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**Undressing the African Vibe: Issues of Heritage, History, Cultural Power, Space and Imagery around the Cape Town Stadium**

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The building of the Cape Town Stadium offers a starting point to address several issues relating to heritage, as a representation of the past in the present and with an agenda for the future. These issues include: cultural and economic power; spatial and conceptual ex- and inclusion; development and change and revisiting and re-envisioning memory and history. I stress that these issues exist in a complex and ‘tangled’ constellation.

In a hermeneutical reading based on observations in prose from the viewpoint of the flaneur, I identify four conceptual spaces. In ‘the space of projection’ I challenge and redefine notions of cultural power and imagining, concluding that even though a limited mold of the African stereotype dictates certain forms, there is inherent resistance at the seam. In ‘the space of recollection’ I discuss categorical exclusion in the historical narrative and its connection to ‘commonage’ and the Green Point Common, and bring into focus the forced post-apartheid narrative of unity, exemplified by a visitors centre performance. In ‘the space of becoming’ I highlight two discourses of ‘development and change’ and relate them to the terms on which stakeholders’ voices are accepted or rejected. In ‘the space of revival’ I address the possibility of a reworking of Mbeki’s African renaissance narrative in the light of the FIFA 2010 World Cup and arrive at the conclusion that this project is permeated with ‘modern nostalgia’, bearing intrinsic contradictions at the root of any discussion of heritage

**Introduction**

With the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup in South Africa, major development around the tournament has been realised in the cities hosting the games. In Cape

Town this has resulted in the building of the controversial Cape Town Stadium in the Green Point area. Just like many other locations in the city, the history of Green Point area is a laden one, and its future an ongoing topic of popular debate. The planning and building of the stadium and proposed use during and after the tournament have raised a range of related issues that span a wide range of human experiences.

Heightened media focus on South Africa that followed the won 2010 bid begs the answering of questions about images and imagery of South Africa, and the way these are shaped, constructed, guided and contested within different receptive contexts that veer between the local and the global.

The multifaceted history of South Africa, Cape Town and the Green Point Common asks for a conceptualization of the politics of history. In this project I identify on the one hand relativistic narrativity aiming to politicize and on the other uncritical reaffirmation of the official revised version of history.

Presented as a project beyond the immediate destination of FIFA 2010, the urban changes surrounding the tournament ask for a reflection on the discourse of transformation, a theorisation of the temporary openness of a building site and an assessment of the impact this reconfiguration has on people's spatial relations. Taking into account the precarious living conditions of many South Africans, inhabitants and critics alike have raised questions about the financial side of FIFA 2010. The huge amounts of money spent and made on the building of the stadium, an estimated tourism boom, city branding and especially global advertising prompt a critical review of economical power relations, division of profit, and its effects on the local political economy<sup>1</sup>.

The pioneering position of South Africa as the first African country to host a FIFA World Cup and the global reactions triggered ask for an inquiry into South Africa's role in the organisational world of soccer and its specific soccer history.

## Method

Following Shepherd's assertion, "that heritage discourse operates as one of the principle sites ... for negotiating issues of culture, identity and citizenship in the postcolony"<sup>2</sup>, I will set out to analyse the above issues in the light of a carefully (re-)defined conception of heritage as the invisible thread that binds them together.

We can see that these issues are connected to one another, but their entanglement<sup>3</sup>, however, is neither unidirectional nor unambiguous. A simply modelled explanation will inevitably lead to an incomplete understanding of the societal force-field of effects which is implied with the mobilisation of the 'heritage' category. I would like to add to Shepherd's definition that "heritage is *of the past in the present*"<sup>4</sup>, that in the case of the FIFA 2010 World Cup it also entails an agenda to shape and influence the future. I will not engage with the practical policy dimension of heritage but I will focus more on the other half of its Janus face: the popular conception of heritage laid out in the relatively open space of the public sphere. This allows me to ignore the canonised and instrumental version springing from government heritage institutions.

Heritage can never be straightforward, and always bears in itself contradictions, contractions, connections and complexities. It has a "changeable and contingent nature... always in motion... tied to the present ... and coursed through by the currents of commercial exploitation and popular culture"<sup>5</sup> Nuttall's concept of 'entanglement' can be used to explain the folded and non-linear way relations phenomena have to be conceptualised, especially in South Africa, to allow for a specific and context-sensitive analysis:

Entanglement is a condition of being twisted together or entwined, involved with; it speaks of an intimacy gained, even if it was resisted, or ignored or uninvited. It is a term which may gesture towards a relationship or set of social relationships that is complicated, ensnaring, in a tangle<sup>6</sup>

Stemming from the broadly hermeneutic tradition, but with a critical theory taste for paradoxes and oppositions, I will set out to paint the geography of issues surrounding the building, use and image of the Green Point Stadium in the light of South African heritage. Literally following the circular hermeneutic mode of enquiry, I take the subject position of the flaneur<sup>7</sup>. Donned with the qualities of enthusiastic curiosity I paint a literary narrative (under poetic license) while separately analytically addressing the issues raised during my metaphorical stroll.

