have predicted in the early 1980s – is generated for consumption by users themselves. To post a football highlight GIF to social media might represent a violation of the enclosure constructed by Sky Sports around the game in question, but it might equally direct viewers to broadcasts of that game by suggesting that the action unfolding is "must-see". Crucially, football highlight GIFs re-entrench the heightened visibility of elite football broadcasts while offering transgressive means of consuming their content. This sense of cultural-political

ambivalence is mirrored by the affective ambivalence which the GIF is capable of producing in some viewers, which I now wish to consider.

Studium, punctum and the laborious temporality of web browsing

The sources above offer a means of framing the material properties and cultural politics of the screengrab GIF, but in order to more fully come to terms with how football highlight GIFs operate in the present conjuncture we need to turn our attention to considerations of affect. To do so, I will turn to a very short text by the football journalist Richard Whittall, but first it is necessary to offer some theoretical background for the observations which I make in relation to that text. The affective vicissitudes of the GIF, I argue, can be framed through two key terms coined by the French theorist Roland Barthes, namely *studium* and *punctum*.

In my desire to open up questions regarding the constitution and effects of the football highlight GIF using affective encounters as a key, I am prefigured by Barthes, specifically the late Barthes of *Camera Lucida* (1980). In this book's opening passages, Barthes reports that he has lately been overcome by what he terms an 'ontological desire', and describes having 'wanted to learn at all costs what Photography was "in itself", by what essential feature it was to be distinguished from the community of images.' [3] No sooner has Barthes established his desire to account for photography's unique ontology, however, than he admits that the task might be an impossible one: 'despite its tremendous contemporary expansion, I wasn't sure that Photography existed, that it had a "genius" of its own.' [3] For all that the name "photography" labels a particular technical practice and connotes an identifiable – if richly contested and varied – set of aesthetic principles, there is something about photography which triggers a reaction that Barthes considers to be 'the only sure thing that was in me'; namely 'a desperate resistance to any reductive system.' [8] Our relationship with photography, its mode of being in the world and impinging upon its consumers and operators is not wholly encapsulated by any overtly materialist account of its mechanical processes or distributive frameworks. What is required in addition is an acknowledgement of how it *feels* to be faced with photographic representations.

Barthes subsequently develops the concept of *punctum*, defined as that aspect of the photograph which *pierces* or *wounds* the viewer as opposed to merely holding their interest or making sense – this latter effect is referred to Barthes as *studium*. *Punctum* is effected when the viewer registers some marginal detail which testifies to the fact that a photograph captures a now-passed lived moment in all its contingency, a fragment which outsteps what the

photographer intended their given photograph to convey and powerfully communicates their *being-there* at the moment that the light was registered on the chemical surface. Barthes' opening lines demonstrate the manner in which *punctum* plays out: stumbling across a photograph of Jérôme-Napoleon Bonaparte, the Emperor Napoleon's youngest brother, Barthes is stunned to realise that he is 'looking at eyes that looked at the Emperor'. [3] It is significant for Barthes that photographs are produced from negatives which are actually touched by the light from the scene which they depict, in this case bringing the author into remote physical proximity with a body that itself was in physical proximity to a figure of such historical import. The shock that this realisation produces, Barthes argues, is an experience that takes place not on an intellectual level but on an affective one.[12] The author's understanding of photography *per se*, beyond its unique technical specifications, rests in this form of affective encounter.

Punctum for Barthes is that 'principle of adventure' which 'allows me to make Photography exist.' [19] It is, Barthes argues, quite possible to leaf through a newspaper with photographs on every page and yet in no case to register any of these images *as* photographs. [19] This relatable practice of everyday life produces the material, psychological and temporal conditions in which *punctum* can take effect: 'In this glum desert, suddenly a specific photograph reaches me; it animates me, and I animate it.' [20] It is this sense of *punctum* emerging out of its opposite – the '*average* affect' that Barthes labels *studium* – that is of the greatest significance for this essay. [26] However, I do not wish to suggest that GIFs possess *punctum* in the strict sense with which Barthes loads the term: as film theorist Laura Mulvey has noted, Barthes was adamant in his opinion that moving images could not possess *punctum* in the manner of still ones. [66] Furthermore, a GIF, as a "poor image" whose originary material has been subjected to multiple transformations in the name of convenience and transportability, seems unlikely to produce affective responses which line up precisely with those induced in Barthes by the Bonaparte image. This chapter is rather primarily concerned with presenting an account of the football highlight GIF by focusing on the temporality of the GIF-viewing process, and particularly the ways in which different intensities of affective engagement with the GIF emerge over time. In order to do this, I will build upon the temporal binary that Barthes depicts in *Camera Lucida*, where *punctum* emerges like an arrow shot from the field of average affect that is the *studium*.

It is this binary that I contend underpins a tweet from which much of this chapter's direction stems. On 23 October, 2013, the Canadian journalist Richard Whittall posted the following: 'I'm almost tearing up watching a gif [*sic*]. I need a break from football.' The GIF in question was taken from a UEFA Champions League group stage game played between

Anderlecht and Paris Saint-Germain on the same day that the tweet was posted, and depicts the latter club's star striker Zlatan Ibrahimović scoring with a powerful shot from long range, his third of four goals in a 5-0 victory for the French club. This GIF presents a side-on view of the goal: an attacking cross from the left wing is headed out of the penalty area by an Anderlecht defender and lands just over twenty yards from the goal he is defending. The ball bounces once more and is caught on the half-volley by Ibrahimović, arriving from off-screen, running across what is commonly referred to as the inside left channel. The ferocity with which Ibrahimović strikes the ball with his right foot is remarkable; so too is the accuracy with which he finds the top left-hand corner of the net. The Anderlecht goalkeeper is wholly beaten by the shot, attempting to make the save only after the ball has already passed him. Other angles on the goal reproduced by the many available online replays demonstrate the curl which Ibrahimović was able to apply to the shot, but this GIF mainly testifies to the speed and power with which it was delivered. By football's aesthetic standards, this is an uncommonly entrancing display.[†]

At the time of writing, Whittall was a staff writer for sports news site thescore.com, contributing at least one article per day about football, generally focusing on finance and statistics. Both the quotidian routinisation of Whittall's engagement with this popular leisure activity as well as the expansive seriality of the online habitats in which GIFs are typically found are significant in addressing the affective resonances of this tweet through the framework that Barthes provides in *Camera Lucida*. As Sianne Ngai notes, Barthes' concept of *studium* (which Ngai reads as one expression of an aesthetic category she labels the "merely interesting", a concept which I discuss in the next chapter) points to an aesthetic experience that is not thought of in terms of 'instantaneity, suddenness, and once-and-for-allness' but is rather 'anticipatory and continuous' [134], producing aesthetic interactions defined by the experience of 'novelty as it necessarily arises against a background of boredom, to change against a background of sameness.' [136] There is no sense of a "break" in the routinised experience of the *studium*, as compared to more alarming and more disarming concept of the *punctum*. *Studium*'s relative affective flatness calls for what Ngai describes as 'an engagement of 'passionless, mechanical, academic decoding' in contrast to the 'intense and spontaneous response solicited by the *punctum*', and is said by Barthes to derive 'almost from a certain training'. [141-42] In line with these terms, a professional engagement with football might be said to invoke a manner of engaging with materials related to the game that is characterised by dispassionateness and a desire to "decode" these materials until they give up their meaning. What initially strikes one

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[†] To view this GIF go to http://gph.is/294Occ7

about Whittall's short text is the sense in which this skein of "average affect" is *pierced* by the GIF in question, whose effect on the viewer is so intense as to lead to a semi-jocular disavowal of the whole professional context from which it emerges. The GIF in question produces an intense response – "almost tearing up" – which seems subsequently to illuminate the absurdity of football's relative scale of value: "I need a break from football". Whittall's remark, along with the elucidation of it offered in a personal interview, provides a compelling insight into the experience of being aesthetically *animated* by a GIF (here applying the term as Barthes uses it; in other words, the GIF produces a *non-average* affect). Through these records of experience we are able to bring into focus some of those qualities which most readily define the medium's movements through early twenty-first century cultural life.

In an e-mail from 29 November, 2013, Whittall relates that 'the reason [the GIF] brought an emotional reaction is because it was so audacious, so incredible, so rare, so ZLATAN [*sic*]…it just captured something about what makes football so great.' Two observations can be drawn from this remark. Firstly, the journalist offers an insight into the cult value pertaining to Ibrahimović, who is often referred to by his first name, and whose well-received autobiography, ghost-written by Swedish journalist David Lagercrantz, was published in English under the title *I Am Zlatan*.[13] The centrality of a notion of charismatic individual authorial focus is, as I have already suggested, one of the most crucial traits of the majority of screengrab GIFs; I will continue to develop this line of inquiry with reference to Ibrahimović's media persona throughout the remainder of this essay. Secondly, Whittall attributes to this particular GIF an acute sense of potency and plenitude by suggesting that the loop is capable of making a more expansive claim for football than would be immediately summoned by its content, much in the same vein as the "Cruyff turn" GIF discussed previously. The nature of this GIF's rarity is further elaborated by Whittall in this interview, when he claims that,

> I am sometimes so immersed in the sport that you almost feel like you're going a bit crazy…hours and hours of mundane moments and then you get this, and it's so beautiful but it also reminds you you've been watching too long because you're so happy when a moment like this comes along.

With these observations, Whittall attempts to highlight the unusual degree of communicativity possessed by the GIF in question: it is an artefact which is capable of speaking not just of what football looks like in this instance, but of what football *can be* as an aesthetic form, and it thus produces an antagonistic feeling in which the journalist is reminded of his love for the game at the same time that he is drawn to consider the quantity of material that the game throws out and the mediocrity of much of it. Reading further between the lines, there is also a sense of a

breakdown of leisure and labour which is palpable in this comment. The journalist is so habituated to viewing highlight GIFs for "hours and hours", a practice which evidently forms a part of both his fandom and his professional practice, that the process comes to resemble a kind of dour factory assembly line in contrast to which artefacts like the Ibrahimović goal appear as sources of liberation.

At this juncture it is pressing to acknowledge the large volumes of writing both scholarly and journalistic which has been dedicated to this process of digital habituation. The art critic Sven Lütticken remarks that the radical potential for the upheaval of traditional economic relations engendered by the rise of the computer has swung decisively in favour of the *status quo*, introducing not 'the replacement of labor by new ludic occupations' but rather 'the erosion of the distinctions between the two.' [195] Lütticken draws upon the fact that user contributions to Facebook actually generate revenue for its founder, Mark Zuckerberg, to argue that 'Looking and reading have become productive of value – often for others.' [195] Lütticken's argument draws here on Maurizio Lazzarato's work on so-called "immaterial labour": resembling Deleuze's arguments about the "society of control", Lazzarato suggests that the economic model of "immaterial labour" is defined by the fact that it does not exist solely in special enclosed sites, but rather 'exists only in the form of networks and flows'. [136] Amongst other phenomena, this form of labour comprises 'a series of activities that are not normally recognized as "work" - in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion.' [132] Users of Facebook, Twitter and so on generate value for the companies behind the sites by providing a body of content into which paid advertising space can be inserted, the sites functioning in this sense like a newspaper whose words are written entirely by unremunerated volunteers. What is more, the companies who purchase advertising space from these sites are likely to monitor the content in question in order to more accurately reflect current cultural trends back to their potential customer base: this can be seen for instance in the many cringe-worthy examples of consumer brands using vernacular terms associated with internet culture in promotional tweets which are brought together by the @BrandsSayingBae Twitter account.[14] In this way, the kinds of communication and self-expression proper to social media platforms become a means through which individuals are made to be generative of surplus value for large companies. In these instances, work time, at least when conceived according to the Foucauldian model that Deleuze notes as having been surpassed, is entirely diffused into its ostensible opposite. Speaking from the perspective of a largely self-regulating computer-based worker, it is clear to me that one significant effect of this is that leisure can no longer be so clearly demarcated as such: time spent

browsing GIFs is time that one could just as easily be spent working, or could indeed be carried out *while* working (even if one's academic or journalistic labour does not comprise time spent looking at GIFs), with the result that clear distinctions between the affective resonances of leisure and labour begin to diminish.

It is possible to view this conception of the essential imbrication of twenty-first century capitalist labour- and leisure-time as a late modulation of a situation diagnosed by many commentators on modernism regarding the factory-like intensities underpinning mass culture during that time. As Laura Frost relates, 'Early film critics describe cinemagoing as an experience of fantasy and escape, but they also imagine cinematic pleasure as banal and standardized.' [226] Walter Benjamin, for instance, remarks in his essay "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire", that 'That which determines the rhythm of production on a conveyer belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film'. [qtd. in Frost, 226] Although Benjamin had elsewhere a nuanced intellectual relationship with popular pleasure, this line demonstrates a common trope that is identified elsewhere by Ben Highmore, who suggests that 'Perhaps the most common analogy for characterizing "everyday life" within modernity (its uniformity, its dullness and so on) is the assembly line.' [6] He continues,

> What makes the assembly line such a telling exemplification of everyday modernity is not the specificity of the factory environment, but the generalized condition that it points to: 'plodding', 'monotony' - the emptiness of time. What makes continuous production register so vividly is the regulating of time within the widespread conditions of industrialization. From the point of view of the everyday, industrialization is not something limited to factory production, but something registered in nearly all aspects of life. [8]

Given the rise of the entertainment industry, in which leisure activities are all-but exclusively administered by those in charge of the means of production, even moments of release from the factory environment – such as visits to the cinema – are figured by analysts of modernity as an extension of the standardised time of capitalism. Pleasure may occur in these screenings but it is not the sort of pleasure that could burst the bubble of a daily routine which has been imposed from above. The same observation is made of sport in Lewis Mumford's 1934 book *Technics and Civilization*: Mumford notes that in industrial society sport 'is no longer a mere game empty of any reward other than the playing', but rather 'a profitable business', and thus 'one of the mass-duties of the machine age.' [307] Again, the idea of "plodding" time and "continuous production" is at play in this notion of "duty". Once supposedly representing a strain of unfettered leisure activity, spectator sport is viewed from as early as the 1930s as an extension of

industrial capitalism's dominance over the lives of its proletarian subjects, particular with regards to the question of lived temporality.

With reference to the later texts by Hall and Steyerl cited earlier in this chapter, it is possible to gesture towards fissures in the apparent façade of cultural hegemony that was diagnosed by critics of capitalist modernity: as both writers suggest, it is more useful to think of popular culture as a site for *negotiations* between total resistance or total capitulation to capitalist cultural dominance than it is to imagine to imagine the masses as entirely dominated and lacking in antagonistic agency. However, while the critiques offered by Lazzarato and Lütticken display similar contours to critiques offered of pre-digital mass culture, they are modulated by changed conditions regarding capitalism's ability to extract surplus value from populations, in which, following Deleuze, the reach possessed by those controlling the means of production becomes both more insidious and more constant. Where the sports stadium or cinema merely analogically resembled the factory, there may now no longer be any qualitative distinction between the workplace and the space in which leisure activities – like viewing football highlight GIFs – are carried out. As has already been suggested, Whittall's consumption of GIFs is a process in which labour and leisure cannot be fully extricated; it is the journalist's job to stay on top of developments in the game but the tweet cited at the beginning of this section demonstrates that Whittall's engagement with this material is not entirely dispassionate.

The earlier, more figurative version of this collapse of distinctions described by Frost and Highmore remains intact, however: Whittall's remarks allude as much to the professional capacity in which his viewing of GIFs plays out as to the figuratively *laborious* nature and conveyor-belt like rhythm of online activity. Highlight GIFs are arranged online a manner which continuously deflects the viewer from one to the next, in a rhythm defined by the irregular appearance of novelty in a continuum of boredom, much like the kind Ngai describes in relation to *Camera Lucida*. The architecture of sites like Twitter and Reddit leads to an investment of time which continually stretches into the future, often with diminishing returns. The moment at which Whittall encouters the Ibrahimović GIF is then, by his own admission, both redemptive, in that it provides a sense of uplift amidst the monotony of "Jet Ski-ing" across oceans of content, and diagnostic, in that this uplift comes to reflect back on the seemingly self-inflicted but nonetheless lamentable conditions which produced it. This sense of ambivalence underpins the pull-push logic of the original tweet, where a strong emotional reaction is at first noted and then rejected, demonstrating that the emotionally overwhelming "pay-off" to Whittall's investment of time in the consumption of GIFs is inextricable from a realisation that for the

most part his investment has failed to generate aesthetic value on his side of the transaction. In light of the ideas just outlined, we can thus re-iterate an assertion made earlier in this section, in slightly altered terms: in Whittall's case, the Ibrahimović goal provides a moment of punctuation in the temporal continuum experienced by the habituated GIF viewer, one where the surface of laborious or "trained" *average* affect is broken to allow for the introduction of some point of greater perspective.

In a follow-up e-mail exchange on 9 December 2013, Whittall argues that a "rare" GIF such as this one of Ibrahimović possesses some qualitative distinction from the morass of other GIFs that, in his experience, surround it: 'Some GIFs, certainly special ones like this, stand the test of time, and become a kind of shorthand for something else. But I find for the most part most GIFs just go on the "happened two weeks ago" pile, at least in the sporting world.' All highlight GIFs have the potential to captivate briefly, given their tendency to depict the apex moments of football's drama. As suggested by Whittall's remarks however, highlight GIFs are not in place to be consumed individually: rather, each one occupies a slot in a sequence constructed at the viewer's will as they surf across sites like Reddit and Twitter. The Ibrahimović GIF is especially powerful because, for this particular viewer, it exposes this structure. I cannot ultimately say what it is that makes this image, and not the one that was next to it on Whittall's Twitter feed on the night of October 23, stand out in this way for the journalist. However, what can be re-iterated at this stage is that the football highlight GIF possesses a paradoxical temporality: in it, a climactic moment is removed from the *longueur* of ordinary game-time, and is frequently used to confer individual esteem on the player at the centre of the action. Although the GIF depicts movement, it also possesses a certain degree of singularity: it is movement concentrated onto the head of a pin, distilled to the utmost of its expressive value. Thus concentrated, however, the GIF is then deposited into a different *longueur*, that of web browsing. For Whittall, then, the most remarkable feature of the Ibrahimović GIF is that it explodes this temporal dialectic, revealing the boredom which underwrites each individual shock in the process of watching GIF after GIF. In the next section of this chapter, I argue that this *punctum*, this point of rupture in the skein of "average affect" which gradually comes to settle even over moving images that are designed to extract points of maximum excitement from the *longueur* of game time, can be associated with a conception of artistic authorship that hinges on the idea of *punctuality*, which is to say, the idea that the individual creative genius is named as such by their ability to seize or mark the present moment.

Fig. 19: Image from the 2014 promotional campaign for Nike and Zlatan Ibrahimović
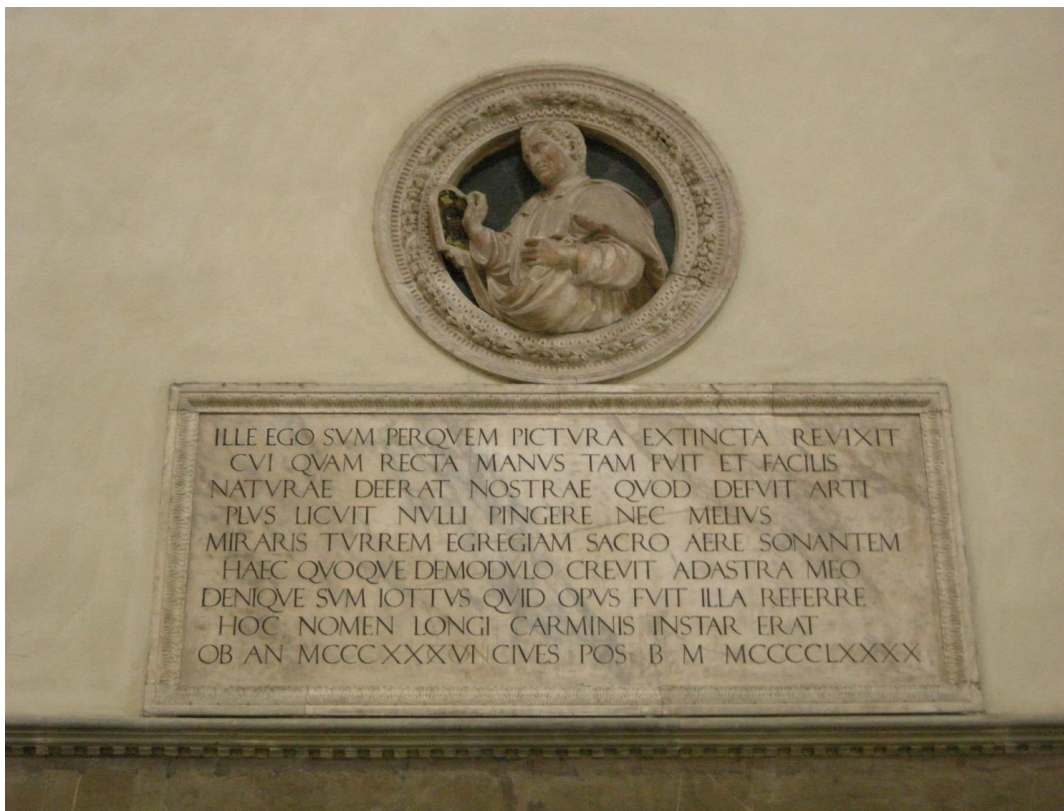
Fig. 20: Benedetto de Maiano, Monument to Giotto, Florence Cathedral, 1490. Marble, with epitaph by Angelo Poliziano.

Punctuality and the authorial mode of production

I remarked earlier that the "Cruyff turn" GIF which became a fulcrum for tributes to Cruyff in the immediate aftermath of his death was redolent of a sense of creative genius which adheres to the player and which was one of the principal themes of subsequent obituaries and retrospective features. The GIF distils a moment at which Cruyff made a decisive intervention into the history of football as it had existed up to that point: if we are to believe the testimony of those who witnessed the match in question either in the stadium or live on television, this trick, which ably facilitates attackers in shaking off their markers when performed correctly, was perceived as a radically original piece of skill. Carrying his name forward into future generations, the trademarked manoeuvre stands as one of the strongest markers of Cruyff's identity as a player, an identity which hinges on a commitment to innovative and refreshing approaches to the game. The GIF as a format lends itself well to presenting this identifying movement in its most purely concentrated form: there is no sound to distract from the visual component of the file, and the truncation and repetition mean that the turn's technique can be appreciated over and over again at the viewer's leisure without wasting time on incidental details, like the movements leading up to Cruyff's confrontation with the Swedish defender. As Whannel suggests, sports highlights lend themselves to individualistic presentations, and the qualities which make the GIF different from pre-digital iterations of the edited sports highlight may serve to emphasise this individualism still further.

The idea that a GIF can lend itself to expressing some singular feature of a charismatic player's identity is also clearly present in Whittall's rejoinder that the Ibrahimović GIF was so stirring because it was 'so audacious, so incredible, so rare, so ZLATAN'. The writer renders the striker's name as an adjective, suggesting that the goal in question demonstrated characteristics that are inextricable from Ibrahimović's on-field idiom. Furthermore, he renders it in upper-case letters, giving the name something of the appearance of a logotype or trademark. This is an appropriate gesture given the identity of the player in question: in March 2014, Ibrahimović's media representatives, working in tandem with the sportswear giants Nike, uploaded a series of portraits of Ibrahimović to the player's official Twitter account (@Ibra_official), accompanied by the slogan "Dare to Zlatan". In six separate images, a black-and-white representation of the player accompanies such telling phrases as "LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, AT LEAST YOU MADE MY HIGHLIGHT REEL" and "SORRY FOR ZLATANING YOU" [*sic*]. The slogan "Dare to Zlatan", rendered both as a logotype and a Twitter hashtag, completes the composition. [*Fig. 21*] In these images, which effectively commodify Ibrahimović's potency as a

producer of great moments of individual skill, the player's first name becomes a privileged object around which a charismatic and saleable identity is articulated.

While this branding campaign itself was evidently managed at least in part by the American sportswear giant Nike, whose "swoosh" logo appears both on Ibrahimović's shirt and as part of the eponymous logotype, it trades – in a manner typical of the production cycles of "immaterial labour" as discussed previously – on a conception of Ibrahimović that has emerged organically among fans over the course of the player's seventeen year career. In an article for a 2013 issue of *The Blizzard* covering Ibrahimović's career to date, Swedish football writer Lars Sivertsen notes that even at his first club, Malmö FF, Ibrahimović had begun referring to himself in media appearances in the third person, using his given name: having offset the (ongoing) reputation for arrogance he acquired at this early stage of his career by leading Malmö to the 2000 Swedish second division championship with a club-leading haul of twelve goals, Ibrahimović 'talked, telling journalists things like, "There is only one Zlatan" and "Zlatan is Zlatan".' [59] Sivertsen notes that 'Statements like these would become a regular feature of Zlatan's career and led many to believe that the man is a raging egomaniac': in another example, Ibrahimović responds to a journalist's question as to what the player had bought his fiancée Mia Olhage as an engagement present with the quip '"Present? She got Zlatan."' [59] This treatment of the striker's first name as a kind of characterological marker is reproduced in the Reddit comment thread which accompanies the Ibrahimović GIF discussed by Whittall. User "MADHEADBILL" quips 'Standard Zlatan', "Gandalf_the_snitch" remarks 'Nothing to see here, just Zlatan being Zlatan', and "schilom" mocks up a quote from the player himself: 'That was nothing - Zlatan'. "JulianArmandos", "SquareRoot", "DanielEGVi" and "hybridsr", meanwhile, reproduce a boastful line attributed to Ibrahimović, gradually replacing more and more of the quote's words with the word "Zlatan", until the latter types '"It was Zlatanbly one of Zlatan's most Zlatanful goals, but then Zlatan has many Zlatanful goals" - Zlatan'. Further down in the comments thread, "shitty_hdr" takes this joke to its logical extreme: 'Zlatan Zlatan Zlatan - Zlatan'. While apparently mocking Ibrahimović for his self-centred mannerisms, these posts help to perpetuate the absolute centrality of Ibrahimović's first name when discussing the player and his exploits both on and off the pitch. This word becomes a site of semiotic plenitude, acting as a kind of storehouse for the player's personal history. The logical end result of this phenomenon, given the increasing commodification of football's top players in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, is that "Zlatan" literally becomes a logo in the images posted by Ibrahimović's official media accounts in March 2014.

Briefly, it is worth considering the background of commodification against which this elevation of Ibrahimović's first name takes place. Media theorist Richard Haynes notes that 'For those players at the pinnacle of the sport the rewards of playing the professional game and the commercial trappings that accompany it are viewed as recognition that their worth is not purely born of how they play the game but also by their market value as a brand.' [361] Such brands, Haynes notes, 'are notoriously difficult things to evaluate and are prone to fluctuations in the potency of their symbolic and capital worth', but this has not prevented the development of a situation in which 'the elite of the world's footballers, the superstars of the game, are now traded on this intangible value with the capture of their so-called "image rights" central to any contractual negotiations between player, agents, club and national federation.' [361-62] The legal concept of "image rights", Haynes continues,

> entered the consciousness of most British football fans in 2000 when Real Madrid made their then world record signing of Portuguese midfielder Luis Figo from arch-rivals Barcelona. Crucial to the negotiations was the retention of Figo's image rights by the club enabling Real to exploit the players name and image on their merchandise and share in the profit from any personal endorsements the player might attain from sponsorship or advertising. [364]

Haynes remarks that Real Madrid would go on to strike further "image rights" deals with the crucial members of their "Galácticos" side, including David Beckham, Ronaldo, and the subject of my next chapter, Zinedine Zidane.[15] This account of the development of "image rights" clauses in professional footballers' contracts demonstrates the particular construction of the contemporary game's privileging of elite players: as was the case with Figo's transfer to Real Madrid, these players become the means through which clubs recoup additional revenue on top of gate receipts, merchandise and sponsorship deals relating to the team, as they are entitled to receive a fraction of the player's own income from individual commercial endorsement deals. Without covering the specifics of Ibrahimović's contracts at his various clubs, it is clear that this is the framework in which the player's elite status is constructed: tellingly, Ibrahimović was one of the first marquee signings the French side Paris Saint-Germain after the Qatari sovereign wealth fund Qatar Sports Investments became the club's majority shareholder in 2011. Paris Saint-Germain went on to become a regular fixture in the widely-televised knock-out stages of the UEFA Champions League, with Ibrahimović leading the attack as club captain. A profile of Ibrahimović in Kurt Badenhausen's countdown for *Forbes* of the top 100 celebrity earners of 2016 puts Ibrahimović's annual earnings at $37.4 million, with $7 million of this total coming from endorsement deals.[16] The profile notes that these deals include a $3 million contract with

Nike, a fragrance labelled Zlatan, a line of sportswear named A-Z, and advertising deals with Volvo and Vitamin Well.

Ibrahimović can thus be considered a commodified entity, and the characterological nuances that are summoned by the player's first name, frequently foregrounded by the player himself, maintain the viability of his brand. Having established this economic backdrop however, I do not wish to dwell further on the player's circulation on the market so much as his attendant circulation through the cultural imaginary, as glimpsed in Whittall's comments on the GIF of the player's goal against Anderlecht. Principally, I want to argue that the GIF in question is not accidentally related to the journalist's ostentatious circling back to the player's first name, but through its truncation and repetition aids the process whereby "ZLATAN" becomes a kind of logo, designating a particular horizon of achievements and expectations that establishes him as an elite and lucrative player. In order to do this, I once again turn to writings on the visual culture of the Late Medieval and Early Modern periods, this time in the figures of Belting, Nagel and Wood.

Before discussing Nagel and Wood, it must be noted that their text *Anachronic Renaissance* owes a considerable intellectual debt to Belting's earlier study *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image Before the Era of Art*. Belting's focus in the latter stages of this book is the changes that theological developments leading up to the Reformation wrought on the practice of icon painting, and the manner in which the Counter-Reformation recuperated the practice. The late antique and medieval religious icon, Belting contends, 'rejected reduction into metaphor; rather, it laid claim to being immediate evidence of God's presence revealed to the eyes and the senses.' [15] This meant that many icons were designed to resemble as closely as possible the appearance of icons that preceded them: an example of a prototype which was carried through a multitude of re-iterations was the so-called Mandylion, whose longevity is attributable to the notion that it records a genuine imprint of the face of Christ.[17] Even in versions based upon many generations of copies, this image was seen to provide some form of real physical proximity to a distant time, in this case the time of events described in the Gospels.

