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This Beautiful,
Tangled, Chaotic Game:
*On Three-Sided Football,
Triolectics and World Space(s)*



The only thing that we can be sure of is that life means movement.

Asger Jorn¹

I

“Time,” wrote situationist and artist Asger Jorn, “is the change that is only conceivable in the form of a progressive movement in space, while space is the solid that is only conceivable in its participation in a movement.”² In other words, “The action of space-time is the process, and this process is itself the change of time in space and the change of space in time.”³ Space and time cannot exist without the other, nor do they possess “a reality or value outside of change or process.”⁴ To put it another way, the hyphen in space-time represents the process—movement and variation—that binds these concepts in continuous relation, without allowing both elements to completely fuse (or collapse) into one.

Situating this in human terms, Jorn wrote: “What makes the space-time of a human life a reality is its variability. What gives the individual a social value is the variability of their behaviour in relation to others.”⁵ Between the individual and the collective, variability is what upholds (or withholds) the autonomy of a person while enabling concord (or discord) among the many. “If this variability becomes private,” wrote Jorn, who saw subjectivity as non-individualistic; that is, “excluded from social valorisation—as is the case under authoritarian socialism”—then “human space-time becomes unrealisable.”⁶ To counter this effect, Jorn proposed a “hyperpolitics” that would “strive for the direct realisation of humanity”—the kind of politics that could, as he put it, valorise humanity itself.⁷ (Behind this proposal is Jorn’s view that value is subjective and unstable, and its surplus should not be eliminated but understood beyond economics, through society, biology, and the “counter-value” of art, whose “function as an index of the very instability of social values” is “something conventionally useless and therefore crucial.”⁸)

Jorn expressed these ideas in an essay published in *Internationale Situationniste* #4 (June 1960), two years before he proposed three-sided football⁹ as an antagonism to normal football: what he saw as a spectacle predicated on the ultimate binaries, ‘us versus them,’ which represents “the worst aspects of modern capitalism.”¹⁰ As an alternative, Jorn envisaged a game played on a hexagonal pitch with three teams, three goals, one ball and no referee.¹¹ The rules related to standard football are reversed and subject to revision, and the team that lets in the fewest goals wins, making the victory defensive rather than offensive.¹²

Three-sided football offers a practical diagram to illustrate Jorn’s (avowedly non-academic) conception of “trialectics”—“the assertion that *any complementary relationship must always be at least triple and can never be established in a purely duple system.*”¹³ Both the theory and the game elaborated on the artist’s ideas surrounding human space-time, and enacted a refusal of “the normal dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis,” which resulted in a game of “*merciless either-or, luck or misfortune, renewal or annihilation.*”¹⁴ Jorn also challenged “the static idea of complementarity”¹⁵ put forward by physicist Niels Bohr to explain wave-particle duality in the study of light and matter: that while it is impossible to observe wave and particle aspects simultaneously, their mutual observation and description (used “alternatively in different experimental arrangements”) enables a better understanding than if each is taken alone.¹⁶ Jorn reasoned that the only conclusion to draw from Bohr’s theory, if philosophy was to gain “new possibilities of existence” from it, was “the necessity of *the simultaneous presence of several complementary or mutually incompatible but equally valid philosophical systems, principles or tendencies.*”¹⁷ But to follow this line of thought would lead nowhere, Jorn supposed, unless it resulted in a critique of the

theory's limits (though "a purely philosophical critique" would "conclude nothing at all"), and the introduction of a third independent yet complementary theory of light alongside those of waves and particles.¹⁸ Crucially, Jorn's concept of trilectics, and his critique of Bohr's complementarity, was rooted in his artistic study of light and colour.¹⁹ He illustrated this by referencing Philipp Otto Runge's colour ball, a spherical model that maps all possible variations based on the relations between primary and complementary colours. At the centre of this sphere, Runge noted, "all nuances of the surface dissolve by an identical number of grades into totally indifferent grey: in ratios that depend on the degree of activity in the total sum of elements."²⁰ On this model, Jorn saw that "colours oppose each other like the angles of a triangle, not in an antagonism of two poles. Red has as its contrast a mixture of yellow and blue—to become green; blue, a mixture of red and yellow—to become orange; yellow a mixture of red and blue—to become violet." What he concluded from these observations was that "all mixtures are characterised as actualised poles," and "variability and play are the elements which make up the mixture."²¹

Thus, while the three primary colours—in accord with Bohr's theory—relate to each other complementarily, Jorn conceded, "the complementary colours relate dialectically and not complementarily to each other, as their synthesis abolishes the colour effect."²² (Leading Jorn to conclude that the theory of complementarity does not hold up in the world of colour.²³) What emerges is an ongoing connection between "complementary statics and dynamic dialectics," in which "an equivalence of all particulars, in their particularity" is created.²⁴ This dynamic is reflected in the "completely continuous progression" that Runge described in the colour sphere, where "the size of the structure develops from the differences between the elements and its form from the reciprocal inclination of the elements."²⁵ (Jorn wrote that the basic process behind his trielectical system is modifiable, extendable, and "totally undogmatic." In short: fusion—the actualisation of a conjunction—creates fission, every "compromise isolates and virtualises the opposite standpoint," and the resulting antagonism creates "a situation"—the basic elements of which "can be organised by the formation of two situations equally different and complementary to the first."²⁶)