### **Space of Projection: Image, Cultural power and the Seam**

*The green mountain draws closer as the city, snugly draped on its lower slopes, starts pronouncing its contours. Unmistakably modern, yet, from this distance, blended together in a formless mix of concrete. The majestic natural features of the mountain and its smaller neighbours dictate fascination. One of the few buildings that stands out from here is the newly built Cape Town Stadium on the far right of the bay. A feat of urban branding, it asserts itself into the cliché Blouberg postcard frame, its bowl-shaped, white, round roof vaguely echoing the table cloth visible above. It is already becoming a landmark, every minute that it stands tall against its opponents it brings home the feebleness of their counterarguments. The stadium is erected by FIFA at the point of arrival upon the African continent that the city willingly symbolizes, showing off its ambition as an 'in between': both 'West' and 'rest'. The rules have changed since France gave New York her landmark: Switzerland demanded and South Africa paid Germany to design. The stadium, has quickly and irreversibly etched itself into mnemonic devices of thousands, altering and constructing Cape Town and South Africa's globally distributed image.*

A key concept in the conceptualisation of the 'space of projection' is the question of cultural power. 'Cultural power' is here defined as the agency that cultural stakeholders have or lack in influencing the projection of images, imaginations and the contexts of their reception. In the case of FIFA 2010, media attention is global and the projection of images has become increasingly linked

to commercial interests. Jameson's notion of the commodification of the production of culture is still relevant in this case, and the Camaroffs show in their book *Ethnicity Inc.* how the marketing and managing of a shared identity mimicks the corporate world, thus adding the sound of the cashier to the concept of culture<sup>8</sup>.

In his article "2010 Soccer World Cup: Where Is The Moral Argument?", Mbembe mobilises the concept of culture to hint at the only way in which South Africa can morally account for the money and energy spent on the organization of the FIFA 2010 World Cup. Hinting at the convergence of the cultural and the economic, he argues that, "fundamentally altering the ways in which Africa's voice is expressed and heard and Africa's face is seen in the world" can take place only through cultural production: the production of "representations, images and signs that are sold to the world as commodities."<sup>9</sup>

As much as I agree with Mbembe's moral question marks, it seems that his definition of cultural power is only partial, singling out an important element, yet leaving other aspects uninvestigated. I believe that culture and its marketing are two separate spheres that don't necessarily have to converge, although they often do. The system of cultural power described by Mbembe is a globally operating economic exchange of media products. Culture, however, has, in the postcolonial context, come to signify an arguably unbridgeable marker of difference<sup>10</sup>. Showcasing culture might therefore not be as multifaceted as hoped for and can present South Africa with the problems of generalisation and the stereotyping.

At the basis of Mbembe's argument lies the assumption that a country hosting a sporting event will have the possibility to assert cultural power and use it to its own gains. But it is hard to imagine how different cultural stakeholders would be able to use their cultural power to suit their own needs, as the need of culture itself to be both unique and different points out the inevitable direction of the mechanism of cultural power. The influential stakes are therefore not so much cultural as they are economical.

Historically imbalanced economical and military power relations between ‘the west’ and ‘the rest’ until this day have played a part in the biased division of cultural power in South Africa, and Africa at large<sup>11</sup>. Global trade relations and the current spread of capital contribute greatly to the fact that images of South Africa that operate as cultural commodities in the global market are not domestically produced or conceived.

Even when cultural products are developed entirely within South Africa, as we can see with domestic film production for instance<sup>12</sup>, products aimed at a world audience will conform their tone and content to an established generic type. This type is influenced by culture as a marker of difference and rehearses the same stereotypical images over and over<sup>13</sup>, from Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*’ unspecified blackness to Coca Cola’s generic African “Fifty-one countries” commercial. The unique position of South Africa as the first African country to host the FIFA World Cup only enlarges the point that whatever image will be globally spread has to embody the ‘voice of Africa’, and is largely confined to the already existing category.

There exists, however, another side to cultural power which I have not addressed so far. In their book *Empire*, Hardt and Negri point out that in addressing global networks,

a false dichotomy between the global and the local [exists], assuming that the global entails homogenization and undifferentiated identity whereas the local preserves heterogeneity and difference.<sup>14</sup>

Hardt and Negri thus claim that as much as the local can be bland and uniform, so can the global offer and harness diversity. This particular rendition of cultural power is based on an internal and necessary resistance from within, seen by the authors as “critical and deconstructive, aiming to subvert the hegemonic languages and social structures and thereby reveal an alternative ontological basis<sup>15</sup>”. Derrida has shown that inherent in the institute of power is its own denial and negation<sup>16</sup>. Derrida’s deconstruction points to the text’s surplus, an ever-present additional element that opposes and devalues the core. The

existence of the surplus hints at the inevitability of resistance, the pressing ever-presence of the accidentally opposite, also in relation to African imagery<sup>17</sup>. This understanding of culture allows me to value Mbembe's claims in a different light. South Africa can pose an alternative voice, but can only do so at the margin.

