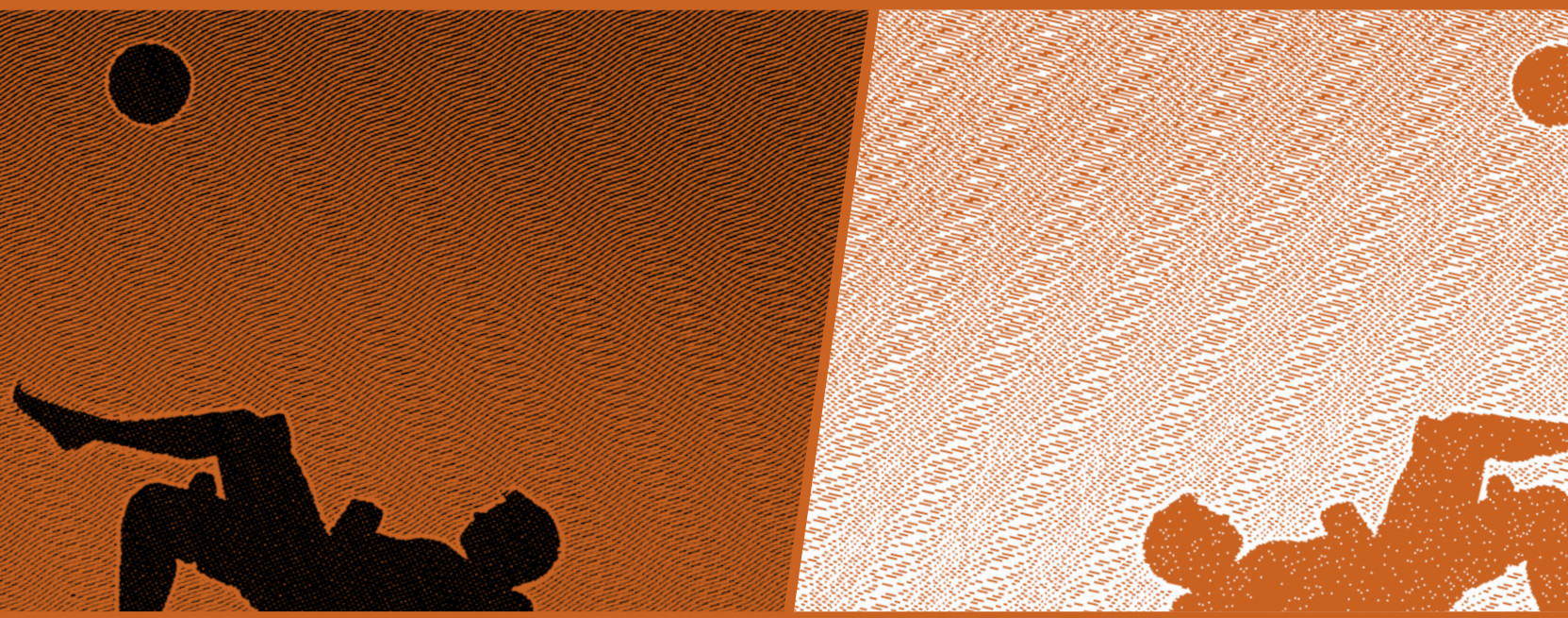

Lizè Groenewald

Mr Blatter, The Boys and The Bicycle Kick: Excavating Identities in the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ Logo

BIOGRAPHY

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→In 2010 South Africa hosts the FIFA World Cup™. This epic football contest equals and possibly even supersedes the Olympic Games as the most prominent global event in the twenty-first century. Sport – perhaps the only legitimate arena in which national flags can be waved and aggressive patriotic rituals flaunted – colludes spectacularly with international media in the construction of national dimensions of identity. The media is a potent agent for engendering a sense of belonging, and sport provides emotive symbolic material for the facilitation of such emotions (Bernstein & Blain 2003). Football, in particular, engages with ideas of race, representation and, in the governance of its controlling body, the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA), imperialism and colonialism (Bale & Cronin 2003).

In South Africa, more so than in most societies grappling with liberation struggles, sport has held a central political place; within this paradigm, football is considered to be the sport of the disenfranchised masses (Farred 2003). Bea Vidacs (2003), in her consideration of the symbolic meaning of football in Cameroon, asserts that football can provide "an opportunity to invert the actual power of relationships reigning in the world". Thus, in 1998, Cameroon regarded the World Cup (hosted by France) as an opportunity to take revenge on an erstwhile coloniser. It is therefore not inconceivable that representations of the 2010 event may evince an attitude of distrust and defiance, while simultaneously wishing to emulate in order to obtain the emblematic values of Europe.

In this paper, I reflect upon narratives of representation inherent in the logo for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. Since 1930, the event has been held throughout the football playing world, but, as yet, never in Africa. It is of interest, therefore, that in contrast to its more recent predecessors,

the 2010 logo proffers a human body as signifier of football. David Spurr (1993) observes that in colonial discourse "the body … is the essential defining characteristic of primitive people". The body is rendered as visibly different in order to confirm – but also to challenge, especially in the body of the African athlete – the perfection of the western subject. John Bale and Mike Cronin (2003) argue for a direct link between the body, sport and post-colonial enquiry, and suggest a possible agenda for a post-colonial study of sports that includes "an interrogation of the practices of authors, photographers and others engaged in colonial representation". It is, then, the outcomes of one of the 'other' agents of representation – namely graphic design – which I seek to unravel in this scrutiny of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ logo.