The developments surrounding the birth of Protestantism, Belting argues, are associated with a critique of the world-view that lent iconic images like the Mandylion their legitimacy: after the Reformation, Belting writes,

> The eye no longer discovers evidence for the presence of God in images or in the physical world; God reveals himself only through his word. The word as bearer of the spirit is just

as abstract as is the new concept of God; religion has become an ethical code of living. [15]

The subject of this ethical code, Belting continues, 'sees the world as severed into the purely factual and the hidden signification of metaphor.' [15] The work of image-making subsequently becomes about the communication of hidden meanings underlying the material world which are conceptually, not sensually, apprehended: image-making has at this point become *Art,* and the image-maker has become a privileged mediator of intellectual material whose legitimacy is decided by their capacity to communicate this material with fluency and imagination (it is worth noting the resonances of this primordial formulation with the contemporary approaches crystallised in Jones' article on Kingsley, or described in the writings by Kester which I address in chapter four). This shift is tied to wider historical forces: highlighting the differences between the instructional books for artists published by Cennino Cennini in 1390 and Leon Battista Alberti in 1435, Belting argues that by the time of the latter publication, 'the image was…made subject to the general laws of nature, including optics, and so was assigned wholly to the realm of sense perception […] In addition, the new image was handed over to artists, who were expected to create it from their "fantasy."'[471][18] Following the disenchantment of the religious icon, artists were to be evaluated not for their accuracy in copying divinely-ordained prototypes, but for their capacity at creating images which both imitated nature with accuracy and communicated metaphorical content effectively and originally. To this extent, Belting argues that artworks began to become privileged sites for the veneration not of the divine, but of the artists that had produced them, quoting a remark made by iconoclastic Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola that 'Every painter, one might say, really paints himself. Insofar as he is a painter, he paints according to his own idea.' [471] The rise of authorial identity is thus associated with a shift of focus from divinely-ordained prototypes to the individualistic and personality-conferring process of artistic originality.

In their book, Nagel and Wood expand on Belting's study by focusing more closely on the temporal aspects of this proposition. The authors address the 'temporal flexibility' of certain art objects, focusing in particular on the European Renaissance, an epoch which they, like Belting, judge as a moment in which an authorial mode of art production emerged. [12] Reframing Belting's concepts in their own terms, Nagel and Wood suggest that around the time of the early Renaissance, the artwork could either be represented as 'a magical conduit to other times and places', a representation which the authors refer to as the 'substitutional model' of artistic causation, or contrarily as 'an index pointing to its own efficient causes, to the immediate agencies that created it and no more', a formation which they label as the 'performative' model.

[17] As an example of the former, Nagel and Wood cite the example of the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, constructed in 1061 in Norfolk, and commemorating an apparition of the Virgin Mary to the English noblewoman Richeldis de Faverches. The site remained a place of pilgrimage from its construction until the English Reformation: 'for the pilgrim', Nagel and Wood remark, 'the shrine at Walsingham is linked, no matter how often its timbers are replaced, to a primordial, meaning-conferring past through labelling and ritual.' [13] This is to say, what sanctifies the shrine as an object of special aesthetic value is not its material connection to the moment of its inauguration – the original timbers testifying to the work carried out by labourers in 1061 – but its mythic or spiritual connection to a moment which is itself merely a conduit for a more significant past: the moment of the Virgin.

By contrast, a token of the "performative" model of artistic causation and legitimacy is provided by the figure of Giotto, the canonical first great artist of the Italian Renaissance.[19] Adapting Belting's terms in a manner which foregrounds the question of temporality, Nagel and Wood argue that the performative model trades the meaning-laden primordial past for the moment of the artwork's actual facture. What is foregrounded in the model associated with Giotto is the single author's contemporaneous act of genius, so that instead of Giotto's paintings amassing value because they keep alive the flame of some historic act of divine intervention, they are valuable because they encapsulate a moment wherein the great artist's material and intellectual capacity is made manifest. Echoing the way that Barthes uses the term *punctum* to characterise the sense of a photograph's absolute integration with the moment of its mechanical production, Nagel and Wood repeatedly use the term "punctuality" to describe how the performative model of artistic causation emphasises the art object's traceability to a single decisive performance: while 'substitution proposes sameness across difference, the authorial performance asserts punctual difference against repetition and continuity.' [16] The substitutional model holds novelty and stasis in balance in a manner comparable to Barthes' concept of the *studium*, where the former is subtle enough so as to not unseat the latter; the performative model by contrast resembles the arrow shot from the "glum desert" of Barthes' account, registering a degree of difference that transcends the existing scale of values and allows for the development of a perspective positioned outside the continuum of "substitution".

Nagel and Wood go on to argue that while the substitutional model of artistic causation may appear 'a primitive or superstitious creed', it is in fact 'a model of production that grasps, in many ways more successfully than the authorial model, the strange and multiple temporality of the artwork.' [16] The authorial model is by contrast rooted in a myth of the individual artist

which overlooks such significant factors as the importance of consensually-developed iconographic programs and the persistence of studio production practices based around teams of workers developing compositions over time, as opposed to the image of lone authors suddenly happening upon their finished item. The sense of *difference* proper to the *punctual* artwork is thus produced in combination with a theory of exceptionalism regarding the individual artist: it is the 'element of agency' proper to the famous artist that 'gives the work its punctual quality', and the performance of artistic genius that 'cuts time into before and after.' [Nagel & Wood 15] Crucial to the conceptions of agency and genius that adhere to artists like Giotto, differentiating his lineage from the anonymous restorers of icons and shrines, is the importance placed on the artist's name as 'a fixed point that anchors fame', wielded as an act of 'protest against the powerful and perhaps finally irrefutable thesis that agency can never really be localized but is instead always dispersed across a field of persons and events.' [Nagel & Wood 126] Elaborating on this idea of the name, Nagel and Wood attribute a great deal of historical importance to the gestures captured in Benedetto de Maiano's Monument to Giotto in Florence Cathedral. [*Fig. 20*]

Here, beneath a roundel which captures Giotto at work on a mosaic image of Christ, one finds a Latin inscription which Nagel and Wood read as an illustration of the nascent cult of authorship in 1490s Florence. Translated, the epigram reads,

> I am he through whom painting, dead, returned to life
> whose hand was as sure as it was adept.
> What my art lacked was lacking in nature herself.
> To no one was it given to paint better or more.
> Do you admire the great belltower resounding with sacred bronze?
> This too on the basis of my model has grown to the stars.
> After all, I am Giotto. What need was there to relate these things?
> This name has stood as the equal to any long poem. [qtd. in Nagel & Wood 123]

This epigram, composed by Angelo Poliziano, makes use of the poetic device known as *sphragis*, in which, according to Nagel and Wood, 'the author of a poem directly addresses the audience to give autobiographical information and proclaim his accomplishments.' [124] Here it is combined with a device found on funerary monuments and known as the "speaking epigram", in which dedications incorporate the first-person perspective of the deceased, to create a situation in which 'Giotto recalls his achievements from a vantage point after his own death, from the position of the retrospective monument'. [Nagel & Wood 125] Central to this effort to monumentalise the painter is a 'gathering up of […] achievements under the artist's name.' [Nagel & Wood 126] The particular phrasing of the monument's invocation of Giotto's name – the epigram suggests that no further evidence of the artist's lasting value need be presented than

is already bound up in the word IOTTUS – demonstrates historiographical ambition in seeking to instantiate this word as what I referred to earlier in this section as a "characterological marker".

As Nagel and Wood put it, '[t]he epigram […] takes as its subject matter the basic nature of monument-making, an event by which a name is transformed into an image, the event by which the name Giotto becomes the logo IOTTUS.' [126] Further, the authors note that 'Only the names of the greatest artists can assume this kind of iconic force, capable – like the painter's works themselves – of summoning a whole series of images and a whole history before one's eyes.' [126] This inscription thus ties Giotto's punctuality in the history of art – the first line suggests that such a history can be divided into the time prior to his revival of painting and the time after – to the signifying power of his name, which becomes an arbiter of individual genius. As the authors demonstrate through this historic example, a sense of punctual temporality and a modern conception of individualistic authorship are intimately linked. Moving back to the focal point of this chapter, we can apply their insights to the rather less canonical locus of Richard Whittall's response to the Ibrahimović GIF. Whittall's rejoinder that the Ibrahimović GIF is "so ZLATAN" resonates strongly with Poliziano's line "After all, I am Giotto. What need was there to relate these things?" Both writers make their respective subjects' name into a monument anchoring a lifetime's achievement: Whittall's decision to capitalise the striker's surname is in keeping with the heavy monumentality of Benedetto's carving, and both suggest in their own way that each respective name is redolent of a whole series of idiomatic and unprecedented interventions into the cultural field in question. Furthermore, it is possible in both cases to draw an intimate link between this conception of individual authorship and the idea of a temporal rupture that creates a "before" and "after". Whereas in Giotto's case this rupture concerns his purported revival of the medium of painting, for Whittall it is bound up with those temporal attributes of the animated highlight GIF that were discussed earlier: firstly, the GIF itself depicts what Whannel refers to as a "peak moment of action" drawn from the game as a whole, and secondly this particular GIF is an unusually enticing highlight, one which interrupts his ordinary flow of surfing through football-related content online. Whittall's reflection, that is to say, is one which draws a connection between the notion of "punctual" aesthetic performance and the notion of charismatic individual authorship, a connection comparable to the one found over half a millennium prior in Benedetto's monument to Giotto, albeit in very different circumstances. This connection, I argue, is also formed in the case of the online response to Cruyff's death, where the tersely expressive "Cruyff turn" GIF that was widely shared in the immediate

aftermath of his death functions as a visual demonstration of the qualities of unprecedented creativity and originality for which the player was praised in the subsequent obituaries.

While accounting for the immediate causes of Benedetto and Poliziano's representation of Giotto is a task that is beyond the remit of this thesis, it is clear that, for his part, Whittall is prompted to draw this connection by the temporal construction and cultural identity of the GIF in question. Following Whannel's terms, we can state that the clip follows the typical pattern of sporting highlights, constituted with a lone author at the centre of its universe; its temporal parameters are at one end the moment that a poor headed clearance sets the stage for Ibrahimović's decisive performative intervention and the other the moment that this intervention is fulfilled, its impact consolidated. The resulting authorial focus of this video loop renders its protagonist's opponents as automata, floundering as our hero seizes the moment and crafts a break in the temporal flow of game-time, now fundamentally altered by the addition of a goal. Both highlight GIFs described in this chapter extract from a wider mesh of time in order to emphasise the virtuosic agency of the figures at their centre, relegating to mere background noise the field of persons and events with which the agentic moment is inextricably intertwined. Each of these two players is thus inscribed as the *punctum* in the scene, as the arrow shot from a field of equivalences, the spring gushing forth in the glum desert of ordinary game-time, and they are thereby inscribed as little Giottos of their own actions. That each and every highlight GIF is modelled more or less on this basis is what then creates the paradoxical temporality of these GIFs as we encounter them in the process of our web-browsing: as their assumed singularity is exposed to a new form of accretion, each gushing spring calcifies and helps to form a new glum desert, until the right GIF comes along and once again restores vibrancy and nourishment. In this sense, the monumentality of Ibrahimović's name as expressed by the GIF which stops Whittall in his tracks is re-doubled: in the first instance, his intervention in the game between Paris Saint-Germain and Anderlecht is seized from that continuum and granted the status of "peak moment of action", while in the second instance this highlight is experienced as a *highlight among highlights*, a peak moment among peak moments which arrests the flow of surfing and directly hails the scrolling viewer as a punctual moment of footballing genius, "the equal to any long poem".

It is in this sense that we can speak of the star power of players like Ibrahimović as a quantity that rises in proportion with the volume of material with which a football fan is assailed on a daily basis in the context of social media: if viewing highlights through services and formats like Vine, Streamable and the animated GIF becomes such a normative means of following

football that the practice of viewing clips of decisive moments develops its own kind of *longueur*, then the ability of players like Ibrahimović to perform acts which stand apart from the vast quantity of equivalent performances that surround them on social media news feeds lends these players a sense of punctuality that responds not just to game-time but also to the time of new media fandom. As such, Ibrahimović is framed as a creative genius not just with regards to his footballing abilities, but with regards to his abilities to seize and alter the on-line conversation, which we have already seen is a demonstrable aim of his media persona. In the new media ecology of football fandom, it may be the case that what Paolo Bianconi calls "GIFability", understood as the capacity to generate unusually high levels of "performative authorial focus", becomes a means of attaining fame and renown.

Over the course of this chapter, I have attempted to demonstrate how the animated highlight GIF provides a new and distinctive means of engaging with football which nevertheless drives the spectator into the orbit of tried-and-true conventions of football fandom. Implicit within the GIF's overall constitution is a movement between sensation and boredom, between "surfing" and stasis, and between alienation and a kind of focused and interactive engagement that did not have a basis in old media outlets. At the same time, however, the animated GIF tends to contribute to a star system which has its roots outside of that particular technology, and furthermore can be said to reproduce a *longueur* which has always been implicit in football viewing, only this *longueur* relates to the experience of online browsing and not to the structure of game-time. The stand-out GIF punctures the surface of more-or-less anomic browsing time in much the same manner as a goal can break through the boredom of viewing a nil-nil stalemate. In an attempt to allow references from the fields of art and sport into communication with one another, I framed this notion of puncture through figures borrowed from writings on the history of artistic authorship and the affective experience of photography, articulating these writings to evidence gleaned from football's interpretative communities.

To conclude, taking into account the object itself, the discursive practices and tacit knowledges which surround it, and those bodies of the discourse to which it can be opened up, the highlight GIF can be compared to the diving image in its oscillation between divergent tendencies with regards to the aesthetic capacities of football. On the one hand, the highlight GIF enables viewers to interact with the products of football's image economy with a new openness, and enjoins them to focus on compelling on-field movements with an increased intent. On the other hand, the format recapitulates and strengthens older phenomena, like the centrality of individual star talents in our conception of the professional game. In the next

chapter, I take a step away from the approach of the previous two chapters, which have squarely concerned themselves with aesthetic discourses and processes occurring within football-focused interpretative communities. In what remains of this thesis, I turn to consider forms of aesthetic engagement with the game that emerge from the field of art, and consider the meanings that are created by artists approaching the game, as opposed to habituated supporters.

Notes

[1] Deleuze, Gilles. "Postscript on the Societies of Control", *October*, 59 (1992), pp. 3-7. Web (accessed 09/04/15). p. 6

[2] In *Discipline and Punish* Foucault presents a 'compact model of the disciplinary mechanism' in the form of a French protocol for managing populations during the seventeenth-century plague epidemic: the quarantined town is an

> enclosed space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead[.] [195]

For Foucault, this model of constant observation, categorisation and supervision is replicated in later institutions such as the school, the hospital and the prison, which are then viewed as crucial instruments for maintaining order and health among the social body.

[3] It bears noting that while Foucault's disciplinary institutions are still "enclosed spaces", they ensure a more continuous operation of power than was made possible by the disincentivising spectacle of public execution or the issuing of decrees. [Foucault 208] The situation diagnosed by Deleuze is then a *further* diffusion of power into the fabric of everyday life.

[4] For a thorough account of the relative "nimbleness" of late capitalism, see Boltanski & Chiapello, particularly Part II on "The Transformation of Capitalism and the Neutralization of Critique"

[5] For critical responses to Carr's piece see Darlin and Wolman

[6] At the bottom of every post made by accounts with standard privacy settings, Twitter provides users with three buttons offering the possibility to "reply", "retweet" or "like" the post in question. "Retweeting" a post means that it is re-posted by one's own account and appears on the scrolling feed of one's followers. Note that when "retweeting", the post in question does not appear as one's own content but bears the mark of the account that originally produced it; on the other hand, by copying the GIF file from the @90sfootball tweet and posting it themselves the accounts belonging to the Evening Standard, ITV and so on did not credit @90sfootball with introducing the GIF to mass circulation.

[7] "Total Football" is the name given to the tactical approach developed at AFC Ajax by manager Rinus Michels during his first stint with the club from 1965 to 1971. Cruyff would later go on to manage Barcelona FC, where he helped to establish the prestigious academy La Masia, whose training program emphasises collectivity, positional multi-tasking and persistent "pressing" of opponents in possession of the ball in a manner which closely mirrors the precepts of Total Football. See Wilson, particularly 244-260 and 421-443.

[8] "Heat maps" are images, popularised by football data providers like Squawka, which purport to show in palimpsest form an individual players' movements around the pitch during a given game. "Goals, Skills, Assists" is the name of a popular series of videos uploaded to YouTube by the ScoutNationHD account, which typically focus on lesser-known players who have recently been signed or are set to sign for elite-level clubs. With

regards to "memes", see Vol. 13, No. 3 of the *Journal of Visual Culture*, a special issue edited by Laine Nooney and Laura Portwood-Stacer containing numerous articles on that theme.

[9] The term "social news" is used to refer to sites such as Slashdot, Reddit and Newsvine, where topical posts are displayed in order of how popular they are among users: on Reddit, for instance, one can choose to "upvote" or "downvote" both posts and the comments contained within the threads that accompany them, with the most frequently "upvoted" posts subsequently appearing on the first page of sub-sections within the site (known as "sub-Reddits") and ultimately the homepage of the site as a whole. The "sub-Reddit" that is dedicated to football is based at reddit.com/r/soccer, and has in recent years become a popular site for discussion of football online, demonstrating through its ranking system the stories and discussions that appeal most broadly to a significant chunk of football's online community at any one given moment in time.

[10] The tweet refers to an event which took place during the Canadian rapper Drake's headline set at the 2015 Coachella Festival, when pop veteran Madonna took to the stage and, apparently spontaneously, kissed Drake before exiting again. "X like" is a common format for the written element which frequently accompanies reaction GIFs, alongside other such *topoi* as "mfw" ("my face when") and "tfw" ("that feeling when"): see Eppink 302

[11] Harmon is the creator and producer of the sitcom *Community*, which ran from 2009 until 2015 on NBC and Yahoo! Screen. The actress Alison Brie in particular was given many scenes in this show that were subsequently turned into screengrab GIFs, to the extent that there is a sub-Reddit solely dedicated to this topic (reddit.com/r/alisonbriegifs).

[12] In *The Future of the Image* (2007), Jacques Rancière criticises this section of *Camera Lucida* by suggesting that Barthes' assertion of an absolute *alterity* proper to the photographic image is the author's means of redressing the work done in earlier texts like *Mythologies* (1957) to divest the photographic image of its sense of immediacy. [10-11] While Rancière's remarks help to bring into focus an obvious criticism of the concept of *punctum*, namely, that it lacks material exactitude and goes against the work that Barthes, as a semiotician, had previously done to suggest that images can be interpreted as a kind of language, I ultimately agree with the critic Brian Dillon when he suggests that Rancière's argument here is 'more than a little schematic'. While *punctum* is clearly not beyond reproach as a concept, privileging Barthes' earlier work over his later, more lyrical interventions may cause us to overlook the ways in which the terms developed in *Camera Lucida* might prove productive for further discussions, ones which do not necessarily lead us inexorably away from material analysis.

[13] This, at least, is the case with Penguin Random House's edition of the book for the US market, despite the full title in the original Swedish publication featuring the player's surname. Perhaps owing to the frequency with which Ibrahimović is referred to by his given name, there are numerous examples of UK sources referring to the English translation of the book by its American title: see Whaling.

[14] One example taken from this account's timeline at the time of writing is a retweet of a post by user @Basti, CEO of the logistics company Postmates, featuring an image of a billboard advertisement which uses the phrase "Postmates and chill", thus appropriating the memetic phrase "Netflix and chill", a sexual euphemism which originated among Twitter users in late 2014. In a further step, these billboards are designed to mimic the appearance of an instant messaging app. A second example is a post linking to a tweet sent by the UK Pizza Hut account to rapper Kanye West, featuring a modified version of the artwork for his 2016 album *Life of Pablo*, which already been subjected to many humorous re-fashionings by social media users in the immediate aftermath of the album's release.

[15] The "Galácticos" were a side assembled by Real Madrid president Florentino Pérez between 2000 and 2007. During this time Pérez's policy was to spend large amounts of money to attract established world-class players to the club: Figo, Beckham, Ronaldo and Zidane were all signed from teams that Madrid would have considered as among their principal rivals in the UEFA Champions' League.

[16] It is worth noting that two footballers, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, place at top spot and second spot respectively in this list.

[17] An extant example of the Mandylion can be found in the so-called "Holy Face of Genoa", an image kept in the Church of St Bartholomew of the Armenians in Genoa. For an extended discussion of this and related image types see Belting 208-24 and Nagel & Wood 205-7

[18] Cennino's book *Il Libro dell' Arte* contains technical information for painters regarding matters such as the mixing of pigments; Belting describes his writings as 'workshop books'. [471] By contrast Alberti's *De Pictura*, typically viewed as one of the cornerstones of Renaissance Humanist discourse as it relates to the visual arts, is concerned with providing artists and connoisseurs with a key to the 'theory of painting', and with '[raising] painting to the status of a science among the "liberal arts."' [Belting 471]

[19] This conception of Giotto emerges in the writings of sixteenth century art historian Giorgio Vasari and has persisted in Art History syllabuses across the world into the twenty-first century. In his *Lives of the Artists*, Vasari opines that 'painters owe to Giotto [...] exactly the same debt they owe to nature, which constantly serves them as a model', and observes that 'after the many years during which the methods and outlines of good painting had been buried under the ruins caused by war it was Giotto alone who, by God's favour, rescued and restored the art, even though he was born among incompetent artists.' [57]

3. "The gaze always finds Zidane": Overdetermination and Photo-conceptualist Aesthetics in Gordon and Parreno's *Zidane: A 21ˢᵗ Century Portrait*

'No, the noise of the world decidedly does not suit you'

- Anne Delbée[1]

Having discussed how the highlight GIF, a non-art artefact from the cultural field of contemporary football, contributes towards the game's commodification of individual players, this chapter marks a change of direction for the thesis as a whole in seeking to account for how a number of artefacts that *are* sanctioned as artistic address themselves to a footballer whose public persona has attained a discursive density that outweighs even that pertaining to "Zlatan", namely Zinedine Zidane. Much more so than Ibrahimović, the FIFA World Cup- and UEFA Champions League-winning former captain of Real Madrid and the French national team occupies a multi-faceted role within public discourse, often acting as an ambassador for his ethnic and class background both internationally and within France. While Ibrahimović's Bosnian-Swedish diasporic identity is occasionally mined for its effects on his upbringing and subsequent on-field mentality (as in the Sivertsen piece quoted from in the previous chapter), these efforts are by far outnumbered by attempts to draw similar connections between Zidane's French-Maghrebi (or *beur*) identity and the on-field exploits for which he is most (in)famous. In addition, Zidane has for nearly two decades been the subject of artworks, literary writings, and scholarly analyses straddling the Humanities and the Social Sciences: the sociologist Nacira Guénif-Soulimas has remarked that, 'Everyone has an opinion on Zidane, and everyone attempts to monopolize him for particular purposes. He belongs to everyone and thus cannot maintain sovereignty over his own persona.' [208] This history of competing claims is, I argue, an essential consideration when attempting to reconstruct the context into which the works of art and literature I will go on to discuss were initially inserted, and must thus enter into any analysis of the objects themselves, in line with my overriding insistence on foregrounding histories of reception when discussing aesthetic objects.

The distinction I draw above between "non-art" and "sanctioned art" is, as was discussed in the introduction, built on the conceptual framework developed by Bourdieu in his work on cultural fields. I suggested that a crucial characteristic of cultural fields is their possession of what Bourdieu calls a *doxa*, the "tacit, fundamental agreement of stakes" that anchors debates between heterodox and orthodox positions on a particular issue by deciding which lines of questioning are pertinent and which are irrelevant. Highlight GIFs and diving images are generally encountered by individuals orbiting the *doxa* at the centre of footballing discourse; these objects are used to illustrate points that commentators on the game may wish to raise regarding certain players or phenomena rooted in the game itself. Diving images are appreciated or denigrated with respect to the master question of what constitutes an ethical performance in football, and highlight GIFs are lent sub-cultural value as a result of their ability to effectively capture and convey certain tropes of individual footballing genius. As demonstrated in the first half of this thesis, the non-art status of these objects does not mean that they cannot be discussed in terms of aesthetics, but the aesthetic debates taking place in conversations around diving images and highlight GIFs are localised and cannot be fully appreciated by treating aesthetics as if it were the preserve of artists, artworks and their critics alone. Rather, football orientates its own discussions over aesthetic matters, and stepping outside the cultural field of football and into that of art for the second half of this thesis thus means adopting a different set of anchoring assumptions and problematics.

I also suggested in my introduction that one of the typical ways of distinguishing "high" and "low" approaches to cultural production revolves around what Bourdieu refers to as high art's 'censorship of the expressive content which explodes in the expressiveness of popular language.' [*Distinction* 34] Where popular aesthetics are portrayed in accounts like Jonathan Jones' article on Kingsley as relatively unmediated, high aesthetics are seen as a zone of relative obscurantism; this conception holds that artists must first alienate mass cultural materials from their natural public in order to make work which has genuine critical or aesthetic value. In the initial discussion of Bourdieu's terms, I portrayed this binary distinction between the immediacy of mass culture and the *hauteur* of high culture as an unhelpful one in this case, since it leads to an elision of the many mediating factors that impact on football spectatorship. In support of this assertion, I gave the example of the learned preference for one style of play over another that can be found in different regions of Brazil, and the indignation that arose when coaches of the national side came to favour more defensive, pragmatic and conservative stylistic approaches than had been typical over the previous few decades. In the discussion that follows, I continue to engage critically with the idea of adopting this distinction between immediacy and hauteur as a

definition of the forces which maintain the border-line between "art" and "non-art" *per se*. Nevertheless, I wish to claim that a form of "censorship of expressive content" *is* one of the distinguishing characteristics of Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's 2006 film *Zidane: a 21ˢᵗ Century Portrait*, as well as Jean-Philippe Toussaint's literary essay "Zidane's Melancholy", published the following year and sharing a marked affinity with that film. The particular form of censorship employed in these works derives, I argue, from a specific lineage of twentieth-century photo-conceptualist art, and carries out an especially pertinent and powerful function within the corpus of artworks, writings and scholarly interventions dedicated to Zidane. While I do not wish suggest that anti-populist *hauteur* is a definitive condition of "high" as opposed to "low" aesthetics, I nevertheless examine the extent to which it is adopted as an underlying mode of production in this specific instance, and account for why that may be the case. Thinking, in words taken from Anne Delbée's novella *The 107ᵗʰ Minute* [*La 107e minute*], of Zidane as a figure surrounded by "the noise of the world", I approach *Zidane: a 21ˢᵗ Century Portrait* as a photo-conceptualist experiment which goes some way towards bracketing Zidane's super-charged public persona. This analysis constitutes the centrepiece of this chapter, book-ended by reflections on literary responses to Zidane by Delbée and Toussaint, which, I argue, demonstrate the stakes present in choosing to embrace or displace the popular expressive content that adheres to Zidane's personage to such a remarkable degree. I will now outline this content through the figure of a fourth work of art drawn from the archives of *Zidanology*.

Zidane at the intersection of sports, politics and art

In September 2012, a large bronze statue of Zidane was unveiled outside the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Entitled *Coup de tête* (*Headbutt*), the work is the creation of French-Algerian artist Adel Abdessemed.[2] The tableau depicted in *Coup de tête* references an event that had taken place six years earlier, and which has subsequently become an inescapable part of Zidane's legacy. [*Fig. 21*] Representing France against Italy in the 2006 FIFA World Cup final at Berlin's Olympiastadion, in a game which he had previously announced as the final stand of his career, Zidane was sent off in the 110ᵗʰ minute following a headbutt to the chest of opposition defender Marco Materazzi. Left a man (and captain) short with the game tied at one goal apiece, France were unable to seize the initiative required to score a late winner and subsequently lost the final on penalties (significantly, Zidane had scored France's goal from the penalty spot after seven minutes). This moment of shocking violence, to quote Bryan Denham and Melissa Desormeaux, 'allowed journalists who were so inclined to travel beyond the soccer field and make broader

Fig. 21: Adel Abdessemed, *Coup de tête*, 2012. Bronze.

assertions about cultural values and social identities.' [389] Specifically, the headbutt became a fulcrum for reflections on racism and the experience of post-colonial subjects in Europe, as commentators on both sides of the political spectrum sought to explicate the event. Many of these commentaries focused on the purported provocation for Zidane's action: accusations abounded that Materazzi had used Islamophobic slurs in relation to Zidane's sister and mother, a charge which Materazzi has consistently denied.[3] The notion that the headbutt was an event which turned on questions of race led some commentators to proclaim Zidane a hero for taking direct anti-racist action, and others to attribute his perceived inability to subdue his violent tendencies to his ethnic background. When Materazzi's claim that he had merely made a bawdy joke about Zidane's sister was accepted as the true version of events, other interpretations emerged which still positioned Zidane's ethnicity as a central factor in the flare-up, with various commentators arguing that Materazzi's joke insulted the honour of Zidane's sister and thus had to be met with retribution, in line with the system of honour intrinsic to Zidane's ethnic background.[4]

This highly contested event is the one monumentalised in Abdessemed's sculpture. [*Fig. 23*] As Daniel Haxall relates, the intended meaning of Abdessemed's sculpture hinges on a sense of empathy between artist and subject; while Abdessemed described the headbutt as a 'moment of weakness, a defeat', he also described it as a gesture that 'expressed freedom', and announced that he was accordingly 'interested in dealing with it as a counter-celebration.' [266] Haxall reads Abdessemed's treatment of this iconography as expressing a kind of shared humanity, one which rests on relatable categories of vulnerability, error and emotional instability in opposition to the unyielding mental and physical strength expected of professional athletes. As if vindicating this contrarian manoeuvre, Haxall notes that

> The National Association of French Football Districts protested the work's display at the Centre Pompidou […] for tarnishing Zidane's reputation and corrupting French youth. In a letter to Zidane seeking his help in their efforts to remove the work, chairman Michel Keff noted that the negative representation of football undermined the "sporting ethics and values" taught in the academy system. [266]

If we were to take at face value Keff's assertion that Abdessemed's depiction of Zidane promotes harmful ethics, it would nevertheless be clear that his clean-up efforts came over half a decade too late. The headbutt was not only a fulcrum for journalistic extravagance but a major event for popular culture: in the month following the 2006 World Cup final, Laplage's song "Coup de Boule" (an alternative French rendering of "headbutt") went to number one in the French singles charts. The song references the headbutt incident with a breezy sense of humour,

drawing attention to Zidane's exculpation by then-President of the Republic Jacques Chirac and suggesting that although France lost the cup, the nation 'had a good laugh anyway'.[5] This song, with its video that translates the events of the match in question into a bright and joyous choreography, represents an early "counter-celebration" of Zidane's transgression; arriving six years after "Coup de Boule", Abdessemed's sculpture represented a further stage in the translation of Zidane's headbutt from on-field trangression to national icon.