The surplus surrounding the Green Point stadium can be located at the border, the seam and in the transition, whether narratively, temporally or spatially defined. It could be that the absence of townships from the helicopter shots stipulates that they exist elsewhere. As I explore more on 'the border', one can see that the edges can be frayed, and paradoxes may arise. It becomes clear that the cultural power to address these issues is not neatly divided along the local/global division, nor is it strictly belonging to one state or subject. When looking at the projection of images of the stadium we therefore need to read, firstly, along the grain, and secondly, against it.

**Space of recollection: history. commonage, the Green Point Stadium Visitor's Centre, and a selective narrative.**

*Circling the stadium on foot is like skirting the Sultan's palaces in Yogyakarta: the barriers around it do not give way to anything apart from a peek or stare through the barbed wire fence, the stadium like a huge monster residing at a considerable distance. The different views call to mind different historic episodes of the common: open fields call for grazing cows, spiked fences bring to mind interned POWs, demolition of a club house point to forced removals in surrounding areas and a look onto the naked slopes of the mountains feeds the myth of empty pre-colonial Africa. The centre of the turmoil and the instigator of this reflection upon the past is frighteningly silent, keeping its distance even in the visitor centre: random and eclectic pictures of soccer teams, a jeering absence of information signs and the most visible walls reserved as advertising space for FIFA's global partners. The performance portraying Green Point's history seems almost childlike: selective, constructed, fabricated, forcing a multitude of strings to appear as one, the loose ends clearly visible and aplenty.*

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*The two minutes at the viewing deck don't offer any respite and the stadium itself remains unexplored, leaving me with a sense of unfulfillment, the sad feeling of a missed chance and a vague but ominous promise of exclusion during the time of the tournament.*

The history of Green Point and its Common is characterised by a number of poignant paradoxes. In 1766, this undeveloped area of Green Point was picked as an area of amusement by members of the African Society, and they were given a lease by the Council of Policy for “some two acres of land on perpetual lease, on the express condition that the land was to be used for ‘recreation’. It could not be transferred or sold.”<sup>18</sup> Thus the Green Point Common came into being. With a ‘common’ defined as “tract of open land, used by all the inhabitants of a town”<sup>19</sup> it becomes clear that the Greenpoint Common has not until 1994, and arguably not even thereafter, lived up to its inclusive claim of accessibility to *all* inhabitants. The history of the Green Point Common with its consecutive levels of exclusion stresses that more than physically inhabiting the area, a person needed the social consensus to be included. With this in mind, I suggest that in the colonial reality of the Cape, legal and societal views upon ‘citizenship’, rather than residency, were enacted and contested through allowances and restrictions of use and entry of the Common.

Located outside the city of Cape Town, the Green Point Common area was also used as a place of public executions. The Common later became a public meeting place where mainly Dutch and British mingled when the British administration built a race course in 1795<sup>20</sup>, where races, held under the auspices of the Turf Club, took place at the Common until 1894.<sup>21</sup> The Anglo-Boer Wars changed the face of the Common completely, as the arrival of British troops turned the area into an encampment, and ironically, a breeding ground for soccer's popularity, as the game spread across the country along with the presence of British troops.<sup>22</sup> The encampment on the Common was then turned into an incarceration facility for Boer prisoners of war, once again changing the terms of exclusion: with the Zulu pacified in the 1879, the Dutch-Afrikaans

subjects became, at least for the time being, the anathema of British South-African citizenship. Where a decade before a resident with Boer allegiances would have been allowed full use of the Common, which included the rights to have one cow grazing on it, he might post-1899 have found himself confined on the very same spot because of the political and military liability he had come to represent.

After the relocation of the horse races to other areas, the Common developed further as a place for sporting activity, with soccer being only one among many other sports<sup>23</sup>. In the early 1900s the Municipality of Green Point and Sea Point became known for its cosmopolitan character with the arrival of Chinese, Jewish and Greek inhabitants. In the meantime African communities in the vicinity were small and their expansion deliberately discouraged.<sup>24</sup>

Notwithstanding institutionalised colonial discrimination, the 1920s and 1930s saw Green Point Common develop into a multiracial sports ground in the particular fashion of the Cape<sup>25</sup>. The functional apartheid laws that were implemented from 1948 completely racialised the idea of South African citizenship and had a huge effect on the everyday reality of the Common. Forced removals changed the demographic make-up of those living in the vicinity, limiting the logistic feasibility of recreating on the Common for those moved to areas in the Cape flats<sup>26</sup>. The everyday reality of the Common came with severe, official limitations of accessibility.