> **Another quintessentially South African crisis is looming and – for a change – it involves neither politics nor sport, at least not directly. It's no exaggeration, though, to say that its ramifications, if not handled correctly and quickly, could be dramatic [and] bloody … (Unfair and arbitrary 2008:16).**

In October 2008, the Director-General of the South African Department of Transport, Mpumi Mpofu, announced that South Africa's *Inyathi* taxis did not satisfy the criteria of the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA):[1] the taxis had to be discarded if operators wanted to be part of the FIFA World Cup™ to be hosted by South Africa in 2010. In response, the taxi industry vowed to "defy orders by Fifa" (Ajam 2008a:2), leading to a warning in a *Saturday Star* editorial (Unfair and arbitrary 2008:16) – quoted above – that "revolutions have been sparked by less". The reason why the editorial should also want to make the point that this 'quintessentially South African crisis' involved neither politics nor sport is unclear. Perhaps the editors wished to distance themselves from sport enthusiasts by juxtaposing a so-called real national crisis with the trivia of popular sport: thus warnings about civil war are followed in the same editorial column by an irritable dismissal of "the three-ringed circus that is the battle over the Springbok [*sic*] as South Africa's official rugby emblem" (Is the Bok fish or fowl? 2008:16).[2] Thus the editors appear to hold Ms Mpofu personally responsible for the outrage of the taxi operators, rather than acknowledging the destabilising impact, on the host nation, of what many regard as "the greatest show on Earth" (Mokoena 2009: 1). However, by tacking an aside about a dispute over a sporting symbol onto an editorial article that responds to the dictatorial edicts of FIFA (and in particular this organisation's chairperson, Sepp Blatter),[3] the editors unwittingly provide a succinct illustration of the direct agency of sport in contemporary societies.[4]

In their overview of sociological thinking about sport and leisure, Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire (1994:10, 18) affirm that sport functions "as a cohesive political force", and is "best understood as a symbolic representation of community and personal identity". John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (2003:195) point out that football, in particular, can bolster internal political cultures whilst also promoting the global ambitions of football bodies. Consequently, although this concept was recognised as early as the eighteenth century (Jarvie & Maguire 1994:1), Neil Blain (2003:252) observes that "[t]here is much more which needs to be done to understand the function of sport in its follower's lives and in culture generally".

Arguably, Blain's observation has particular relevance in South Africa. Two weeks after the editors of the *Saturday Star* condemned the 'circus' surrounding the Springbok emblem, the matter had taken on such alarming dimensions that African National Congress (ANC) president Jacob Zuma called for a national debate (Quintal, Ajam & Gerretsen 2008:1). As Alan Bairner (2001:xi) remarks, "Sport and nationalism are arguably two of the most emotive issues in the modern world. Both inspire intense devotion and frequently lead to violence". In the case of the Springbok war, fans and activists were squaring up over a trademark, a piece of communication design. That the battle was not only about the branding of a rugby team, but also about a nation's identity (see Smith 2008:16), was clear. It is, then, within the context of the powerful relationship between sport, nationalism and visual communication design that I examine the logo for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ in this paper.

A graphic designer's proudest moment

Perhaps appropriately, the design consultancy that constructed the present version of the Springbok emblem is the same group that created the logo for the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ – Gaby de Abreu and his design team at Switch, a Johannesburg-based branding consultancy.[5] Both logos can be viewed on Switch's website (Switch [sa]). The unveiling of the 2010 logo in Berlin, Germany, in July 2006 was the culmination of a painstaking six-month process (Salie 2006b): FIFA asked the South African Design Council for a list of 25 South African graphic design companies, and selected five to present concepts for the 2010 trademark.[6] De Abreu, who as a teenager relinquished football for the graphic design profession, stated in an interview reported in the *Cape Argus* (Salie 2006b), that the selection of his company's submission was the proudest moment of his career; in particular, he expressed satisfaction with FIFA for "having belief in South African designers" (De Abreu cited in Salie 2006b).[7]

The final logo presents itself in a rectangle, and is dominated by a stylised human figure tumbling backwards whilst kicking a football over its shoulder. A backdrop of graphic "swishes" (2010 FIFA World Cup – Official Emblem 2009) suggests a conjoining of the continent of Africa with the South African flag. The black figure and the so-called swishes are contained by the blue, cradle-like shape of FIFA's new brand identity, a feature that seems set to become standard on all future FIFA World Cup™ logos (Salie 2006b).

De Abreu takes care to explain why the 2010 emblem comprises several important "areas" (Salie 2006b): 1) Africa is depicted, because it is the first time that the

FIFA World Cup™ is being hosted on this continent; 2) the footballer executes a bicycle kick, because, states De Abreu (cited in Salie 2006b), "I thought that the best way of showing off African flair"; 3) the footballer is rendered "in a San or rock painting style" (Salie 2006b) in order to draw attention to "South Africa and its identity as 'The Cradle of Human Kind' [*sic*]"; 4) the "convergence of lines towards South Africa … is intended as a metaphor to represent the diversity and energy of African soccer flair";[8] 5) finally, the colours of the South African flag were used to "strengthen" (Salie 2006b) the South African identity of the design.

As such, De Abreu's rationale for the logo, which was received with "mixed reactions" (Salie 2006b),[9] both counters and underscores reservations regarding the 2010 logo, most notably the perceived elitist selection process, the inclusion of the FIFA device and the general clutter of the design (Airey 2008). From 62 responses gleaned from an Internet blog (Logo Design Love 2008) requesting comment on FIFA World Cup™ logos from 1950 to 2010, the South African design emerges as fairly forgettable.[10] A blogger who had difficulty finding the 2010 logo on Switch's website commented that perhaps the studio would rather not show this piece "due to [the] clients thinking themselves to be designers" (Airey 2008).[11] While praising FIFA for its belief in South African design, De Abreu refrains from acknowledging the frustration of having to accede to the former's authority, yet the machinations of Switch's powerful client are perhaps all too evident in the final work.

The *Inyathi* taxi crisis, the springbok debacle, and a designer's explanation of his company's design, when read together, not only provide an introduction to the concerns evinced in sport studies, but also highlight the neglected role of communication designers in this field. In order, therefore, to reflect upon the 2010 logo, selected themes of recent discourse in the discipline are briefly highlighted in this paper, namely

- sport and nationalism
- sport and identity
- sport and the 'other'
- sport as utopic myth
- sport, the body and resistance
- sport and globalisation.

Sport and nationalism

"Benign or aggressive", states Bairner (2001:17), "the relationship between sport and nationalism is … inescapable". Thus Douglas Booth (1996:471), in his reflection upon the role of the *amabokoboko* in the nationalisation of South Africa, suggests that South Africa's victory over Australia in the 1995 Rugby World Cup "engendered perhaps the first palpable sense of nationalism among South Africans". Indeed, Alina Bernstein and Neil Blain (2003:13) remark that, because "[s]port is one legitimate arena in which national flags can be raised", 'nationalism' and 'nationality' are frequently accompanying (if not always explicitly specified) categories in sport studies. The role of sport in the construction of identity thus emerges from, and is continuous to, the interaction between sport and nationalism.