While a more dedicated analysis of this sculpture could be made, it is thus possible for present purposes to treat *Coup de tête* as a symptom of Zidane's broader visibility, particularly with regards to the 2006 headbutt. Furthermore, Abdessemed's method of artistic representation in this work is a fairly blunt and straightforward one: turning a fleeting moment of on-field action into a large bronze sculpture installed outside a major public art institution represents a gesture similar to that expressed by the title of Ian Hamilton's essay *Gazza Agonistes*, where the player is subject to a classicising representation that suggests that his on-field heroics or failings are "a bit like" those captured in the most canonical Western art. Gordon and Parreno's film, I argue, engages its subject in a more complex and oblique manner; drawing its cues not from the most canonical representations of art history but from a 20th century development in that history which engages critically with mass media. Furthermore, rather than contextualising this film by comparing it to other works of visual art which have featured Zidane as a central subject – a task which has already been carried out by Haxall – I look to set the scene for Gordon and Parreno's particular treatment of Zidane and his attendant cultural baggage by discussing a pair of literary responses to the headbutt incident enshrined in Abdessemed's sculpture.[6] *Zidane: a 21st Century Portrait* bears a stronger resemblance to Toussaint's essay "Zidane's Melancholy" than it does to Abdessemed's sculpture, and the aesthetic strategies employed by both film and essay are more clearly legible if we contrast them to the approach taken to the headbutt in Delbée's *The 107th Minute*. Zidane's artistic representations across different media are multifarious but tend to cluster around a small number of distinct approaches, and these two literary representations seem to me a useful way of framing Gordon and Parreno's film as an artwork which distinctively embraces the task of critically negotiating the overdetermined narrative projections that adhere to this key figure of late twentieth and early twenty-first century football.

At this point, it needs to be noted that *Zidane: a 21st Century Portrait* is *not* a film about the 2006 headbutt. The game at which the film was recorded occurred over a year prior to the 2006 World Cup final, and neither Gordon nor Parreno could have precisely predicted the impact of that event on Zidane's eventual cultural legacy. However, although the film was premiered at the

Cannes Film Festival and put on wider release in France in the months immediately preceding this final, it was released in cinemas elsewhere shortly after the final had taken place; as such, David Rowe suggests that 'no reading of the film about Zidane's performance over a year earlier […] can now be insulated from the events in Berlin'. [152] I can personally corroborate Rowe's suggestion: on numerous occasions I have faced surprise from colleagues who, having heard of the film but never seen it, assumed that *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait* was filmed on the occasion of the momentous 2006 final, as opposed to the more humdrum context of a league game between Real Madrid and Villarreal. Furthermore, as is explored in more detail shortly, the discursive figures which the headbutt so effectively brought into the public sphere were latent in Zidane's persona at least eight years prior to this event, and the film even ends on a note similar to the 2006 final: Zidane is sent off for violent conduct some minutes from the final whistle. As Rowe reports, Gordon and Parreno claim to have "'seen the headbutt coming'" while watching the 2006 final on the basis of similar facial expressions displayed by Zidane across the two games. [Rowe 155] The protagonist addressed in Gordon and Parreno's film carries many of the same meanings that became so hotly contested a year later, and in its ongoing reception the film continues to be considered in light of the conversations which came to a head in 2006 but which have accompanied Zidane since his rise to superstardom in the late 1990s.

These conversations concern the integration of former colonial subjects into the French Republic and the relationship between the *banlieues* and urban life more generally. Zidane is a French-born child of Algerian parents, Berbers belonging to the Kabyle ethnic group. Although he himself does not practice the religion, Zidane was raised in a Muslim household, in the working-class Marseille suburb of La Castellane. By the turn of the 21st century, Zidane was also a World Cup champion, a member of one of history's most expensively-assembled club squads (the aforementioned "galácticos" of Real Madrid), and a lucrative ambassador for brands such as Adidas, Danone and French Telecom. As an especially prominent site for crucial intersections between class, ethnicity, religion, nationality and celebrity, Zidane is, in Guénif-Soulimas' words, 'perpetually Exhibit A' [206], and 'dangerously overdetermined' as a result [221]. Her observation is reinforced in remarks from the two literary texts that will be addressed in this chapter. Toussaint, describing his experience inside the Olympiastadion on the night that Zidane's headbutt shocked the world, recalls having 'instinctively singled out Zidane' during the stoppage in which Zidane received his red card, noting that 'the gaze always finds Zidane.' [13] Delbée, tuning in to the same game shortly before the headbutt, notes 'I immediately recognised Zinedine Zidane. So many photos, so many stories, I could not ignore him […] In fact, I did not recognise any person besides him, Zinedine Zidane, the player.' [12] In both accounts, Zidane is

an inescapably and immediately magnetic presence that commands attention to the detriment of all others.

This magnetism, which attracts speculative judgements and interpretations in service of particular agendas, presents an aesthetic and ethical challenge when viewed from the perspective of artistic production. The challenge relates to the question of how one continues to represent Zidane – a straightforwardly appealing task for artists seeking to engage with mass cultural material given his centrality in French cultural life over the past two decades – without simply conforming to those presumptive discourses which turned the player's most famous gestures into decidedly overdetermined ones. That is to say, it concerns how one speaks *of* Zidane without speaking *for* him in the most coercive sense. Gordon and Parreno, I will argue, approach this challenge through a qualified strategy of authorial self-abnegation aligned with the aesthetic strategies of an earlier generation of photo-conceptualists who themselves dealt primarily with mass-cultural imagery, a strategy which is especially concentrated in the work of Ed Ruscha. In this intent they are connected by a partially-acknowledged affinity to Toussaint's interpretation of the headbutt incident, and implicitly opposed to Delbée's. Before moving on to consider these rival aesthetic strategies, however, it is necessary to elaborate further upon the nature of those judgements, interpretations and agendas which require negotiation.

Zidane as race ambassador and tragic hero

While the 2006 headbutt was one of the most crucial junctures in the media representation of Zidane's persona, discussions of Zidane as a privileged mediator of France's colonial legacy had been opened up at least eight years earlier: Zidane had already attained the status of a national ambassador for *beur* identity on the basis of his participation in the ethnically-diverse World Cup-winning French team of 1998, when the Republic's heterogeneous demography became a point of official national pride. On home soil, France won their first World Cup trophy, beating Brazil 3-0 in the final in Paris in a match featuring two first half goals from Zidane. Over the course of this campaign, along with various teammates of sub-Saharan African, Caribbean and Melanesian origin, Zidane had helped to popularise a notion of France as belonging as much to the *black* and the *beur* as to the *blanc*.[7] The celebration of the diverse nature of the victorious national squad drew particular strength from its opposition to the monocultural ideals espoused by Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front party, which had achieved its largest measure of support to date in the 1997 French legislative elections.

In his account of the history of French involvement with the World Cup and of French football's role in issues of decolonisation and post-colonial diasporic identity, Laurent Dubois comments on the presence of Algerian flags at national celebrations of the 1998 World Cup victory, an act of socio-political heterodoxy which was to some extent legitimised by Zidane's prominence within the victorious national side:

> It is a remarkable gesture. The Algerian flag, after all, was created in the midst of a war with France. But by raising the flag to celebrate France, fans announced the hope that, despite everything – the history, the racism, the far right's portrayals of North Africans as a menace to French society – it was possible, even joyful to be Algerian and French at the same time. [136]

However, while Zidane provided a fulcrum around which some *beurs* could claim a rare stake in the French national team and the nation more broadly, the gesture in question could at the same time be seen to represent a kind of ambivalence over the terms of this belonging:

> It suggests that the French flag by itself cannot fully represent or incorporate Zidane. Since 1998 the question "Who is Zidane?" has been a crucial way of asking "What is France?" Zidane is a symbol and a cipher for the larger debates about the place of Algerians and their descendants in the future of the nation. [Dubois 136]

In this instance then, Zidane provided a qualified means through which *beurs* could assume belonging to the national community, a belonging which preserved a degree of antagonism between the two sides of the struggle over de-colonisation which had officially ended just short of forty years earlier.

By 2006, when Zidane rose to the pinnacle of public consciousness once again, such questions had only intensified. This was not least as a result of then-Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy's insensitive handling of the riots which broke out in the largely non-white Parisian suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois and spread as far as Marseille and Toulouse in the autumn of 2005. As Achille Mbembe remarks, Sarkozy's suggestion that the riots had been started by *beur* and black *racailles* ("thugs") framed the *banlieues* in question as 'inhabited not by fully-fledged moral subjects but by an undifferentiated mass that can be summarily discredited'. [55] The subsequent imposition of "state of emergency" laws which had last been applied during the French-Algerian war brought the spectre of colonial control to bear on this series of disturbances, turning the *banlieues* into 'the domestic front of a new planetary war […] where the very identity of the Republic is being played out', and summoning 'a great temptation to want to apply colonial methods […] to the most vulnerable categories of French society.' [55] These riots were an extreme incident in this history of these communities, but *beur* identity within French society intrinsically hinges on questions of inclusion and exclusion: Martin Evans notes that the

term itself was born out of the struggles of the French-born children of Algerian immigrants in the 1970s, who despite having an 'automatic right to French citizenship under French nationality law', were still apt to be 'confronted with racism and discrimination'. [360] This generation subsequently gravitated towards *beur* identity as a marker of their difference both from the white French citizenry and the generations of Algerians that had preceded them, utilising the term in an ongoing 'search for a citizenship that involved an acceptance of their North African identity' within which 'the exploration of unresolved tensions was central, whether it be the place of Islam in a secular society, historical knowledge about colonialism, or the link with Algeria.' [360] The 2005 riots, which brought the repressive and strikingly neo-colonial measures being enacted by the state on the next generation of *beurs* into dramatic focus, demonstrated the ongoing nature of this search and these tensions.

In light of these events, it is not difficult to see why an act of shocking violence on the part of one of France's most famous Maghrebian *banlieusards* caused such a stir within the Republic the following summer, even if Zidane, according to Yvan Gastaut and Steven Apostolov, 'has never tried to pass any political message about cultural assimilation, nor has he talked about sensitive issues in France, such as immigration, Islam or the difficulties that second generation young people of North African origin experience in tough ethnic neighbourhoods and housing projects.' [687] Whether he has willed it or not, Zidane has throughout his career been used as a means of talking about the relationship, and possible reconciliation, between *beur* identity and the French state. From a reactionary perspective, the headbutt could be, and frequently was, taken as a statement on the "thuggishness" of Zidane's cultural background both in his parents' native Algeria and in suburban Marseille. Yasmin Jiwani notes that the headbutt was in some places inscribed in the logic of a "street fighting instinct" felt to be characteristic of the black and *beur* residents of the *banlieues*, places 'where violence, vengeance-like retribution and the law of the jungle were presumed to reign supreme.' [22] Surveys of responses by the French media and general population carried out by Pascal Duret and David Winterstein lend weight to Jiwani's observations.[8] In a telling example taken from Duret's collected oral testimonies on the headbutt, a young basketball player living in Paris' metropolitan centre – and thus carrying a different cultural and socio-economic baggage to that with which Zidane is associated – notes that 'he's a *beur*, they are not able to calm down, they lose their heads and afterwards it's never their fault.' Zidane is here depicted as a figure entirely determined by his race: as Duret suggests elsewhere in his essay, although the headbutt was in some parts viewed as a glorious moment of 'virility and spontaneity', it could be viewed as a moment of

ignominious weakness when it appeared as the last resort of a *beur* who had momentarily become a 'prisoner' to his 'nature'.

At the same time, however, the headbutt opened itself up to interpretation as a gesture of anti-racist direct action, drawing such plaudits from no less a figure than Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. In an editorial for the daily newpaper *El Watan*, Abouteflika wrote, 'Against what could not be but a grave aggression, you reacted first as a man of honor before submitting without flinching to the verdict […] Since you have never forgotten the country of your origins, Algeria and the Algerians are proud of you.' Here the headbutt is framed as an alternative means – eight years after the victory parade on the Champs-Élysées – through which Zidane did honour to his Maghrebi heritage. As allegations of racist abuse on Materazzi's part became widespread, the headbutt was quickly bound up in the language of de-colonial struggle. Theatre director Claire Lasne for instance described Zidane as having put 'the dignity of a people, or even of a single man, higher than a Cup given by the white world to those who keep quiet' in refusing to stand for Materazzi's purported slurs. [qtd. in Dubois 255] It is worth pausing on this judgement, since it is one which carries over into Delbée's more sustained engagement with the headbutt which, I will argue, clearly demonstrates what is at stake when selecting aesthetic strategies for representing a subject like Zidane. Lasne's conception of the FIFA World Cup as an institution that affirms white European hegemony is undoubtedly a polemic one, though it is reflective to some degree of the long-term history of the competition: the tournament was for instance boycotted by seventeen African nations in 1966, after FIFA refused to grant the African confederation (CAF) a single automatic qualifying berth. FIFA's relationship with confederations outside of the traditional football heartlands of Europe and South America was subsequently strengthened by the efforts of FIFA Presidents João Havelange and Sepp Blatter, with the first World Cups being held in Asia and Africa in 2002 and 2010 respectively. Regardless of this *rapprochement*, Lasne's words point to FIFA's ongoing difficulties in adequately addressing racism in football stadia. The Federation's ineffectiveness in tackling this issue is evinced by the scandal that surrounded Blatter's advice, reported in an article for the *Daily Telegraph* by Luke Edwards, that players subject to racial abuse during matches should 'forget about it and remember "it's just a game".'[9] It is the persistent re-appearance of instances of racial abuse by both fans and players that lends Zidane's act of retaliation the mien of nobility with which some commentators associated it.

We can perhaps understand Lasne's assertions in terms set by philosopher Sara Ahmed, in her study of *Willful Subjects*. In refusing to sacrifice his personal dignity in order to save face for an organisation that pays lip service to the idea of celebrating cultural diversity while failing to tackle issues of racial discrimination, Zidane appears as one such subject, registering his own will as distinct from that of the game's administrators. Adapting Martin Heidegger's analogy of the hammer from *Being and Time* to her own ends, Ahmed outlines her concept of *wilfulness* like so:

> The hammer we might say is a *willing object*, if or when the hammer allows us to complete a task, such as building something. It "points" in the right direction […] A body can become a wilful thing, when it gets in the way of an action being completed […] When something is agreeable to our will, we tend not to notice it, which it to say the impression created is not as distinct. When something resists will, an impression becomes more distinct. If the hammer breaks, it would create quite an impression, as would the thumb, if it broke. [42-43]

The inescapable visibility of Zidane's headbutt rests on its break with the process of "willing together" that defines FIFA's efforts to circumscribe cultural difference within amicable competition.[10] The latent asymmetries underpinning this arrangement are brought to the surface in Zidane's wilful act of disobedience*:* unable to continue "willing" for a friendly outcome in the face of Materazzi's provocations, Zidane uses his body, already marked as "distinct" in the nation of his birth, to prevent this course of action from being realised. By acting in a "disagreeable" fashion, he can be said to have in turn registered a "distinct impression" of his own divergence from the direction towards which many in the game would insist on pointing, bringing the racist dimensions of FIFA's administration of world football into focus.

Of course, the nature of Materazzi's provocation was misrepresented in the immediate aftermath of the incident, meaning readings like Lasne's appear somewhat misaligned in retrospect. Ahmed's text is however relevant here in enabling us to create a bridge between Lasne's relatively pithy assertion of Zidane's heroism and Delbée's more ornate account of the same in *The 107th Minute*. For Delbée, Zidane's act is comprehended in terms of the downfall of tragic heroes, a reading which seizes upon an understanding of *wilfulness* that leads us not – as is Ahmed's project – to a radical politics of otherness, but to a depiction of Zidane which effectively essentialises him within his *beur* identity. Delbée's text frames the headbutt as the moment when this identity tragically exploded onto the world stage. Her understanding of Zidane as a *wilful subject* is one which ends up willing the player himself into a particular narrative form, that of tragedy, and through her elaboration of the conventions proper to this narrative form Delbée opens up certain implicit suggestions about the intertwining of identity and destiny, suggestions which direct us towards questions of racial determinism. Delbée's approach in this novella, I argue, underlines some of the stakes involved in representing Zidane's persona

through literary or artistic discourse, a process which is carried out in a highly divergent fashion by Gordon and Parreno in their film.

The 107th minute of Delbée's title refers to the minute of the 2006 World Cup final at which her autobiographical narrator turned on her television and tuned into the game: before this, the narrator had by her own account attempted to avoid the event by instead socialising with friends. [9] Three minutes after tuning in, the narrator witnesses the headbutt, an incident which provokes in her a sudden rhapsodic interest. [12] In the lyrical digressions around this moment of impact which constitute the bulk of the novella, we learn that this interest is premised on the supposed similarities between Zidane's shocking exit and the falls proper to the protagonists of Classical and Renaissance tragedy: reflecting on the event, the narrator exclaims, 'And here is the tragedy that rises in the centre of the stage. The moment when man seizes freedom for himself by denying the common law of society, choosing solitude and failure against the propriety of the herd and against success.' [31] Here, the sentiments expressed by Lasne are articulated to an understanding of the rudiments of tragic theatre: by having chosen "freedom" or "dignity" in contravention of the demands placed upon him by the "herd" or the "white world", Zidane ensures that 'on a beautiful summer evening, France have lost the World Cup but reinvented theatre.' [76] Zidane's transgression is replayed many times over in the narrator's account, and the player accrues analogic references to tragic heroes and heroines including Othello, Oedipus and Phèdre. Laurent Dubois notes that Delbée's lionisation of Zidane is carried out on the basis of the notion that Materazzi's insult was sexist, as opposed to racist, as is indeed the truth to the best of our knowledge: 'For Delbée', Dubois writes, 'part of Zidane's heroism was that he refused the idea that a sexist insult was banal, and instead treated it with deadly seriousness.' [258] Here Zidane's tragic fall is conceived of as the result of a fatal wilfulness, a refusal to honour certain codes of conduct – in this case the anti-violent codes that govern professional football – when they come into conflict with higher ideals, in this case Zidane's desire to maintain the honour of his sister. Delbée's narrator accordingly adds the figure of Antigone to her patchwork of tragic reference points. [51]

In another passage, Zidane is compared both to Orpheus and to a duo of canonical western artistic luminaries. Focusing on Zidane's rare grace on the field, Delbée's narrator attributes to him 'that rare sensation of finding oneself unbound, outside of time, during which the earth no longer stretches beneath him, a single moment of total freedom', adding, 'he tastes a morsel of eternity – the eternity experienced by Arthur Rimbaud, by Jean-Sebastian Bach.' [18] To return to a point made in my introduction, Zidane's brilliance is here seen to momentarily

replace the essentially transient value which Natasha Lushetich argues is typically attributed to football with a more lasting one comparable to works of great art. Shortly thereafter, however, Materazzi's insults bring everything down to earth with a bump: 'Everything suddenly becomes too loud, meaningless'. [19] The spell of Zidane's grace is broken and all is lost in an instant. Delbée frames this fall through a reference to the story of Orpheus, and his failure to bring his lover Eurydice back from the underworld to the land of the living by resisting the urge to turn around and look at her until she had reached the surface: 'Orpheus advances into the light out of hell. For the third time, another insult. "Do not turn around!"' [19] Zidane's tragic fall is hereby imagined as one triggered by an inability to sustain engagement with the terms by which grace is extended: in order to play to his dizzying potential Zidane must be able to occupy a transcendent plane of consciousness, a feat which becomes impossible in the face of Materazzi's provocations.

In light of considerations that were addressed in the introduction to this thesis as well as in my brief discussion of Abdessemed's *Coup de tête*, Delbée's novella can be read as a fairly straightforward aestheticizing treatment of football: it seeks to raise the game to "high art" status by drawing analogies between its contents and the contents of canonically high works of literature and music; as is the case in Abdessemed's sculpture, the aestheticizing gesture here consists of rendering Zidane's sending-off offence as something that is "a bit like art", specifically classical art. There is however a further level to Delbée's classicising treatment of Zidane: the author's language throughout *The 107th Minute* invokes a classically tragic worldview which foregrounds a notion of the relationship between wilfulness and fate not wholly unlike the one offered in a very different context by the young basketball player interviewed by Duret. In a passage that appears later than those previously cited, the narrator compares Zidane's fall to that of Othello or Oedipus, asserting that the victims of these tragic heroes are forced to accept 'the influence of God, mad Sibyls that intone their sombre predictions in superhuman voices.' [75] In the compelling account offered in *Sweet Violence: The Idea of the Tragic*, Terry Eagleton, reinforcing Delbée's assertion, notes that in the Greek tradition 'Tragic protagonists receive their actions back from a place which they cannot fathom, a realm of Delphic opaqueness and sibylline slipperiness which is nonetheless implacable in its demands.' [108] This does not mean that tragic protagonists lack free will, but rather that 'Fate and freedom are not so separable'. [109] Eagleton goes on, 'Oedipus's *moira* or allotted portion in life is woven into his conduct in a way best captured by the Freudian concept of overdetermination – so that while it is undeniably he who acts, there is also an otherness which acts in him.' [109] That is to say, the "influence of God" can be found mixed in with all the other determining factors that motivate the actions of a

figure like Oedipus, but overdetermination renders that fate opaque until the moment of the tragic downfall, when a clearer picture of the protagonist's cosmological constitution emerges.

For present purposes it is significant that Eagleton describes this "influence" as an "otherness", given the importance that concepts of inscrutable alterity hold in critical discussions of race, ethnicity and the colonial experience, particularly as it pertains to Islamic subjects.[11] Ahmer Nadeem Anwer, writing with specific reference to the headbutt and its myriad responses, highlights the incident's forced articulation in popular discourse to the tragic paradox outlined above, whereby the protagonist is seen to exercise freedom in the face of society's laws and to be duly punished, but is also seen to do so in a manner that is pre-ordained by fate. Focusing on the example of Othello demonstrates how this dialectic can take on racial connotations. For Anwer, the Western imaginary dictates that racial outsiders like Othello, 'no matter how Europeanised and thus "rational" they may superficially have made themselves, are always liable to be undone by a "flash of red".' [100] Anwer goes on,

> When tested by critical pressures, the adopted Europeanised identity would instantly disintegrate and they would regress to a primitive, pre-civilized, irrational "true self". Especially, should their emotions be excited, "their" women glanced at, or their fragile masculinity impugned, they would completely lose control and revert to arcane male-hysteric behaviours that were bizarre and violent, as well as tragically misdirected. [100]

As has been suggested, the idea that Zidane was guided by a brutish instinct proper to his *beur* ethnicity was a well-documented and much-repeated response to the act of violence which saw Zidane expelled from the field in the 2006 World Cup final. Anwer suggests that this notion of a destructive *otherness*, liable to force the hand of the "Europeanised" ethnic minority or post-colonial subject, aligns neatly with a conventional understanding of tragic narrative tropes. This reading points to a problematic aspect of Delbée's reading of Zidane, compounded by a number of explicit statements made by Delbée, as when she seeks explication for the headbutt in Zidane's 'pride in the Kabyles [*fierté Chez les Kabyles*]. That pride that this evening earned you condemnation.' [42] Here the valorisation of Zidane as a defender of his cultural heritage appears little removed from an identification of the racialised other with uncivilised and violent behaviour.[12] The unity of tragic self-destructiveness and the idea of an "allotted portion in life" forces the case that Zidane's action speaks to some underlying condition of the player's ethnic identity; Delbée is thus responsible for contributing to the body of discursive claims on Zidane's persona, the cumulative effect of which French national team-mate Bixente Lizarazu described as 'not pressure, [but] oppression.' [qtd. in Morrissey 222]. In this respect, Delbée's approach

helps to illuminate by way of contrast the strategies used by Gordon and Parreno in their film, which appears decidedly less invested in furthering this oppressive situation.

The soft conceptualism of Zidane, a 21st Century Portrait

Having established the socio-political baggage that Zidane acquired around the time of the 1998 World Cup and which was brought to a head in the 2006 final, it is now possible to introduce Gordon and Parreno's film as one which attempts, by means of an aesthetic strategy adopted from an earlier moment in the history of post-war art, to divest Zidane of some of this discursive load. *Zidane: a 21st Century Portrait* is an essential object of discussion when considering Zidane's appeal for artists and writers both on account of the wide exposure and publicity and the degree of scholarly attention it has received. Where other scholars have focused on the film as an example of contemporary portraiture, a reflection on sporting temporalities and a meditation on cinematic audio-visuality, my route into the material is based around questions of how the film – taking into account both the aesthetic choices that determine its formal structure and its history of reception – interacts with an existing body of statements regarding Zidane's cultural persona.[13] In this respect I am perhaps closest in affinity to the accounts of the film offered by Paul Myerscough in an article for the *London Review of Books* and Tim Griffin in a feature for *Artforum*, both of which make the case for considering Gordon and Parreno's film as a "portrait" which ultimately "obscures" what we can know about the protagonist, although neither of these accounts engage with art historical precedent in the manner I do here. Most of all, I wish to distance myself from approaches to the film which fixate first and foremost on the sheer novelty of artists addressing the subject of contemporary football in their work and thus frame Zidane as an avatar for *all* late-capitalist footballing superstars: this reading appears in Martine Beugnet and Elizabeth Ezra's reflection on the film for *Screen*, which attempts to reconstruct Zidane's allure for contemporary football audiences by considering the product advertisements with which he is surrounded on the field of play: 'The name "Movistar" elicits the glamour of Zidane's star turn […]; Siemens Mobile suggests the kinetic virility and choreographic intensity of Zidane's movements […]; "BP Ultimate Gasoline" suggests the fuel that powers the seemingly unstoppable force of nature that is Zidane'. [84] This analysis, I argue, elides the complex processes through which footballing superstars actually become enmeshed in consumer culture, and fails to provide a compelling account of why Zidane was selected as the subject for this film above any of his peers.

A crucial paradox underpinning the manner in which *Zidane* interacts with established bodies of knowledge around the player at its centre is the seeming incompatibility between the

film's mainstream success and its over-riding sense of formal obtuseness. The film's production history is a significant factor here: *Zidane* represents a rare hybrid production suspended between
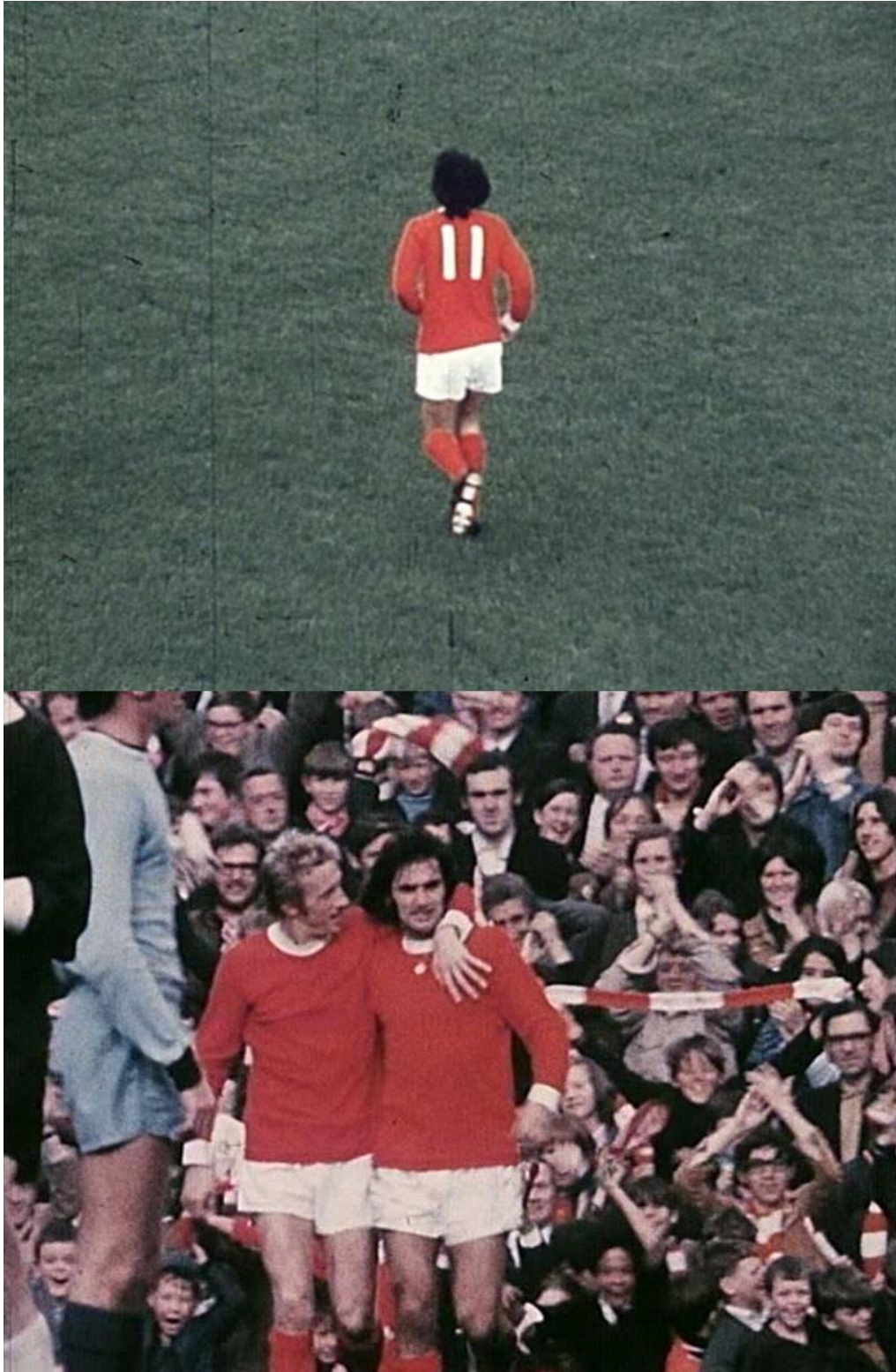
Fig. 22: Stills from Hellmuth Costard's film *Football As Never Before*, 1970

the economies of contemporary art and the feature film industry, and has been presented both as a single-channel projection in cinemas and on multiple monitors in galleries.[14] Though Parreno and Gordon are established practitioners in film and video, this work was executed with the assistance of prominent French-Iranian cinematographer Darius Khondji, known for his contribution to Hollywood blockbusters such as David Fincher's 1995 thriller *Se7en*, as well as Hervé Schneid, editor of a number of popular films by Jean-Pierre Jeunet, including *Amélie* (2001). To complete this eclectic picture, the film is also noted for its specially-commissioned score by the Scottish rock group Mogwai, which was itself released in 2006 by the record labels Wall of Sound and Play It Again Sam. This sense of hybridity is significant in understanding the nuances of the aesthetic strategy the film deploys, a strategy which I label *soft conceptualism*, and which I argue betokens a qualified degree of *censorship* of the high-pressured discourses which cling to Zidane's persona. Before outlining this strategy, and the manner in which it negotiates these discourses, it is first necessary to give a descriptive account of the film's form and content.