When developing his theory of trilectics, Jorn engaged with the ideas of Romanian philosopher Stéphane Lupasco, who believed that things "are able to exist only in function of their successive and contradictory conflicts."²⁷ As Lupasco observed, "all energetic movement—which ever form it takes—implies an antagonistic event such that the actualisation of one brings about the potentialisation (the virtualisation) of the other."²⁸ These "Antithetical elements," Lupasco noted, "possess the constituent property of the idea of dynamism itself"²⁹—the third of "three intersecting dialectics" that ensures a continued movement between two antagonistic forces.³⁰

But Jorn perceived a problem. For one, he rejected Lupasco's position—which takes into account the second law of thermodynamics, whereby entropy increases in a closed macrophysical system and homogeneity governs the evolution of particles, including photons, in the microphysical world—that light equals death.³¹ To counter this, Jorn put forward Newton's view that light is a non-homogenous assemblage of constituent (heterogeneous) particles (colours) and Goethe's assertion "that the division of light into colours is an inverse process"—that is, "of materialisation" and "a tendency towards 'life'."³² Jorn also believed that Lupasco had been "taken captive by an antagonism bounded by the opposition of the homogenous and the heterogeneous,"³³ and "did not—or did not

wish to—take account of” the “placing of all mixtures in play.”³⁴ (As opposed to the example of Runge’s colour wheel.) This rejection of Lupasco’s “arbitrary antagonisms”³⁵ relates to the main difference Joao Leao identifies between Jorn’s and Bohr’s ideas (and by association, Lupasco’s): “that complementary relations were, by definition, unresolvable, while triolectic relations suggested a number of intermediate compromises which amounted to creative resolutions.”³⁶

Referring again to Runge’s colour wheel, where everything moves towards a grey centre, Jorn described the fact that in nature the opposite occurs: “everything becomes greyer and greyer the more it spreads out and becomes distanced.”³⁷ Furthering his train of thought, he wondered, “Is our perception of space one-sided, like our perception of past and future, and thus *oriented*? Should the idea of the expansion of the universe be supplemented with another about that same universe in the process of shrinking?”³⁸ These questions, in which Jorn’s observations are positioned as a third independent reading between two others, point to another critique the artist had of Bohr’s position: that he made the mistake of “cutting out the observer as an influencing element” by making “him one with the conditions of the observations.”³⁹ What Jorn found lacking was the crucial demarcation between the objective, actual and subjective—“or, to put it another way, *object, instrument and observer*.”⁴⁰

It is this third position, an “Archimedean point outside of that which is to be moved,” that Jorn sought to reinstate.⁴¹ For any two descriptions of a phenomenon “to be sufficient or complete,” Jorn wrote, “a third necessary description is always ignored, which is only to say that the three descriptions form a unit and thus become philosophically accessible.”⁴² This idea could be aligned with what Jorn called the abolition of variability (“as far as meaning is concerned”) once thought and expression have become standardised (or rationalised) into a concept, with those who do “not follow these rules of the game... simply not taken into account.”⁴³

This oversight is rectified on the three-sided football pitch, where the third unaccounted thing in any philosophical system that Jorn identified is given space to assert itself. In so doing, the idea that “two dialectical oppositions neutralise each other, like positive and negative,” is upended with the introduction of “three mutual oppositions.”⁴⁴ In other words, by inserting a third element into a binary system that creates an aggression between bilateral opponents, tensions are mediated in a way that avoids the endgame of a fixed two-way confrontation. Movement thus becomes “the instrument with which one ascertains positions and positions are the instrument with which one ascertains movement.”⁴⁵ The result, as academic Karen Kurczynski observed, is lateral and continual “evolution without any teleological end.”⁴⁶ After all, with three terms rather than two, “Jorn’s triolectic schemata disrupted conceptions of progress and regression” so “that no forward or backward motion could be described.”⁴⁷

Another way to understand Jorn’s theoretical game is through his definition of a law and a rule. “A law is to be considered absolute in a given situation,” he explained, “but a rule is a law which one decides to follow or not follow, and in a given situation or a particular form of situations is thus still open to choice and decision.”⁴⁸ Therefore, variability—what makes human life a reality and defines the social value of a person in relation to others—is the law of the game, the outcome of which is contingent on the individuals playing at any given time and the rules devised among players within the game itself. Three-sided football thus becomes more about devising, enacting, observing and mediating a constantly shifting (and crucially open) field of polarisations, compromises and potentialities rather than a zero-sum contest. In practice, the game demonstrates Jorn’s belief—in reference to Raymond Aron—that it is possible “to harmonise a hierarchical system of values (in itself) with Max Weber’s world of free play.”⁴⁹ (“To reject this would be a fallacious illusion.”⁵⁰)