Sport and identity

For Pierre Bourdieu (2003:223) research on sport occupies a central space within the concerns of modern social theory; sporting activities are "predisposed to express all the differences sociologically pertinent at that moment … agents only have to follow the leanings of their habitus … to find an activity which is entirely 'them'". As Jarvie and Maguire (1994:206) observe, Bourdieu's analyses uncover the structure within individual practice; more prevalent, perhaps, in recent sport studies is an interest in larger group identities, in particular national/civic identity. Thus Joseph Maguire (1999:176) points out that "international sports contests … [are] a form of patriot games … Close links can be traced between the rituals of national identity practices and these sports occasions". Bernstein and Blain (2003:13) emphasise the importance of epic contests of sports in the construction of national dimensions of identity, although Alan France and Maurice Roche (1998), who explore the impact of the 1991 World Student Games on the citizenry of Sheffield, conclude that sport mega-events cannot promote a positive civic identity. On a somewhat more optimistic note, Sugden and Tomlinson (1998:178) argue that "sport has become an important site for the expression of unity within difference", but only as "a temporarily constructed mechanical solidarity". As an example, they describe the African Nations Cup hosted by South Africa in 1996, an event that demonstrated how football can create a cultural identity over and above deeply-rooted differences. Sugden and Tomlinson (1998:185) acknowledge that "the [FIFA] World Cup has offered the opportunity – to those privileged and resourced enough to be able to get there – for the simultaneous expression of their local identity and their cosmopolitan self". However, within these expressed identities there are complex layers of meaning (Sugden & Tomlinson 1998:183); from the necessity of representation in the construction of identity thus emerges the next area of reflection, namely sport and its obsession with stereotypes of the 'other'.

Sport and the 'other'

Liz Crolley and David Hand (2002:9) observe that national sports teams "are frequently seen as representing facets of national identity in their reputed style of play". However, reputations do not always correspond to the reality of the game. Thus,

> **We are dealing, then, not so much with the way in which people actually play football but rather with the way in which they are represented when playing it. Such representations frequently take the form of stereotypes (Crolley & Hand 2002:9).**

Booth (1996:471) posits that "the effectiveness of a national ideology requires the presence of 'another community', whose differences the nation seeks to project and protect itself against". According to Crolley and Hand (2002:96-98), when France faced meeting Germany in the semi-final of the 1998 FIFA World Cup™, the French media evinced an "almost pathological obsession with the German Other". However, despite (or perhaps because of) its usefulness in the construction of identity, stereotyping can make the "easy transition into out-and-out racism" (Bernstein & Blain 2003:15), as is often the case with representations of African-Caribbeans in football writing. Crolley and Hand (2002:158) point out that blacks are frequently portrayed as "naturally athletic, strong and threatening", while Bernstein and Blain (2003:18) note "the existence of a perception that blacks are good at sport because it requires physical rather than intellectual qualities". During the 1990 Football World Cup the media therefore characterised the Cameroon players as

> **'uninhibited, [and] enthusiastic' ... 'temperamental', 'inventive', 'creative' and above all 'joyful'. In extreme cases, the Cameroon style of play was presented as 'irrational', 'as befits children below the age of reason'. Indeed, Cameroon were [*sic*] described as football's version of the 'savage infant' (Bernstein & Blain 2003:18).[12]**

Crolley and Hand (2002:12) contend that stereotypes in football are not necessarily located in sport itself, but "connect with issues other than the sporting" – issues that inevitably centre upon the construction of the nation as an 'imagined community'.

Sport as utopic myth

Anthony Smith (2003:18) defines national identity as "the continuous reproduction and reinterpretation of the pattern of values, symbols, memories, myths, and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations". Within this pattern of reproduction and reinterpretation, Maguire (1999:184) demonstrates that national sports teams are one example of the evocation of "sleeping memories" that crystallise around common symbols, which in turn reinforce the emotional bonds of individuals with their nations. This project thus requires the invoking of a "mythical golden political and sporting age of the past". However, while Smith (1991:22) is adamant that, "The sense of 'whence we came' is central to the definition of 'who we are'", he is equally sure that "myths of origin are rarely correlated with actual biological origins" (Smith 2003:52). Consequently, Bairner (2001:5) posits that national myths, because they are *constructed*, should be criticised when they lead to harmful consequences, are perpetuated as a result of artificially sustained ignorance, or are used to enforce a morally unacceptable condition.

Mike Featherstone (cited in Maguire 1999:24) notes that festive moments enable people to "temporarily live in unison, near to the ideal"; in its evocations of a mythical golden age, sport therefore shares with nationalism a *utopic* dimension. However, while Ava Rose and James Friedman (1997:9-12) agree that sport reportage seems to operate "by evoking a utopic sensibility that reflects and responds to real social needs", the authors fear that this utopia "may serve to distract its fans from the harsh realities of economic and racial inequality with a mythic fantasy of integration" (see, for instance, Olympic 'utopia' gives way to reality 2008:15). Rose and Friedman (1997) identify at least one further utopian principle, namely that sports programming is a vehicle for the imagining of patriarchal ideals of the masculine. The problematic of gender has been a perennial theme in sport studies (see, for instance, Jarvie & Maguire 1994; Baker & Boyd (eds). 1997; Maguire 1999; Crolley & Hand 2002; Bernstein & Blain (eds). 2003). However, more recent texts tend to place greater emphasis upon the "vital theme" (Bale & Cronin 2003:2) of post-colonialism, namely, *the body*.

Sport, the body and resistance

Joan Bale and Mike Cronin (2003:4-6) argue that, in recent decades, post-colonial sport has been seen as a form of resistance by colonies or "post-/neo-colonies". The authors contend that it is worth speculating about the extent to which distinctive body language reflects this resistance, but they also suggest that "what might often appear to be resistance may be more akin to transgression – that is, being 'out of place'". A specifically post-colonial sport performance might therefore involve dramatic body language, typically perceived as 'flair'.[13] Bale and Cronin (2003:6-8) reiterate that "representations do not equate with simply re-presenting some original 'reality'"; a representation is always something that is constructed by an observer. All representations can therefore be said

to be "deformations" in the sense that all words or pictures are metaphors, a condition that "becomes particularly important in … exploring the ways in which colonists recorded and represented the native body cultures". The authors therefore call for studies that unveil the complicity of sport in colonial domination, consider the potential of sport as a form of (neo-) colonial resistance, and interrogate the practices of individuals engaged in colonial representation.