As has been lost on few of its critics, *Zidane* derives its overriding formal framework from an earlier experimental cinematic foray into the world of football, Hellmuth Costard's 1970 film *Football as Never Before* (*Fußball wie noch nie*). *Zidane* is indeed a repetition of Costard's original experiment: in both films, a multiplicity of cameras is used to track a single footballer through the course of a ninety-minute match, even during the long passages of play where the ball is elsewhere (as indicated above, Zidane does not in fact reach the end of his ninety minutes, receiving a red card for violent conduct shortly before the final whistle). Both films present this footage without any other layer of mediation save for some musical accompaniment, cuts between different sources (as well as the footage from the cameras, *Zidane* features footage lifted from the Spanish television broadcast of the game) and captions: in the Costard film these captions simply report the time of the match and the score, while Gordon and Parreno use lines from an interview with Zidane at seemingly random intervals. Costard's film focuses on a player who in his short prime possessed a magnetic personality comparable to Zidane's, the Northern Irish winger George Best, then a starring member of the Manchester United team. This is accomplished through the use of six cameras, positioned among the crowd at United's Old Trafford stadium, shooting onto 16mm film as Best's team defeat Coventry City. [*Fig. 22*] By contrast, Khondji deployed seventeen digital cameras placed in diverse positions around the Santiago Bernabeu stadium as Zidane's Real Madrid played out a draw with Villarreal, making use of some of the most powerful zoom lenses available at the time (provided by no less a technological force than NASA). The result is a work of much higher definition, one which,

compounded by Mogwai's atmospheric score, exudes a sense of cinematic professionalism in contrast to the low-grade, gritty amateur aesthetics of the Costard piece.

It is demonstrable that both *Zidane* and *Football as Never Before* emerged out of concerns that were not intrinsically linked to their eventual subjects. In the liner notes to *11Freunde*'s DVD release of the latter film, it is remarked that Costard was a 'radical director' who had 'no truck with football'; these remarks recapitulate the notion, discussed in my introduction, of football as a backwards and anti-aesthetic cultural practice. [2] Elsewhere in these notes, producer Werner Grassmann speculates on Costard's motivations for making the film, suggesting that Costard 'probably asked himself during a football broadcast, what is a player actually doing when they are not in the picture, not in the centre of events.' [5] Grassmann also notes that Costard and his team had approached some of Best's most illustrious contemporaries before settling on the Manchester United player, deciding that Pelé, then playing in Brazil for Santos, was 'too far away', and that Johann Cruyff 'wanted too much money'. [5] Costard's attraction to those figures at the forefront of the game's celebrity industry indicates that we are to consider the director's focus more in relation to the dynamics of screen celebrity than anything else: for Grassmann, Costard 'wanted to show that soccer stars are not gods, but normal people. It shows but only if you can watch them in silence.' [5-6] Grassmann's statement here resonates with Abdessemed's understanding of his bronze likeness of Zidane, though it is orientated in a different manner: here the notion is that one can represent the essential humanity of a "soccer star" by showing them in their quieter moments, as opposed to their noisier moments of "all-too-human" weakness. The film thus employs an atypical form of mechanical visual attention: Best is in the frame not just when he is proving his worth on the ball but in the moments where he is struggling or unable to make an impact on the game.

It is this experimental form of attention that Gordon and Parreno, whether or not they were aware of Costard's earlier effort, sought to create in *Zidane*. In an interview conducted by Benedict Clouette, Parreno notes that his artistic practice is based around what he calls 'protocol adherence', which he understands as a 'kind of game'. The protocol which is adhered to in the case of Zidane is presented by Parreno in the form of a proposal: 'What If/Why Not following one protagonist going through a story.' In a second interview, conducted by Khondji, Parreno elaborates on this suggestion, noting that,

> *Zidane* didn't even start with the idea of football. It came out of a conversation with Douglas about an idea for a film where we follow only one character all the way through a story. You never leave him, even when he crosses other characters. We were talking about

that while playing football, so we decided it would be like following one player through a game.

Besides Costard's film, this strategy, in which the resulting visual material emerges from adherence to prescribed "protocol", can be said to closely resemble work made by an earlier generation of conceptual artists whose projects were realised primarily through the medium of photography, particularly the American Ed Ruscha.

Throughout the nineteen-sixties and -seventies, Ruscha produced a number of small artist's books which were often based around photographs of everyday scenes and objects from American life. While not indicative of the entirety of Ruscha's oeuvre, books such as *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1963) and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) are among his best known works. [*Fig. 23*] These books are all but entirely described by their titles, which provide a kind of instruction for their assemblage: the former, the first of the series, compiles a seemingly arbitrarily-selected number of images of gasoline stations found on the roads which lead from Oklahoma City, Ruscha's place of birth, to Los Angeles, where he resides to this day. The latter is a fold-out panorama of every building on the eponymous section of West Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard, and is, as with *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, at least ostensibly shot from the windows of an automobile, which leads Margaret Iversen to refer to these "instructional" books as having been created via a process she coins "auto-maticity": for Iversen,

> There is an intrinsic connection [...] between the instructional means of short-circuiting authorial agency, of ensuring non-interference, and a certain use of the medium of photography. Photography, or at least this particular snapshot use of photography, brings together authorial abnegation, indexicality and openness to chance. Ruscha refers at one point to its "inhuman aspect", as it records without making qualitative judgements. [841]

In Ruscha's books, an artistic strategy based around "protocol adherence" combines with a particularly deadpan and amateurish photographic aesthetic to create works which brush against the grain of established notions of artistic self-expression. Benjamin Buchloh, in a landmark essay on the history of Conceptual Art, notes that Ruscha's strategies of 'random sampling and aleatory choice from an infinity of possible objects' would later be repeated by many artists associated with that movement. [121] Noting that Pop Art had also "sampled" the visual material of mass culture through media such as collage, Buchloh remarks that 'instead of lifting photographic imagery from mass-cultural sources…Ruscha would now deploy photography directly [...] And it was a particularly laconic type of photography at that.' [122] Whereas, for instance, the Pop Art pioneer Richard Hamilton had sampled material from popular culture to make works which belied a humorous and abundant imaginative capacity, most famously the 1956 collage entitled *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, Ruscha's books
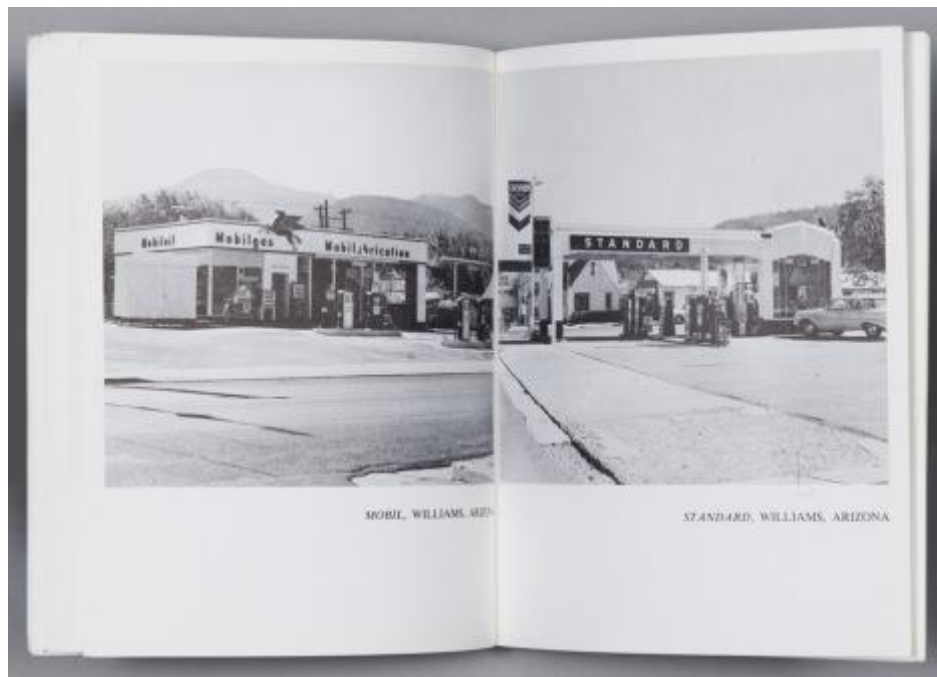
Fig. 23: Page spread from Ed Ruscha's book *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, 1963
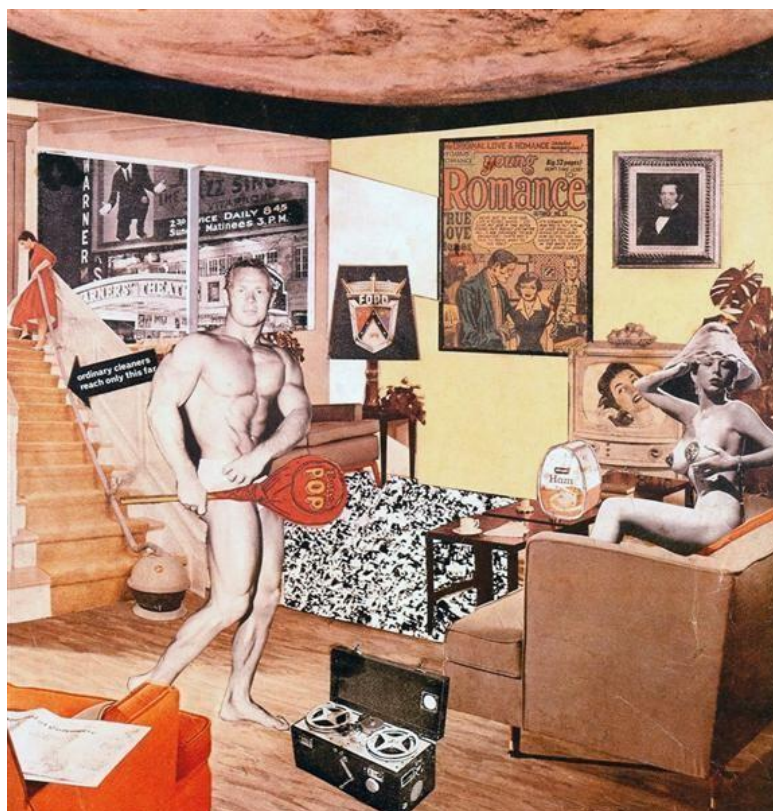
Fig. 24: Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?*, 1956. Collage.

draw together mass-cultural material – like the vernacular architecture of gasoline stations – under the aegis of a deadpan sense of literalism. [*Fig. 24*] The resulting book elides the author's imagination by pointing as much to its own "inhuman" protocol as to the aesthetic qualities of this architecture.

It is in this sense that the work of Costard, Ruscha and Gordon and Parreno resonates with the description of high art that Bourdieu offers in *Distinction*: unlike Hamilton's work, we can identify *Zidane, Football as Never Before* and *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* with 'a sort of censorship of the expressive content which explodes in the expressiveness of popular language, and by the same token, a distancing […], a refusal to communicate concealed at the heart of the communication itself.' [*Distinction* 34] My suggestion here is that Bourdieu's formulation has a useful bearing on this particular movement in post-war art, even as we can find reasons for doubting its actual efficacy in describing high art in general (although, as was established in my introduction, it remains a powerfully operative notion in discourse around high art, particularly where it comes into contact with low culture). As John A. Frow has argued, Bourdieu is guilty of a 'naïve mimeticism' when he attempts to use this description as a definition of the border-line between "high" and "popular" aesthetic forms. [63] For Frow,

> whereas the dominant aesthetic is associated with an autotelic formalism, a refusal of practical or ethical function, a refusal of the facile and vulgar, and with intertextual rather than mimetic modes of reference, the "popular" aesthetic is defined as having a primarily ethical basis and as subordinating artistic practice to socially regulated functions (for example, working-class people use photography above all for the ritual celebration of family unity.) [62]

The problem with this association, as Frow identifies it, is that it draws too neat a binary distinction between "form" and "content", seen to be the primary concern for "dominant" and "popular" aesthetics respectively. Bourdieu's identification of "form" with "intertextuality" and "content" with "mimeticism" produces an untenable binary which 'places content outside the domain of the formal, and […] places the formal outside the domain of content.' [63] In truth, the "primarily ethical basis" of the "popular" aesthetic is inextricably bound up with certain tacit discussions over form – this was my contention in my introduction and first chapter – and the "formalism" of the "dominant" aesthetic cannot in turn be thought of without thinking of the kinds of content that have typically supported formal experimentation, often content related to everyday life.[15] The unsustainability of the belief that one can fully extricate form and content – which Frow frames as 'the implicit supposition that one class stands in a more "natural", less mediated relation to experience than do other classes' [64] – prevent us from being able to use "censorship of expressive content which explodes in the expressiveness of popular language" as

a necessary or sufficient condition for considering a work to belong to the "dominant" aesthetic. Nevertheless, the idea of an artistic strategy which is predicated on precisely this "refusal to communicate concealed at the heart of the communication itself" is of use when thinking about practices that seek to represent mass-cultural materials through the anonymising influence of "protocol adherence", like those of Ruscha or Gordon and Parreno.

In order to further think through this kind of artistic strategy, it is relevant to return at this stage to Sianne Ngai's essay "Merely Interesting", cited in the context of Barthes' concepts of *studium* and *punctum* in the previous chapter. In an extended discussion of Ruscha's photo-books, Ngai argues that 'these generic-looking compilations were clearly engineered to keep affect on a low burner, generating at most tiny flickers of interest, not unlike the eponymous "small fires" presented at regular intervals in *Various Small Fires and Milk* (1964)', referring here to another photo-book by Ruscha whose contents are accurately summarised by its title (a photograph of milk appears on the final page of the volume). [147] The low-intensity affect summoned by Ruscha's books is of a piece with Barthes' concept of *studium*, which is identified with a kind of affective flatness that leads to the images in question being approached as objects to be decoded, or at most with "liking, not loving". [qtd. in Ngai 142] Ruscha himself affirmed this connection in a description of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*:

> I had a vision that I was being a great reporter when I did the gas stations. I drove back to Oklahoma all the time, five or six times a year. And I felt there was so much wasteland between L.A. And Oklahoma City that somebody had to bring in the news to the city. It was just a simple, straightforward way of getting the news and bringing it back. I think it's one of the best ways of just laying down the facts of what is out there...It's nothing more than a training manual for people who want to know things like that. [qtd. in Rowell, 17-18]

Ruscha's description of his book as a kind of "training manual" resonates with Barthes' definition of *studium* as deriving from "a certain kind of training". So too does the idea of a "simple, straightforward way of getting the news and bringing it back" resonate with Barthes' account in *Camera Lucida* of those photographic images which do not reach out to the newspaper reader *as* photographs, but are rather present to be decoded for the meanings and values they contain. Building on Barthes' account, Ngai writes,

> for all its affective minimalism, the "general interest" associated with *studium* is still an aesthetic or feeling-based response, albeit one of the lowest order ("liking, not loving"). At the same time, it is an aesthetic response explicitly defined by a kind of critical impulse or activity ("read[ing] the photographer's myths in the photograph"). Far from reinforcing the divide between criticism and aesthetics, it could be argued, the *studium* of Barthes's merely interesting photography embodies the seam between them. [142-43]

It is Ngai's contention that Ruscha and other artists of his generation who share similar approaches to art-making knowingly adopt a "merely interesting" aesthetic comparable to Barthes' *studium* precisely in order to bridge the gap between aesthetics and criticism within their own work. The combination of authorial self-abnegation through "protocol adherence" with a laconic style of photography enables Ruscha to create an anti-expressive visual account of his everyday environment in which the distance between aesthetic and critical excitations is crucially collapsed, as in the illustrations in a newspaper or a training manual.

It is this aspect of Ruscha's works that appears most significant with regards to *Zidane*. Neither Parreno nor Gordon – nor Costard who came before them – had explicitly set out to make a film about their eventual chosen subject; what was first envisaged was an exercise in dialectical reading, an attempt to re-instate the *longueurs* that are excised, as in the case of the GIFs that were discussed in the previous chapter, from mass-media presentations of sporting superstars like Zidane and Best. In adopting their chosen protocol, Gordon and Parreno attempt to "censor the expressive content which explodes in the expressiveness of popular language" by de-familiarising the discursively-charged figure at the centre of the piece. In terms borrowed from Ruscha and Whannel respectively, the film represents an attempt to enter the "wasteland" that exists between those "peak moments of action" in which we typically view such superstars, and to "bring back the news" through images that simply report the facts, without editorial embellishment. In the case of an overdetermined figure like Zidane, this strategy might be said to function on a highly critical register, producing readings which brush against the grain of those attempts to "monopolize" Zidane's persona by articulating his every action to deeper-lying narratives around race and nation. This reading of the film is strengthened by the captions which appear immediately after the opening title screen, relaying words taken from an interview with Zidane carried out by the directors. The full text that is gradually revealed by captions reads as follows: 'From the first kick of the ball until the final whistle, who could have imagined that in the future, an ordinary day like this might be forgotten or remembered, as anything more or less significant than a walk in the park'. [*Fig. 25*] In these fragments, Zidane seems strangely surprised by the commonplace notion that football games can be a vector for grand narratives. These remarks, I argue, are selected precisely for their resonance with Gordon and Parreno's formal strategy in the film. Through the relatively automated procedure which determines the film's content, the directors appear to deny Zidane his customary sense of narrative iterability. It is in this sense that Griffin suggests that 'audiences leave the theater with the inevitable realization that Zidane, whether image, symbol, or hero – all real aspects of his being – is also a man we can't pretend to know at all.' [337] By carrying out an aesthetic treatment of the superstar that

collapses the distance between aesthetic and critical excitations, Gordon and Parreno may force viewers to confront the discrepancy between their pre-determined notions of Zidane and the images they have just seen unfold.

To focus entirely on the film's protocol at the exclusion of its actual on-screen contents would however be to produce an incomplete reading. Here the hybrid production history of *Zidane* must be re-iterated: although Gordon and Parreno are evidently highly invested in the precedent set by conceptual artists like Ed Ruscha, their film was created not by piecing together amateur-style photographs in a cheaply-produced book, but through collaboration with numerous personnel schooled in the motion picture industry. As Andy Birtwistle argues effectively, *Zidane* makes use of a number of cinematic devices associated more with the feature film industry than with the world of experimental cinema and film and video art, in a manner which expands the film's narrative horizons beyond the confines of its aleatory framework. Birtwistle highlights a passage of the film which plays out as follows:

> at one point in the film the directors cut away from Zidane to a close shot of part of the lighting rig illuminating the stadium. Having established this space, the film then cuts to a shot of Zidane resting during a brief pause in the game. During this hiatus, he looks up, off-screen, and we then cut to a shot of the lighting rig, now constructed as Zidane's subjective point-of-view. [109]

Continuity editing interrupts the relative monotony of the film through a technique familiar to mainstream film-making: by toggling between shots of a particular part of the stadium and the protagonist directing his gaze in a particular direction, we are able to summon a sense of Zidane's subjective experience of the game; these brief sparks of interiority are, it is worth noting, entirely absent from Costard's film. [*Fig. 26*]

In one passage found towards the beginning of *Zidane*, a sequence of shots very similar to the one identified by Birtwistle is brought together with the opening strains of Mogwai's track "7.25" and a series of captions which appear to offer us some insight into Zidane's psycho-biography. Taken together they read,

> As a child I had a running commentary in my head when I was playing. It wasn't really my own voice. It was the voice of Pierre Cangioni, a television anchor from the 1970s. Every time I heard his voice I would run towards the TV, as close as I could get for as long as I could. It wasn't that his words were so important, but the tone, the accent, the atmosphere, was everything.

By the time the sequence of captions is completed, the melancholy tones of Mogwai's track are in full effect; having been provided with a window onto Zidane's childhood love of football, we now see him in a moment of vulnerability: as the last caption disappears from the bottom of the

Figs. 25-27: Stills from tree sequences in Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's film *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, 2006

BUT THE TONE,

THE ACCENT,

THE ATMOSPHERE,

WAS EVERYTHING...

WAS EVERYTHING...

screen, Zidane falls over attempting to pursue the ball. [*Fig. 27*] This interview fragment also reaffirms the importance that Gordon and Parreno place on sound in their film. It is followed up with another fragment which continues in the same vein:

> When you step on to the field, you can hear and feel, the presence of the crowd. There is sound. The sound of noise […] you don't really hear the crowd. You almost decide for yourself what you want to hear. You are never alone. I can hear someone shift around in their chair. I can hear someone coughing. I can hear someone whisper in the ear of the person next to them. I can imagine that I hear the ticking of a watch.

As Birtwistle notes, the directors make use of certain post-production effects in creating a compelling soundscape for the film that mirrors Zidane's sentiments in this fragment: this is most notable in the sequence where Villarreal take the lead from the penalty spot, where a series of Foley effects – a net rippling, a few individuals muttering, dogs barking in the distance – momentarily replace the roar of the crowd. For Birtwistle, this sound sequence calls to mind the acoustic scene of the amateur football pitch; this resonance serves both to reinforce the effect of Zidane's textual recalls to his childhood and to underline his description of the acoustic scene of the stadium. [110] Both interview fragments and sound-scape relate to Zidane's subjectivity: we are able to imagine the psychic threads which connect his contemporary mind-set to his memories of childhood, and to speculate on what it feels like to be a key player in one of the world's most famous clubs.

Birtwistle's account is significant as a means towards an accurate close-reading of the film in question. *Zidane* is not an entirely straightforward expression of the concept that gives rise to it, and Gordon and Parreno clearly use some of these cinematic devices to lend the film a narrative interest that it might otherwise be seen to lack. What I am most interested in with this chapter however is not only offering a close-reading of the film's formal strategies but also interrogating *Zidane* within the context of its reception, a context that I have already argued is necessarily inflected by the kinds of discourse I outlined in the previous section. While presenting the film as one which uses certain editing techniques to break up the flow of the action, Birtwistle also acknowledges that *Zidane* is ultimately renowned for its sense of *longueur*, which frequently causes even those viewers interested in football to confess to having "hit a wall" some time in. [111] This sense of boredom is clearly attributable to the protocol-based paradigm of the film; the fact that Gordon and Parreno take *some* measures to alleviate this boredom by reservedly introducing a sense of subjectivity and narrative dynamism is what leads me to describe *Zidane* under the rubric of *soft conceptualism*.[16] As a closing thought in this regard, it bears noting that similar claims have been made of Ruscha's books: Margit Rowell for instance

draws attention to the inclusion of a lone photograph of a glass of milk in *Various Small Fires and Milk*, noting that the second clause of the book's title only appears on the title page inside the front cover. For Ruscha, 'milk seemed to make the book more interesting and gave it some cohesion'; Rowell remarks on the 'casual jarring of expectations and deliberate subversion of the artist's own system' that is implicit in this ill-fitting inclusion. [22-3] Even if Ruscha himself is not the hard-line conceptualist that I have in the main made him out to be in this chapter, however, it is certainly the case that Gordon and Parreno afford themselves more room to work around the demands of their protocol than Costard, a closer contemporary of Ruscha, afforded himself for his earlier, prototypical treatment of George Best.

The oscillation between opposing tendencies that is implicit in my phrase *soft conceptualism* has given rise to two broadly opposed strands of critical response to Gordon and Parreno's film. On one side are the likes of art historian Jennifer Doyle and football writer Philippe Auclair. Noting in a 2008 essay for *frieze* magazine that the film has proven so popular in France that one can buy DVD copies of it from the supermarket, Doyle expresses concern that Gordon and Parreno have done little more than to 'co-operate with and [expand] Zidane's celebrity.' Auclair echoes Doyle's remarks in a piece for the *New Republic*. Drawing on Besma Lahouri's unauthorised 2008 biography of Zidane, Auclair presents Zidane as 'a manipulator who had carefully built, exploited, and protected the cult of Zidane to gain money and power.' As such, Auclair laments that 'It's hard not to see *Zidane: a 21ˢᵗ Century Portrait* as an exercise in self-aggrandizement, vetted by the film's hero […] as an effort by his advisers to reinforce a lucrative brand, rather than the celebration the player's art deserved.' Such criticisms must take as their primary object the film's skilful use of continuity editing to inject some degree of emotional resonance into Zidane's actions on the field. On the other hand, various reviewers, focusing more on the film's over-riding protocol, have criticised the film on the basis that, despite professing to offer a *Portrait* of its protagonist, it only offers a fragmentary picture. Writing in *Positif*, Michel Cieutat argues that Gordon and Parreno's aesthetic strategy 'naturally prevents the film from achieving its objective, for the simple reason that it is in total contradiction with the spirit of the football, team sport *par excellence*, in which individualism is highly unwelcome.' Although Cieutat is neglectful here of football's grand history of individualists, his argument that the depiction fails to properly convey Zidane's *gravitas* without access to the relational structures that give the player's movements on the pitch their meaning is nevertheless a sound one. Likewise, Dushko Petrovich's review for *n+1* makes the claim that,

> Zidane's essence as a player was omitted from the film […] The intricate angles, uncanny foresight, and precision timing that comprise the advanced calculus of the killer pass –

these were nowhere to be found. Zidane's commanding intelligence was thereby excluded, supplanted by huge beads of sweat, white socks, eyebrows.

The visual attention placed on Zidane by this film is for Petrovich a de-familiarising device, one which produces an image of Zidane lacking in his most essentially recognisable features. Drawing on the argument made in the previous chapter, it is clear that this kind of depiction is opposed to the appearance of the highlight GIF. Both Petrovich and Cieutat emphasise the film's failure to adequately represent Zidane's compelling on-field identity, though this criticism could justifiably be extended to encompass his off-field identity, since the film's literalism also serves to distance this representation from the discourse around Zidane's character which was outlined in the previous section.

In this sense, it is worth pausing on the use of the word "essence" in Petrovich's review: while the critic is here referring to Zidane's skills on the ball as opposed to his social background, this remark nevertheless ought to resonate with those ideas referenced in the previous section. This piling up of obstacles between the viewer and the putative essence of the overdetermined subject of the film is, I argue, not an oversight on the part of the film's makers but a conscious aesthetic strategy. At this point we can gesture towards a fissure in the film's overall appearance which might allow us to conjoin the Doyle-Auclair line of criticism with the Cieutat-Petrovich line: the widespread exposure which the film received both as a single-channel and multi-channel projection enabled Zidane's brand and *mythos* to propagate in the fields of cinema and contemporary art, but the work's contents are liable to frustrate the expectations of certain football enthusiasts hoping for a more recognisable documentary presentation of Zidane's singular identity, due to an intentional tendency on the part of the film-makers to embrace banality and de-familiarisation as representative strategies. Variations on the idea of "censorship of expressive content" play a central role in responses to the film, even if critics do not agree precisely on the extent to which this film actually censors Zidane's persona. In concluding this chapter, I want now to demonstrate what might be at stake in this kind of censorship by considering the case of Toussaint's essay "Zidane's Melancholy".

"Zidane's Melancholy" and the "final flight from the finished work"

The history of critical reception around *Zidane: A 21st century portrait* is a significant aspect of the film's cultural-political legacy, since it demonstrates a not-altogether unanimous but nevertheless pervasive sense of friction with regards to the fitness of the film's chosen mode of representing

Zidane. Gordon and Parreno's portrait is one that is designed to be only hazily recognised, a gambit which serves – in the context of the film's general release shortly after the 2006 World Cup final – to displace some of the meanings that were being invested in Zidane's persona around that time. In the final section of this chapter, I argue that what is implicit and somewhat contingent in *Zidane* becomes more adamant and univocal in the case of "Zidane's Melancholy."

It is in fact Parreno himself that first draws a connection between his own project and Toussaint's, albeit seemingly unconsciously. In Parreno's discussion with Khondji, the cinematographer proposes that Parreno and Gordon sought a 'delirium of points of view' in their film. Parreno's response is revealing. He remarks,

> The multiple points of view around the event of Zidane came from a text by Pier Paolo Pasolini that talks about the shooting of John F. Kennedy. That it was seen from so many different angles. Pasolini was saying that if you multiply the points of view around the event to infinity, when you want to play it back, the event never takes place – the bullet never hits the target.

The essay that Parreno references here was published by the Italian director and writer in 1967, and concerns the epistemological effects that montage has on cinema audiences. While it is not difficult to see the bearing that Pasolini's essay may have had on Gordon and Parreno's film, that linkage is not the focus here (it is however addressed by Griffin). Notably, Parreno's brief account of Pasolini's essay seems curiously ill-informed. Despite Parreno's suggestion, it is difficult to find any references in "Observations on the Long Take" to Zeno's arrow paradox, colloquially remembered as the logical inference that if an arrow is to fly from point A to point B it must first travel through an infinite number of subdivisions of that space, thus never managing to hit its target.

Parreno's words in this interview in fact find much greater resonance with the closing sentences of "Zidane's Melancholy", which was first published several years prior to the Khondji interview and can thus be plausibly presented as a text that Parreno has read and retroactively integrated to his thought process in co-creating *Zidane*. The relevant passage is worth quoting at length:

> Zidane's act […], invisible, incomprehensible, is all the most spectacular for not having taken place. It simply did not take place, if one limits oneself to the live observation of events in the stadium, and to the legitimate faith we can have in our senses, no one saw anything, neither the spectators nor the referees. Not only did Zidane's act […] not take place, but, were it to have taken place, were Zidane to have had the mad intention, the desire or the fantasy, to headbutt one of his opponents, Zidane's head would never have reached his opponent, for each time Zidane's head would have covered half the distance separating it from the opponent's chest, there would still have been another half to

cover, and then another half, and then still another half, and so on eternally, such that Zidane's head, progressing continually towards its target but never reaching it, as in an immense slow motion sequence infinitely looped, could not, never, for it is physically and mathematically impossible (it is Zidane's paradox, not Zeno's), come into contact with the opponent's chest [14].