Yet, despite the political undertones, Jorn denied any kind of political advice behind his game, or the ideas it enacted. (“I am only trying to discover what happens,” he insisted.⁵¹) But there were real-world implications to the game’s propositions, especially considering the period in which Jorn was thinking them through: when the Third World liberation movement was actively seeking a third way through the polarisations of North and South, East and West, Left and Right, Communist and Capitalist. “It is like a football match where both sides are trying to win,” he said of the “naïve competition” produced by such duality.⁵²

II

Amazingly, there is no record of Jorn ever having staged a game of three-sided football. It is said that the London Psychogeographical Association organised the first match in the early-1990s as part of the Glasgow Anarchist Summer School.⁵³ It has since been played elsewhere, including London, where the Deptford Three-Sided Football Club (D3FC), which formed in 2012, has its home ground. A Three-Sided World Cup was staged in 2014 at the Museum Jorn in Silkeborg, Denmark, where Jorn was born. Organised by the International Three Sided Football Federation, teams came from all over the world (France, Germany, Poland, England, Lithuania, Turkey and Denmark), and the Danish team Silkeborg KFUM won the tournament. Another Three-Sided Football World Cup was held in Kassel in August 2017, and the next one is apparently scheduled for 2020 in London.⁵⁴

D3FC have a succinct description of the game on their website. “In open play,” they write, “teams are free to form (or break) alliances in order to gain advantage against the opposing team(s). While tactical planning plays a role in such manoeuvres, the penetration of the defence by two opposing teams imposes upon the defence the task of counterbalancing their disadvantage through sowing the seeds of discord in an alliance which can only be temporary.”⁵⁵ In practice, anything can happen.

This brings us to the dialectic of triplicity, as developed by philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre. In his work, Lefebvre pointed out “the problems in the reception of Marx’s work because of the two-term opposition between bourgeoisie and proletariat,” which does not take into account “the third aspect of land” and “ultimately the territory of the nation-state.”⁵⁶ As academic Stuart Elden explains, “one of Lefebvre’s problems with dialectical materialism is its tendency toward a linear, teleological picture of historical change.”⁵⁷ In the 1970 publication *La fin de l’histoire*, Lefebvre took a lateral approach to the concept of progress, which allowed “the dialectic to not simply be the resolution of two conflicting terms but a three-way process, where the synthesis is able to react upon the first two terms,” and no term is prioritised over the other.⁵⁸ (As is the case in Jorn’s conception.) For Lefebvre, the dialectic is part of a continual process, which in itself represents the third element. “The third term is *already* everywhere,” Elden continues.⁵⁹ (Or as Lefebvre put it, “no two without three.”⁶⁰)

In this sense, the dialectic is not about resolution or negation, nor is synthesis its end result, just as Jorn asserted. It is an ongoing non-teleological movement, which brings to mind the rhizome theory, as famously proposed by Deleuze and Guattari—a concept also created to break down oppositional binaries that were perceived to characterise Western thinking. The rhizome is an “antigenealogy” composed of (organic) plateaus; Deleuze and Guattari cite Gregory Bateson’s definition of a plateau as “a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation toward a culmination point or external end.”⁶¹ It is a concept “composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion” with “no beginning or end,”⁶² as in nature—where “roots are taproots with a more multiple, lateral, and circular system of ramification, rather than a dichotomous one.”⁶³



Lefebvre had his own organic interpretation of the non-teleological dialectic, which he applied to his conception of space. He did so by unifying three manifestations or “modalities” of it—conceived (representation of space), lived (space of representation), and spatial practice (which structure lived reality)—into one theory of spatiology, which explores how space “gets *actively produced*.”⁶⁴ Thus, “space becomes reinterpreted not as a dead, inert thing or object but as organic and alive”—it “has a pulse, and it palpitates, flows, and collides with other spaces.”⁶⁵ In this conception, the real and imagined co-exist simultaneously within representational space, which “may be qualified in various ways” —physical, mental, social—“because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic.”⁶⁶ Embracing “the loci of passion, of action, of lived situations,” which “immediately implies time,” the space of representation—lived space—is understood as multi-layered and never still.⁶⁷ This concept lent itself to the way Lefebvre made “political purchase of process thinking” as urban theorist Andy Merrifield points out, and “of conceiving reality in *fluid movement*, in its *momentary existence* and *transient nature*.”⁶⁸