In closing, Bale and Cronin (2003:11) refer to Sugden and Tomlinson's argument that FIFA – one of the most powerful international governing bodies in the world – both promotes an imperialist standpoint and allows for colonial resistance in non-western footballing nations. Consequently, I now turn to one of the most debated themes in the field, namely globalisation.

Sport and globalisation

Bernstein and Blain (2003:2) point out that the spread of modern sport provides "an interesting example of globalisation"; consequently, sport sociologists entered the globalisation debate from the beginning of the concept's fashionableness during the 1980s (Bernstein & Blain 2003: 21). By 1999, the term *globalisation* had become marked by confusion, and Maguire (1999:5) refers to "the seemingly non-resolvable debate concerning whether globalisation leads to homogeneity or heterogeneity". Within the broad Marxist tradition, emphasis is placed on power and exploitation (Maguire 1999:34-35), but sports sociologists have been prominent in the struggle to erode the notion that the globalisation process is "a relentless … surge toward total homogenisation" (Bairner 2001:1). It is important to resist, warns Bairner (2001:12), some of the "implications of 'McDonaldization'"; indeed, Bernstein and Blain (2003:22) agree that the "hypothesis of 'Americanization'" is problematic when truly international sports like football, and international events like the Olympics and the Rugby World Cup, are not American.[14] While once the emphasis was on growing cultural similarity, clearly, at the dawn of the twenty-first century it is not: audience interest in global events has "local dimensions … that is, special attention to … a nation's own performing athletes" (Bernstein & Blain 2003:23). "The very prevalence", states (Maguire 1999:24-25), "of images of the 'other' contained in global sport and leisure practices … both decentre the West and put other cultures more centre stage".[15]

The diffusion of sport, from its European origins, moved along the lines of Empire (Maguire 1999:29), but distinctive identities flourished in an exchange that is "something other than straightforward British cultural imperialism" (Bairner 2001:13). Thus football – formalised as a game in 1848 at Trinity College, Cambridge (Crolley & Hand 2002:19) – has spread rapidly in countries that were not part of the British Empire. In other communities indigenous peoples took up British games but gave them a local flavour, thereby linking them to broader anti-imperialist struggles: Bairner (2001:13) offers as an example the adoption of rugby union as a national game by "South Africa's Afrikaaners [*sic*]". However, Maguire (1999:20-26) warns that an analysis must never lose sight of the fact that powerful groups do operate to "construct, produce and provide global sport processes". He warns against an uncritical deployment of concepts such as hybridisation "where the individual is assumed to be sovereign and where people freely choose from the global sport *mélange*". Nevertheless, Maguire (1999:93) concedes that while globalisation undoubtedly involves attempts by established groups to control global flows, indigenous peoples both resist these processes and also recycle their own cultural products. Maguire (1999:176, 185-186) and Bairner (2001:18) point out that the role sport plays in identity politics is not straightforward: people in complex nation-states have multiple identities that are many-layered. To illustrate this complexity, Bairner (2001:17) again refers to South Africa, where, he claims, "it has long been possible to differentiate between white and urban black sporting identities, which have fed into rival constructions of what it means to be South African".

In response to the concerns outlined above, I devote the latter section of this paper to an examination of the 2010 logo as it gives way to, resists and recycles the products of a global culture in an attempt to represent a curiously hybrid identity.

The 2010 logo: Do South Africans exist in it?

According to Bairner (2001:18) sport has the capacity to help understand official nationalism by providing a vehicle for the expression of alternative visions of the nation. Thus, while cultural struggle has occurred at every Olympic Games, it was particularly acute at the time of the 1976 Montreal Games, when the very definition of the host nation was debated in the press. Similarly, the composition of the 1998 French World Cup team raised questions about what it meant to be 'French' (Bairner 2001:xi). The run-up to the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ has been infused with pressing questions about South African identity. Whereas the country's victory in the 1995 Rugby World Cup enabled "a moment of intense nationalism, a moment when South Africans … transcended individual differences and social conditions" (Booth 1996:473), the country's repeat performance in 2007 had, if anything,

the opposite effect. The latter victory elicited questions about who was worthy of representing the nation (Majola & Ikaneng 2007:39), and exposed, for some, the willingness of politicians to use "rugby glory" (Ranokwang 2007:39) to bolster their flagging careers. Beyond the arena of sport, concerns raised by Ivor Chipkin (2007) regarding the proscriptive nature, under ANC rule, of South African citizenship were deepened by Jacob Zuma's controversial assertion that Afrikaners are the only whites who are true South Africans (Mboyisa 2009:4).[16]

Given that there are divisions concerning how the nation is understood and presented – in many cases by means of sport – Bairner (2001:19) posits that the examination of the representations of the latter can reveal how, "below the superficial veneer, the relationship between sport and nationality remains contested terrain". Existing criticism (see, for example, Laurence 2006; Yap 2007) of the design of the 2010 logo within the South African design community reflects, for the most part, concerns about 'standards' and 'aesthetics', as well as an aggrieved sense of exclusion.[17] Arguably, it is necessary for the communication design profession to scrutinise more closely the impact of graphic design experiences on the contested terrain of sport and nationality. To this purpose, it is useful to return to the five "important areas" (Salie 2006b) of the 2010 logo, but to start with a sixth 'area', namely the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* and its "critical role in the brokerage of forms of neo-colonialism" (Sugden & Tomlinson 2003:195).