Toussaint's obsessively re-iterated observation that the headbutt "did not take place" is rooted in some degree of fact from the perspective of his own experience and that of the many thousands of other spectators gathered in the Olympiastadion that night: the incident occurred far from the ball, as Zidane and Materazzi were making their way at a leisurely pace back towards the French goal, following an unsuccessful French attack. The majority of spectators had momentarily focused their gaze up the field from where the headbutt took place; as Toussaint notes, this was also true of referee Horacio Elizondo, who had to be informed of the incident by his officiating colleagues. So too did television broadcasts fail to capture the event unfolding, having to settle for showing a replay without a live counterpart. This *simulacral* aspect of the headbutt is presumably one feature to which Toussaint seeks to draw attention when he states that the event did not take place, calling to mind Jean Baudrillard's similar assertion regarding the first Gulf War.[17] The reference to Zeno's paradox, however, which Parreno mistakenly attributes to Pasolini, speaks to a further need on the part of the author to install a sense of non-accomplishment at the heart of his conception of the event.

In an earlier passage of the text in which Toussaint seems more willing to acknowledge that the headbutt did in fact take place, he writes of the two 'vast subterranean currents' which brought it about. [12] On the one hand, Zidane is motivated by 'the sadness of the ordained end, the bitterness of the player who is contesting the last match of his career and cannot resolve to finish'. [12] On the other, he entertains 'the wish to be done with it at the quickest, the wish, irrepressible, to leave the pitch abruptly and return to the locker rooms'. [13] Each current constitutes its own source of melancholy. Tiring and struggling in the final game of his career, Toussaint's Zidane is characterised by frustration and an inability to put the adequate finishing touch on a storied career. He is haunted by the incommensurability of his own capacities to fulfil the terms of the overdetermined narrative drama in which he finds himself. The responsibility to represent his *beur* identity has never been shrugged off, especially not in light of the 2005 riots, and this weight is now compounded by Zidane's seniority within the national side. Zidane has already scored once in the game but cannot repeat his heroics from the 1998 final by scoring a second, winning goal. The headbutt emerges as a resolution for this situation of narrative disappointment:

> He no longer has the means, or the strength, the energy, the will, to pull off a last stunt, a final stroke […] of pure form; the header, for all its beauty, pushed away by [Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi] Buffon a few moments earlier, will definitively open his eyes to his irreparable impotence. Form, at present, resists him – and this is unacceptable for an artist…Unable to score a goal, he will score minds. [13]

With this last line, Toussaint references a quip that Zidane himself had reportedly used to rally his team in the French dressing room, which Dubois renders as 'Il faut marquer des buts en marquant les esprits.' [xx] What is most significant to note in this passage, however, is its assertion that the headbutt is an action born out of impotence. The headbutt is an attempt to compensate for a determining absence, an absence which grows as Zidane's gifts gradually desert him. It is a gesture conceived in a void at the centre of Zidane's overdetermined identity where any truly meaningful action (such as his two goals in the 1998 final which brought Algerian identity briefly into the bosom of the Republic) is unable to emerge. Toussaint's image of the origin of the headbutt then grows to infect his account of the headbutt itself: rooted in impotence, the headbutt becomes a non-event. The gesture itself lacks form, since it is so unorthodox and unexpected that it fails to provide Zidane with an exit that recognisably aligns with his image as a heroic captain (although it does of course align with the image perpetuated commentators like the young Parisian basketball-player alluded to earlier). For Toussaint, the headbutt is born out of an evacuation of all that is recognisably *Zidane* from the figure of the player himself, and thus cannot be said to belong to his *oeuvre*; Gordon and Parreno's attempt to present a Zidane whose most distinguishing characteristics are technically de-emphasised finds a resonance in Toussaint's insistence on this evacuation.

In an essay accompanying his co-translation of *Zidane's Melancholy*, Timothy Bewes offers an interpretation of this aspect of Toussaint's text which allows us to strengthen the connection between these two works. Expanding on Toussaint's assertion that 'Zidane's melancholy is my melancholy' [13], Bewes identifies a dilemma facing both the semi-fictional Zidane of Toussaint's essay and the author himself: 'How is it possible to create without closing down possibilities, without enclosing thought within forms that are inadequate to it.' [19] This, Bewes asserts, is the melancholy 'of the modern novel itself'. [19] In his book *The Event of Postcolonial Shame*, Bewes reflects further on this topic, drawing on the work of such critics of modernity as György Luckács and Walter Benjamin, and noting, 'in the twentieth century, a new occasion for the production of writing emerges into consciousness: its own lack of ethical substance.' [16] Modernity's upheavals provoke artists to find forms to reflect it, but these artists are constantly faced with their own inadequacies in bringing the stuff of modern life to worthy representation. Focusing in particular on Western authors' treatments of post-colonial themes, Bewes describes

this struggle as one rooted in the shame that follows the European writer's realisation that their depiction of the post-colonial *milieu* can only *subtract* from our knowledge and understanding thereof, given the subjective partiality and subconscious agendas that are bound to underpin the account.[18]

It is this legacy, Bewes remarks, that still informs the daily creative struggles of a late twentieth- and early twenty-first century writer like Toussaint, and this becomes particularly pronounced when dealing with an overdetermined post-colonial subject like Zidane. For Toussaint, the headbutt is born out of an all-too-familiar struggle to produce a gesture which is fit for the world into which it is to be launched, a feeling of powerlessness in which 'The world becomes opaque', and which can only be resolved by what Toussaint, quoting from Sigmund Freud's account of the psychopathologies of Leonardo da Vinci, parenthetically labels 'the *final flight from the finished work*'. [13] That is to say, this *impasse* can only be worked through in the endless deferral of grand meanings familiar to readers of Toussaint's work more broadly, or, in Zidane's case, in a wholesale abandonment of the idea of a fit and proper ending which would worthily sum up and recapitulate the meanings of the career which has preceded it (such endings in sport are indeed exceptionally difficult to come by, though few find themselves in the advantageous position Zidane found himself in in 2006).[19] Toussaint's sense of the shocking and anomic incongruity of the headbutt is thus mined in the text for its resonances with the tribulations of writerly practice, and the earlier, contrasting example of Delbée's *The 107th Minute* allows us to witness the extent to which Toussaint performs his own *flight from the finished work* in refusing to draw any resolute set of meanings from the headbutt, outside of the principle of non-meaning.

I have argued that the three works discussed at length in this chapter can be categorised by their respective willingness to release into the world a holistic and recognisable vision of Zidane's public persona. All three works alienate Zidane from the "expressive content" which typically adheres to him in public discourse, content which starts on the football pitch but which, owing to football's cultural centrality in this conjuncture, soon works outwards into the realms of socio-political analysis. There are crucial differences between these trajectories of alienation, however. Following Bewes' terminology, when Toussaint and Gordon and Parreno foreground Zidane in a manner that (at least partially) holds out against the temptation to structure his depiction through recognisable narrative tropes, they can be said to absent themselves from the process of "subtractive" representation of this overdetermined post-colonial figure. In neither *Zidane* nor "Zidane's Melancholy" are we presented with a clearly positivistic reading of Zidane's

motivations or personality. This is in to contrast Delbée's presentation, which by transplanting Zidane to the context of tragic theatre actually ends up re-affirming some of the most harmful discursive formations that were used to explain his actions in July 2006. Whether either Toussaint or Gordon and Parreno intended to produce a reading of Zidane which specifically resisted the neo-colonial determinations that are thrust on their protagonist in certain quarters, their works can be said to negotiate the highly charged discourses surrounding Zidane's persona in a distinctively negative manner, one which is emphasised through the contrasting approach taken by Delbée in *The 107th Minute*. Ultimately, I have argued, these works may be most effectively interpreted by "staging a collision" between their artistic approach to Zidane and the highly-charged approaches to that figure that already exist in discussions orbiting around the *doxa* at the centre of football's cultural field.

This chapter marks my first attempt at viewing the borderline between the cultural fields of art and football from the "art" side. I have suggested that while Bourdieu's definition of high art as based around a kind of "censorship of expressive content" is far from a watertight definition of that domain, it is a strategy which has been adopted by particular artists at particular periods of history, and is one which finds itself applied in the case of Gordon and Parreno's film. Furthermore, I have made the case for reading this film both with a view towards its place within the lineage of twentieth-century photo-conceptualist art as well as its role within the sizeable body of cultural discourse that already surrounds its protagonist. For the most part, commentators on Zidane's cultural footprint have tended to contribute to the player's overdetermination, without reflecting back on the relationship between particular cultural objects in which he features and the discourse around him as a whole. In the case of Gordon and Parreno's film, I argued, this relationship can be understood along the lines of a refusal to engage with already-charged readings of the player, with implicit consequences regarding the treatment of Zidane's identity as a post-colonial subject. In the next chapter, I continue to focus on the borderline between discursive formations proper to football and those that belong to the cultural field of art, although in what follows I will be working towards a somewhat messier picture, one where this line becomes increasingly diffuse even as the protocols that maintain it can be clearly identified. By presenting four different participatory interventions based around football – that is to say processes through which football is not just represented but played in an unorthodox fashion – I turn my attention to aesthetic practices where "censorship of expressive content" is decidedly less of a factor than the attempt to imagine new conditions in which that expressive content may play out, and where the idea of a "rough collision" between art and sport gains physical weight.

Notes

[1] Delbée, Anne. *La 107e minute*. Les Quatre Chemins, 2006. p. 38

[2] *Coup de tête* was installed outside the Centre Pompidou for the duration of the large exhibition of Abdessemed's work that took place across the autumn of 2012. In 2013 it was purchased by the Qatar Museums Authority and transported to Doha, where it was to be displayed in a public setting. As a result of concerns regarding the statue's 'negative values' and 'idolatrous nature', these plans were quickly terminated and the work was instead put on display in Doha's Arab Museum of Art. [Haxall 266]

[3] In a BBC article from 11 July 2006 entitled "Materazzi denies terrorist insult", Materazzi's response to the accusation that 'he called Zidane a "terrorist" or used insulting language towards Zidane's mother' is reported: '"I am ignorant, I don't even know what an Islamic terrorist is; my only terrorist is her," he said pointing to his 10-month-old daughter.' Materazzi went as far as to write a book, published in both Italian and French, whose title translates into English as *What I Really Said to Zidane* (2006).

[4] This argument is made at length by Sean Morrissey in his article "'*Un homme avant tout*' : Zinedine Zidane and the sociology of a headbutt". The author draws on a conception of a sense of pride intrinsic to descendants of the Kabyle tribes which is also drawn on by Delbeé; both derive this conception from the work that Bourdieu carried out among the residents of Kabylia in the 1960s, collected in the book *Algeria 1960*. To summarise Bourdieu's findings, the natives of Kabylia are imagined to live in fidelity with a system which demands that males seek retribution against insults to the honour of their personage or their family; failure to act in this sense rebounds negatively on the insulted individual [*Algeria* 99-117]. A lengthy account of the problems underpinning Bourdieu's account and its subsequent appropriation in these later texts is beyond the remit of this thesis, though needless to say there are issues with Bourdieu's research which resonate with the ones I introduce later in this chapter in relation to the work of Ahmer Nadeem Anwer. For an account of the various *lacunae* in Bordieu's research, see Goodman.

[5] As Henry Samuel reported for *The Telegraph*, Chirac met with Zidane at the Elysée palace on 10 July, the day after the final itself. There he greeted Zidane 'without a word of admonition', stating, '"You are a virtuoso, a genius of world football. You are also a man of the heart, of commitment, of conviction, and that's why France admires and loves you."'

[6] One work that undoubtedly warrants further examination in light of the issues presented here is Harun Farocki's twelve-channel digital video installation *Deep Play* (2007), which breaks the 2006 final down into broadcast and other camera footage, real-time statistical data visualisations and various other forms of visual and acoustic representations of the game in question. Here Zidane is far from the lone object of visual scrutiny but one reasons that this particular match was selected for such a treatment with the impact of the headbutt in mind. Lack of space prevents me from offering Farocki's work further consideration in this chapter.

[7] *Black, Blanc, Beur* (black, white, Maghrebi) was a popular slogan used to describe the diverse make-up of the 1998 French World Cup squad. For a concise account of the notions of successful integration that were discussed in conjunction with the 1998 World Cup campaign, see Dauncey & Hare 338-40

[8] Winterstein's essay usefully frames the extent to which both French and Algerian media responses to the headbutt foregrounded Zidane's Algerian heritage, though Algerian sources were self-evidently less inclined than French ones to cast this heritage as 'sinister'.

[9] This response was issued in the wake of a widely-reported incident in a 2011 Premier League game where Liverpool's Luis Suárez was found to have directed a racial epithet at Manchester United player Patrice Evra, an offence for which the guilty party received a somewhat meagre eight-match ban and £40,000 fine. Despite the English FA's ongoing support for the Kick It Out organisation, which is tasked specifically with eradicating racism in English football stadia, Suárez's ban for racial abuse was two games shorter than the suspension the player received in 2013 for biting Chelsea defender Branislav Ivanović.

[10] In chapter one we saw evidence of FIFA's desire for footballers to take action above and beyond the powers of on-field officials to "preserve the values" of the game. Using Ahmed's terminology, this can be described as a process of "willing together". This is the 'social model of willing' that Ahmed also refers to (referencing Margaret Gilbert) as 'will pooling': 'Will pooling occurs when subjects are willing to will the same way, that is, when they are ready to take up the same projects.' [48] When this "will pooling" occurs without obstruction, '[t]hings run smoothly; we might be walking in unison', meaning that resisting being enfolded into this project can register as 'clumsiness' or '*non-attunement*' [50]. It was suggested in chapter one that the act of diving represents a form of *non-attunement* with the typical visual ethics of the game, at least as they are conservatively conceived; Zidane's headbutt, by bringing a form of violence atypical to the football contest onto the field in such a visible way, can be viewed similarly.

[11] For an influential account of how the alterity of Islam and the "Orient" is historically constructed in relation to European values see Said, particularly 49-72.

[12] As suggested in note 4, this conception of pride "Chez les Kabyles" is evidently indebted to Bourdieu's surveys of the population of Kabylia, but the articulation of Bourdieu's reading to tragic narrative tropes still presents cause for alarm, *pace* Anwer.

[13] These approaches are represented by Fried, Rowe and Birtwistle respectively.

[14] In 2013, *Zidane* was installed across seventeen separate screens as part of Parreno's retrospective at Paris' Palais de Tokyo, entitled "Anywhere, Anywhere, Out of the World". Each screen displayed the footage from one of the seventeen cameras that Khondji had configured for the duration of the game. A year earlier, the piece had been installed on eighteen monitors as part of a major solo exhibition of Gordon's work at Frankfurt's Museum für Moderne Kunst; the eighteenth monitor was given over to a recording of the Spanish television broadcast of the match from which the film draws its footage Finally, a two-channel version of the work, consisting of a DVD copy of the edited film displayed alongside rush footage from one of the seventeen cameras, has been acquired by various museums, including the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, who purchased their copy of the work in 2007.

[15] One thinks here of the mundane descriptions of Dublin that form the basis of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, the household objects that appear in Pablo Picasso's cubist collages and the meticulous descriptions of domestic environments found in the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Mercè Rodoreda.

[16] In addition to the strategies of continuity editing that have just been outlined, it is worth noting that at the half-time break the directors insert a sequence that takes place outside the narrative continuity of the match; we are presented with a series of events which took place on the same day as the film's footage was captured, ranging from the significant to the banal, and concluding with a photograph taken at the scene of a car bomb explosion in Iraq which includes a figure dressed in a replica Real Madrid shirt with Zidane's name and number on the back. This sequence takes one out of the game, alleviating its tedium in a stranger manner than the continuity edits highlighted by Birtwistle.

[17]Baudrillard argued that the conflict, which was covered in expansive and innovative ways by international television networks, played out first and foremost as a media spectacle and public relations battle, suggesting that, 'We are all accomplices in these fantasmagoria […] as we are in any publicity campaign.' [64] The connection drawn between the "fantasmatic" allure of visual mass media and a sense of "unreality" is consistent with Baudrillard's wider philosophy, most famously expressed in his 1981 book *Simulations and Simulacra*.

[18] See particularly *Shame* 182-92

[19] In an interview with Laurent Demoulin, Toussaint suggests that his literary efforts are geared towards the production of what he calls '"the infinitesimal novel"'. Many of his writings, including *Football*, which was cited in the previous chapter, are characterised by non-events and close attention to everyday minutiae.

4. Unnecessary Obstacles: Participation and Experimentation in *Polder Cup*, *Forest Pitch* and Three-sided Football

'Regardless of how easy it may seem, do you really think that you would manage to kick a big ball with your foot on your very first try? Just try it and see.'

– Pierre de Coubertin[1]

My final chapter pays less attention to visual material than the previous three chapters, owing to its focus on a series of performance-based interventions ranging from the 1960s to the present day, all of which revolve around some skewed version of association football. It is however my contention that the three contemporary case studies discussed in this chapter –Maider López's *Polder Cup* (2010), Craig Coulthard's *Forest Pitch* (2012), and the ongoing collective efforts to promote and sustain what is known as "three-sided football" – gain a great deal of their resonance from the vision of spectatorship that has been outlined in the previous four chapters. While not always explicitly articulated as such, each of these case studies can be seen to present their participants and viewers with an alternative to the *status quo* of contemporary football, which, as I have explored throughout this thesis, appears increasingly premised on vicarious participation mediated through an expanding set of image economies and apparatuses. *Polder Cup*, *Forest Pitch* and three-sided football are by contrast premised around matches experienced in the flesh either as a participant or as a visitor to an extraordinary location. In each example we can pinpoint the use of experimental organisational strategies which are designed to provide an experience more intense and memorable than the average football game. Where the previous chapter sought to account for attempts to depict contemporary football by other means, this chapter looks at attempts to organise football by other means, considering how and why artists and cultural practitioners alienate the game from its most customary appearances.

Each of these participatory interventions, I argue, is premised on the possibility of re-imagining football in new forms. Crucially, in order to fulfil this objective, the interventions must insert a layer of *difficulty* or *inefficiency* into proceedings that is not

recognised in football's standard form. In her work, López makes use of the canals that intersect the Dutch countryside in order to render playing surfaces that are criss-crossed with obstacles, requiring players to devise means for negotiating these during the course of play. As I will demonstrate prior to my discussion of López's work, this approach borrows a great deal from the game of *Stilt Soccer*, invented by Fluxus member Bici Hendricks. Coulthard makes non-repetition a crucial part of his intervention, presenting two football matches in a commercial spruce forest in the Scottish Borders before returning his specially-constructed pitch to the mercies of nature. In doing so he disrupts the expectations of economic return that are generally attendant on the construction of publically-accessible sporting facilities and sets free some aspect of a game that has, in the time period with which we are concerned here, grown closely associated with ideas of economic efficiency. The practice of three-sided football requires players to re-imagine their relationships with their opponents by introducing the possibility for a wider and potentially more confusing range of affective positions over the course of a game. In each case, we are invited to read back through football's accrual of ingrained or customary practices and proclivities in order to secure some kernel of liberatory strangeness.

In all three of these participatory activities, the artists and organisers appear to want to take their publics back to some pre-lapsarian state of engagement with the game, whether this is with regards to the recreation of certain spatial memories from childhood – as is the case with *Forest Pitch* – or with regards to the introduction of new rules that at least momentarily put all participants back on a level playing field. It is as if, with reference to the quote from the founder of the modern Olympic Games selected as the epigraph for this chapter, the artists and organisers behind each of these projects were striving to return us to a moment before we had grown comfortable with kicking a football, and from that primordial unfamiliarity enable us to realise football in forms different to those through which it is generally structured by the forces of contemporary capitalism.[2] Crucially, in bringing together two artistic interventions defined by their limited time-span with a broader cultural practice which theoretically knows no end, I wish to focus closely on the temporal parameters of that "moment"; three-sided football, I will argue, partakes of a more qualified but potentially more lasting critical potential than the other two interventions on the basis of its development of league structures and routinized fixtures.

There are two sources which require referencing at this stage. Firstly, I wish for the reader to consider the projects described in this chapter through terms that Jeff Kelley uses

to discuss the projects of Allan Kaprow in the introduction to his edited collection of Kaprow's writings, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Throughout his writings, Kaprow calls for a form of performative art-making which takes place on the level of everyday life and which, in Kelley's phrasing, 'dissipates into the situations, operations, structures, feedback systems, and learning processes it is like.' [xxii] A pertinent example of this rhetoric is found in Kaprow's 1972 essay "Education of the Un-Artist, Part II", which predicts a situation where, 'Gradually, the pedigree "art" will recede into irrelevance, giving rise to the figure of the "un-artist". [125] In Kaprow's vision, this "un-artist" becomes a socially useful figure who can 'convert their abilities, like dollars into yen, into something the world can spend: play.' [125] As Kelley puts it, Kaprow sees this form of experimental tutored play 'as a remedy for […] the ossifying routines and habits of industrial-age American education, which have less to do with learning and fun than with the "dreadfully dull work" of "winning a place in the world."' [xxii] This image provides a prototype for the modes of art-making that are discussed in this chapter: in each case, the artist or collective produces forms much closer to social work or sports management – that is to say, forms that typically focus on more-or-less pedagogical play-based activities – than to art traditionally conceived, though the extent to which each of these projects adheres to some version of artistic "pedigree" or "dissipates into the processes it is like" is contentious. An extended consideration of this latter issue forms the crux of this chapter.

The contention alluded to above arises from the fact that the kind of participatory art-making called for by Kaprow as an end to the role of the "artist" has in fact flourished without dismantling the idea of the artist as a skilled professional. The story of participatory art's development throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first is well recorded by Claire Bishop in her 2012 book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Here, Bishop traces the development across the twentieth century and into the twenty-first of an artistic discourse which 'tends to value what is invisible: a group dynamic, a social situation, a change of energy, a raised consciousness', noting a particular resurgence of this mode of art making in the 1990s and 2000s. [6] In spite of the movement towards radical de-materialisation found in such projects, Bishop nevertheless insists that the works covered in her text must be discussed '*as art*, since this is the institutional field in which [they are] endorsed and disseminated'. [13] In line with this, I argue that while *Stilt Soccer*, *Polder Cup* and *Forest Pitch* are undoubtedly unorthodox art projects in certain respects, they conform to a number of key expectations relating to art's institutional field in others. The case of three-sided football is however less easily resolved, and may point to a form of

experimental aesthetic activity which has become more *dissipated into what it is like* than most others, which is to say, whose place on the art/non-art borderline is more indeterminate.

It is also worthwhile briefly referencing a passage from the opening pages of Bishop's text in order to elucidate the methodology of this chapter. Unlike previous chapters, I am unable in this case to base the greater part of my observations on readings of visual material. Participatory art is, in Bishop's words, 'an art dependent on first-hand experience, and preferably over a long duration (days, months or even years).' [6] As such,

> To grasp participatory art from images alone is almost impossible: casual photographs of people talking, eating, attending a workshop or screening or seminar tell us very little, almost nothing, about the concept and context of a given project. They rarely provide more than fragmentary evidence, and convey nothing of the affective dynamic that propels artists to make these projects and people to participate in them. [5]

While *Polder Cup* and *Forest Pitch* lend themselves to more striking visual representations than the kind of projects Bishop lists here, it is nevertheless the case that in the absence of actual participation both events are most effectively discussed through some combination of visual documentation and textual testimonies. Equally, though three-sided football can be seen to emerge from the artistic field broadly conceived, it has left behind only a small number of truly noteworthy visual objects.[3] My engagement with each of these examples of experimental participatory practice thus hinges to a large extent on the writings of those close to the events. In discussing *Polder Cup* I engage with an essay by Ilse van Rijn, included in the official catalogue for the event, which presents a significant attempt to frame the project as a critical intervention into existing football. In my section on *Forest Pitch* I likewise engage with writing from the official catalogue, alongside Coulthard's original proposal document and various press sources critical of the event. Finally, my account of three-sided football is constructed in large part through statements made by those seeking to promote the game as a source of aesthetic and social experimentation. For the most part I do not frame these texts as critical secondary sources but as documents integral to the overall structure of the events: writings by those who engaged closely with participatory artworks are essential devices through which posterity will reconstruct these projects, and their closeness necessarily results in what Bishop calls a 'foreclosure of critical distance'. [6] Through these sources I aim to construct a picture of the *assumed* critical intent of each project before subjecting these assumptions to more sustained analysis. Firstly, however, I will continue to build up a picture of the critical context for each of my case studies by considering a fifth more-or-less "artistic" intervention into football's

cultural landscape, one which is not participatory but can nevertheless be used to come to terms with certain key claims advanced by those interventions that are.

Gianluigi Buffon's ethics of representation

In a 2005 interview with the Mexican visual artist Mariana Castillo Deball, Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon offers an unorthodox take on his craft. Asked whether he regards football as a 'pastime' or as his 'primary obsession', Buffon professes a sense of disconnect with the game at hand:

> My approach to knowledge is playful. I am a Jack-of-all-trades, master of none. If I chose a particular discipline the charm would be gone, because choosing one means dismissing the others. Foremost, I respect my ignorance, otherwise it would be impossible to maintain my sense of humor. [99]

This intimation of a naïve, ephemeral and non-serious relationship with football is decidedly counter-intuitive, given the extent of Buffon's achievements on the pitch.[4] Buffon goes on to make a number of other statements that maintain an aloof separation from the sentiments and values that may be expected of an elite international footballer: he claims that he knows 'nothing about formal technique', that he is 'a very lazy person', even that he 'really enjoy[s] failure'. [99-101] For present purposes, what is most significant about this distancing is the critical leverage it appears to afford Buffon with respect to the activity at hand: asked about the resonances of his surname, which means "clown" or "joker" in Italian, Buffon replies that this connotation is appropriate to the manner in which he imagines his on-field persona:

> I like to think that I am a buffoon, a clown, entrusted with the task of entertaining people […] Being a clown is also a question of playing with the rules. If you play with the rules, you may become a joker or a criminal, but in a sense you change people's own rules of thinking. Many people don't like the way I play; they think I am over-acting, screaming too much, trying to win the attention of the cameras, but I do that intentionally to maintain the link between sport and the notion that it is truly just a circus. [100]

This whole passage can be said to function not just descriptively but performatively: by claiming that perceived faults with his playing style are in fact intentional gambits designed to direct the audience's attention in specific directions, Buffon's words open up space for a kind of aesthetic reflexivity that, as was argued at length in the first chapter, is not customarily perceived to exist in the context of a football match.

It is significant that Buffon's co-conspirator in this piece is a visual artist, and that their discussion takes place in *Cabinet* magazine, a publication with a history of giving over page space to the realisation of original works of visual art. Through the passages just quoted, Buffon and Castillo Deball almost go as far in this interview as to designate the former's professional practice as an artistic performance.[5] In light of his statement, Buffon's on-field "tricks" acquire a cachet of critical value that they would not have been perceived to possess otherwise: specifically, they are seen to explicitly mediate football as related to other, less privileged, popular entertainments, and to thereby enable the audience to engender fresh conceptions about the actions unfolding in front of them. Following the definition developed by Thierry de Duve in *Kant After Duchamp*, we can thus describe Buffon's admission as a kind of *readymade*: for de Duve, the readymade is 'neither an object or a set of objects nor a gesture nor an artistic intention, but rather,[…] a statement. It is the sentence, "this is art," such as it is pinned to absolutely any object whatsoever, *given* […] that it was recognized – that is, judged, as art.' [333] Buffon's language does not pass the judgement "this is art" *per se*, but the way his choice of language frames his on-field activity has much the same effect, marking this activity as something possessing pre-meditated aesthetic significance.[6]

Buffon's framing, to be precise, resembles the 'mode of ethico-representational engagement' that art critic Grant Kester describes as one of the characteristic driving forces of advanced art in the 20th and 21st centuries. [22] Discussing *Cruising Pavilion*, a 1998 artwork by Danish-Norweigan duo Elmgreen and Dragset which was temporarily installed in a popular spot for outdoor sex in the Marselisborg Forest near Århus, consisting of a stark white cube with divided interior spaces and numerous "glory holes" drilled into the walls, Kester suggests that the artists' presumed role in creating this piece is one of responsibility 'for arranging and administering an experience of therapeutic dislocation directed specifically at the representational matrix of identity'. [23] This is how the work is reflected in the words of another critic, Lars Bang Larsen, whose judgements Kester challenges in this passage. Bang Larsen argues that *Cruising Pavilion* functions through its uncanny imposition on the landscape to de-familiarise queer space from those that use it, noting that to be in the vicinity of *Cruising Pavilion* is 'to feel the pull of your identity, whether you are straight or gay'. [qtd. in Kester, 23] The work in other words functions by acting as a fulcrum around which apparently latent or secretive phenomena may be revealed and subsequently critiqued. For Kester, this is 'familiar avant-garde territory': nobody, he argues, can be sure of the extent to which 'gay (or straight) Danes need lessons

in queer representation or identity politics or help in finding spots for public sexual encounters, but this question is really beside the point.' [23] What is most significant is that the work ostensibly distances itself from the everyday sexual practices of those Danes in order to reflect back upon them with a sense of critical purchase. *Cruising Pavilion*, at least as viewed through the lens of this particular strand of reception, thus stands for Kester as an object lesson regarding contemporary art's sense of its own contribution to the discourses surrounding given cultural phenomena. The model of aesthetic radicalism Kester gestures towards when he depicts *Cruising Pavilion* as "familiar avant-garde territory" is one we should by now recognise, in which,

> Instead of seducing the viewer, the artist's task is to hold him at arm's length, inculcating a skeptical distance (defined in terms of opacity, estrangement, confusion, or ironic distanciation) that parallels the insight provided by critical theory into the contingency of social and political meaning. [32]

There are clear similarities between Kester's language in this passage and my earlier discussions of the supposed *hauteur* of high art. It is evident that this sense of a "skeptical distance", of a set of gestures which stall the work's viewers or participants in their efforts at total unthinking immersion, also plays out in Gianluigi Buffon's comments about his efforts to remind football crowds that their object of attention is "truly just a circus".

We might, like Kester, question the necessity of reminding football fans of this fact, even before moving on to scrutinise the efficacy of Buffon's performances to this end. There is no way to finally answer this question however, no single effective method for gauging the relative naivety or reflexivity of the average football crowd. As in my introduction, I maintain that the conception of a crowd as more or less conscientious can only be an object of faith, as it is throughout twentieth- and twenty-first-century debates on mass culture. For present purposes, what matters most is that Buffon's linguistic performance appears articulated to a well-established body of thought that casts elite professional football in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as altogether too serious and insufficiently *ludic*, as a duplicitous spectacle underpinned by impure and exploitative motives, or as a vehicle for the ruthless acquisition and concentration of capital, and that it seeks to act on this deficit or decline by restoring a kind of performativity marginalised by the elite game. This is a conception which is common in the context of twenty-first century football, for reasons outlined in my introduction and expanded upon in chapters one and two: the increasing imbrication of media companies, multinational corporations and elite clubs and players leads to a situation in which the

effects of money permeate all aspects of the game. The case of Paris Saint-Germain, whose sudden injection of capital in 2012 led to their rapid acquisition of elite commodified players like Ibrahimović, which in turn led to unchecked dominance in the French league and subsequent increased revenue through repeated televised appearances in the UEFA Champions League, is an example of the kind of circumstances that might lead fans of the game to desire some simpler or "purer" form of entertainment.

