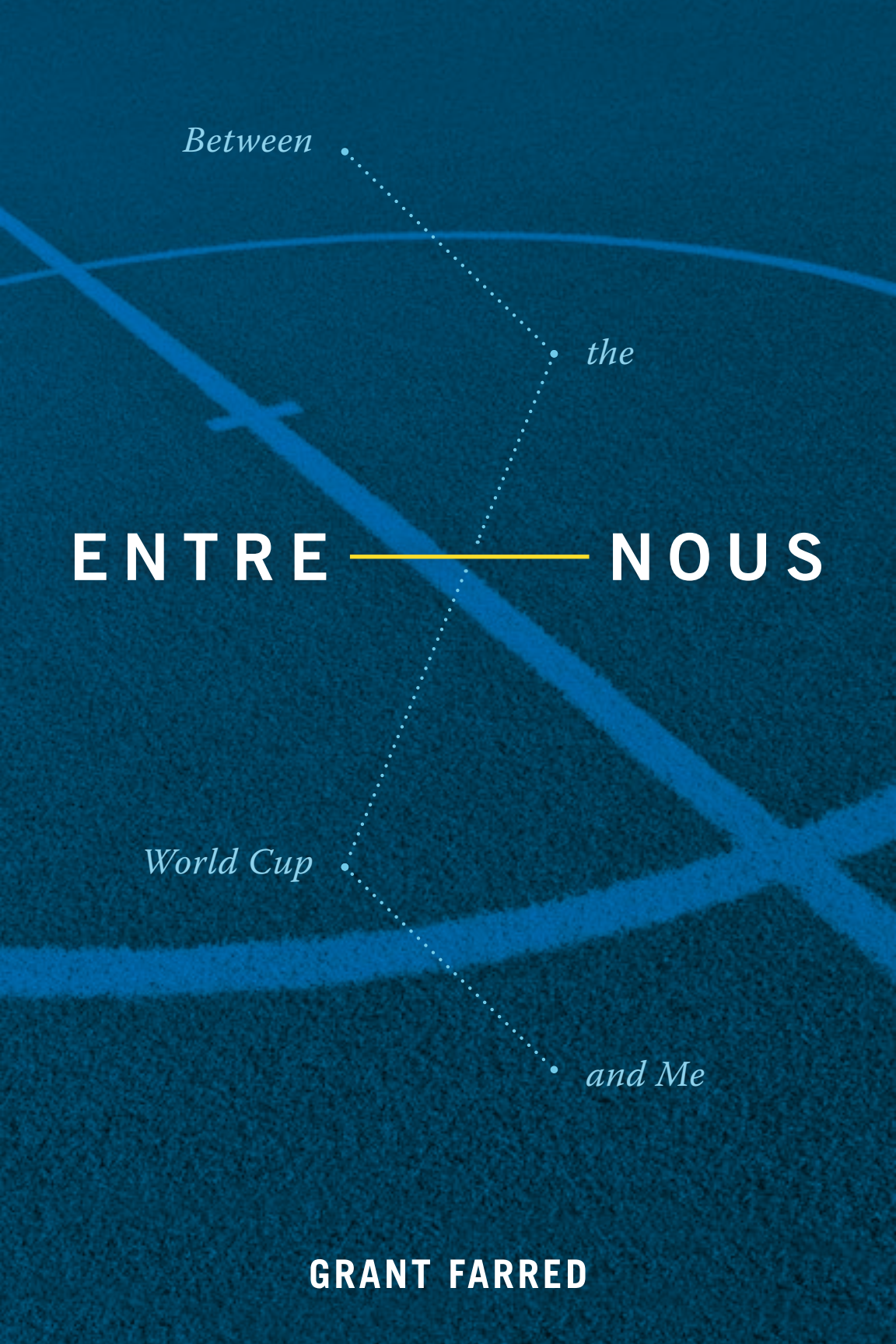
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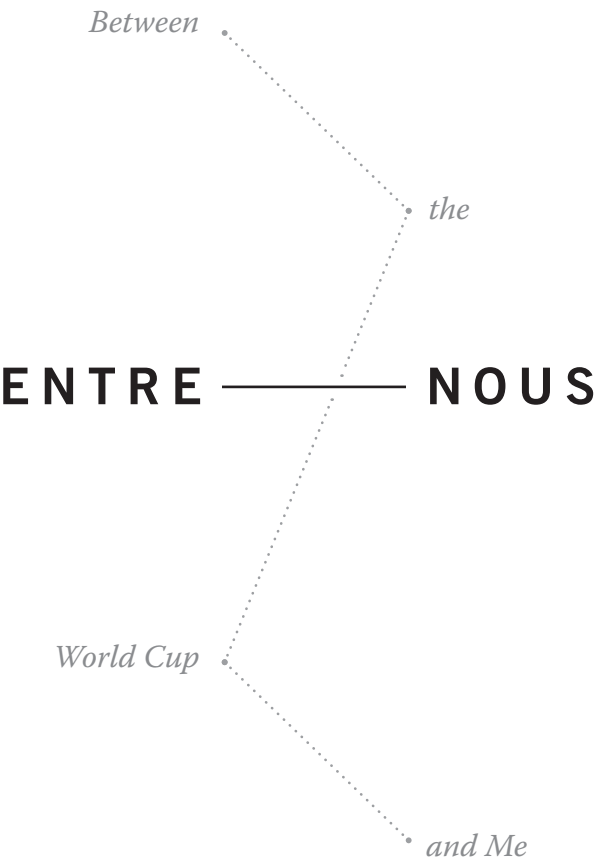




DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS *Durham and London* 2019

Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Matthew Tauch
Typeset in Warnock Pro by Copperline Books

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Farred, Grant, author.
Title: Entre nous : between the World Cup and me / Grant Farred.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2019. | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2018044273 (print) | LCCN 2018054839 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478005551 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478004097 (hardcover : alk. paper)
ISBN 9781478004707 (pbk. : alk. paper)
Subjects: LCSH: World Cup (Soccer) | Farred, Grant. | Messi, Lionel, 1987– | Suârez, Luis, 1987– | Tabârez, Oscar Washington, 1947—Influence. | Soccer players. | Sports—Philosophy. | Soccer—Social aspects. | Soccer coaches.
Classification: LCC GV943.49 (ebook) | LCC GV943.49 .F38 2019 (print) | DDC 796.3340922 [B] —dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2018044273

Cover art: Soccer pitch with center circle. Photo by daitoZen/Getty.

POR JUANITA:
Gracias, mi amor

# CONTENTS

# PREFACE

In all beginnings dwells a magic force
—— HERMAN HESSE, "Stages"

Martin Heidegger knew nothing about *Mitsein*.

Martin Heidegger knew nothing about *Mitsein* because he never had the chance to see Lionel Messi, Football Club Barcelona's star player, "being-with" his fans after a miraculous, come-from-behind Champions League victory in 2017. Barça—as football fans the world over refer to the Barcelona team—had just emerged triumphant from its quarterfinal clash against Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) on Barça's home ground.

A philosopher, a double World Cup winner: a not-so motley cast of characters.

The Barça-PSG match will be dealt with, at some length, shortly, but for now it is Martin Heidegger who demands our attention. After all, to claim that Heidegger knows nothing about *Mitsein* is little short of preposterous, a declaration that is philosophically unsustainable. No one, we can assert with absolute confidence, knows more about *Mitsein* than Heidegger.

But . . . let us tarry with the declaration a moment longer. Martin Heidegger, who in his boyhood days was a "useful left wing" in Meßkirch, his home town, and in his last years reportedly followed European football (*Fußball* to Heidegger) keenly, knew nothing about *Mitsein*. Heidegger knew nothing about *Mitsein* because, unfortunately for him, he died more than a decade before Leo Messi was even born.

In his final years Heidegger was (unsurprisingly, given his reputation for discipline) enamored of his countryman, the imperious Franz Beckenbauer. Nicknamed "Der Kaiser," Beckenbauer commanded respect from teammates,

opponents and fans alike. In 1974 Beckenbauer captained the West German team to World Cup victory. On home soil, no less, with a 2–1 win over the Netherlands in West Berlin. In 1990, as manager of the last divided German team to play in a World Cup, Beckenbauer coached West Germany to victory.

On a train ride one day, Heidegger, who was "full of admiration for [Beckenbauer's] delicate ball control," according to his biographer, Rüdiger Safranski, "actually tried to demonstrate some of Beckenbauer's finesses to his astonished interlocutor," who happened to be the "director of the Freiburg theater."[1]

One can only imagine it. The now venerable philosopher, in his declining years, trying, as the keen Meßkirch amateur left-winger he'd once been, to make like Beckenbauer. On a moving train, showing no appetite for talk of the theater or literature, there, for all the world to see: Martin Heidegger, footballer. Martin Heidegger, trying to imitate Der Kaiser's football skills. The philosopher, an outdoors type (he liked to hike and he was no mean skier), exhibiting, in a moving train, his best football moves. The philosopher giving us a glimpse of what the philosopher as footballer looks like. The old philosopher retrieving, from gilded memory, the young footballer he once was. The old philosopher recovering, if only for a moment, the footballer in him. The footballer he imagined himself to have been. Albert Camus was a keen amateur goalkeeper. Jacques Derrida loved playing the game as a boy in El Biar, the Algiers neighborhood in which he grew up. And how could we forget Jean-Paul Sartre's insightful analysis of the game: "In football everything is complicated by the presence of the opposite team." What legendary coach has not arrived at exactly the same conclusion? Are all philosophers nothing but insufficiently talented footballers or underemployed color commentators?