The 2010 logo and globalisation

Bairner (2001:1) remarks that "the relationship between sport and *national* identity is self-evidently unravelling to reveal an increasingly homogenous global sporting culture" (emphasis in original). Here three aspects of the 2010 logo are noteworthy. Firstly, the South African design is arguably the most *political* design since 1950, both in its use of narrative detail and geographic specificity. While the incorporation of the national flag of the host country is a common feature of earlier FIFA World Cup™ logos (for example, Switzerland 1954; Chile 1962; England 1966 and USA 1994), only France 1998 depicts the actual geography of the host nation. Indeed, the logos for Argentina 1978 and Spain 1982 take pains to depict the flags of *all* participating nations, emphasising the *international* nature of the event. Mexico 1986, faced with an impossible number of flags, resorted to depicting a map of the entire world to guarantee the inclusion of even the most obscure nation in the logo design. Whereas the trend, from the 1980s, had been simplicity and regional neutrality, and the stylised representation of a football dominated most designs, the 2010 logo is notable for its deviation from this norm. De Abreu (cited in Salie 2006b) believes that it is "the strong African identity of his logo that appealed to the judges"; indeed, by choosing to allow (perhaps even dictate) such a geographically specific logo – the 2010 slogan is *Win with Africa in Africa* – FIFA countered the organisation's image of imperialist power and visibly enabled the subaltern to speak. Thus, the (then) president of South Africa, at the unveiling of the logo in Berlin, could announce – to "wild applause" (Forji 2006) – that

> **Undoubtedly, FIFA is proving, by its word and deed, that the world can succeed against the many and varied global challenges through fair and equitable partnerships … Today, we have no doubt that FIFA is Africa's Partner of Hope (Mbeki 2006).**

To demonstrate this 'fair and equitable partnership', the 2010 design is the first FIFA World Cup™ logo to carry FIFA's new, fixed brand identity; De Abreu (in Salie 2006) points out that the FIFA brand was indeed the departure point for the South African design. Consequently, the logo for the South African World Cup presages a colourful and exotic event, but the obligatory FIFA branding overtly declares the control that the international body is exercising over this local colour. Thus, a volunteer worker (cited in Chilwane 2009:3) witnessing police brutality as the 2010 FIFA World-Cup by-laws were being brought to bear on hawkers and the homeless in Johannesburg, observed that, "There is mounting pressure from Fifa to make the inner city look … first-world". Phillimon Mnisi (2009:14), in a letter to the *Saturday Star*, warns about the "curtailing of moods" by FIFA, which he interprets as "the total disregard of the host nation's sovereignty" and a "suppression of culture". Added to these comments, the remark by the president of the African Federation of Informal Traders Association (cited in Chilwane 2009:3), that 2010 "is bad for informal businesses. We are already being left out … " becomes an echo of the negative impact of the 1991 World Student Games on the citizens of Sheffield. The by-laws, Advocate Kevin Malunga agrees, are bitter pills to swallow for many South Africans, but swallow they must, because, according to this legal expert, "Fifa owns every piece of territory where these events are being staged" (Malunga cited in Chilwane 2009:3) and therefore "the country has made certain undertakings to Fifa" (Chilwane 2009:3).

The notion that a sovereign state is forced to show obeisance to a sporting body is perhaps a cynical but inevitable condition of late capitalism; however, the 2010 logo suggests that it is not only South Africa, but an entire continent that is called upon to curb its advertising, animals, language and public urination. Indeed, the depiction of the African continent on a device that has

'South Africa' stamped across it in bold lettering not only suggests but demands that Africa is understood as one homogenous 'country'; FIFA appears to have addressed the historical absence of the African continent as a source of World Cup host nations by doing-it-all-in-one in 2010.[18] While previous logos, that have pointedly eschewed nationalist programmes, extended the idea of football into a language of internationalism, South Africa is required to speak for a very specific territory that extends beyond its borders, yet does not encompass the world. To some degree, this delimitation echoes attempts to create a "United States of Europe" (Maguire 1999:188; 205) in a global sporting arena, but how does this selective internationalism allow the 2010 logo to speak meaningfully of the identity of the nation that is, in reality, the host country?

The 2010 logo, nationalism and national identity

Carlos Amato (2009a:4),[19] in an attempt to muster much-needed support for the hapless home team, who are up against "terrifying odds" in 2010, reminds the nation that,

> **Too many people all over the world have a garbled foggy mental picture of South Africa and Africa, and that will change when the world drops by next June … We won't be able to hide our glaring inequalities, our crime, education and health crises and our increasingly embittered, amoral politics … But the national snapshot that will be shown to billions of 2010 viewers must and will include far more than our problems. If we get it right, we'll project ourselves as the warm, passionate, creative and funny nation that we are – a people who still share a stubborn spirit of hope and courage.**

Amato is worth quoting at length because his text captures the burden of proof placed upon the 2010 logo as it sets out to be the 'national snapshot' of choice. Long before the first football tourist 'drops by' in June 2010, billions of people with 'foggy mental pictures' of this part of the world are being introduced to its purported essence in the distilled form of the FIFA World Cup™ logo. It is questionable whether the device lifts the 'fog' with regard to the political geography of Africa; if anything, it adds to the existing confusion. And, while De Abreu (cited in Salie 2006b), claims that certain elements of the design "bring the focus back to South Africa and its identity" what exactly *does* the design communicate about the host nation?

Between client and designer, four elements of the logo that signify South African identity are enumerated, namely rock art, the depiction of the rainbow nation, the use of an original typeface and the South African flag. Like several of its predecessors, the 2010 logo refers to the national flag of the host nation and the use of this device should have anchored the identity of the community in question. However, the shapes that construct the flag in the 2010 logo conterminously construct not the host nation but the continent of Africa and, in an ironic evocation of earlier imperialist maps of the world, suggest that all of Africa is 'South', or, perhaps, that all of 'South' is Africa. Benedict Anderson (1993:7) famously states that nations are imagined as limited because even the largest of them has finite boundaries beyond which lie other nations, while Anthony Smith (2003:12) argues that, "A nation … must occupy a homeland of its own". Switch's design, therefore, cannot 'imagine' a South African nation because the logo denies this nation its finite geographical boundaries.

The dilemma appears to be acute – even Amato (2009a:4) refers to "South Africa and Africa", a curious expression that argues both for the conflation *and* separateness of the regions (would a sports commentator refer to 'France and Europe'?) and FIFA – on its official website – is obliged to address this apparently necessary confusion in its rationale for the 2010 logo: the identity is "encapsulating" the African continent, while "more intimately dipping into South Africa's rich and colourful heritage for inspiration" (2010 FIFA World Cup – Official Emblem 2009).[20] Leaving the worrying associations of 'encapsulation' aside, how 'intimately' can the logo 'dip' into South Africa's heritage? Does the design confess the "nasty realities" (Amato 2009a:4) enumerated by Amato?