In previous chapters I have discussed various effects of the intensification of football's media presence as felt in the visual culture surrounding the game. In chapter one I discussed the manner in which the illegitimate visuality of the diving image is constructed in relation to the forces that radically altered football's socio-cultural make-up after the Hillsborough disaster, a period in which a broadening media interest in the game is bound up with its perceived social gentrification. In chapter two I considered how the radically ambivalent form of the screengrab GIF contributes to the mainstream media's lucrative construction of elite footballing geniuses even as the material itself is bound up in a visual economy that is both piratical and that sometimes generates boredom with the game rather than excitement. In chapter three I discussed how *Zidane: A 21ˢᵗ Century Portrait* uses aesthetic strategies derived from earlier experiments in photo-conceptualism to side-step the overdetermined expectations placed on certain elite footballers by those same mainstream media outlets. In this final chapter, I turn my attention to creative interventions which respond to the game as it is currently experienced by seeking to transform or radically re-situate the field of play, *en route* to unravelling certain normative expectations of the practice of football itself. In what follows, I describe how each project carries out this act of transformation and consider the nature of their "ethico-representational engagement" with the elite game. At play throughout this account, as in the previous chapter, will be a lingering question about institutional borders: how do our conceptions of the organisational frameworks proper to the fields of contemporary art and professional sport intervene in our evaluation of the critical impact of these participatory interventions, and what is at stake when variant forms of football genuinely begin to blur the line between the two fields?

Stilt Soccer, Polder Cup and the "lusory attitude"

Before introducing my first contemporary case study, however, it is important to address a historic prototype for this project in the form of the Fluxus group's "Flux Sports" events, not least since the recent critical handling of these programmes by performance historian Natasha Lushetich can be used to open up a set of key problematics relating to the research questions outlined above. Fluxus, a fluid collective of experimental musicians and artists founded by the Lithuanian-American artist George Maciunias in the early 1960s, had aims which are outlined in Maciunas' 1965 manifesto: in a precursor to Kaprow's writings on the subject, Maciunas and his followers sought 'to establish artist's non professional status in society' and to 'demonstrate the self sufficiency of the audience' by producing art that 'must be simple, amusing, unpretentious, concerned with insignificances, require no skill or countless rehearsals, have no commodity or institutional value.' [qtd. in Kellein, 134] Fluxus first held festivals and concerts dedicated to the pursuit of these objectives in various European cities in 1962, and began introducing participatory "group games" to these events in the middle of the decade.[7] Art historian Kristine Stiles attributes an experimental potency to the performances which constituted these festivals and concerts:

> Fluxus performances require both performers and viewers to consider the function of thought in the ways in which the body interacts with things: they draw attention to the behavioral processes that relate thinking and doing, and compel both performers and viewers to confront and then, perhaps, revise conditions of being. Such revisions – the results of the reconfiguration of common bodily actions – may give rise to alternative procedures and patterns for the reconstruction of thought. [65]

In the case of the "group games", presented under the rubric of "Flux Sports" or "Flux-Olympiad", these "revisions, reconfigurations" and "rediscoveries" of bodily actions and behaviours were mainly brought about by imposing absurd constraints on familiar physical activities: Owen F. Smith lists such events as 'a "100 yard race while drinking vodka," a "100 yard candle carrying dash," "crowd wrestling in confined spaces," and "soccer with ping pong ball pushed by blow tubes"'. [35] To take the example of the first item on this list, it is clear that the need to drink vodka would alter the way one physically approached the act of running, and vice versa. Such a performance would require its participants to imagine, *ad hoc*, ways in which familiar physical acts like running may be altered to fit unfamiliar and challenging circumstances, thus creating a feedback loop between body and intellect, tethering new forms of physical movement to new movements of thought.

In the essay cited in previous chapters, Lushetich describes a "Flux Sports" event that took place at Rutgers University in 1970 and which included the aforementioned "blow soccer" and "candle dash" alongside a host of other competitions. Participants engaged in the "100-yard run", devised by Larry Miller, 'in which runners proceed to the fifty-yard mark by taking three steps forward and two steps back, and from the fifty-yard mark, three steps backward and two forward'; as well as a form of boxing devised by Maciunas in which competitors wear 'giant inflated musical gloves' and Bici Hendricks' version of football in which all competitors were forced to wear stilts. [31] Many of these events were repeated at Rutgers in 2003 and again as part of the Tate Modern's "Long Weekend" program in 2008, where Lushetich saw numerous iterations of these games at first-hand. [*Fig. 28*] For Lushetich, 'Flux Sports engage the player in a clash of opposites by asking him/her to pursue the goal of the game in ways and by means that are either nonsensical or entirely counterproductive.' [31] In the case of Hendricks' "Stilt Soccer", which Lushetich discusses at length, the constraint of the stilts means that,

> in order to stick to the rules of the game, the players are forced to continually improvise and look for new ways of covering the field, hitting the ball, and cooperating with other players. At the same time, however, attempts at strategic organization are perpetually thwarted by the use of stilts, which creates euphoric and panicked tumult. That said, the tumult never quite takes over, as it is precisely amid the shrieking and the falling on top of one another that the players discover a new, strategically useful move, such as holding onto one another for balance while attempting to hit the ball. [33]

This constant improvisation and adaptation to unpredictable conditions is precisely where the value of "Stilt Soccer" as an experimental participatory activity is located: as Lushetich puts it, 'it is impossible to form any idea of the development of the game prior to becoming involved in it, and…the only useful tactic is indeed the nonstrategic "blind" kind.' [34] Here, Lushetich describes Stilt Soccer's experimental potency as something arising from the lack of standardisation that underpins its gameplay.

In Stilt Soccer, the "alternative procedures and patterns for the reconstruction of thought" that Stiles identifies as the aim of Fluxus performance practice are brought about as a result of the sheer novelty of the game at hand: since presumably none of the participants have prior experience of having to move a ball around a field while balancing on stilts, no abstracted lexicon exists to dictate pre-meditated strategies for teams and individual players, and the game possesses a relatively undiminished capacity for bodily improvisation and self-exploration. While Lushetich derives her understanding of "blind

tactics" from Jacques Derrida's *Margins of Philosophy*, it is useful here to think in the very similar terms introduced by another French philosopher, Michel de Certeau, who distinguished between "tactics" and "strategies" in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Whereas a "strategy" is defined for Certeau by its ability to secure 'a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats [...] can be managed', a "tactic" does not

> have the options of planning general strategy an viewing the adversary within a distinct, visible, and objectifiable space. It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. [37]

While the management of a farm is "strategic", the individuals who raid that farm to steal vegetables to eat are acting "tactically". The farmer maintains a locus that is delimited from everything outside her farm and organises her resources through future-oriented planning; the vegetable poachers by contrast are forced to 'play on and with a terrain imposed on [them] by the law of a foreign power', seizing whatever resources can be gained in the moment. [37] Put otherwise, strategies 'are able to produce, tabulate and impose' whereas 'tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert'. [30] "Tactics" thus relate to Certeau's figure of "production" that was addressed in my introduction: to the effort that television executives put into managing their audiences through attention to demographics and social trends there corresponds an almost-invisible but widespread form of effort that television viewers put into constructing meanings – not always fully aligned with the intended ones – from the shows that eventually make it onto the air. What is most applicable to Lushetich's writing here is the momentary temporality of "tactics": those unable to "keep what they win" are forced repeatedly to start over again from scratch. It is this kind of temporality that Lushetich associates with the practice of *Stilt Soccer*, which, as a novel and absurd diversion of football's gameplay structure, requires its participants to act on impulse and through improvisation rather than with reference to the kinds of highly "tabulated" approaches found in elite professional football.[8]

As a mode of performance, Lushetich considers "tactical" play more intellectually and physically enriching than play that is bound by an established set of rules and prototypes governing which actions are desirable or efficient and which are not. As Lushetich puts it, 'the concept-practice of art-amusement' embodied by *Stilt Soccer* 'functions as a matrix for a nonhegemonic structuring of social reality. It communicates

innovative ways of acting in the world by means of unskilled corporeal participation.' [41] Lack of requirement of specialist skill is a crucial aspect of Kaprow's and Maciunias's respective formulations of the potential critical value of their performative interventions: only by dwelling within spaces that are not delimited by particular technical proficiencies can participants be free to discover new ways of being in and moving through social space. For Lushetich, the "nonhegemonic structuring of social reality" enabled by *Stilt Soccer* also permits participants to gain a critical purchase on the activity that is being modified: '*Stilt Soccer* restores playfulness to sport and subverts its objectification,' by 'proposing a highly regulated as well as spatio-temporally quantifiable competition, while providing not only inadequate but purposefully counterproductive means with which to achieve the desired ends.' [34] The first part of this formulation resonates with the critical engagement proposed by Buffon, who in his own way sought to restore a seemingly lacking sense of playfulness to the world of professional football by intentionally carrying out on-field actions deemed inappropriate by some. Where Lushetich attempts to account for the cause of this particular "restoration", however, her argument demonstrates some significant lacunae. The central weakness of Lushetich's account has already been noted by Steven Connor: in a lecture developed between 2011 and 2012 entitled "Shackling Accidents: Culture and Chance", Connor remarks that,

> one has only to observe children who have only just been introduced to the arbitrary restriction of not being able to use any part of their bodies other than their feet to recognise that the way in which *Stilt Soccer* interferes with soccer is a pretty exact recapitulation of the way in which soccer itself interferes with the ordinary ways of carrying and projecting a ball – that is, by imposing a restriction that warps the field of probabilities.

Connor's suggestion here is that Lushetich's understanding of the "purposefully counterproductive means" employed in *Stilt Soccer* overlooks the existence of the very same means in standard, "objectified" forms of the game in question. Since *Stilt Soccer* is still premised around the idea of two teams attempting to kick the ball into the net guarded by the opposing team, the addition of stilts does not mark a qualitative shift away from elite football but a quantitative one: football's fundamental prohibition on handling the ball is itself a very basic "purposefully counterproductive means", since it straightforwardly makes moving a ball from one end of a field to the other more difficult. Similarly, basic principles such as the offside rule and the various measures taken to curb in-game violence serve to make football players less, not more, adequate to the task at hand. *Stilt Soccer* then does not constitute a decisive rupture with elite football but a modification of existing principles.

Although Lushetich refers in constructing this argument to two highly influential theorists of play in Roger Caillois and Johan Huizinga, she omits a crucial reference in the form of analytic philosopher Bernard Suits, whose definition of games, offered in his 1978 book *The Grasshopper: Games, Life and Utopia*, hinges precisely on the universal necessity of "purposefully counterproductive means." Suits' definition reads as follows:

> To play a game is to attempt to achieve a specific state of affairs [prelusory goal], using only means permitted by rules [lusory means], where the rules prohibit use of more efficient in favour of less efficient means [constitutive rules], and where the rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity [lusory attitude]. [54-55][9]

To apply this definition to the game at hand, we could say that football's "prelusory goal" consists of forcing a ball to pass between two posts, that the "lusory means" are defined first and foremost by the prohibition against handling the ball, that this basic tenet is augmented by a host of other "constitutive rules" which make the "prelusory goal" more, not less difficult to achieve (such as the aforementioned offside rule), and that these inconveniences are adopted in the name of a "lusory attitude", which is to say out of an awareness and unspoken acknowledgement that they are the means by which an essentially absurd aim (forcing a ball between two posts) is turned into a ludic activity. Suits also offers a more concise and 'portable' formulation of the above definition in stating that 'playing a game is the voluntary attempt to overcome unnecessary obstacles.' [55] According to Suits' meticulously argued and ultimately convincing definition, game-playing invariably calls for the adoption of inadequate means to realise the task at hand. Even elite football is at its root based around the kind of ludicrous constraint that Lushetich wishes to associate exclusively with variants like *Stilt Soccer*. If there is an experimental potency in these performances then, it cannot be attributed to their implementation of physical obstacles. It is rather a question of temporality: if *Stilt Soccer* offers a more fertile terrain for improvisation and subsequent self-discovery than regular football, we can attribute this to the fact that the former is in its infancy, still devoid of a defined "locus" through which "strategies" can be developed. That is to say, there is nothing inherent in Stilt Soccer that would prevent it from becoming "objectified" were it eventually to reach a level of popularity comparable to standard football.

On this basis, Connor is critical of the idea that what experimental potency does reside in an activity like *Stilt Soccer* could be seen to have an impact on the field of association football itself: recall that Lushetich describes the game as "restoring playfulness

to sport", much in the vein of Buffon's intimation that his on-field activities subvert contemporary football's dour disavowal of its more ludic attributes. For Connor, 'How far [*Stilt Soccer*] can restore playfulness to anything will depend upon how that playfulness is itself put into play […] in different fields of expectation or probability.' Hendricks' creation is, Connor suggests, 'a perfectly plausible and possibly in time rather a good game, as well as being a witty send-up of one', but the possibility of an artistic project like this one having any "restorative" impact on the game it mimics is 'vanishingly unlikely' as long as *Stilt Soccer* is known first and foremost as 'an agreeably prankish art-proceeding', which is to say, as long as it remains embedded within what Connor refers to as 'the fields of art practice and aesthetic theory'. Providing a rather stark account of the difference between this field and the field of football itself, Connor states that one simply does not 'look to the Tate Modern website for details of soccer fixtures', just as 'one does not go to the Emirates Stadium to see a work with the title *Soccer Match Between Arsenal and Bolton*'. Equally, by Lushetich's own measure, *Stilt Soccer*'s experimental potency would be diminished were it to become "in time rather a good game, as well as a witty send-up of one": in this instance the "blind tactics" which decided the outcome of matches in the occasional art-world realisations of Hendricks' game would be replaced by strategies predicated on calculations and abstract knowledge. Winning matches would come about less as a result of individuals drawing on previously undiscovered inner reserves of resourceful improvisatory ability and more as a result of those individuals attempting to measure up to prescribed roles in the division of on-field labour.

Through this example, it is possible to see how significant the question of temporality is in determining the boundaries between the values proper to the field of art practice and those proper to professional sport, and more specifically to the question of the possibility for an efficacious form of critical engagement emerging from the former field. It is demonstrable that *Stilt Soccer*, an experimental participatory intervention drawn from the *milieu* of the post-war artistic avant-garde, would begin to resonate differently were it to acquire the kind of regular league structure associated with association football proper. The purported capacity of the game to generate meaning for its participants is associated first and foremost with its novelty value, meaning it is perfectly suited to the rhythm of exhibitions and festivals that defines the field of contemporary art. Yet, as Connor suggests, if the game were to have any real chance of following through on its pedagogical promise of "restoring playfulness to sport" it would have to overspill its narrow definition

as an "agreeably prankish art-proceeding" and become something which actually establishes a level of intimacy with the sporting field proper.

In the remainder of this section, I will consider an example of a more recent participatory intervention in which the same logic and lacunae spelled out above are recapitulated, namely Maider López's project *Polder Cup*. Out of a number of other recent artistic projects that make use of football as a medium – I could also have discussed Priscilla Monge's portable installation *Cancha de fútbol*, first commissioned for the Liverpool Biennial in 2006, or López's own *Football Field*, constructed the following year for the Sharjah Biennial – *Polder Cup* is the work which resonates most closely with Hendricks' *Stilt Soccer*, both in terms of its material strategies and its subsequent theorisation by those close to the project.[10] As illustrated by the many aerial images taken by Max Dereta on the day of the event, López's intervention consisted of four pitches drawn onto a patch of land in Ottoland, a village in the Molenwaard municipality in the mid-western Netherlands. [*Fig. 29*] The land – which can be seen in its everyday usage as pasture for cows in the photograph printed on the front cover of the catalogue which documents the event – is intersected by various narrow canals. As reflected in the title of López's project, this area is a "polder", defined by *Oxford English Dictionary Online* as 'a piece of low-lying land reclaimed from the sea, a river, etc., and protected by dykes.' The canals seen in the images serve to regulate the flow of water through the plain: sluices close to larger bodies of water can be opened and closed to flood or drain the area. As with López's earlier installation from the Sharjah Biennial, in which a football pitch was created for a public square whose street furnishings remained in place, these canals serve in *Polder Cup* to interrupt the field of play, presenting obstacles to be negotiated by the players. Two of the pitches are divided in two by canals which cut across the shorter axis of the playing field: in one the canal is positioned just in front of the "d" of the penalty area and in the other it almost touches the edge of the centre circle. A third pitch features a canal running the length of one of the wings, enclosing a space between water and touchline less than ten yards across. The largest of the four pitches is intersected twice, with both canals positioned roughly equidistant between the penalty area and the centre circle on either half of the field. On 4 September 2010, these pitches were used for a total of twenty-three matches, arranged in a round-robin format leading to quarter-finals, semi-finals and a final. Sixteen teams took part, with squads comprising between eight and fourteen players apiece.

Fig. 28: Action shot from performance of *Stilt Soccer* at Tate Modern, 2008

Fig. 29: Aerial view of *Polder Cup* site on match day

Figs. 30-31: Polder Cup in action: players isolated on the wing; one team-mate fishes another from a canal (below)

In the build-up to the day itself, a banner was installed advertising the event on the façade of Rotterdam's Witte de With gallery, with the institution serving as 'the official information centre for the event', the site where 'potential players could sign up' and from where the bus to Ottoland departed on the day. [Van Rijn 16] Witte de With were one of two institutions that facilitated the event, alongside Stichtig Kunst en Openbare Ruimte (SKOR), a now-defunct organisation dedicated to realising art projects in public space, which oversaw many projects focused on the landscape of the polders. As Ilse van Rijn relates in her essay for the *Polder Cup* catalogue, 'The entire occasion was carefully coordinated, with very little left to chance. This attention to the organisation of the tournament ensured that the players could fully immerse themselves in the game.' [18] Van Rijn here includes a footnote which guides the reader to a quote from philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer's text *Truth and Method*: 'Play fulfils its purpose only if the player loses himself in play. […] seriousness is necessary to make the play wholly play'. [qtd. in Van Rijn, 18] Gadamer's assessment in these lines echoes Suits': primarily, it resonates with Suits' emphasis on the integral significance of adopting a properly "lusory attitude" in sporting endeavours, that is to say adopting a steadfast commitment to approaching the "pre-lusory goal" at hand through the filter of the agreed-upon "lusory means". Play comes about as a result of taking on deliberately absurd conditions to delimit the range of legal actions on the field of play and adhering to them throughout the contest.

Van Rijn's insistence on the necessary relationship between seriousness and play appears as something of an apology for the measures that had to be taken in order for the event to transpire, since the idea of an event in which very little is left to chance does not necessarily conform to the ideal conception of a participatory art work. Kester, for instance, has criticised the kinds of participatory art practices praised elsewhere by the likes of Nicolas Bourriaud and Claire Bishop (artists such as Liam Gillick and Rikrit Tiravanija in the case of the former, and Santiago Sierra and Francis Alÿs in the case of the latter) as retaining 'an essentially textual status, in which social exchange is choreographed as an a priori event for the consumption of an audience "summoned" by the artist.' [32][11] To return briefly to the previous section of this chapter, it is plain to see how a prescribed or "textual" choreographing of audience participation would be detrimental in the case of a participatory intervention like *Stilt Soccer*: if the emphasis of the activity is on improvisatory self-discovery, then a certain threshold of unscripted spontaneity, or what Maciunas calls "self sufficiency" among participants, is required. Van Rijn is plainly aware of this when she justifies the meticulous organisation of the *Polder Cup* event, and her apology is credible,

relying on a well-trodden sense of the creative potential engendered by establishing certain limits: in this case, the artist presents an organisational framework more frequently associated with professional sports (the round robin followed by play-offs) in order to sustain participation and focus the attention of the participants on the task of activating the polder as a space of experimental play. In other words, in order for the individually liberating potential of this spatial arrangement to be realised, the participants are first required to buy into the organisational framing established by the artist, since this is responsible for determining the "lusory means".

The experimental aspect of the games played at the *Polder Cup* comes about as a result of a rule change enacted to accommodate the canals into what are otherwise games played to the standard rule-set of association football. As Van Rijn relates, 'Players were not allowed to leap over the ditches [...] Consequently, the players had to discuss and revise their tactics and devise new strategies in the heat of the moment, without them being formalised.' [20] Furthermore, 'all the pitches were different, which produced new forms of interaction between the attackers and defenders of a given team, as well as between the competing teams, resulting in a new (football) language.' [20] Evidence from the photographs included in the catalogue suggests that the pitch featuring a canal running along the length of one wing produced the strangest forms of interaction between attack and defence: in two images presented side-by-side, we see that two players, one from each team, are isolated on this thin spit of turf between the conceptual boundary of the touchline and the physical boundary of the canal. Their efforts are related to the events transpiring on the main body of the pitch, but they are nonetheless spatially adrift, condemned to only enter into direct physical competition with one another. [*Fig. 30*] There is a comic absurdity to their isolation when viewed from the lofty overhead shots reproduced in the catalogue, and this isolation must by necessity have been productive of new modes of play and physical conduct. In a video documenting the tournament which was uploaded to López's *Vimeo* page on 8 October 2011, we gather a similar comic sense, as well as a sense of the necessity of devising new modes of play, in the various pieces of footage of players falling – or narrowly avoiding falling – into the canals while in pursuit of the ball. These slapstick hazards perform the role of bringing laughter onto the field of play: drawing on the interview discussed in the first part of this chapter, we could say they are conducive to *buffoonery*.[12] Bound up with this are the new forms of movement the canals engender: several times in the video we see players attempting to control the ball before it falls into the water, balancing this effort with the need to avoid over-shooting the motion

and ending up soaked and muddy. [*Fig. 31*] The rough-and-ready nature of this kind of play – such hazards have to be negotiated only on the rarest of occasions in elite football, though mud remains a stalwart feature of semi-professional and Sunday league games – is compounded by what Van Rijn refers to as 'the tall grass, the pollen and the squishy ground' that comprises the playing surface. [18]

Van Rijn attributes a degree of criticality to these tricky playing conditions: 'By taking place during the 2010 World Cup,' she notes, '*Polder Cup* served as a foil to the official football tournament. It criticised the spectacle that sport had become, and its nonsensical practical context and daft rules (by professional standards) parodies the official game.' [18] This apposite scheduling enhances *Polder Cup*'s capacity to reflect critically on elite football: participants in this event are supposed to discover through their own performances a more playful and liberated alternative to the elite game at the moment of its most widespread spectacular prominence, through engagement with conditions that help to maximise the suppressed ludic potential of association football. To this end, and in the same vein as Lushetich, Van Rijn perhaps overstates the "daftness" of *Polder Cup*'s rules: the prohibition against crossing the canals which divide the pitch is a constitutive rule not terribly dissimilar to the set of rules which regulate on-field positioning during play in various sports, including football's own offside rule. As with *Stilt Soccer*, the game presents more opportunities both for laughter and for improvisatory bodily performance than standard football, but we can attribute this primarily to the one-off nature of the competition: that is to say, to its identity as a "prankish art-proceeding". Tellingly, despite the various images included in *Polder Cup*'s catalogue which document the tournament structure that unfolded on the day, López did not publish results or give special attention to the tournament victors. Neither is the tournament final particularly demarcated in the video documentation. Having adopted the kind of "serious" organisational structure required to activate the polder as a space of experimental play, López stops short of dwelling on the kind of content that such structures are characteristically designed to deliver: namely, a list of winners and losers, records and statistics, that can be engaged and challenged in future performances. Rather, this format was employed in order to allow them to engage more lucidly on this particular day.

Again, I contend that the key issue here is one of temporality: while the commitment to a carefully organised tournament structure appears to demonstrate that the kind of football seen in *Polder Cup* could be a "perfectly plausible game", the event is nevertheless

underpinned by the kind of one-time-only logic more associated with site-specific participatory art than with professional sport's complex of fixtures, league tables and records. The sense of novelty required for the event to "provide a foil" to the world of elite professional football is retained through this refusal of repetition or routinisation: the video ends with participants packing up the goals, corner flags and grandstands, returning the polder to its former use and bringing an end to this exceptional tournament. I will now move on to consider a participatory project realised two years after *Polder Cup* which was more explicitly bound up in questions of temporality, both in its original conception and in its sometimes hostile public reception.

Craig Coulthard's Forest Pitch

Forest Pitch, executed as part of the Cultural Olympiad program for the 2012 London Olympic Games, was materially constituted around a single day of football matches but sought to juxtapose this time frame with other, longer durations, principally durations related to ecological rhythms and processes. *Forest Pitch* was the Scottish entry for the nation-wide "Artists Taking the Lead" initiative, and was realised alongside other participatory artworks from the United Kingdom's regions. As Beatriz Garcia has highlighted, the London bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games placed a particular emphasis on the idea of "legacy", following the precedent set by Barcelona's staging process in 1992, whose organisers had attempted 'to use the Games to improve the city's urban landscape and assist in its international projection far beyond the Games staging period.' [370] *Forest Pitch* and the other works that made up the "Artists Taking the Lead" program were funded in part by the Legacy Trust UK, an agency tasked specifically with attempting to optimise the long-term fall-out of the London Olympics. [Gilmore 157] Although the Olympics project entailed a significant make-over of the Lea Valley area of East London, projects like "Artists Taking the Lead" demonstrate that the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) were less singularly focused on urban regeneration within the boundaries of the host city than the organising committee of the Barcelona Games had been. Indeed, Carol Scott has suggested that LOCOG's attempt to extend the wider cultural mission of the Olympics to the regions 'may have served to diffuse perceptions of the Cultural Olympiad in the mind of the public.' [13] *Forest Pitch* was then realised at the behest of LOCOG, but, as with *Polder Cup*, the project's distance from the metropole is significant to its meaning.

As with López's banner display and subsequent tournament, *Forest Pitch* was based around two main sequences, with a great deal of importance placed on what came after the football matches had been played. On 25 August 2012, two amateur matches – one each for men and women – were played on a pitch whose dimensions roughly conformed to the standard ones used in the professional game. The pitch was created by clearing hundreds of trees from a commercial spruce plantation on the Bowhill Estate, close to Selkirk in the Scottish Borders. Wood harvested in this act of clearing was used to make goalposts, rails and stools for spectators and a changing hut for participants, and a path was cleared through the forest from an entrance just off the AS699 road. [*Fig. 32*] A significant number of the players in the two matches were individuals whose citizenship or right to remain in the United Kingdom had been granted since the previous Olympic Games in 2008: this number had to be marked down from the "all" suggested in Coulthard's original proposal document due to logistical difficulties.[13]

Elsewhere in this document, Coulthard proposes that, 'After the day's events, the pitch will be left to grow back naturally and the infrastructure will be left to nature's devices. This is an essential element of the proposal.' [6] By the time the project materialised, this hands-off approach to the ecological management of the site in the aftermath of the event had been revised into something more controlled: on 28 November 2012, Coulthard, along with volunteers from the Borders Forest trust, members of the football teams that had competed on the day and children from various local schools planted over 800 trees along the touchlines of the pitch. [*Fig. 33*] The catalogue produced as documentation in the project's aftermath records some of the species that were planted: 'Hawthorn, Aspen, Birch, Crab Apple, Scots Pine and Wych Elm.' [Coulthard et al. 240] What is significant about these species is that, unlike the spruce trees, they are native to this area of Scotland. Coulthard suggests that these plantings 'will, over time, grow into a huge three-dimensional sculptural representation of the pitch', as well as helping to 'create a symbiotically diverse eco-system' that 'will be accessible to the public for decades to come.' [Coulthard et al. 240] In the proposal document, Coulthard understandably reproduces LOCOG's terminology regarding the idea of "legacy": *Forest Pitch* is conceived in its afterlife as providing 'a small-scale comparison' to LOCOG's project to create community-managed green spaces on some of the central sites of the London Olympics in the aftermath of the Games, premised as it is on the idea of opening up new pockets of nature for individuals to enjoy and thereby contributing to a general improvement in "'quality of life'". [6] In a text produced for the catalogue, on the other hand, ecologist Rob St. John

Fig. 32: Forest Pitch site with goalposts and fences made from felled trees

Fig. 33 (below): Spread from *Forest Pitch* catalogue detailing planting of trees along touchlines
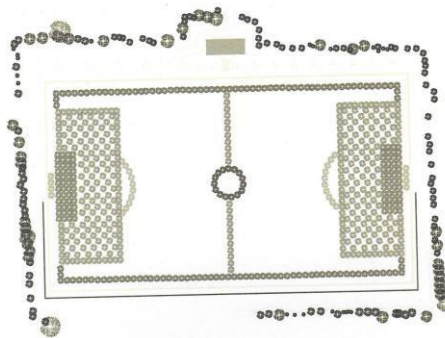
suggests a degree of divergence between the Lea Valley regeneration project and Coulthard's own intervention into the landscape, framing the latter as a celebration of 'life in the edgelands', the kinds of 'urban-suburban-rural hinterlands' which the Lea Valley regeneration project was responsible for 'trampling.' [Coulthard et al. 41] According to St. John, *Forest Pitch*'s afterlife is not to be thought of as a return to "wilderness" but "wildness": '"[w]ildness" in this conception differs from "wilderness" in acknowledging and accepting the human presence in the environment, and celebrating the adaptability and ingenuity of plants and animals that find their own niche in modified, manufactured landscapes.' [Coulthard et al. 40] That is to say, the landscape that is the lasting legacy of *Forest Pitch* is one which is decidedly hybrid, falling in some indeterminate space between human and non-human agency and intermingling the instrumental and the natural.

Although the football matches themselves were played to standard rules on an unremarkable playing surface, they were nevertheless estranged from regular football on the basis of this overriding ecological time-frame. The games were a fulcrum around which a broader project of participation, encompassing the planting of trees and hypothetical visits to the site by members of the public many years into the future, were to be realised. Coulthard has noted in various locations that the inspiration for the project arose out of a personal narrative: as a child Coulthard had played for the German amateur club SV Wildenrath, whose ground was located in a forest close to Düsseldorf; Coulthard had subsequently revisited the site of this pitch in 2008 while on a three month residency in that city, and had found it to be reclaimed by nature. In a personal correspondence, Coulthard notes a mixed reaction to this discovery:

> I was saddened – this was the site of many happy memories, and more idiosyncratic ones too, such as the smell of washing powder when the strips were turned out onto the floor of the changing room, and I struggled to find the number 8 shirt […] I was in a way quite pleased too, that this site was no longer used for the same reasons, it made my memories seem more precious, as less people were reliving similar experiences on it. Plus, I've always liked places which seem to have breathed a deep sigh of relief once people have left them alone.