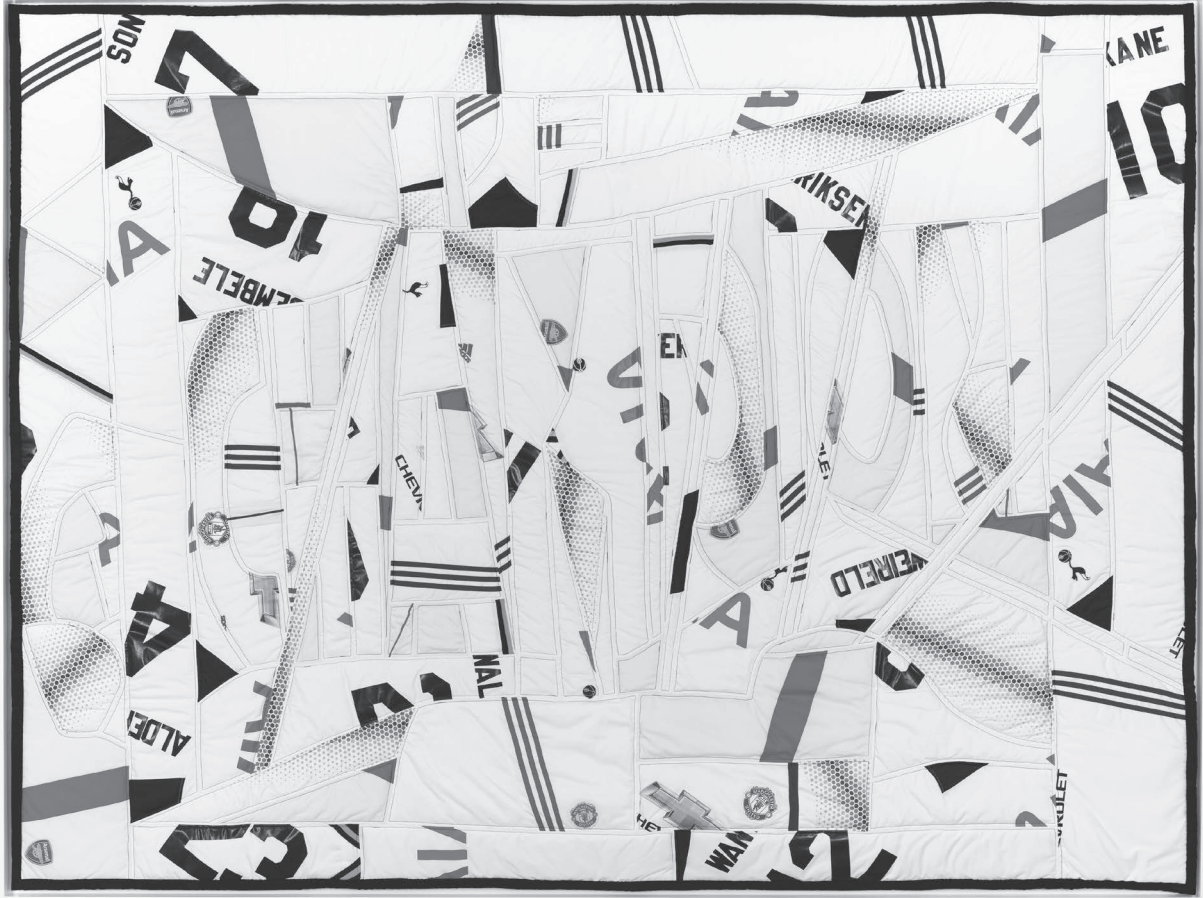
Building on Lefebvre’s work, Edward Soja (also an urban theorist) devised a theory of what he called “thirdspace,” whose close approximation is Lefebvre’s lived space of representation. Thirdspace is “a limitless composition of lifeworlds that are radically open and openly radicalisable; that are all-inclusive and transdisciplinary in scope yet politically focused and susceptible to strategic choice; that are never completely knowable but whose knowledge nonetheless guides our search for emancipatory change and freedom from domination.”⁶⁹ Crucial to this conception was trialectical thinking; what Soja described as “difficult” since it “is disorderly, unruly, constantly evolving, unfixed, [and] never presentable in permanent constructions,”⁷⁰ just as Jorn himself implied with his “eminently flexible trialectical system.”⁷¹ Quoting Soja, these ideas present a challenge to “conventional modes of thought and taken-for-granted epistemologies.”⁷²

Such a rhizomatic mode of thinking finds grounding on the three-sided football field, which articulates Soja's thirdspace, filled as it is "with politics and ideology, with the real and the imagined intertwined, and with capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and other material spatial practices that concretise the social relations of production, reproduction, exploitation, domination, and subjection."⁷³ On this hexagonal pitch, three football teams subvert these very dynamics in a game normally bound up in "the mythic bi-polar structure of conventional football, where an us-and-them struggle" plays out.⁷⁴ Like its binary forebear, the three-sided game is lived representational space in action. But three-sided football is not governed by fixed rules. It is constituted by individuals existing as independent entities, team members and players governed by a set of unstable rules that everyone on the pitch negotiates among themselves. What emerges, to follow Soja's formulation of thirdspace, is a site of struggle, liberation and emancipation: "a strategic location from which to encompass, understand, and potentially transform all [other] spaces"—be they conceived, perceived and so on—"simultaneously."⁷⁵