In contemporary times, the contradictory history of the Green Point Common becomes clear in Greensman's daily performance, played by a single actor at the Green Point Stadium Visitors Centre in the months leading to the World Cup kick-off. The Greensman performance has visible difficulty juggling the opposed sentiments that the moving history of the common incites. The British imported soccer, but with it came concentration camps. Volatile Dutch/Afrikaans heritage is portrayed either humorously as 'ancient' (the same strategy mobilised by Social Darwinism) or in the case of the apartheid laws, as simply the 'devil's work'. When handling the subject of ethnic subjectivity, the performance gazes

over historic responsibility, as if not to upset anyone in the audience. Just like the building site is barred off by a big wall, leaving the outsider only one vantage point, similarly, the vantage point conveyed in the performance draws together all possible strands of history and heritage without an attempt to disentangle, drawing on the unity instead of the knots.

For some time now, the post-structural movement has claimed its stake<sup>27</sup> widely, even in the field of history: typified by the spread of the idea that facts are constructed and objectivity is a utopia. Within this paradigm, the blending of minority<sup>28</sup> histories into one multicultural unity clearly poses a problem. In his chapter “Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts” Chakrabarty suggests that histories can unite into one narrative when “democracy requires hitherto neglected groups to tell their histories, and these different histories come together in accepting shared rational and evidentiary rules”<sup>29</sup>. But simultaneously, he argues that since not every history can or wants to conform to a rationally defensible position, we are forced to deal with a “shared, unhistoriscible and ontological now ... out of joint with itself”<sup>30</sup>. This approach is useful to the way one interprets South Africa. South Africa’s current grapple with the matter of its history and the various particular and sometimes mutually exclusive vantage points, hint at a South African ‘now’ that cannot unproblematically be presented as one.

I suggest that to fully address the colonial past in relation to the new stadium, politicised and monumentalised versions of history should be allowed to contest each other, instead of being pre-emptively pacified. An example of such a toothless narrative is South Africa’s globally spread, picture-perfect tourist imagery<sup>31</sup>. Rassool, for instance, celebrates how the District Six museum “explicitly and implicitly contests the ethnic and racialised ways in which South African society continues to be depicted, in the tourist gaze and beyond, in spite of the demise of apartheid ... [and] also challenges the ways in which national heritage tends to be centrally constructed and handed down by the state”<sup>32</sup>. The Greenpoint Visitors Centre, and the Greensman performance they host, on the

other hand, stay far away from the borders of historic narrative, and thus fail to provide any of the critical and deconstructive practices that are so readily available.

### **Space of becoming: Moving forward, or, regressive development**

*The street is broken open, the old cement and pebbles sidewalk making way for the uniform grey-white stones piled up in neat stashes. A big red Coca-Cola sponsored wall blocks off the site. The row of new lamp posts stretches all the way into the city, in an attempt to make it seem as if the stadium is the original, now extended with the building of a matching side city. Conflicting fabrications border one another. The hyperreal<sup>33</sup>, privately owned and independently operated V&A Waterfront area does not match the architectural theme that the stadium has forced upon the cit. Both at the same time talk vaguely about different origins and futures, and deny each other's existence. Who will reap the benefits from the forward movement the stadium pompously presents? Who is the happy smiling citizen from the advert, baring his shiny teeth in a content smile, excited about what happened to the Green Point Common?*

The future is an interesting media subject, and South Africa's future has a long history as such. The country is widely seen and portrayed as in transition, with a society that has been actively changing since Apartheid rule was disbanded and the first democratic election took place in 1994. In these projections the future looks bright. Representations of other possible futures are nevertheless gathering ground in global and local public imaginations, opposing the optimistic developmental tune of a young democracy. Possible reasons for this change in mood are stubborn are issues such as excessively high crime rates, politicians who keep failing to provide for the basic needs of millions, and ethnic violence aimed at 'mkwerekwere'<sup>34</sup>, occurring time and again all around the country<sup>35</sup>.

A bleak or bright future? Terms like 'transition' and 'change' are used in both accounts, suggesting both improvement and regression within the discursive field of the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup. The role of the government in leading

and laying out the narrative of transformation is generally acknowledged, but the outcome of the “transformational mechanisms in place”<sup>36</sup> that led to the building of the Cape Town Stadium is differently interpreted by the various stakeholders. In the case of urban development the process is irreversible, in filling an open space one moves from multiple possibilities to one concrete result. Once the building is there the outcome can be contested, but earlier possibilities no longer function as an alternative in the light of a ‘fait accompli’.