The idea of a significant site which decays physically but leaves mnemonic traces is reproduced fairly straightforwardly in *Forest Pitch*: Coulthard goes as far as to specify in his proposal document that 'any unauthorised documentation is to be strictly controlled' in order to force participants and attendees 'to have to work hard to imagine what happened, and not be able to rely on cameras, video, phones or other means', hoping that 'this will help to increase the mythological potential of the event'. [19] Indeed, Coulthard aspires to

an almost dream-like level of ephemerality when it comes to the events of 25 August: in the section of his proposal which deals with "The Day's Events", the artist suggests that the trail from the A669 to the site 'will curve round so that the approach to the pitch itself is hidden, and the sense of anticipation is heightened', resulting in a moment where, 'At the end of the path, the pitch will appear in dramatic fashion before the viewer, a kind of sporting Brigadoon'. [19] Here Coulthard references the eponymous subject of a 1947 musical by Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe, a fictional Scottish village which magically appears to outsiders for just one day every 100 years. A sense of sudden appearance, as well as one of ephemerality after the fact, is then a crucial attribute of the football performance itself: the pitch was isolated enough that few individuals besides those intimately connected with the project saw it in person during the development process, and a film of the day's events, directed by Nick Gibbon and uploaded to the official *Forest Pitch* website after the event, conveys the interested expressions of children emerging for the first time to the pitch-side. Viewed through this lens, *Forest Pitch* reads as an attempt to romantically juxtapose the short duration of an exceptional sporting event with much longer rhythms of seasonal growth and change.

As with *Polder Cup* and *Stilt Soccer*, football is hereby reproduced under the guise of a temporal structure distinct from that of regular football, and serves to critique certain normative expectations of the game. The football matches at the centre of Coulthard's project are positioned in such a way as to speak more to the game's potential for decay than its potential for growth: where the one-off nature of the site-specific contest is merely implicit in *Polder Cup*, here it is heavily enforced through the subsequent transformation of the pitch into a pocket of "edgeland". The project is in fact a profoundly *wasteful* one, at least in economic terms, in that it is geared towards the production of a singular location (as well as specially-designed kits, balls, corner flags and so on, not to mention the time invested by the players and their coaches in preparation for the matches) for an ostentatiously short event, which is subsequently returned to what St. John labels "the ingenuity of plants and animals" [Coulthard et al. 40].

A sense of wastefulness has indeed been a recurring feature of mainstream press coverage of *Forest Pitch* both in the build-up to the events of 25 August and in their aftermath. A *BBC* report on the day itself carried the headline "£460,000 Forest Pitch hosts its two matches", inviting readers to marvel at the discrepancy between the depth of investment and the shallowness of return. In the article, Coulthard defends the project by

Fig. 34: Cartoon by Pete for *The Sun* lampooning *Forest Pitch*

suggesting that 'Its legacy is more of a poetic legacy than a practical legacy.' The lack of "practical legacy" was evidently a point of contention for some: a *Herald* article from 4 October 2012 entitled "Art project is used as underage drinks den" claims that 'Politicians and residents were…furious over the use of public money for the Forest Pitch, which was created to stage just two football matches as part of the 2012 Olympic Games.' As an example of the project's apparent profligacy, the article quotes activist Ross Anderson's remarks that 'less than 100 spectators turned up on August 25' in spite of the event organisers having 'put on nine coaches, each costing £600, to run from Glasgow, Edinburgh and provide the local shuttles.' The article in question also claims that 'Now, as the area is allowed to return to its natural use…, teenagers have taken over the specially-erected wooden pavilion for underage drinking sessions', a fact which then-Scottish Environment Minister Paul Wheelhouse considers to be evidence of the project having had a 'negative impact'. Wheelhouse goes on,

> as a representative of the south of Scotland and a Borders resident, I have some real concerns about the value in funding a project of this kind which appears to provide neither a local sports legacy nor a tangible artistic legacy, given the pitch will be allowed to return to its natural state.

In a lighter vein, a cartoon by the artist "Pete", included in the *Scottish Sun* edition of 7 February 2012, plays up the general public's apparent rejection of the project by imagining a pair of squirrels attending the event: the first squirrel is downcast, declaring "What a waste of money!", to which his companion replies, "You're telling me, I just bought a season ticket". In the bottom right-hand corner of the cartoon a poster nailed to a tree trunk advertises the event, although it is torn where the last word in "Artists Taking the Lead" would be, suggesting that the artist in question is in fact "taking the piss". [*Fig. 34*]

Evident in all these criticisms, which range from the implied to the explicit to the jocular, is a desire for the project to function successfully as something which it somewhat resembled, namely a municipal sports facility. In the hostility towards *Forest Pitch* we can see one of the hazards that participatory art faces when it closely models itself on existing social structures: the project is lambasted for its lack of returns to offset the investment that was put into it, and for its refusal to provide a concrete legacy whose usefulness to the community can be adequately measured. Although I myself do not share the hostility to the project which is tangible in these examples of mainstream coverage, and find Wheelhouse's comments about the "lack of tangible artistic legacy" to be oblivious to the range of possibilities that that phrase summons, it has to be said that criticisms focusing on the wastefulness of the project are in fact driving along the right lines. Only, I would argue that wastefulness is a built-in feature of the project, and not a flaw. In a gambit that one doubts would win over the likes of Paul Wheelhouse, we can refer to the writings of Georges Bataille to demonstrate the extent to which wastefulness *as such* is intimately bound up with ludic possibilities.

In his essay "The Notion of Expenditure", Bataille engages with hegemonic utilitarian theories of economy, arguing that under this system, 'any general judgement of social activity implies the principle that all individual effort, in order to be valid, must be reducible to the fundamental necessities of production and conservation.' [117] In such a paradigm, 'Pleasure, whether art, permissible debauchery, or play, is definitively reduced…to a concession; in other words it is reduced to a diversion whose role is subsidiary.' [117] What Bataille is at pains to point out in this essay is not that one ought therefore to buck the trend and commit to a life of sybaritism, but that in fact this theory is guilty of a serious lacuna: 'it does not occur to him', Bataille writes, meaning the champion of the ideas just outlined, 'that a human society can have, just as he does, an *interest* in considerable losses.' [117] Bataille goes on to lament that 'humanity recognizes the right to

acquire, to conserve, and to consume rationally, but it excludes in principle *nonproductive expenditure*.' [117] Bataille's contention here is that many activities central to civilisation are in fact based around the generation of unrecovered losses: his focus to a large extent is on the practice of *potlach*, a gift-giving system found among indigenous peoples of the American Pacific North-West in which 'At no time does a fortune serve to shelter its owner from need', but rather 'remains […] at the mercy of a need for limitless loss, which exists endemically as a social group.' [123] However, Bataille also discusses games and sport as a species of activity predicated on "considerable losses", noting that in sporting contests 'As much energy as possible is squandered in order to produce a feeling of stupefaction – in any case with an intensity greater than in productive enterprises.' [119] Competitive games entail huge quantities of wasted effort, but this, Bataille intimates, is precisely why people pursue these activities.

As was suggested earlier in this chapter in relation to the ideas of Bernard Suits, the "pre-lusory" goal of any given sport is invariably non-productive – nothing is gained from placing a ball between two posts when one extracts the action from the field of meaning produced by the relevant "lusory attitude". Until wages and bonuses are factored into the equation, the effort of footballers to achieve this goal thus results in a net loss of sorts, since effort is expended in the pursuit of essentially intangible returns. The activity is pursued in the name of the "lusory attitude", or, to follow Bataille, the singular "intensity" that the losses engendered by participation in competitive sports can bring about. The only sporting activity generative of tangible economic returns (save very arcane ones like aizkolaritza, the wood-cutting competition traditional in rural areas of the Basque country) is that which takes place at the professional level, where footballers' efforts are richly remunerated and companies from outside the narrow confines of the game itself profit from television deals and sponsorship deals. In making *Forest Pitch*'s temporal structure one based around non-repetition in the most ostentatious way, I argue, Coulthard's project can be said to present a foil to the financial arrangements that carry increasing influence in the field of contemporary elite football by foregrounding the idea of *nonproductive expenditure* as it relates to football's *ludic* essence. This gambit is of course also appropriate for a project realised as part of the cultural program of the Olympic Games, an institution which was originally conceived as an exclusive domain for sporting amateurism.[14]

To focus on the non-repetition of *Forest Pitch* in this way is to seize on just one possible route for interpretation, but it is this temporal axis that offers the most fruitful

Fig. 35: Trophy ceremony for women's match at *Forest Pitch* event

comparison with the projects already discussed. In both *Polder Cup* and *Forest Pitch*, resources are committed and arrangements are made for one-off football tournaments that are in the event more about exploring the novel possibilities opened up by specific locations than they are about delivering either a champion or a sustainable structure through which more "productive" forms of play may be realised. As with López's project, the winners of the two matches played on 25 August are not emphasised in any of the project documentation. Indeed, all four teams were permitted to lift the trophy that had been designed for the day's activities after their respective games. [*Fig. 35*] Both implicitly and explicitly, the legacy of Coulthard's project is decidedly disassociated from football, meaning the day retains its strange sense of novelty into the future, and perhaps grows stranger as time elapses (the site's associations with a special football match grow ever less traceable, just as the memories of those who attended grow foggier). Football is seized as a medium and performed as a transient endeavour which appears and disappears as a blip in longer rhythms of ecological time, offering an experience of the game that is singularly divorced from the seemingly endless march of fixtures and seasons proper to the elite game. Crucially, as with *Polder Cup*, it is the horizon of expectations proper to the world of contemporary art, and specifically to the history of site-specific participatory practice, that allows for this kind of engagement: quite simply, only arts funding would permit a project of this nature to be realised. I now turn my attention to a kind of engagement with football that, although it retains important ties to the realm of aesthetic discourse, is realised in part outside of this institutional sphere, and as a result entertains a more complex set of temporal frameworks than the artistic projects that have thus far been discussed.

Three-sided football

The variant form of association football known as three-sided football originates from two moments which are separated by several decades. The game was first envisaged in 1962 by the Danish artist, writer and founding member of the Situationist International (SI) Asger Jorn, in the form of a thought experiment presented in his book *Naturens Orden* (*The Natural Order*). A seemingly negligible part of Jorn's legacy for many years, the relevant passage was discovered by the English anarchist Fabian Tompsett around 1994. Since then it has been played in numerous locations and situations, from scheduled league fixtures on Fordham Park in Deptford, London to a one-off presentation in Bilbao's municipal bull fighting arena. [*Fig. 36*][15]

Fig. 36: Three-sided football pitch installed at Bilbao's municipal bullring.

Fig. 37: Advertisement for three-sided football world cup held in Silkeborg in 2014

In an interview with *Morning Star* reporter Karen Simmonds, Mark Dyson, one of the organisers of a three-sided football league which has for several years operated in Deptford in South-East London, notes that Tompsett's discovery occurred while he was working on a translation of Jorn's text *Open Creation and Its Enemies* for Unpopular Books, an independent publishing house which brought various Situationist texts to Anglophone attention in the 1990s. Tompsett, representing a collective called the Workshop for a Non-Linear Architecture (WNLA), subsequently brought Jorn's idea to the attention of delegates at the 1994 Glasgow Anarchist Winterschool, and the first game was played in relatively unregulated circumstances on Glasgow Green that year. The difficulty of conducting scholarly research into this group, however, is clear from a quote found in a 1997 article written by fellow-traveller Stewart Home for the second issue of the radical publication *Variant*, in which Home describes the dissolution of the artistic collective the K Foundation, noting that, 'In November 1995,' the group 'selected the Workshop For a Non-Linear Architecture Bulletin to announce a 23 year moratorium on K Foundation activities. This privately circulated newsletter is so obscure that news of the moratorium is only just beginning to seep through to the general public.' Outside of three-sided football, the WNLA's cultural footprint was vanishingly small. Furthermore, Dyson notes in a post for the website of Deptford 3-Sided F.C. dated 19 September 2013 that the WNLA only played one game of three-sided football, making their contribution to the game influential but ephemeral. Indeed, one of the defining features of all those groups that helped to foster the development of Jorn's notion from textual analogy to performed practice is their more-or-less voluntary tendency towards ephemerality. The difficult task of excavating the history of the British and wider European scene of what we might call neo-situationism in the 1990s remains an open one, although figures like Dyson are increasingly influential in communicating particular histories to a wider audience, based on the increasing presence of three-sided football on the international contemporary art biennial circuit, as I outline below.

The task of tracking three-sided football's development since 1994 is equally challenging, but there are some certainties: between the Glasgow Green game and the present moment, three-sided football acquired a standard pitch (hexagonal, with a goal on every second side of the polygon and sometimes a centre circle formed around the intersection of three lines radiating out towards the centre of the sides which are not marked with goals) and a form of regulation, although no official rules have been universally standardised as of yet and the Deptford league is still collectively refereed by

participants in the games. In addition to the Deptford league, which has six established teams but which nevertheless remains open to all comers, there have been attempts to establish regular competition in various other parts of the world, including a World Cup which was held at the Asger Jorn Museum in Silkeborg in 2014, the poster for which featured an image of Jorn "painting" a hexagonal pitch. [*Fig. 37*] Though awareness of the activity is still miniscule compared to its ancestor, the Deptford league has recently been featured by such mainstream outlets as the BBC, *Time Out*, and FIFA's television organ *Futbol Mundial*.[16]

Alongside modes of organisation which closely resemble those of elite football, three-sided football has also been a presence at numerous art events: the French collective Pied la Biche organised a tournament for the 2009 Biennale de Lyon, and games also took place at the 2009 Alytus Biennial in Lithuania and the 2013 Istanbul Biennial. In 2010, prior to the founding of the Deptford league, a game was organised in London by the Whitechapel Gallery's writer-in-residence Sally O'Reilly, where the competing teams were represented as surrogates for each of the three main political parties contesting that year's United Kingdom General Election. The game can thus be seen to represent something resembling the hypothetical trajectory that Connor spells out for *Stilt Soccer* in his critique of Lushetich's essay: three-sided football is "a perfectly plausible and rather a good game" as evidenced by the increasing popularity of organisations like the Deptford league, but it also remains affiliated in some sense with "the fields of art practice and aesthetic theory" as a result of its roots in experimental aesthetic practice. This oscillating identity puts three-sided football in a unique position with regards to experimental performative interventions into football, producing ambivalences which I will explore throughout the remainder of this chapter.

Firstly though, it remains to flesh out the story of three-sided football's development within the field of experimental art and literature. The section of *Naturens Orden* which gives rise to three-sided football concerns the Hegelo-Marxist concept of dialectics, particularly as it relates to cold war-era geopolitics.[17] Jorn begins by offering an explanation of dialectics and arguing for its rootedness in natural processes: 'Dialectics is based upon a conviction about the endless union of polarizations or *two-sided* oppositions into syntheses, which then again produce dualities. That there is something correct about the unity of duality cannot be explained away as long as the polarity of electricity and magnetism has not been explained away.' [29] Jorn then transfers this analogy of electromagnetic bipolarity

to the field of international relations in his historical moment, noting that 'such a polarization between East and West can be of high dynamic quality for the development of trade on both sides in a sort of naïve competition or cold war'. [29] For Jorn, the bipolar form of international relations exemplified by the stand-off of superpowers in the Cold War era 'is like a football match where both sides are trying to win.' [29] By way of exploring the effects that might be occasioned by the introduction of a third superpower into this stand-off, Jorn moves on to elaborate the analogy that forms the basis of three-sided football:

> However, let us now imagine a whole new type of football field, where, instead of two teams and two goals, there are three teams in play and three goals […] It would swiftly be discovered that it is impossible to control which of the two attacking enemies had scored. It would become necessary to invert the rules so that the victory was a negative one, so that it was the team that has defended itself best and had let in the least goals that was the victor. The victory becomes defensive and not offensive. […] It would not be an exciting game at all. This is how a third power can neutralize a tension between two powers. [29]

Jorn's concept of three-sided football thus serves to illustrate his contention that 'two-sided opponents are always aggressive whilst three-sided ones are defensive.' [29] Leaving to one side the philosophical and geopolitical application of this idea, however, and in spite of the author's contention that the hypothetical game in question would "not be an exciting game at all", it suffices to note that the image conjured in this passage is the basis for all subsequent iterations of the game.[18] What is crucial here is that three-sided football is a game in which the question of "which of the two attacking enemies had scored" becomes a practical irrelevance. Jorn's contention that this would require an inversion of the rules related to scoring has become manifest in three-sided football in the most practical sense: throughout the game's history as a participatory activity matches have been decided by the relative number of goals conceded, as opposed to goals scored (unlike in standard football, the victorious team is the one that concedes the fewest goals). This invariably entails some degree of contingent co-operation between sides, since every side is looking to limit its losses wherever possible, and getting on good terms with one or another of the opposing teams is an effective way to go about this. Alongside practical considerations, this notion of subverting football's ordinary zero-sum structure was developed theoretically by groups seeking to harness three-sided football as a participatory activity in the aftermath of the 1994 Glasgow Green game. Perhaps the most intriguing of these theorisations is that put forward by the London-based Association of Autonomous Astronauts in the mid- to late-1990s.

In an essay addressing British situationist revival movements, Alastair Bonnett records that the AAA was founded in 1995 and that by 1998 it contained 'thirty groups, based mostly in Britain but also in France, Italy, Denmark, New Zealand and Austria.' [28] Stevphen Shukaitis, another scholar to address the AAA in the context of late 20th-century cultural activism, notes that the AAA emerged at least in part from the scene of psychogeography, in which field the London Psychogeographical Association, a group present at the founding of the SI, was a prominent organisation. [108] Shukaitis also places the AAA in connection with those contemporary European movements which sought to mobilise a "collective name" in service of radical politics, the most famous of which was the Italian Luther Blissett group, who also practiced three-sided football in the early 1990s, and whose name is sometimes used to refer to the Deptford 3-sided Football League.[19]

The AAA's identity as a group was formed around notions of space travel. Their 'five-year mission', proclaimed at the group's inauguration, was, in Brian Holmes summary, to establish 'a planetary network to end the monopoly of corporations, governments and the military over travel in space.' While this may appear absurdly ambitious, the AAA's spokespeople consistently reject attempts to interpret their activities as either purely speculative or practical: Jason Skeet for instance lambasts those 'buffoons' who criticise the AAA for its lack of realistic aims or concrete examples of efficacy, arguing that 'Words can be used to subvert the commonly held view that space travel requires vast amounts of money, and language has been set in motion by the AAA as part of a vast collective fiction that concludes with the creation of a world-wide network of AAA groups all dedicated to building their own spaceships.' Skeet refuses to draw a simple line between the conceptualisation of action and action itself: he subsequently notes that 'It is the declared aim of the AAA to ensure that all future discussions of space travel will understand how the AAA has revealed the contradictions created by the development of space exploration technologies.' The "vast collective fiction" mobilised by the AAA aims to inflect the discourse of space exploration along the axes proposed (namely, a critique of the capitalist formation of already-existing space exploration, which proceeds on the basis that space may be an untapped source of resources for the benefit of the capitalist classes), occasioning real effects not necessarily coextensive with those proposed in AAA literature, but real nevertheless. Seen in this light, the AAA could be described as a broadly utopian enterprise, dedicated to revolutionary goals that may never in fact be realised, but who nevertheless could propose provisional measures of re-orientation and re-education in the

here and now in order to carve out an imaginative space in which that utopian thinking may be sustained.

A 1999 AAA text entitled "An Introduction to Three-Sided Football" refers to three-sided football as 'valuable training exercise' within this attempted process of re-education. A post for the South London blog "Transpontine" entitled "Three Sided Football and the One Tree Hill Astronauts" records an AAA event which took place on Sunday 18 October 1998, advertised as a 'full on-site TRAINING MISSION' and featuring a game of three-sided football in a 'flattish clearing' halfway up One Tree Hill in Honor Oak, London. In "An Introduction to Three-Sided Football", a representative of the East London AAA describes the radical potential of three-sided football. The anonymous writer begins by echoing Jorn's description of the game in *Naturens Orden*: noting that 'Unlike two-sided football, no team keeps a record of the number of goals they score', but 'do keep a tally of the goals they concede', the author suggests that 'The key to the game is that is does not foster aggression or competitiveness.' The following passages mark a development of Jorn's description, delineating a conception of the game focused on the affective responses which it potentially engenders, which crucially displays a more nuanced appreciation of football itself than was demonstrated by Jorn.

The East London AAA spokesperson describes two-sided football as a 'psycho-sexual drama of the fuckers and the fucked'. They note the 'anal-retentive homophobic techniques of conventional football whereby homo-erotic tension is built up, only to be sublimated and repressed.' The language used here is strongly reminiscent of that used by Mark Simpson, introduced in chapter one as the inventor of the term "metrosexual", in his book *Male Impersonators*. Simpson considers the football stadium a place of barely-suppressed eroticism between men, drawing on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's dictum in *Between Men* that 'For a man to be a man's man is separated only by an invisible, carefully blurred, always-already-crossed line from being [sexually] interested in men.' [qtd. in Simpson 72] Simpson notes that 'football blurs [the line] still further but sharpens it at the same time, giving boys and men more leeway to express something approaching an interest in men as well as setting up clear ground rules that reassure the male spectator/player who is quite literally paranoid about overstepping that "always-already-crossed" line.' [72] While noting football's tendency towards "ambient homophobia" (a coinage belonging to David Coad that was introduced in chapter one), Simpson thus considers the game an erotically-charged activity, and expands the language of "penetration" proper to the game into a reflection on

the homo-eroticism of the goal. Simpson remarks that 'it is in the "goal-fuck" that the player achieves both his goal and manhood – "a fucker" – *and* the (semi-)fulfilment of his homoerotic desire – "a fucked".' [79] The goal marks the moment in which full "penetration" of the opponent's protected physical space is realised, testifying to the virility and phallic potency of the striker who forces this breach, but also occasioning the habitual celebrations on the field and in the stand, those 'tremendous displays of physical affection and ecstasy of male for male', in which 'young men and old…express for a moment, within the sacred walls of the football ground, a love that is as exuberant and irrepressible as it is inconceivable outside those walls.' [79] Joyful physical contact from his fellow players is the male footballer's 'reward' for having scored a goal: thus in the goal's immediate aftermath the scorer transitions from "fucker" to "fucked". [79]

Whereas Simpson frames this oscillation as a happy dialectic, one in which the most outstanding moment of virility and phallic potency displayed on the football pitch is undone by the release of desire it engenders, the AAA portray the situation as excessively limiting. The binary nature of conventional football creates a situation in which the desire to "penetrate" one's opponent goes hand-in-hand with an "anal-retentiveness" regarding one's own territory. *Either* one is working towards defending one's own 'orifice' (the AAA article in question uses this term) *or* one is working towards penetrating the orifice of the other. As one team works towards the moment of successful penetration, the moment where the striker becomes first the "fucker" and then the "fucked", the opposing team is forced into the purely negative position of attempting to prevent any "fucking" from occurring whatsoever. As previously mentioned, however, three-sided football scrambles the concept of the zero-sum game: to quote the 1999 AAA article, 'the possibilities are greatly expanded!' Of course, defending one's goal is also paramount in three-sided football given the means through which matches are decided. However, Jorn's prediction that this would lead to a drearily defensive game has not come to pass. Instead, the play of three-sided football has come to be defined by the notion of contingent alliances, by shifting situations in which two teams agree, more or less vocally, to join forces in order to weaken the remaining opponent.

As the AAA's introduction to the game reflects, this scrambling of football's ordinary zero-sum principles introduces an instability to the affective fluctuations of the game: 'the penetration of the defence by two opposing teams imposes upon the defence the task of counterbalancing their disadvantage through sowing the seeds of discord in an alliance

which can only be temporary.' Thus the simple antagonistic dynamics of two-sided football give way to an expanded field in which affective labour becomes just as important as physical effort: alliances will be brokered, this article contends, 'through exhortation, body language, and an ability to manoeuvre the ball and players into such a position that one opposing team will realise that its interests are better served by breaking off an attack and allying with the defending team.' While an aspect of the old "anal-retentiveness" might still pertain to three-sided football, then, the act of "penetration" grows a great deal more complex, encompassing varied and fluctuating forms of antagonism and co-operation between rival teams, and lending the activity a contingent, exploratory, experimental dimension. The game thus opens up previously unexplored imaginative space around a familiar collective activity. Plainly, the AAA viewed such activity as useful on principle in terms of their overall critical strategy.

Though the AAA were instrumental in carrying forward a certain vision of three-sided football as a liberated and liberating participatory practice, there is little evidence to suggest that their actual iterations of the game moved beyond the "prankish art-proceeding" paradigm that was earlier attributed to Hendricks' *Stilt Soccer*. A report on one of their three-sided football events by Michael Hodges gives some idea of the nature of the kind of practice that accompanied these theorisations: the assembled participants are enjoined by AAA member John Eden to '[go] to the moon now to find a suitable site to play three-sided footballl', setting out 'from one of the lunar seas, the Mare Heracleum.'[20] Overlaying a map of the moon with the terrain of Hackney, the group gradually navigate their way to a suitable playing spot on Grove Street Park. Within this aesthetic conceit, the game itself is very informally arranged: one set of goalposts consists of 'no more than a discarded Cure T-shirt and a smelly black jumper', and one participant is described as '[i]gnoring one third of the pitch.' As with the WNLA, the AAA's engagement with three-sided football carries more conceptual weight than it does material. For the AAA, three-sided football was imagined as a stepping stone in an absurdly ambitious project of cultural subversion. Its time frame was utopian, preparing the ground for a moment of redemption that is constitutionally bound never to arrive. In this way, the AAA's handling of three-sided football is significantly opposed to the game's later treatment by Pied la Biche, the French artists' collective who realised a tournament for the 2009 Biennale de Lyon.

This tournament is detailed in the 2009 video *Triolectique*. As with the AAA, Pied la Biche credit three-sided football (here drawing on Jorn, but erroneously attributing the

discussion of three-sided football to the 1964 essay "De la Methode Triolectique") with offering a way out of 'confrontation, duelling [and] the law of the conqueror' by means of 'strategy, collaboration [and] chance.' It is here that the similarities end, however. Pied la Biche's tournament takes place at the Stade Laurent Gérin in Vénissieux, described by the film's narrator as a 'real football stadium'. The stadium is not the only "real" thing serving to elevate this tournament into something approaching a semblance of professionalism: the teams, referees and coaches are also 'real'. Pied la Biche's decisions to employ the services of referees and coaches and to rent out a stadium with grandstands and other facilities betoken a certain level of pragmatic seriousness absent from the AAA's pronouncements about three-sided football. The film's narration redoubles these differences by repeatedly emphasising the authenticity of their exercise, which is to say, its grounding in as many of the structures of professional or semi-professional two-sided football as are available to the group at the time. A good deal of the film is also given over to discussions of the rules of the game: there are multiple scenes included in which members of Pied la Biche liaise with referees in order to develop a rule-set which allows for more 'fluid' play. However, in one instance these discussions lead to an augmentation of certain aspects of the rules which pertain to two-sided football, as when members of the group suggest introducing an 'orange card' as a means of making the options at a referee's disposal more reflective of the trinary basis of the game. The group's relationship to three-sided football thus at times appears curiously fastidious, dedicated to imposing increasing numbers of legal strictures on an activity which was in its earliest manifestations improvisatory and provisional.

The narrator in fact offers a justification for this towards the end of the film: over footage of an all-but empty field traversed by a lone running figure, the subtitles read, 'When the rules are not followed, it leads to chaotic form of games with no interest.' [*sic*] When this clip is replaced by footage of a game in full flow, the subtitles add, 'Sometimes, when the rules are understood, it can lead to great inspirations / Actions you would never see in the traditional [*sic*] football.' [*Fig. 38*] Here the approach demonstrated by Pied la Biche finds some form of affinity with Van Rijn's apology for López's firm organisational hand in *Polder Cup*. If three-sided football can be seen to possess the kind of experimental potency attributed to it by the AAA, then it could be said that it is first required that participants take it seriously as a sport, a leap aided by the provision of proper facilities and adjudication. *Triolectique* thus spells out the conditions that may be required for three-sided football to be realised as a space for "greatly expanded" ludic possibilities in the here and now. The contradiction at play here is that in order for this aesthetic practice to fulfil its

Fig. 38: Stills from Pied la Biche's video *Triolectique*, 2009

critical potential, it has to edge ever closer to the conditions of the regular football that it serves to critique and subvert. Read against the AAA's assertions that three-sided football could offer a provisional means of re-orientating behaviour for a utopian future, Pied la Biche's contrastingly conservative emphasis on the authenticity of their own realisation demonstrates some of the ambivalence that arises when the line between "prankish art-proceeding" and "perfectly plausible game" is approached.

This contradiction has been recognised by Deptford league organiser Mark Dyson. As with the AAA, Dyson has also discussed three-sided football in terms of the progressive ethics it is capable of engendering: in his *Morning Star* interview, Dyson remarks that 'The idea of a sport in which collaboration is the way in which you win, as opposed to direct confrontation, is an obvious metaphor for leftist ideas.' Dyson notes that it was Tompsett that first discussed the game in such terms, opening up the field for interventions like that carried out by the AAA. In the same interview, however, Dyson describes how 'two different strands' have emerged out of this originary moment, one concerned with fostering and developing these political concerns and the other with the game's possibilities *qua* sport. In Dyson's words, 'there's very much the artistic performance, situational side to it; and […] there's also a really serious football side, in which the techniques of football, the ball skills, the ability to play the game, takes it into a different dimension than the artists take it to.' Here Dyson is ambivalent with regards to the process through which three-sided football has become a "perfectly plausible game", in line with the sense outlined earlier in this chapter: as the "blind tactics" that would have been present in the original iteration of the game played on Glasgow Green give way to more calculated "strategies", the exploratory dimension identified by the AAA may give way in some instances to a "tabulated" seriousness on a par with regular football, thus neutering some of the game's more improvisatory aspects.

While in this interview Dyson emphasises the Deptford 3-sided league's basis in communal organisation, noting the decision to keep the game free of the baleful influences of money and hierarchical authority by playing in parks which have neither dedicated police nor facilities, the earlier comments regarding the game's "different strands" demonstrate a sense on the part of the organiser that this might not be the case forever. In a previously cited post for the *D3FC* blog entitled "The Rumble in the Jungle", Dyson discusses a game organised in a forest by Stewart Home for the 2009 Alytus Biennial in Lithuania in the following terms:

> it was only with Stewart's breathtaking genius in setting the Alytus game amongst trees that the real potential for constraint games was fulfilled. By detourning the fledgling rules of 3sf in such a way Stewart not only made the game more fun […] but he made an important contribution to the avoidance of the recuperation that the game will inevitably face by undermining the seriousness with which it is played – and in which it is held.