Clearly not; instead, the logo draws on a core technique of nationalist rhetoric, namely the argument for a primordial nation, one that "exist[s] in the first order of time, and lie[s] at the root of subsequent processes" (Smith 2003:51). Both the FIFA website and De Abreu draw on the narrative of early rock art, De Abreu (cited in Salie 2006b) making a direct link between this prehistoric form of mark-making and South Africa's identity as the purported cradle of humankind. In reality, no member of the South African nation can claim kinship (except in a universal sense) to the early hominids that traversed the Southern regions of Africa, while the 'cradle' itself remains disputed,[21] but the evocation of a mythical, pre-agrarian age erodes the sometimes brutal reality of contemporary South Africa. As such, the 2010 logo demonstrates Rose and Friedman's (1997) premise that the rhetoric of sport distracts its audience from economic inequalities and racism by means of utopian fantasies.

In the case of sport (as with nationalism) this fantasy typically centers upon a dream of integration that, in the case of the 2010 logo, utilises the argument of a primordial nation, but also the notion of a diverse yet united community referenced – according to FIFA (2010 FIFA World Cup – Official Emblem 2009) – by the colourful shapes that "symbolize the rise of the rainbow nation". It is perhaps telling that while the latter is presented as real and 'rising' in an international media environment, De Abreu, in a South African newspaper, refrains from referencing the by now battle-weary rainbow metaphor that has lost most, if not all, of its credence in the host nation (Khumalo 2009b:5; Mbembe 2008:21; Habib 1996:[sp]).

Finally, the letterforms signifying the name of the host nation – 'South Africa 2010' – make a last bid for South Africa*nness*. FIFA makes much of the fact that the "typeface is an original creation" (2010 FIFA World Cup – Official Emblem 2009), which "reinforces" the idea that in South Africa things are done "uniquely". At first viewing, the logotype is indeed the one element of the design that unambiguously announces the host nation. However, even in this apparently straightforward signifier the words 'South' and 'Africa' are rendered in different colours, the former in black, the latter in red, and the host nation is thus once more joined *and* separated from the continent, at the same time and in the same space. Since the fiery red 'Africa' is emphasised in the full colour logo, the mythical territory being referred to here can, at best, be read as (South) Africa.

What, then, is unique about this imagined community? Viewed objectively, the brusque letterforms argue for a somewhat dated and unsophisticated identity. Referencing (rather awkwardly) the aforementioned rock art, the logotype signifies intuitive, hand-drawn and pre-historic mark making, thereby setting the host region apart from the rational and technologically driven typographic traditions of the First World.[22] This observation is borne out by FIFA's explanation that "[t]he typeface … is playful, naïve and free-spirited" (2010 FIFA World Cup – Official Emblem 2009), characteristics that are elaborated by also being "bold, welcoming and friendly". In short, (South) Africa is without finesse, but also without guile – a large lumbering child.

The 2010 logo, stereotypes and the 'other'

While it is clearly necessary that FIFA reassure potential football tourists that the dark continent is *welcoming* and *friendly*, the argument that the host nation is *playful* and *naïve* is arguably less objectively purposive. As in the case of the French press depicting the Cameroon team as 'children below the age of reason', the 2010 logo is drawn irresistibly towards presenting (South) Africa as football's savage infant.

'Naïve' letterforms aside, the figure in the logo design, ostensibly a signifier of the ancient San culture, differs from its authentic counterparts – a condition that the FIFA website (2010 FIFA World Cup – Official Emblem 2009) tacitly acknowledges by stating that the figure "strikes a resemblance to", rather than exactly duplicating, South African rock paintings. Although it is dangerous to generalise with regard to the latter, an overview of selected examples reveals that in South African rock art the stylisation of human figures typically de-emphasises the corporeal body through extreme elongation, resulting in magical and other-worldly figurations. Consequently, San mark-making is understood by anthropologists as a deeply spiritual art (see, for example, San Rock Art of South Africa: The Bushmen of the Drakensberg mountains [sa]). Conversely, the stylised footballer depicted on the 2010 logo exudes a gauche physicality that denies any dimensions of spiritual enlightenment. However, by also being rendered as a *black* footballer, the figure reinforces the perception, posited by Bernstein and Blain (2003:18), that blacks are good at sport because it requires physical rather than cerebral skills.

World Cup logos have not featured the human figure since Sweden 1958. It is therefore notable that when the tournament is brought to (South) Africa the region is referenced prominently by a (black) human body. If representation is a key theme in post-colonialism, David Spurr's (1993) observation that the bodies of the colonised have been a focal point of colonialist interest takes on renewed meaning in the 2010 logo. In colonial representation, writes Spurr (1993:22-23), "[t]he eye treats the body as landscape … proceeding systematically from part to part, quantifying and spatializing, noting color and texture, and finally passing an aesthetic judgment which stresse[s] the body's role as object to be viewed". Spurr (1993:24) points out that this surveillance is enabled only by "forcible arrest and custody".

It is perhaps the realisation that the African body has been captured and put on display in the 2010 logo that has led to dismayed remarks about its imagery resembling a "frog jumping over a pork chop" (Salie 2006a). Their best intentions notwithstanding, client and designers have echoed the French press in forcefully

constructing not a German, but an African 'other', whose differences FIFA as a latter-day imperial power arguably seeks to project and protect itself against. This position is not lost on the general public: Luke Alfred (2009:3) muses that Sepp Blatter, when first presented with the chaotic South African landscape, probably "harrumphed irritably and pined for the pristine green hillsides of Switzerland".

Slavoj Žižek (cited in Sugden & Tomlinson 2003:195) posits that organisations such as FIFA conceive this "Other as a self-enclosed 'authentic' community towards which ... the multiculturalist maintains a distance rendered possible by his [*sic*] universal position". FIFA's inadvertent reference to 'encapsulating the continent' is telling, and it is ironic that, having chosen to represent (South) Africa as 'passionate', 'playful' and 'free-spirited', the organisation has taken extreme measures to curb exactly these qualities in the host nation for the duration of the FIFA World Cup™.

This said, it is also worth speculating – as Bale and Cronin (2003) suggest – about the extent to which distinctive body language in the 2010 logo reflects not hegemony alone but also resistance in the 'colonised' culture.