This is what makes three-sided football such a useful and practical diagram—it encourages a lived examination of space in the sense that Lefebvre considered it: "not only with the eyes" or "the intellect, but also with all the senses" and "the total body."⁷⁶ ("The important thing is to demonstrate that *we do not see or sense what is at all, but what happens*," Jorn said.⁷⁷) Enacting the game, or even thinking about it as a possibility, enables a greater awareness of the dynamics at work within space itself, as defined by the complexity of its inhabitants who exist not as either/or, but both/and/also/maybe and despite.⁷⁸ This view aligns with how Jorn saw the act of establishing "subjectively acting causal relationships" as a work of "*magic* or art."⁷⁹ The result of such an establishment, as he hinted in his writing, is an "artistic humanism" that he believed was the "key to an all-embracing exchange of experiences that knows no bounds of either language or politics or convictions."⁸⁰ ("For Jorn, the art that matters most is a subjective realism that extends beyond the individual and invokes a collective practice," to quote Mackenzie Wark.⁸¹)

These dynamics were exemplified in 2010, when writer and critic Sally O'Reilly staged a three-sided football game during the run-up to the United Kingdom's general election, with three teams representing the main political parties at the time—Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat. (This election marked the second time since World War II that a UK election resulted in a hung parliament; 2017 being the third.⁸²) As writer and editor Ajay Hothi observed, "O'Reilly's *3-Sided Football Match* was an example of a participatory public event in which the fundamental notion was to highlight the absurd nature of artifice"—in this case, of the two-sided football game and how that relates to contemporary political structures—"and how that imposes an inflexible nature onto a core concept" (the practice of politics itself).⁸³ Ultimately, Hothi writes, the match demonstrated "how it is possible to maintain a relational status quo in a situation in which rules are flexible or non-existent."⁸⁴

Embedded in the concept of three-sided football, then, is a proposal: to establish "a truly cosmopolitan mental fellowship"⁸⁵ whereby the individual and collective are understood as a complex set of conflicting, playful and variable relations, at once mutually exclusive, yet inter-dependent. The game, like art, is based on an "invitation to expend energy, with no precise goal other than what spectators themselves can bring to it."⁸⁶ (As Jorn said; "Play is not consciously directed to any goal but is a delight, an identification with things themselves. This is why play develops best in community."⁸⁷) To follow Jorn's opinion that art is not a representation but "a direct transformation of nature" that does not reduce "nature to essence or order," such freedom would result in "the transformation of human qualities into real values."⁸⁸ This was Jorn's vision for an artistic revolution.⁸⁹



III

In deliberating on three-sided football and the formulations of trialectic thinking that the game visualises and enacts, consider the problem Jorn observed with modern atomic physics: that it produced an isolated “world picture constructed upon the wave interpretation” and an imprecise “fusion of the particle and the ray concepts” as a result.⁹⁰ “Only when one decides to set up a complementary description of all three observations,” he wrote, will “three world pictures clearly emerge.”⁹¹ “These pictures could be mutually complementary,” Jorn wrote “providing one keeps them strictly separate.”⁹² Every element should be taken on its own *and* with others.

Now let’s apply this idea to the real world, currently in the throes of complete upheaval, with the past, present and future seemingly unfolding all at once. This is something that Hank Willis Thomas’ recent exhibition, *The Beautiful Game* at Ben Brown Fine Arts in London, illustrates through the prism of football, with a group of artworks that challenge the same dichotomous ‘us versus them’ binary

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inscribed into football that Jorn confronted. Tracing a link between European and American football, colonialism, and—by association with Thomas’ previous work, the history of slavery—the exhibition uncovered the sheer complexity of the world by zeroing in on a microcosm of it, as identified in the culture of an international team sport.

On view was a series of ten quilts made from various football jerseys, including Arsenal and Liverpool, with sponsorship logos, from Chevrolet to Etihad, visible in compositions that are based on—or directly copy—modernist paintings and flags made by Asafo warrior groups in the Fante region of Ghana. “The function and aesthetic of Asafo flags,” the exhibition statement notes, “which have been made from the colonial period to today... developed in relation to African contact with Europe starting in the eighteenth century.”⁹³ Under British influence, some flags were designed in the colonial style, with a Union Jack featured on the top corner. As academic Nana Adusei-Poku writes, these flags would come to represent rivalries that were encouraged by the British as part of a “administrative strategy of *indirect rule*,” which was intended to prevent a united uprising among the colonised—a Machiavellian gesture of divide and conquer.⁹⁴ In Thomas’ exhibition, three quilts make reference to these flags, with figures donning the insignia and/or sponsorship logos of contemporary football teams, including Adidas and Nike, thus connecting the battlefields of the past with the football pitches of the present, here framed as sites of globalised, proxy war.