Here is a fairly exact recapitulation of the problem that was established earlier on in this chapter: while the form of three-sided football itself constitutes a radical overhaul of the existing form of football, one which introduces experimental pockets of improvisation and affective labour on the pitch, its organisers are gradually required to introduce further "purposefully counterproductive means" for fear of "recuperation".[21] To judge by his *Morning Star* interview, Dyson uses the term "recuperation" to refer to a reversion to some of those aspects of two-sided football that three-sided football had previously provided an escape from: his emphasis on "ball skills" suggests that the future of three-sided football may be one where a profusion of highly-skilled players begins to push against the open participatory policies of the Deptford league, leading in turn to a privileging of victory over participation and the birth of the kind of star system we see in regular football. Although the Deptford league opens up three-sided football to a kind of access that was not available to the AAA during their initial experiments, nor to López and Coulthard, whose projects were restricted in this respect by their chosen time frame, it does so under the shadow of an institutional structure which threatens to replace an open, exploratory ethics with one of technical mastery and triumph.

Over the course of this chapter, I have reflected on numerous examples of artists proposing versions of football that do not conform to the temporal rhythms we associate with the elite game. The purported experimental potency of *Stilt Soccer* and *Polder Cup* rests on their sense of novelty: these activities are capable of de-familiarising football primarily because their own modalities are not yet familiar. By the same token, what sets *Forest Pitch* apart from the kind of sporting investment it was in some quarters expected to be is its "Brigadoon"-like temporal unfolding, where a space of play appears suddenly and disappears shortly thereafter. In each of these cases, the project would function considerably less articulately were the game at its centre – football played on stilts, across canals, or in the heart of a forest – turned into something regular and routine, with seasons to be negotiated and champions to be crowned and dislodged. We can thus associate the temporal structures adopted in *Polder Cup* and *Forest Pitch* with what Kester refers to as "textuality": while neither Coulthard nor López necessarily seeks to push a prescribed

reading of the event on participants or visitors – it is an important aspect of these projects that the events are productive of memories and forms of behaviour that the artist could not have predicted or prescribed – they nevertheless have control over the beginning, middle and end of the process, and are responsible for inviting participants to an event whose boundaries *are* prescribed. A football match played tomorrow across the polders of Molenwaard would represent a continuation of the imaginative possibilities thrown up by *Polder Cup*, but would not be a continuation of the project itself. The meaning of both Coulthard and López's projects is still relatively concentrated in the moment that the artist made their intervention on the landscape. This is not to criticise either project as such, so much as to suggest that for all they are constituted from an overlapping of many different individual agencies, the artist's name is central to our understanding of both works. It is possible to read both projects as unusually diffused into the social practices that they resemble, and as offering vibrant critiques of elite football, but such readings must also take into account the limiting conditions imposed on this critique by the artworld context in which the two projects are realised.

The picture is very different when we consider three-sided football. Although the game has been developed by a variety of cultural practitioners, each of whom sought to load it with a different meaning, the activity has arguably passed the point at which these voices of authority effectively dissipate. Having been held up as a utopian "training exercise" by a group seeking to democratise space travel, three-sided football as played on Fordham Park on the first Sunday of every month more closely resembles park football than a radical counter-cultural participatory experiment. In one respect, this routinisation may spell an end to the novelty which is necessary for a game to provide relatively undiminished possibilities for improvisation and bodily self-exploration. This is not true for all participants, however: as long as the Deptford league continues to exist and to allow novices to participate, steadily more individuals will be able to acquaint themselves with three-sided football than with any of the other experimental games that have been discussed in this chapter. Though Dyson has certain ideas about the developments the game may undergo as it grows in popularity, nobody can fully predict what the effects of this growth will be. Some effects will naturally bring it closer to the professional game, while some may generate further possibilities for an efficacious critique of that game. Having passed through various stages of aesthetic development, the form is now in the hands of "un-artists" and is free to move in all manner of divergent directions, with no one individual qualified to dictate when it has run its course.

Notes

[1] De Coubertin, Pierre. *Olympism: Selected Writings*, ed. Norbert Müller. International Olympic Committee, 2000. p. 64

[2] The quote in question is taken from an essay by De Coubertin regarding the English education system and its advantages over the French version; the author's intention in this section of the piece is to suggest to French school-masters that children are not naturally adept at sports like football and rowing but need careful and sustained training if they are to play games more complex and fulfilling than 'sticking out their tongues and making faces.' [63]

[3] These include the interactive three-sided version of a "table football" game created for the exhibition "Asger Jorn – Restless Rebel", held at Copenhagen's Statens Museum for Kunst in early 2014, as well as the permanent installation of a partially-enclosed three-sided football pitch unveiled at the Jorn Museum in Silkeborg later that year.

[4] To wit: six Italian Serie A titles, one Serie B title, one UEFA Champions League title, one UEFA Cup title, two Coppa Italia titles and six Italian Super Cups with Juventus F.C and S.S.D. Parma Calcio 1913, as well as a host of individual awards.

[5] It can be argued that following the gambits made by avant-garde artists like Marcel Duchamp and subsequently by post-war figures like John Cage, Lawrence Weiner and Seth Siegelaub, simply *publicising* a specified action or duration and declaring it to be of aesthetic significance is one of the many options available to contemporary artists. Of course, as a professional athlete Buffon does not possess the exact same cultural cachet as Duchamp, Cage *et alia* but he is aided and abetted to this end by this end by his interviewer, who straightforwardly occupies their field. For more on the relationship between avant-garde art and publicity, see Alberro.

[6] De Duve's account of the readymade unsurprisingly privileges Marcel Duchamp as the key instigator of this 20th century phenomenon. Duchamp is presented as having sidestepped the avant-garde posturing of the Dada movement, which viewed art's progression as a series of *Aufhebungen*, or transgressions of existing aesthetic codes which nevertheless keep the privileged sphere of art intact. In the wake of the Dada movement's attack on bourgeois artistic values, Duchamp is seen to have sided not with the artistic avant-garde but with the "man-on the street", who now perceives – albeit in befuddled and negative fashion – that "anything whatever" can be considered art, as long as an "expert" declares it to be so. The artistic readymade appropriates this popular conception in order to break the avant-garde cycle of transgression and reification by inexorably intermingling "expert" and "non-expert" knowledges: see De Duve 327-70.

[7] The cities in question are listed as Wiesbaden, Düsseldorf, Copenhagen and Paris. See Stiles 65

[8] For instance, the growing field of football analytics, in which increasingly complex sets of data are gathered to monitor player performance with a view towards selecting the best players available on the market.

[9] Square brackets all Suits' own.

[10] Monge's installation consists of a small football pitch, suitable for casual games, whose surface has been rendered almost unusably bumpy. Commissioned for the 2006 Liverpool Biennial, where it was installed facing Strand Street, close to the Albert Dock, it was subsequently reiterated for the "Nuit Blanche" festivals in Paris (in 2009) and Edmonton, Canada (in 2015), and was included in the "Fútbol, Arte y Pasión" exhibition at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Monterrey (MARCO) in Monterrey, Mexico in 2013. The pitch was used across these occasions for casual games – an advertisement posted to MARCO's Facebook page on 27 February, 2013 invites visitors to 'come with your family or friends and organise your pick-up game at MARCO'. López's *Football Field* was an installation that lasted the duration of the Sharjah Biennial, wherein the lines of a football pitch were drawn on a public square

outside the Biennial's venue, incorporating various items of street furniture. A video uploaded to López's *Vimeo* page on 28 May, 2011 suggests that the pitch was used casually by local children and teenagers, often in a piecemeal fashion: individual goalmouths are each claimed by different groups, and players have to negotiate not just lamp-posts and benches but other groups using the square to play cricket. What distinguishes both these projects from the ones that will be discussed in this chapter is that the actual gameplay they entail is comparatively unregulated: both Monge and López seem happy with these installations to merely set up their fields of play – fields which are, as with *Stilt Soccer*, both dedicated to the notion of "unnecessary obstacles" – and allow them to be used more or less casually by interested parties. López's *Polder Cup* and Craig Coulthard's *Forest Pitch*, by contrast, involve a level of control that carries right through from the creation of a unique playing field to the realisation of matches.

[11] The first chapter of Kester's *The One and the Many* is characterised by a sustained engagement with Bourriaud, whose 2002 book *Relational Aesthetics* was a key intervention into the topic of participatory art, and Bishop, author of the influential article "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", which appeared two years later and sought to critique Bourriaud's text from a number of angles. The judgement quoted here arises from the same passage drawn on earlier in which Kester addresses the "skeptical distance" displayed by artists seeking to engage with aspects of mass culture. Kester argues that Bishop and Bourriaud both display a tendency to disregard participatory art which works 'in alliance with specific collectives, social movements, or political struggles', fearing that such work 'will, inevitably, be consigned to decorating floats for the annual May Day parade.' [32] Instead, they privilege artists who, through distanciation and antagonism of the communities their work engages, assume for themselves 'a position of adjudicatory oversight, unveiling or revealing the contingency of systems of meaning that the viewer would otherwise submit to without thinking.' [33] In my opinion Kester's critique of both Bishop and Bourriaud's critical proclivities is effective: the praise heaped by the latter onto the figure of Santiago Sierra, known primarily for works in the mould of *160 cm Line Tattooed on 4 People* (2000) – a performance in which four prostitutes were brought into the gallery space at El Gallo Arte Contemporáneo in Salamanca, Spain and paid the price of a shot of heroin to sit shoulder-to-shoulder while a tattoo artist permanently etched a line across their backs – is particularly problematic when we consider the 'singular capacity for transcendence' that this work appears to grant the artist. [Kester 58] Quite simply, in order to praise this work for the way that it lends ideas of economic disparity and exploitation a relatively unqualified and unmediated material presence in the gallery space (this is broadly speaking Bishop's line) we are required to look *through* the actual exploitation unfolding in front of our eyes, which is perpetrated by the artist himself. The artist is granted a unique license to abuse other individuals in the name of bringing social issues to light, thus re-entrenching the divide between artist and audience that other artists working in a broadly "participatory" vein have elsewhere attempted to abolish.

[12] Besides Gianluigi Buffon's gesticulation towards the clown-like associations of his name, this observation resonates with Lushetich's discussion of the importance of laughter to Fluxus activities in "Ludus Populi". [35]

[13] As much as this decision to turn the pitch into an exclusive space for recent arrivals to the United Kingdom is a central aspect of the project's conception, it is also one of the areas where planning did not quite align with execution, and the concept could quite easily have been overlooked by those without inside knowledge of the project. For this reason, it will remain on the sidelines in my analysis.

[14] For extended discussions on the rationale behind the Games' original amateurist ethos see De Coubertin 635-58.

[15] This took place as part of the 2012 "Thinking Football" festival organised by Athletic Club de Bilbao, or more specifically by their cultural wing, headed by Galder Reguera and known under the Basque title Athletic Club Fundazioa.

[16] *Time Out* had reporter Alexi Duggins participate in a game on Fordham Park as part of their "Now. Here. This" column. The BBC covered the game in a short online documentary entitled "Three-sided

football football: A game of alliance and betrayal", uploaded to their site on 23 January 2014. Finally, a five minute documentary entitled "How 3-sided football works" was added to FIFA's official Youtube channel, FIFATV, on 7 April 2014. Both of these documentaries also focus on the Deptford league and feature interviews with Dyson.

[17] It needs mentioning here that readers wishing to follow up this text in order to gain a more thoroughgoing understanding of Jorn's account of dialectics may find themselves disappointed. Peter Shield describes Jorn's philosophical writings as full of wilfully obfuscatory incoherence, lacunae and conceptual leaps. In a memorable passage, Shield quotes an anecdote from Guy Atkins, who remarks,

> I once had the temerity to introduce Jorn to a professor of philosophy at Balliol. The meeting was not a success. Jorn happened to be in his most discursive and argumentative mood. My philosopher friend tried in vain to pin him down to the rules of logical discussion. Not a hope! The encounter suggested to me the dilemma suffered by a chess player who moves his pieces according to the rules, but finds himself up against a football player who jumps on the table and kicks the pieces around. [20]

I can confirm that this characterisation of Jorn's intellectual attitude is effective: throughout *Naturens Orden* the author refuses to play by one consistent rule-set, making his argument nigh-on impossible to follow. It is better understood as a working document, as a relatively unfiltered self-published outpouring from an artist attempting to reconcile his artistic practice with an intellectual one. Indeed, Shield suggests that Jorn's writing served first and foremost as 'a kind of catharsis so that he could get on with his artistic work.' [Jorn ix]

[18] As indicated earlier, the content of this passage was disseminated by Tompsett, who seems to have come across it in the early 1990s. In the discussion that follows, it should be assumed that iterations and theorisations of the game which were conceived in the aftermath of the Glasgow Green game were responding to Tompsett's account of Jorn's ideas and not to *Naturens Orden* itself, not least since Shield's 2002 translation was the first time the book has appeared in English.

[19] This name appears to be a lingering influence from an earlier version of the league: the league's Facebook page, which is used to list and co-ordinate fixtures, simply gives the group's name as Deptford 3-Sided Football League.

[20] This article was originally published in the U.K. sports magazine *Goal* and subsequently uploaded to the AAA's online archive.

[21] In labelling this organisational strategy as a process of "detourning", Dyson refers to one of the key terms propagated by the SI. Foster et al. define the verb *détourner* as 'to divert – in this case, to divert purloined images, texts, and events toward subversive viewings, readings, and situations.' [395]

Conclusion

Jean-Philippe Toussaint prefaces his book *Football* with a note of warning: 'This is a book that no one will like, not intellectuals, who aren't interested in football, or football-lovers, who will find it too intellectual. But I had to write it, I didn't want to break the fine thread that still connects me to the world.' [7] More than two decades into the process of "bourgeoisification" that academic commentators have associated with football after 1990, and writing in the wake of the critical success of his own essay "Zidane's Melancholy", the novelist still sees fit to describe an unsurpassable line between the two constituencies to which he professes a sense of belonging, the intellectuals on the one side and the football fans on the other. What confirms the note as a tongue-in-cheek gesture is the very appearance of the book in which it is included; neither Les Éditions de Minuit, who published the book in French in 2015, nor Fitzcarraldo Editions, who published Shaun Whiteside's English translation the following year, could have justified expending resources on a book that "no one will like". In spite of this, Toussaint's note points towards a hierarchical separation that is still evidently assumed to exist between the cultural pursuit of sport, traditionally coded as a matter of "predominantly sensorial enjoyment" and "instant gratification", and the cultural pursuits of art and literature, whose pleasures are considered more lasting and richer with humanistic significance.

Of these two fields, the latter has typically reserved the right to be spoken of in terms of serious aesthetic concepts, even as football is colloquially referred to as the "beautiful game". While figures from canonical western art may be appropriated to elevate players beyond the transitory values of their sport – as in the case of Adel Abdessemed's large bronze sculpture of Zinedine Zidane and Marco Materazzi – it seems fair to suggest that an artist conceiving of their own craft in the light of David Ginola's speed with the ball at his feet or Zlatan Ibrahimović's striking ability would be considered a more eccentric *rapprochement* (the comparison drawn by Michael Fried between American Minimalist painter Frank Stella and baseball star Ted Williams provides a rare example of this [Krauss 7-8]). In the second decade of the twenty-first century one can identify intellectuals who are interested in football and football fans who are interested in intellectual culture, but a hierarchy persists between these two fields with regards to assumed interpretative power. In the introduction to this thesis, I outlined this idea with reference to Jonathan Jones' *Guardian* column on artist David Shrigley's design for a new Partick Thistle mascot, where football fans were painted as thwarted aesthetes unable to reflect on their own cultural practices without assistance from the field of art.

My thesis has drawn on a wide range of intellectual resources to brush against the grain of this orthodoxy. One name I have referenced on numerous occasions, Sianne Ngai, suggests that her own research into aesthetic categories is predicated on a concept of aesthetic experience for which high art is no longer 'the obvious model'. [23] The "inter-discipline" of visual studies as formulated by the likes of Mieke Bal, W.J.T. Mitchell and Keith Moxey makes general proposals which resonate with the ones that Ngai lays out here: the author suggests that we live 'in a culture that hails us as aesthetic subjects nearly every minute of the day', notes that 'aesthetic experience no longer seems definable by the presence of a single exceptional feeling (say, "disinterested pleasure")', and proposes to use her book to '[take] stock of how art and aesthetic experience stand in relation to each other once they become structurally decoupled.' [23] At the beginning of this thesis, in a riposte to Jones' conception of football fans, I introduced writings by David Goldblatt and Richard Giulianotti attesting to the variegated forms of aesthetic experience found in relation to football in different parts of the world, whose identification poses localised connoisseurial challenges for the spectator. Being qualified to identify the differences in playing style between the Brazilian national teams of 1970 and 1994, I suggested, bears analogous comparisons to art historical work regarding the periodisation and taxonomy of painterly or sculptural styles. Building on Lynda Nead's reflections on boxing photography, I subsequently proposed to approach football as a space of aesthetic variation, bringing materials from football's interpretative communities into conversation with art historical materials I found useful in relation to this context. Following Nead's terms, I sought to stage this meeting as a "rough collision" between fields with their own rich sets of orthodox and heterodox concepts, resisting the temptation to portray football as the more naïve partner. As a corollary, I also proposed to examine tensions at those boundaries where sport and art, necessarily defined as porous cultural fields, come into contact with one another, either through subtle overlaps in practice and discourse (as was the case in chapters one and two respectively) or through action on the part of cultural practitioners with more or less of an allegiance to the institution of art (as was the case in chapters three and four).

In chapters one and two I examined visual phenomena situated in football's recent history through the lens of concepts gleaned from art history and visual studies. Rather than granting explicatory sovereignty to these concepts, however, I chose to place at the centre of my analysis the discourses that surround these objects in their natural habitat – the cultural field of football – in order to explore some of the tensions at play when aspects of football's visual culture approach certain conditions redolent of art. In my work on the journalistically popular but academically little-explored theme of diving images, I found that the act of diving can be

described as a process through which players use their bodies to create what visual historian Aby Warburg termed *pathos formulae*. More specifically, the formulae employed relate to depictions of extreme bodily vulnerability, particularly the case of the "hysteric" female body. Crucial context for these observations however comes in the form of the heavily gendered discourses which already exist around diving in the mainstream sports press, which tend to align masculinity with a refusal of visual demonstrativity and thus propose what W.J.T. Mitchell refers to in his work on visual culture as the 'default feminization of the picture.' [*Pictures* 44] The diving image, I argued, thus provides an example of the extent to which debates over aesthetic issues figure prominently in everyday commentaries on football.

In chapter two I demonstrated the connections which may be drawn between informal discussions of animated highlight GIFs, Roland Barthes' theorisations of photography, and conceptions of artistic authorship analysed by scholars of Late Medieval and Early Modern visual culture. Focusing on sources intrinsic to the online discourse that surrounds football in the twenty-first century, I argued that GIFs have the potential to reify already highly-regarded and highly-visible footballing superstars by "punctuating" the somewhat laborious temporality of web browsing, a dynamic which can be fruitfully compared to the emergence of an authorial model of artistic identity through figures like Giotto, and helpfully framed through Barthes' work on the affective and temporal vicissitudes of photography. In doing so, I again sought to underline the complex aesthetic negotiations that are at play within the everyday experience of online football fandom: formats like the GIF, I argued, lay the foundations for a new media ecology around the game, one that creates rhythms of boredom and surprise that mirror in distorted fashion the ones found in older forms of engagement with the game. In both these chapters, my research consisted not of seeking to elevate the mass cultural material at hand by treating it as something "a bit like art", but rather of staging a speculative and exploratory conversation between aesthetic concepts derived from academic reflection and those which are present in the most casual and tacit discussions around football.

The second half of my thesis moved away from material intrinsic to the experience of football fandom to focus on artistic interventions dealing with the game. My third chapter focused on one of the more prominent recent examples of football-focused contemporary art, Douglas Gordon and Philippe Parreno's *Zidane: a 21ˢᵗ Century Portrait*. Here, drawing on academic and literary reflections on Zidane, I argued that the film's engagement with football is at least in part defined by an attempt to escape or mute the cultural baggage carried by its protagonist. This assertion was explored in relation to a lineage of twentieth century art-making in which

photography is paired with automation in the name of delivering work which resonates with a sense of anonymity and impartiality. Discussing Jean-Philippe Toussaint and Anne Delbée as contrasting examples of authors seeking to locate meaning in Zidane's infamous headbutt incident in the 2006 World Cup final, I suggested that Gordon and Parreno's intervention can be considered in the light of these contrasting approaches as a work which retreats from, rather than advances, claims on Zidane's already overdetermined persona. Many academic reflections can be found in the social sciences regarding these claims, in addition to a significant number of analyses of Gordon and Parreno's film from the disciplines of art history and criticism and screen studies. However, both bodies of research have tended to operate in isolation from one another; my chapter marks an attempt to synthesise these discourses with the intention of understanding how the specific artistic strategies employed by Gordon and Parreno function in relation to the febrile and expansive corpus of *Zidanology* that emerges out of football's own cultural field.

Finally, in chapter four I sought to locate various aesthetic interventions relating to the actual practice of football within a lineage of experimental participatory practice that emerges out of the influence of post-war avant-garde art theorists like George Maciunas and Allan Kaprow. While so doing, I also explored some of the contradictions inherent in these forms of practice that are made visible when one takes the particularities of football into account. Through four examples, I suggested that the desire on the part of certain artistic practitioners to create interventions which rejuvenate football as a source of liberating ludic energy is invariably found to come into conflict with the temporal structure that must be adopted for an initial sense of rejuvenation to be felt. Applying key concepts from the work of Bernard Suits, I found that it is the novelty of activities like "Stilt Soccer", three-sided football, and Maider López's "Polder Cup" that enables participants to approach them more or less exclusively through what Michel de Certeau calls *tactics* as opposed to *strategies*, or through embodied improvisation as opposed to rational calculation. The idea that the experience of embodied improvisatory participation could have a lasting critical impact on the game of football itself is, I argued, necessarily qualified by this question of temporality, since the sense of rational calculation that is seen in some quarters to have overtaken football is bound up with the game's potential for longevity and repetition. Thus questions of novelty and habit, routine and singularity, become crucial in identifying the border-line that ensures that football and experimental artistic practices which appropriate the form of football are not fully inter-permeable. Finally, I suggested that three-sided football is one case where the image of this border-line grows less clear and determinate, since the game has begun to adopt more routinized structures while striving in other ways to keep its critical

aesthetic legacy intact. Having shaped an image of the discourses and tacit knowledges that maintain a certain degree of separation between art and sport in the previous case studies, three-sided football is thus presented as a kind of limit case for the idea of a clear division between these fields.

In line with the suggestion made in my introduction that focusing on the border-line between art and sport enables the constitution of and relationship between the two fields to come into sharper focus, there have been multiple occasions over the course of this thesis where a critique of the assumed immediacy of low culture and the attendant critical reflexivity of high culture has come to the fore. This critique was initially introduced through the figure of Pierre Bourdieu, and was particularly prominent in chapters one, three and four. Having proposed from the outset to write in opposition to the notion that football is a straightforwardly-comprehended spectacle, I then discussed the distinction that Bourdieu draws between the refined gaze of the art-world denizen and the "naïve gaze" of the ordinary civilian, a distinction which Bourdieu argues is antagonistically constructed. The case studies I went on to present advanced the discussion of this distinction by exploring it in various local contexts. In chapter one, I argued that diving, a form of visual self-reflexivity that has become commonplace among football professionals, is rejected by "retrosexual" voices within football's interpretative community, for whom a diversion from pre-reflexive forms of display represents a suspicious foray into feminised aesthetic terrain. Here a force in popular culture which mobilises against the normalisation of a certain kind of self-reflexive mediation was identified as motivated by historically contingent ideological formations. In chapter three, I continued in this vein by reading Bourdieu's conception of the censorial hauteur of *all* high art against the specific context of the lineage of photo-conceptualism associated with the work of Ed Ruscha, examining the reasons why Gordon and Parreno's adoption of this lineage might be said to constitute a sound aesthetic strategy in this particular instance. Finally, in chapter four I drew on the critical work of Grant Kester, whose reflections on the rhetorical tendencies of the artistic avant-garde enable us to evaluate claims made by artists purporting to subvert familiar mass cultural phenomena through their work. It was Kester's identification of the "ethico-representational" critique advanced in many works of contemporary art that in turn enabled me to focus critically on the gambits through which sanctioned artworks like Maider López's *Polder Cup* approach their mass-cultural subject. Once again, I argued that a certain sense of *hauteur* is in fact central among these gambits, even as these projects in other respect carry out Kaprow's project of "dissolving into what they are like". The *hauteur* in this case relates to the adoption of a novel, non-repeating sense of temporality, which distances the intervention in question from football as it is typically

conceived. Throughout all these discussions it is assumed that there is value in Bourdieu's conception of an antagonistic distinction between high and low culture as it relates to questions of mediation and reflexivity, but that this value can only be effectively derived if local discursive dynamics and motivations are taken into account.

It is in this sense that I would argue my intervention is effective beyond the cultural field with which it is most centrally concerned. Firstly, by taking football seriously as a site of aesthetic dissensus and discursive complexity in those chapters dealing with sanctioned artworks and art-events, I revealed that art-world approaches to the game often reveal more about the *doxa* in whose orbit they are suspended than they do about football itself. This, I argue, is a methodological tenet which ought to underpin all scholarly work dealing with figures whose artistic projects probe at the border-lines between art and non-art. Secondly, in arranging materials drawn from theorisations of art, aesthetics and culture so as to be able to evaluate discourses and tacit knowledges local to football, I have constructed certain trajectories through these materials that seem to me to be both original and fruitful. One such trajectory is the line drawn from Bourdieu's conception of the antagonistic relationship between the refined gaze and the naïve gaze through to Ngai's reflections on the aesthetic domain of the "merely interesting" and Kester's discussion of the "ethico-representational" critical tendencies found in much rhetoric around the artistic avant-garde. There is evidently a good deal of sympathy to be found between these texts, but were their intersections to become the focus of further study I have no doubt that interesting tensions would emerge as well. The same can be asserted with regards to the connections I have drawn here between the work of Suits and Certeau, between Berger and Warburg, and between Barthes and Nagel and Wood. In the case of the latter, a focus on the overlapping aspects of their key terms *punctum* and "punctuality" enabled me to bring together concepts of affect, temporality and authorship, in a manner which could prove useful for further study in these areas.

Beyond developing these trajectories, my decision to bring together academic, critical and journalistic fields focused on art and sport enabled me to present fresh vantage points on some artworks that have already received scholarly attention. This was most prominently the case in my chapter on *Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait*, since foregrounding the notion of Zidane's overdetermined persona in relation to the film enabled me to treat the protagonist as a footballing icon who is not interchangeable with other footballing icons. This, I have argued, is a problem with some existing scholarly accounts of the film, which see the racially and culturally overdetermined figure of Zidane as an avatar for *all* gifted footballers or for the conditions of

late capitalist football in general. Furthermore, by using the 2006 headbutt as a fulcrum for my discussion of Zidane's overdetermination, I was able to draw connections between Gordon and Parreno's work and that of Toussaint, which in turn enabled me to challenge the transparency of one particular observation that Parreno has made about his own project. Although existing material on the case studies that constituted my fourth chapter is altogether less dense, my engagement with the theme of "lusory means" and its relationship to questions of temporality enabled me to construct readings of López's *Polder Cup* and Craig Coulthard's *Forest Pitch* that have not yet been presented in the existing literature, much of which is intimately associated with the projects themselves and thus tends towards what Claire Bishop refers to as a "foreclosure of critical distance" [6].

In the preceding reflections I have for the most part neglected to address my second chapter, on animated highlight GIFs. Although this chapter was committed to demonstrating the variegated forms of aesthetic experience that are present in the everyday practice of football fandom, it is clear to me that it did not succeed in engaging the over-riding theme of distinctions between the artistic and naïve gaze as centrally as the other chapters. Highlight GIFs, unlike the materials examined in the other three chapters, do not occupy such a contested intellectual position on the border-line between sport and art; my use of concepts from the domains of art history and aesthetic theory were in this case relatively foreign to the material at hand, beyond the analogical resemblances which I have argued for there. This chapter may thus be considered as something of an outlier within the scope of this thesis as a whole. At the same time, however, the chapter functions as a crucial speculative exercise with regards to testing the methodological framework I have attempted to develop over the course of this thesis. My intention in staging a "rough collision" between the cultural fields of football and art was twofold. Firstly, as discussed above, I trusted that it would enable the intellectual dynamics animating the border-line between the two fields to emerge more sharply into focus. Secondly, I wagered that approaching football as a site of aesthetic dissensus and discursive complexity would help to bring tacit assumptions and submerged discursive formations within football's interpretative community to light, and thus provide a foundation for addressing the lack of research that has taken place on football's cultural field within the inter-disciplinary area of visual studies. It is this latter intention that the second chapter most clearly responds to: in it, I took a casual remark made by a commentator on the game and used it as a fulcrum for a reflection on how concepts of aesthetic value, temporality and authorship play out in the context of football discourse. My decision to draw out the affective content of apparently undistinguished on-line commentaries on the game is one which could be carried over into future research. It could for instance be used to produce

detailed accounts on the aesthetic and affective principles at play in fan responses to kit and stadium design, or to different styles of play. Deeper and more focused research into the conversations that take place in those sites where football's interpretative community naturally gathers is required if we are to gain a greater sense of how football plays out as an aesthetic experience in the twenty-first century.

Finally, I hope to have demonstrated over the course of this thesis that football, although widely regarded as a space of predominantly fleeting and physical rather than lasting and intellectual satisfaction, is nevertheless a nexus for complex negotiations of aesthetic matters, and one which warrants greater attention from the field of visual studies. Football is of comparable importance in our contemporary visual culture to the family photographs around which Barthes develops his theories of *punctum* and *studium*, and approaching the game as an object from which we may learn lessons about socially-embedded aesthetics could in the long run be conducive to the development of concepts as widely-disseminated as Barthes'. For this reason, it seems overdue that the "beautiful game" be admitted into the repertoire of materials used to teach the study of visual cultures more broadly, and that the impression of football fans as a vibrant but unreflecting mass be dispensed with in favour of more productive readings.

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