The 2010 logo and resistance

Christian Bromberger (cited in Vidacs 2003:149) has argued that football provides a way for people to create a narrative through which they can make sense of their lives. In South Africa, football has been the sport of the disenfranchised masses, and thus a marker of "ethnic, historical, and ideological distinction" (Farred 2003:125). Grant Farrad (2003:125) describes how, during the apartheid struggle, football allowed communities to voice their need to valorise international cultural practices above those that the erstwhile regime held dear; thus, football in the Cape Flats townships mimicked English professional clubs as a "deliberate circumspection" (Farrad 2003:126) of apartheid society. However, as Farrad (2003:128-129) points out, mimicry is also about the potential of the imitator to *exceed* the original identity, therefore, as much as township clubs sought to achieve an "aesthetic symmetry" with their metropolitan templates, many clubs also attempted to overcome their status as cultural derivatives.

Within the context of football as a world-view, Bea Vidacs (2003:151), in her consideration of the symbolic meaning of football in Cameroon, asserts that football can provide "an opportunity to invert the actual power of relationships reigning in the world". Thus, in 1998, Cameroon regarded the FIFA World Cup™(hosted by France) as an opportunity to take revenge on an erstwhile coloniser. The South African team's apparent "downward spiral" (Seale 2009:3) since 1996 obviated any reasonable hope that the host country could aspire, in 2010, to avenge the indignities that its European colonisers had heaped upon the territory in the past. However, this task has arguably, to some small degree, been shouldered by the designers at Switch: but how is this subversion made visible?

The nickname of South Africa's senior national team is *Bafana Bafana*, translated as *The boys, The boys* – a name that has been problematised, not least because it "is overloaded with undertones of boyishness, immaturity and clumsiness" (Seale 2009:3), so much so that the newspaper columnist Fred Khumalo reconstructed the phrase as "buffoona buffoona" (Khumalo 2009a:5). It can be argued, however, that these undesirable 'undertones' are precisely the characteristics signified by the human figure in the 2010 logo. While (South) African designers, on the one hand, chose to achieve an "aesthetic symmetry" with their footballing counterparts in France, Korea and Germany by conforming to FIFA's dictates with slick professionalism, the mimicry becomes a vehicle through which to produce a curiously defiant *difference*. Thus Switch abandons the hitherto dominant symbol of the anodyne football in World Cup logos in favour of a boyish, immature and clumsy (black) human figure that tumbles dangerously into the cool, (white) corporate space of the organisers. The trope is one of transgression – being 'out of place' – and pointedly denies the stereotype of the noble savage associated with African athletes in the western press (Bale & Cronin 2003:2). In fact, the logo embraces tropes that commentators such as Bernstein and Blain find demeaning and racist.

Of course the football *aficionado* understands that the figure collapses because he (all 2010 footballers are male) is executing a *bicycle kick*, a difficult and potentially dangerous acrobatic move that De Abreu (cited in Salie 2006b) states is "the best way of showing off African flair". However, this kick has no relevance to Africa within the global football arena: although its origin is controversial, the *bicicleta* is most readily associated with the Brazilian player Edison Arantes do Nascimento (nicknamed Pelé), and South American countries in general. Moreover, Internet sites featuring detailed descriptions and histories of this move fail to produce a single reference to Africa, for example, Bicycle kick [sa].[23] An extensive glossary on this site – ranging from the Dutch *omhaal* to Vietnamese *Ng bàn đèn* – does not include any African terms for the kick, an omission that implies that the move is not even deployed on this continent. Within this context, the use of the *bicicleta* on the 2010 logo is questionable, but, as Farrad (2003:128) points out, mimicry is "an uneven, hybrid

process". Arguably, the designers deliberately referenced Pelé, who was idolised in both coloured and black townships in the 1960s, from an ongoing and as yet unfulfilled desire to "facilitate … the interpellation of oppressed South Africans into metropolitan culture" (Farrad 2003:125), a project that has not reached completion despite a change of regime (Sunter 2009:8). The fact that the desired identity is undeniably 'south' (if not exactly African) provides a modicum of legitimacy to the use of the *bicicleta*, while its narrative also markedly sets the 'south' apart from the 'north', the latter being signified by FIFA itself.

However, the skill required to execute the bicycle kick also makes it "nearly impossible" (Bicycle kick [sa]) – even for experienced players – to make the move in important games. Since Bafana, Bafana is not expected to survive the first round of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ (Amato 2009a:4; Khumalo 2009:5; Mark 2009:18) it may also be inappropriate, if not somewhat precocious, to reference (South) Africa by means of one of the most difficult manoeuvres in football. Yet it is exactly this hubris – depicting a naive, clumsy child possibly succeeding where grown-ups often fail – that allows the 2010 logo to speak with some complexity of the power relations inherent in global sport (and politics) at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Finally, the realisation that FIFA not only enabled but also supported these transgressions in the logo, bears out the observation by Žižek (cited in Sugden & Tomlinson 2003:195) that the organisation has kept footballing power in the hands of an elite, while tolerating the identity of the 'other'. Sugden and Tomlinson (2003:195) concede that there might be a kind of implicit racism in the way that FIFA has recognised cultural difference in what the authors term a "permissive fashion", and that the organisation has consequently played a critical, if subtle and ideologically complex, role in "the brokerage of forms of neo-colonialism".

Conclusion

Bairner (2001:1) asks to what extent the linkage between sport and national identity is likely to be weakened as a result of major transformations in global society; an examination of the signification of 2010 logo suggests that, in some cases, the erosion is considerable. However, Maguire (1999:206) points out that attempts to create a 'we'-identity in Europe appeared to reinforce a stronger identification of citizens with their own nation. It remains to be seen whether the identity foisted upon South Africans by FIFA during 2010 annoys the nation to such a degree that it serves a unifying, nationalist aim.