The uniformity that the stadium and its immediate surrounding propagate does not only come at the cost of multiple imagined possibilities, but also at the cost of a heterogeneous pattern of use that existed in the open spaces now converged. An example of affected uses is the undoing of the sports facilities of a soccer club with a long history on the Green Point Common. The planning of a road through their fields made the City of Cape Town decide to end their lease. Here the soccer World Cup, temporary though it might be, outweighs the pleas of another more permanent and enduring soccer body. Another group affected by the development of a big part of the common are the itinerants, whose presence on the Common has not been officially acknowledged<sup>37</sup>, although it is highly probable that current informal use has a long history<sup>38</sup>.

Even though there is no mentioning of this group of un-official stakeholders of the Common in the plans around the new stadium, one might expect that both the City of Cape Town and FIFA, contrary to their official position, would prefer the area to be free of the homeless. The lack of mention of the itinerants in the new plan points out how much space of possibility is prepared for them in developed area: ie. none. Not recognised by the bureaucracy, the only protest voiced by itinerants has been in the popular press. Since themes of removal and vagrancy do not seem to fit with a forward movement envisioned in post-apartheid South Africa, it seems that those relying on the discourse of improvement judge that those issues are better left unmentioned.

The stakeholders most articulate in protesting against the building of the new stadium have been the inhabitants of Green Point. In his discussion of public opinion in the colonial state, Chatterjee suggests that on the basis of cultural difference only a specific part of the public will be considered as sharing and shaping the public opinion, whereas media springing from groups pictured as marginal are ignored<sup>39</sup>. In the post-colony, the following division can be imagined. In South Africa's framework of democratic governance and free market capitalism, vagrants are the have nots, marked as marginal by cultural difference. The inhabitants of Green Point, on the other hand, supported by their constitutional rights to protest, and their official bureaucratic status as stakeholders, are in light of Chatterjee's model, most likely to be considered to voice public opinion. Their protest, however, was criticised from different sides.

In line with the linear development discourse, development is deemed to equal economic improvement. Then Cape Town mayor Helen Zille was quoted in the Cape Argus of the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006 saying,

We respect people's legal rights in terms of the Constitution and we don't want to infringe on people's democratic rights, but we have warned them of the consequences ... It is puzzling to me that the residents who object will decline this huge investment to have state-of the-art sports facilities and a magnificent urban park.

She also claimed that any moral grounds concerning this development, including tackling the problems of vagrancy and prostitution in the area, would be non-existent if the stadium would not be built, since other area's development had a higher priority. Her response is one of acknowledgement of the official status of the inhabitants protest as public opinion, and her argument is aimed at the logical structure of their reasoning, as she tries to convince them of the positive sides of building.

ANC provincial chairman James Ngculu, on the other hand, uses a different rhetoric to describe the opposition to the new Green Point Stadium— namely that of Apartheid legacy and racism. He claimed that the inhabitants would be committing an act of environmental terrorism to prevent the stadium from

bringing "the vuvuzelas and the noise of the black people" to the area. The picture this statement invokes is that the public opinion in South Africa can nowadays no longer be represented by a (it is implied) white minority, and their protest against the building of the stadium is thus marginalised on the basis of cultural difference, hinting that the 'real' public opinion comes from the same people whose noise is so feared. Ngculu does not mention the value of development in itself, but uses the discourse of democratisation in his interpretation of the change that the stadium can deliver.

Despite protesters, the stadium was nevertheless built and public consultation was partially and arbitrarily followed. Whether this will, on a permanent note, bring 'the noise of the black people' to the area or leave the inhabitants with a tangibly better living environment has yet to be seen. Geographically, the stadium is far from the concentrations of black residency and sports clubs. Built in the fashion of the W&A Waterfront and Century City<sup>40</sup> (as copies of non-existent historical and modern buildings) and privately managed in a style similar to the aforementioned semi-public spaces, it seems that the main interest in the FIFA 2010 World Cup development lies elsewhere than with the public—regardless of which of the above definitions of public we choose here.

### **Space of revival: Unsure nostalgia, the renaissance of South African Football**

*When visiting the Cape Town Stadium Visitor Centre, the soccer enthusiast is bombarded with advertisements, carefully mixed with the material building on display. One of the sentences displayed struck a chord by way of its implied and mobilised meanings. It heralded: "The beautiful game with an African vibe". Commercial slogans like these travel back and forth, between, on the one hand, the empty marketing branding lingo solely based on the accumulation of profit and, on the other hand, a mental picture that for some reason has proven itself able to captivate the minds of those exposed to it. From a neo-Marxist point of view, the tournament is just a way for capital to acquire more capital. The main income is advertising, and the development of stadiums, fan parks and official*

*training facilities is mainly a creation of advertising space. Alternatively, a slogan connects to a discourse and embodies something more than just the product it is trying to sell.*