Yet, beyond the two teams pitted against one another on the football field in the context of this exhibition, Thomas’ quilts and their myriad references—which also include national rugby teams like the All Blacks, Tonga, Panama, South Africa and England—expand on this idea of global war as something multi-positional, intersectional and materially complex. With Arsenal’s homeground named after Emirates airline, the current reality, as Thomas shows, is one where the historical faultlines—for example, between coloniser and colonised—are not as clear-cut as they once were. Thus, to quote Adusei-Poku once more, central to *The Beautiful Game* is an investigation “into how modern sport is a reflection of historical power structures,” while posing “the question of how to deal with a past that continuously ruptures the present.”⁹⁵ In Thomas’ flags, the binary field is disrupted. The pitting of one team against another (be it national or local) is made trinary through the inclusion of historical and supra-national elements—from the history of imperialism to contemporary corporate sponsorship, which one could argue are inter-related—that are also present in the game. In making this visible in his work, Thomas asks his audience “to see” as Lefebvre implored, “how homogeneous abstract space manifests itself in a dislocated and dismembered landscape of capitalism”—“a global space pivoting around ‘uneven development’ and pell-mell differentiation” (to quote Merrifield again).⁹⁶ As Lefebvre said, “The space that homogenises ... has nothing homogeneous about it.”⁹⁷

Thomas expanded on this idea by drawing a link between the politics of international corporate sports culture, and that of the global art market in his exhibition. *The Beautiful Game* opened during Frieze Art Week 2017, with one of Thomas’ *Endless Columns* presented as part of Frieze’s public exhibition at Regent’s park, composed of twenty-two realistically rendered footballs made from painted resin. Its composition and name—*Endless Column (22 Totems)* (2017)—reference the work of Constantin Brancusi, a sculptor who, like many other European and American modernists, owes much to the influence of African art, even if no credit, or due respect, was actually given to the artists, or regions, from whom they profited. (“African art IS modern art, it just wasn’t named as such,” Thomas has stated.⁹⁸) Thus, by overlapping global football with the culture of global art conveys the crux of what Thomas proposes when thinking about both realms as sites in which world history continues to play out a two-sided game, whereby a crucial third side (or world) tends to become marginalised or ignored.

The Beautiful Game brought this marginalised world into the picture so as to complicate it, just as Jorn's three-sided football disrupted the binary game in order to expand the field. In both cases, the idea is to widen the frame and demonstrate the dynamics—process, variability and movement—that mediate the overlapping positions that human beings can sustain in a changeable world that is organic, evolving and contradictory. As living beings, we are prisms that reveal a cross-hatching spectrum of ongoing histories and the politics that have emerged from them. And as we move through space and time, our forms are likewise beholden to the forces that seek to contain the continuum that our bodies negotiate. This is why Jorn decided to offer his own response to what was essentially a scientific discussion surrounding complementarity—it was and is the artist's right to challenge those frames that seek to define the human experience without taking into full account the actual complexity of *lived* experience itself. (As Mackenzie Wark observes, the limit Jorn saw in “scientific socialism” was its embrace of “a materialist world view, but not a materialist attitude to life. His artistic materialism proposes to fill this gap.”⁹⁹)

What could we learn today, politically and globally, if we were to think about a three-sided game that one artist envisioned as a means to break out of the stalemates left to us by history?

In summer 2015, three simultaneous games of three-sided football were launched at high speed into each other as part of the Alytus Biennial in Southern Lithuania. It was an attempt at “uncovering the deep triolectics at play within the science of exceptions,” as reported by The New Cross Triangle Psychogeographical Association (NXTPA).¹⁰⁰ “In doing so, the assembled sitologists successfully glimpsed the quantum hyperspace of psychogeographic gameplay, completing the first phase in what has been called a ‘Great Unworking’: Three-sided football’s attempt at the psychogeographical ‘unbinding’ of Europe.”¹⁰¹ The account of this supercollider game is as barmy and beautiful as one would expect. “Whilst the teams acted like nations, defending their territory and making raids against opponents,” the NXTPA reported, “the overlapping space in the centre realised that they were all of the same class, and thus rather than working with their team alliances, self-organised a form of class solidarity amongst themselves to co-operatively defend their goals against the whirling melee around them.”¹⁰²

What emerged in this game was, to borrow the diagram of Runge's colour ball, an emergence of that grey space at the centre of the sphere where all possible colours interact. Through this controlled chaos, created by the activation of every individual on the field and defined by the variability between them, an interactive solidarity was negotiated that effectively broke through the binary rules normally applied to the collective body, as demonstrated by two-way football. In this hyperpolitical situation then, humanity itself, as Jorn imagined, became valorised beyond the structures of normative politics. What was visualised, to borrow the words of D3FC and the Strategic Optimism football club, was three-sided football's potent essence as a practical exercise of being in the world, relationally: “Not oppositional but superpositional,” with “contradictions resolved by blending multiple simultaneous potentialities.”¹⁰³

Maybe this was the aim of Jorn's conception: to offer a moving reflection of the world in all of its conflictual complexity; a material explosion of all things possible, thanks to the liberation of fixity from the production of meaning (and being). To play the game is to learn to exist—together, separately and in complementary opposition—in “a tangled and chaotic truth” rather than a “symmetrical and finely chiselled lie.”¹⁰⁴

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Notes

¹ Asger Jorn, 'What is an Ornament?' (1948), in Jorn, *Fraternité Avant Tout*, Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2011, p. 203

² Asger Jorn, 'The End of the Economy and the Realisation of Art', trans. Reuben Keehan, *Internationale Situationniste* #4, June 1960, p. 1 (of 4). Viewed on Situationist International Online: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/economy.html>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. See also Mackenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, London: Verso, 2011, p. 51

⁷ Asger Jorn, 'The End of the Economy and the Realisation of Art', op.cit.