Endnotes

1. For the purposes of this article the abbreviation FIFA is used as it is appears on the organisation's official website (http://www.fifa.com/), except where the abbreviation 'Fifa' appears in a direct quote.
2. A distinction should be made between *Antidorcas marsupialis*, or springbok, an antelope indigenous to the Southern African savannah, and the South African national rugby team, referred to as the Springboks, and abbreviated to 'Boks'. The antelope was chosen by the South African Rugby Board as a symbol for the South African rugby team in 1903, and the conferring of the nickname 'Springbok' on team members stems from this period (Dobson 2008). Eventually, all national teams acquired the prefix, and the nickname became a brand. The continued use of this name for the national rugby team, when other national teams have been re-branded as 'Proteas', has been controversial – see Booth (1996). The current debate, however, is as much about copyright as it is about ideology (Quintal 2008:5).
3. The satirist Ben Trovato (2009:7) describes Blatter as a "Swiss gentleman [who] is to soccer as Jesus is to Christianity". Trovato is not alone in conferring ecumenical status on Blatter: Bareng-Batho Kortjaas (2009:4) refers to the FIFA chairman as "the father of the all-powerful chapel running the world game".
4. FIFA's media officer Delia Fischer (cited in Ajam 2008b) countered Mpofu's announcement by stating that FIFA had no particular standards for taxis. However, the illusion of a hands-off policy is quickly eroded when Ms Fischer continues that the South African Department of Transportation had already "submitted plans" to FIFA for the 2009 Confederations Cup as preparation for the "2010 World Cup inspection road show".
5. The involvement of professional graphic designers in the on-going reconstruction of the 'springbok' symbol dates back to at least 1992, when Lindy de Waal (at Ogilvy & Mather) conceived the leaping antelope above a wreath of proteas. In 1996, the Springboks adopted a new badge designed by Jeremy Sampson & Associates: the antelope now leapt from left to right. In 2004, Charles Kuzmanich (cited in Dobson 2008), then of Switch, contacted the South African Rugby Football Union (SARFU) and suggested that "one of the country's oldest and possibly most iconic brands needed to be refreshed". Notably, Kuzmanich's difficulty with the existing antelope was that it lacked 'aggression'; consequently, the emblem was tweaked by Switch "to make the Springbok [*sic*] look mean and formidable" (Kuzmanich cited in Dobson 2008).
6. The short list comprised the following design consultancies: Grid V (Johannesburg); Orange Juice (Durban); Enterprise IG (Johannesburg); Switch (Johannesburg); Jupiter Drawing Room (Cape Town); Two Tone (Johannesburg) (Search for 2010 logo begins. 2005).
7. In addition to FIFA members, judges drawn from South Africa and the rest of Africa voted for Switch's submission.
8. The term *soccer* is an abbreviation and alteration of *Association Football* (Allan 2000:1328).
9. In an article preceding the interview with De Abreu, the Argus reporter is less diplomatic: "[W]hen the logo was unveiled, comments were scathing … ". Goolam Allie (in Salie 2006a), CEO of Santos Football Club, is reported as saying, "I am not an artist and as a non-artist something either appeals to me or it doesn't – and this doesn't".

10. Mexico 1970 evokes much positive comment, while Germany 2006 is generally regarded as "perfectly awful" (Logo Design Love 2008). The fact that the event has not yet taken place may account for the paucity of comment on the 2010 design. However, this condition did not stay the "total hysterical riot" (Sampson 2007) following the unveiling of the 2012 Olympics design (see, for example, Airey 2007).
11. Expecting to find the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ logo fore-fronted by its designers, I similarly drew a blank when first accessing Switch's website and suspected the same motive for the design's invisibility as that offered by Airey. Patient excavation finds the logo buried within a sub-section titled 'Sports branding'.
12. When Cameroon was eventually eliminated, the media attributed their defeat to the very same characteristics that made them attractive in the first place.
13. Tellingly, the three footballers that Carlos Amato (2009b:3) chooses to honour for their "sheer flair" are players from South Africa, Italy and Egypt respectively.
14. However, another aspect of Americanisation has emerged, namely the notion that "sport has … come to express ideas about 'competition, excellence, corporate efficiency, and what it is necessary to do to win – ideas that have their origins in the United States'" (Bernstein & Blain 2003:22).
15. The controversy, in 2009, over the appearance of the South African athlete Caster Semenya, and the likening of the scrutiny of her body to that endured by Saartjie Baartman, is an interesting example of 'othering' in sport (see Caster Semenya and gender discrimination [sa]).
16. Zuma (cited in Hogarth 2009:4) stated that, "Of all the whites groups that are in South Africa, it is only the Afrikaners that are truly South Africans in the true sense of the word".
17. Eben Keun (2009/07/20), brand designer at Breinstorm Architects in Johannesburg, who originally expressed reservations about the design during a television interview at the time of the logo's release, confirmed these views in an email to myself. While Keun's comments raise some technical concerns, he also engages with more ideological issues when he states that "the type [is] extremely naive. The character condescending. [The logo] goes against any of the efforts of … undoing the perceptual scars left on Africa by colonization. It pays a poor homage to the San art it is supposedly referencing. It reduces the African continent as brand to the 'novel poor natives'".
18. FIFA employs a rotation system, inviting bids from continents in turn. The 2014 bid came from South America, where the host country Brazil emerged unchallenged after Columbia's withdrawal (Brazil confirmed as 2014 hosts 2007).
19. Amato is, according to Tony Leon (2009:11), "the Sunday Times soccer maven". The marriage of nationalism and sport is reiterated by the increase, in 2009, of football-related themes in the columns of political commentators such as Leon and Fred Khumalo.
20. Smith (2003:12) separates the notions of *nation* and *ethnic community*, arguing that the latter lacks a territorial dimension, thus excluding it from nationhood. This position implies that the identity depicted in the 2010 logo is perhaps that of an (imagined) homogenous ethnic group residing on the continent of Africa.
21. See Wilson (2009:7).
22. It is perhaps useful to compare the 2010 logotype with the logo for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games; while the latter also refers to hand-drawn letterforms, it is within the context of a sophisticated calligraphic tradition requiring consummate skill and rigorous training. While a key word in the official rationale for the 2010 logo is 'naïve', a key word in the official rationale for the Beijing logo is 'dignified' (see The Olympic Emblem 2008).
23. When asked about the relevance of the bicycle kick in the 2010 logo, South African football experts - in an informal conversation with the author - agreed, after some thought, that the bicycle kick was indeed an African invention. Arguably, merely by being pictured with the map of Africa, the kick has entered a new mythical paradigm.

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