*The question that I immediately asked was: what is an 'African vibe'? And does the beautiful game of soccer usually have to do without 'then', if now it suddenly became present? What would be the value of adding the 'African Vibe' to the beautiful game? Would it be like a so-called 'cherry on top', or an exotic spice mixed in with bangers and mash? And what are the implications of the 'African Vibe' for soccer? Is it a blessing, or could it also potentially harm soccer with its ominous and unreliable Africanness?*

Mbeki's appropriation of the concept of African renaissance in his famous speech<sup>41</sup> has ignited a vivid discussion among theorists about the nature of the mobilised analogy with its European historic counterpart<sup>42</sup>. In defining the African Renaissance, he prioritises the humanist objective to recognise man as "a human and African being"<sup>43</sup>, and stresses that the future must be built on a knowledge of 'oneself' in the past. He identifies liberation— social, economic, cognitive and so on, as the way to confront African challenges. Furthermore, Mbeki urges a pan-African solidarity. Above all, in his speech, Mbeki emphasises that "the African Renaissance, in all its parts, can only succeed if its aims and objectives are defined by the Africans themselves, if its programmes are designed by ourselves and if we take responsibility for the success or failure of our policies"<sup>44</sup>.

Mbeki's speech is, like all public discourse, open to critique. Essentially a building block of the project of modernity, the European Renaissance unmistakably shares responsibility for how the era of colonialism has affected Africa. In my view, it would be helpful, because of ideological connotations, to disqualify the term 'Renaissance' from use in an African context. Additionally, according to former ANC stalwart Feinstein, Mbeki's understanding of the African renaissance runs the risk of being hijacked by

essentialist Africanism<sup>45</sup>. In that case, the proposed elevatory project falls for the same simplistic exclusive binary logic of cultural ‘othering’ as in the Apartheid days, and is helped in this inversion by a counter-democratic retribalisation of power structures<sup>46</sup>.

All this criticism has not stopped the use of the term, and a revival in relation to the FIFA 2010 World Cup can be noted. The working title of the Cape Town Stadium was the ‘African Renaissance’ stadium, and in his aforementioned article, Mbembe lauds the World Cup as stage for a “cultural and urban renaissance in South Africa”<sup>47</sup>. Modern nostalgia, conceptualised as harking back to something that has never been<sup>48</sup> seems prevalent in the complex discourse surrounding the revivalistic potential of the FIFA World Cup. Mbembe’s romantic mentioning of a reviving of the past, while in the same sentence mentioning further de-raciliasation, shows the inconsistency and symbolism to which references to the past are prone.

Another example of this kind of symbolic essentialism is the case of the vuvuzela and its rise to fame during the Confederations Cup. As an unofficial last rehearsal of the FIFA 2010 World Cup, South Africa hosted the Confederations Cup in June 2009. The typical vuvuzela horn is popular among many South African soccer supporters, and was used en masse by spectators, causing upheaval in the different European camps that were not used to the noisy instrument. The discussion in the media that followed showed in a very clear way how extreme positions disregard that heritage is never a fixed fact, nor is it necessarily historic by simply referring to a specific time and space even though invested with political currency, particularly in the South African context. Instead of engaging with empirical observations provided by scientists<sup>49</sup> that the vuvuzela is bad for your ears, the responses in the public discussion about this means of public participation have been mostly confined to two positions. Both are ideological and normative. The first denounces the unusual stadium antics as hindrance to the normal way of enjoying football, whereas the second elevates the use of the vuvuzela as a quintessentially African soccer practice that should,

if not enjoyed, at least be endured without commentary. Whereas commentators holding the first position can be accused of narrow-mindedness, so can the holders of the second be categorised as uncritical of difference thinking. Although the vuvuzela historically is a well known South African instrument, the use of it during football matches is something that has only garnered momentum in the past few decades.

Representative of the symbolic African Renaissance, the vuvuzela was typecast either as martyr or foe, both equally problematic. The vuvuzela fell victim to the mechanism of ‘heritage effect’: just like objects in a museum taking on larger than life capacity, so does something presented as heritage take on the role of representing something that has been passed on<sup>50</sup>. Directly dismissing the vuvuzela’s suitability for a sports venue because of its exoticness is as easy a position as declaring it untouchable, merely for the fact that it happens to exist in public space. Heritage objects are thus imbued with political sentiment: constructed as the fictitious or the authentic.

The conception of soccer heritage in South Africa does not offer easy answers on how to interpret the possibility of an African renaissance through the FIFA 2010 World Cup. Brought by the British, soccer’s origins are colonial but the sport offers itself as a vehicle for the prolongation of many South African traditions like youth sports and praise naming<sup>51</sup>. Despite its colonial legacy, soccer grew mostly popular among black South Africans. As the game became assimilated into the African landscape, it has held a unique position in the imagination. In South Africa, it has been used as both a tool for hegemonic containment and as a tool for political awareness and ‘the struggle’. In past times, owing to its status as an African sport, football in South Africa structurally received too little funding and resources. Now, both economically challenged players and those seeking a shortcut to success, money and fame<sup>52</sup> are viable contenders for the game. Sadly, in terms of actual sporting results, at best opinions are divided and at worst ‘Africa’, as a sporting continent, has failed. Tshabalala’s heart-warming opening goal and confident Ghana reaching the quarter finals were seen as

unexpected, but disappointing early exits of Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Algeria and South Africa showed African football to be found wanting on the world stage.