⁸ Karen Kurczynski, *The Art and Politics of Asger Jorn: The Avant-Garde Won't Give Up*, New York: Routledge, 2016, p. 215

⁹ Asger Jorn, 'The Natural Order', published in 1962. See *Cosmonauts of the Future: Texts from the Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and elsewhere*, Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen & Jakob Jakobsen eds, Brooklyn: Nebula in association with Autonomedia, 2015, pp. 156-157

¹⁰ Geoff Andrews, 'The Three Sided Football Revolution – Football's New Idea', 9 June 2013; <http://geoffandrews-philosophy-football.blogspot.be/2013/06/the-three-sided-football-revolution.html>

¹¹ As described on the Deptford Three-Sided Football Club website in a text published 23 March 2013; <https://d3fc.wordpress.com/2013/03/27/asger-jorn-on-three-sided-football/>

¹² Jorn, 'The Natural Order', pp. 156-157

¹³ Ibid., p. 135. Jorn's italics. Jorn also mapped out his conception of trilectics in great detail in the 1964 paper, 'On the Trilectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', also published in *Cosmonauts of the Future: Texts from the Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and elsewhere*, pp. 238-249

¹⁴ Jorn, 'Luck and Chance Dagger and Guitar', in *Cosmonauts of the Future: Texts from the Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and elsewhere*, p. 41. Jorn's italics

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ 'Complementarity Principle', in *Encyclopedia Britannica*; <https://www.britannica.com/science/complementarity-principle>. See also Kristian Camilleri, 'Heisenberg and the wave-particle duality', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science Part B: Studies in History and Philosophy of Modern Physics*, Volume 37, Issue 2, June 2006, pp. 298-315

¹⁷ Jorn, 'The Natural Order', p. 134. Jorn's italics

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 135, pp. 157-158. See also 'On the Trilectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 242

²⁰ Philipp Otto Runge, as quoted by Rolf G. Kuehni, 'Philipp Otto Runge's Color Sphere: A translation, with related materials and an essay'. See <http://www.iscc.org/pdf/RungeFarben-Kugel.pdf>, p. 14

²¹ Jorn, 'On the Trilectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 242

²² Jorn, 'The Natural Order', p. 158

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ First quote, *ibid.* Second quote, Strategic Optimism Football, 'Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Trilectic', 11 September 2015; <https://strategicoptimismfootball.wordpress.com/2015/09/11/preliminary-problems-in-constructing-a-trioletic/>

²⁵ Philipp Otto Runge, as quoted by Rolf G. Kuehni, 'Philipp Otto Runge's Color Sphere: A translation, with related materials and an essay', op.cit.

²⁶ Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 246-247

²⁷ Stéphane Lupasco, as quoted by Joseph E. Brenner in 'The Philosophical Logic of Stéphane Lupasco (1900-88)', *Logic and Logical Philosophy*, Volume 19, 2010, p. 248. See <http://www.apcz.pl/czasopisma/index.php/LLP/article/viewFile/LLP.2010.009/967>

²⁸ Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 240

²⁹ Ibid., p. 246. Lupasco, as quoted by Jorn

³⁰ Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 246

³¹ Basarab Nicolescu, *From Modernity to Cosmodernity: Science, Culture, and Spirituality*, Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2014, p. 129. See also Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 243

³² Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', *ibid.*

³³ Ibid., p. 242

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 249

³⁶ Joao Leao, Senior Systems Specialist at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Massachusetts, as quoted in 'The Silkeborg Interpretation Redux or Jorn's Detournement of Niels Bohr's Complementarity Theory', a report on his contribution to the 'Cut and Thrust: Reconsidering Asger Jorn' seminar workshop which took place at the Museum Jorn in March 2012, published on <http://www.hildegoesasger.org> at: <http://www.hildegoesasger.org/2012/05/the-silkeborg-interpretation-redux-or-jorns-detournement-of-niels-bohrs-complementarity/>

³⁷ Jorn, 'The Natural Order', p. 159

³⁸ Ibid. Jorn's italics

³⁹ Ibid., p. 143

⁴⁰ Ibid. Jorn's italics

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 144

⁴² Ibid., p. 135

⁴³ Ibid., p. 140

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 157

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 144

⁴⁶ Karen Kurczynski, 'Red Herrings: Eccentric Morphologies in The Situationist Times', in *Expect Anything Fear Nothing: The Situationist Movement in Scandinavia and Elsewhere*, Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen & Jakob Jakobsen eds, Brooklyn: Nebula in association with Autonomedia, 2011, p. 139, p. 140

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Jorn, 'The Natural Order', p. 171

⁴⁹ Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 245

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 157

⁵² Ibid., p. 156

⁵³ Deptford Three-Sided Football Club, 'An Introduction to Three Sided Football', 1 March 2012; <https://d3fc.wordpress.com/2012/03/01/an-introduction-to-three-sided-football/>

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⁵⁴ John Hartley, 'Sport of the Week: Three-Sided Football', *That One Sports Show*, 23 October 2017; <http://thatonesportsshow.com/podcast/sport-of-the-week-three-sided-football/>

⁵⁵ D3FC, 'An Introduction to Three Sided Football', op cit.