Africa's position in the organisation of football globally has nevertheless taken a step towards a greater influence<sup>53</sup>, yet this fact is easily distorted by the way this developement is historicised as a colonial narrative. Within the global mediascape and beyond its own influence, Africa is pictured as emerging from what Chakrabarty describes as 'history's waiting room'<sup>54</sup>, a metaphorical place to which colonised states have been confined. The irony of this narrative is that this emergence is believed to finally finish the project of modernity set in motion by colonialism. Agreeing that (South) Africa can host a tournament as successfully as a 'Western' country may only crystallises the condescending mentality that still pervades outsider perspectives about Africa.

Africa's relationship with soccer is complex and as I have shown in this paper, a number of intersecting and contradictory aspects around its heritage are present. Narratives that present South African soccer heritage suggest that constant contestation is intrinsic to a complex understanding of the matter. A critical reading will point to the tangles in this trajectory. The the only way the historicising of linear history, whether presenting a global, nationalist or relativist position, can be contained is by allowing paradoxes and even oppositions to exist.

*We are back full circle, at the point of departure. Well aware, legs heavy from the sturdy walk of inquiry and with a head a little dizzied by all the thoughts I sit down and look at the stadium once more. It explains me, in the golden late afternoon light, that time will tell what the legacy of the FIFA 2010 Soccer World Cup will be for Africa, South Africa, Cape Town and the Green Point Common. I realise that the building, invested with layers of meaning, has come to symbolise much more than can be seen on the outside. A surfacing of a tangle, there for all to investigate.*

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For a discussion of economic consequences see R. Mabugu and A. Mohamed, The Economic Impacts of Government Financing of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. (Stellenbosch: University of Stellenbosch, 2008).
- <sup>2</sup> N. Shepherd, "Heritage." Shepherd, N. and S. Robins. New South African Keywords. (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2008. 116-128) 124.
- <sup>3</sup> S. Nuttall. Entanglement: Literary and Cultural Reflections on Post-Apartheid. (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008).
- <sup>4</sup> Shepherd, Heritage 117.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid. 123.
- <sup>6</sup> Nuttall 1.
- <sup>7</sup> Conceptualised by Baudelaire and academically appropriated in, for instance: M. de Certeau, "Walking in the City." During, S. The Cultural Studies Reader. (London: Routledge, 1999. 151-161) and E. Jokinen and S. Veijola, "The Disoriented Tourist: The Figuration of the Tourist in Contemporary Cultural Critique." Rojek, C. and J. Urry. Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory. (London: Routledge, 1997. 23-51).
- <sup>8</sup> See also F. Jameson, Postmodernism: Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991) and J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, Ethnicity Inc. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).
- <sup>9</sup> A. Mbembe, 2006. 2010 Soccer World Cup: Where Is The Moral Argument? 3 Nov 2009 <<http://www.africultures.com>>.
- <sup>10</sup> H. Garuba and S. Radithlalo, "Culture." Shepherd, N. and S. Robins. New South African Keywords. (Johannesburg: Jacana, 2008. 35 – 46).
- <sup>11</sup> S. Hall, "The West and the Rest." Hall, S and Gieben. Formations of Modernity. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992. 275-333).
- <sup>12</sup> Tsotsi. Dir. G. Hood. 2005, Jerusalem. Dir. R. Ziman. 2008, and District 9. N. Blomkamp. 2009.
- <sup>13</sup> H. Garuba and N. Himmelman, 2009. The Cited and the Uncited: Towards an Emancipatory Reading of Representations of Africa in Recent Hollywood Films. Unpublished.
- <sup>14</sup> M. Hardt and A. Negri. Empire. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002) 44.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid. 47.
- <sup>16</sup> J. Derrida, Of grammatology. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
- <sup>17</sup> A clear resemblance exists here with the 'uncited' in Garuba and Himmelman.
- <sup>18</sup> N. Kagan, The Growth and Development of the Municipality of Green Point and Sea Point. (Cape Town: UCT Theses, 1975) 6.
- <sup>19</sup> "Common." Chambers Concise Dictionary. (W & R Chambers Ltd: Edinburgh, 1992).
- <sup>20</sup> Kagan 7.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid. 73.
- <sup>22</sup> Alegi.
- <sup>23</sup> Kagan 73-4.
- <sup>24</sup> Kagan.
- <sup>25</sup> On creolized Cape identity see: N. Shepherd, "Archeology Dreaming: Post-Apartheid Urban Imaginaries and the Bones of the Prestwich Street Dead." Journal of Social Archeology (2007): 3 - 28.
- <sup>26</sup> M. Paulse, "Everyone Had Their Differences but There Was Always Comradeship': Tramway Road, Sea Point, 1920s to 1961." Field, S. Lost Communities, Living Memories: remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town. (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2001. 44-61).
- <sup>27</sup> See for instance H. White, The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992) and F. Ankersmit, Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language. (Groningen: University of Groningen, 1981).
- <sup>28</sup> For an understanding of the term 'minority': "a group numerically smaller than the rest population of the state. It is not in a dominant position, its culture, language, religion, race, etc. are distinct from that of the rest population, its members have a will to preserve their specificity"

D. Smilhula, "Definition of National Minorities in International Law." Journal of US-China Public Administration (2009): 45-51. 1.

<sup>29</sup> D. Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) 100.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 104.

<sup>31</sup> See also E. Edwards, "Postcards: Greetings from Another World." Selwyn, T. Myths and Myth Making in Tourism. (Chichester: Wiley, 1996. 197-222), C. Crawshaw, and J. Urry. "Tourism and the Photographic Eye." Rojek, C. and J. Urry. Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory. (London: Routledge, 1997. 176-195) and J. Urry, The Tourist Gaze. (London: Sage, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> C. Rassool, "Memory and the Politics of History in the District Six Museum" in Murray, N., N. Shepherd and M. Hall. Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City. (London: Routledge, 2008. 113-127) 126.

<sup>33</sup> 'Hyperreal' here refers to Baudrillard's "model of a real without origin or reality" J. Baudrillard, "The Precession of Simulacra." Baudrillard, J. Simulations. (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983. 1-75) 2.

<sup>34</sup> Mkwerekwere is isiZulu slang with negative connotations meaning 'foreigner' or 'outsider' and is mainly aimed at (Black) nationals from other African countries.

<sup>35</sup> See B. Harris, A Foreign Experience: Violence, Crime and Xenophobia during South Africa's Transition. Violence and Transition Series Vol. 5. (Johannesburg: Centre for Study of Violence and Reconciliation, 2001) and J. Sharp, "Fortress SA: Xenophobic Violence in South Africa." Anthropology Today (2008): 1-3.

<sup>36</sup> Barac 240.

<sup>37</sup> Todeschini and Japha Architects and Planners, The Green Point Common Masterplan. (Development Proposal. Cape Town, 1991) and all later publications around the planning of the new Green Point Stadium on the Common don't address the issue of homeless people using the common as a place to sleep.

<sup>38</sup> The often used term in Cape Town for itinerants, 'Bergie', is derived from the Afrikaans word for mountain, and is said to have developed since unproductive slaves were forced off the farms and started living on the mountain slopes and caves.

<sup>39</sup> P. Chatterjee, The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 22-26.

<sup>40</sup> See also R. Marx, "Palaces of Desire: Century City and the Ambiguities of Development." Robins, S. Limits to Liberation After Apartheid: Citizenship, Governance and Culture. (Oxford: James Currey, 2006. 225-242).

<sup>41</sup> T. Mbeki, The African Renaissance, South Africa and the World. 9 Apr 1998. Speech delivered at United Nations University. 13 Oct 2009 <<http://www.unu.edu/unupress/Mbeki.html>>.

<sup>42</sup> See E. Maloka, "The South African "African Renaissance" Debate: A Critique." 2002. 17 Oct 2009 <<http://www.polis.sciencesbordeaux.fr/vol8ns/maloka.pdf>> and P. Vale, and S. Maseko. "South Africa and the African Renaissance." International Affairs (1998): 271-287.

<sup>43</sup> Mbeki, sec. 2, par 8.

<sup>44</sup> Idem, sec.8, par. 9.

<sup>45</sup> A. Feinstein, After the Party: a Personal and Political Journey in the ANC. (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007)

<sup>46</sup> M. Mamdani, Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

<sup>47</sup> Mbembe, sec. 4, par. 1.

<sup>48</sup> M. Hall and P. Bombardella, "Paths of Nostalgia and Desire through Heritage Destinations at the Cape of Good Hope." Murray, N., N. Shepherd and Hall M. Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City. (London: Routledge, 2008. 245-258) 245-6.

<sup>49</sup> D. Swanepoel, J. Hall and D. Koekemoer, "Vuvuzela: Good for Your Team, Bad for Your Ears." South African Medical Journal (2010): 99-100.

<sup>50</sup> Shepherd, Heritage 125.

<sup>51</sup> A Alegi, P. Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 2004

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<sup>53</sup> P. Darby, The Relationship between Africa, Football and FIFA. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002).

<sup>54</sup> Chakrabarty.