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⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 37

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 36-37

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 36. Jorn's italics

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis/London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005, p. 22

⁶² Ibid., p. 11, p. 21

⁶³ Ibid., p. 5

⁶⁴ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 105. Merrifield's italics

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Lefebvre, quoted by Andy Merrifield in *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, p. 110

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 105. Lefebvre's italics

⁶⁹ Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996, p. 70

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Jorn, 'On the Triolectical Method in its Applications in General Sitology', p. 245

⁷² Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, p. 70

⁷³ Ibid., p. 68

⁷⁴ This description is found on a number of three-sided football pages. See Gabriel Kuhn, *Soccer vs. the State: Tackling Football and Radical Politics*, Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011, p. 228

⁷⁵ Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, p. 68

⁷⁶ As quoted by Andy Merrifield in *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, p. 115

⁷⁷ Jorn, 'The Natural Order', p. 162. Jorn's italics

⁷⁸ What Soja has described as the fundamental principles of thirdspace

⁷⁹ Jorn, 'The Natural Order', p. 167. Jorn's italics

⁸⁰ Asger Jorn, 'Neither Abstraction Nor Symbol', trans. Peter Shield, originally published in Danish as 'Hverken abstraktion eller symbol' in the exhibition catalogue Henri Michaux, Silkeborg Museum, Denmark, 1962, pp. 7-13. See http://www.museumjorn.dk/en/text_presentation.asp?AjrDcmntId=455

⁸¹ Mackenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, p. 51

⁸² Bronwen Maddox, 'The British constitution can handle outcomes like this', *The Financial Times*, 9 June 2017, <https://www.ft.com/content/6d83e31c-4cd9-11e7-a3f4-c742b9791d43>

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⁸³ Ajay Hothi, 'On the methodologies of the adaptation of text for gallery exhibition', MPhil by Thesis, Critical Writing in Art & Design, Royal College of Art, London, October 2014

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Jorn, 'Neither Abstraction Nor Symbol', op cit.

⁸⁶ Jorn, 'The End of the Economy and the Realisation of Art', op cit.

⁸⁷ As quoted in Birtwistle, p. 76. See Mackenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, p. 51 See also Hilde Goes Asger; <http://hildegoesasger.org>

⁸⁸ First two quotes, Mackenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, ibid. Third quote, Jorn, 'The End of the Economy and the Realisation of Art', op cit.

⁸⁹ Jorn, 'The End of the Economy and the Realisation of Art', op cit.

⁹⁰ Jorn, 'The Natural Order', pp. 160-161

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 161

⁹² Ibid., p. 159

⁹³ *The Beautiful Game*, curatorial text; <http://www.benbrownfinearts.com/exhibitions/121/overview/>

⁹⁴ Nana Adusei-Poku, 'The Beautiful Game', exhibition essay in a booklet published to accompany Hank Willis Thomas, *The Beautiful Game*, Ben Brown Fine Arts, London 5 October–24 November 2017. Adusei-Poku's italics

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, p. 112

⁹⁷ Lefebvre, quoted by Andy Merrifield in *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, ibid.

⁹⁸ Naomi Rea, 'Hank Willis Thomas on His New Work, Charlottesville, and Modernism's Debt to African Art', *Artnet*, 3 October 2017; <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/hank-willis-thomas-interview-1057031>

⁹⁹ Mackenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, op cit.

¹⁰⁰ The New Cross Triangle Psychogeographical Association, 'Preliminary Problems in Constructing a Triolectic: Thoughts suggested following experiments in the use of "pataposition" to render three-sided football in n-dimensional space (in two parts)', 15 December 2015; [https://www.alytusbiennial.com/2-uncategorised/720-preliminary-problems-in-constructing-a-triolectic-thoughts-suggested-following-experiments-in-the-use-of-"pataposition"-to-render-three-sided-football-in-n-dimensional-space-in-two-parts.html](https://www.alytusbiennial.com/2-uncategorised/720-preliminary-problems-in-constructing-a-triolectic-thoughts-suggested-following-experiments-in-the-use-of-)

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Text for 'Jorn and Trocchi United: A Workshop in Practical Triolectics', <http://www.antiversity.org/Jorn-and-Trocchi-United-A-Workshop-in-Practical-Triolectics>

¹⁰⁴ Asger Jorn, quoted by Peter Shield in Jorn's 'Neither Abstraction Nor Symbol', op cit. Also quoted in Graham Birtwistle, *Living Art: Asger Jorn's Comprehensive Theory of Art Between Helhesten and Cobra*, Utrecht: Reflex, 1986, p. 69. Courtesy Mackenzie Wark, *The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, op cit.

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