*Zu sein wie.*

In the case of Heidegger's *Mitsein*, then, what we encounter is nothing other than the philosopher's (true; truest) desire: to be-with a great footballer. Heidegger could not know *Mitsein*, even with Beckenbauer, because he was (physically) too far removed from Der Kaiser. So he did the best could do: he tried to be-like: zu sein wie. To be-like Beckenbauer. Unlike Messi, at Camp Nou, Barça's stadium, where all the partisans were free to be-with their idol. As we will see shortly, Messi gave himself freely to them, and they, in their turn, gave themselves utterly to him. Heidegger did not give himself to Beckenbauer. Nor would Beckenbauer ever have imagined the possibility of *Mitsein* with Heidegger.

Still, Heidegger's is an admirable desire. Eschewing cultural expectation, Der Kaiser is subsumed into the athletic orbit—the aging body—of the "Maestro from Meßkirch." *Zu sein wie*, the meeting of the imperious Bavarian body (Beckenbauer) and the towering Baden-Württemberg mind (Heidegger). *Zu sein wie*, this is what it means to want to be-like the other. To be-like the other across (West) German generations, across vast discrepancies in athletic ability.

*Zu sein wie* is not *Mitsein* but it is what makes it possible for the amateur left-winger to give himself license, now nearing the end of his life, to believe that he is capable of reenacting the "delicate ball control" of a World Cup—winning captain and coach. In truth, zu sein wie, even more than *Mitsein*, may be the lifeblood of every amateur footballer, of every football fan: to imagine, for a moment, in a train carriage, on a dusty field, on a busy street, on a manicured training complex, no, to believe, with fervor and conviction, in the possibility of being-like your *Fußball*, football, *fútbol* heroes. To be-with is, for an instant, for a glorious instant, to be-like. As much as any amateur footballer, a community among whom I number, Martin Heidegger knew zu sein wie as such a dream, knew the dream of zu sein wie as momentary athletic transcendence, knew what it meant to dream of supping with the *Fußball* gods.

To correct the terms of this philosophical proposition, then, we can say that while Martin Heidegger knew "nothing" about *Mitsein*, he knew everything about zu sein wie. And, as such, all amateur and aspiring professional footballers are like, are with, Heidegger. *Mitsein*. In a footballing sense, as much as a philosophical one, there can be no doubt: Martin Heidegger is as much a master of *Mitsein* as he is of zu sein wie.

The left-wing philosopher.

The irony. Martin Heidegger, a philosopher infamous for his involvement—his May 1933 rectoral address ("Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität" [The Self-Assertion of the German University]) and so on—with the right wing of German politics, started out as a left-winger. Was Heidegger, like Leo Messi, left-footed? One wonders, was he left-footed but right-handed? As for the matter of "delicate ball control," football fans of a certain generation are more likely to associate this football skill with Messi rather than Beckenbauer. The always-imposing Der Kaiser was no slouch on the ball, and while he possessed impressive football technique, his was not on the order of Messi's. Football fans would be hard-pressed to name another footballer who has such

immaculate technical skills, such an array of invention, and such a visionary range of passing skill.

But I digress, no doubt because I take too much pleasure at the prospect of an almost octogenarian Martin Heidegger reliving his ball-playing ambitions from his Meßkirch youth on a German train, ignoring the invitation to talk high culture. Who among us wouldn't pay good money to have been able to see that? Imagine what a historic spectacle all the passengers in that train carriage were witness to. They were with Heidegger zu sein wie Beckenbauer while Heidegger was being-with his younger, left-wing self. What a moment of triangulated (West) German zu sein wie und *Mitsein*. Heidegger, former member of Hitler's National Socialists (he and Carl Schmitt joined on the same day), enacting a being-like Beckenbauer, a footballer born in September 1945 in the ruins of postwar Munich, rising to lead both his country, West Germany, and his club, Bayern München, to footballing glory, a being-like that is, courtesy of Heidegger's athletic reenactment, extended to all (the passengers in the carriage) and sundry (metonymically, to all of Germany and the world beyond too).

*Mitsein* and zu sein wie, then, as that mode of being that forges a sustainable, perhaps unbreakable, connection between philosophy, replete with erudition and abstraction, and football, a sport that is so intensely about the body. Heidegger and Beckenbauer, arrived at through Messi, reminding us once that football is—at least—how the body thinks itself; football is how the body remembers its (younger, much younger,) self, is how the body, just for an instant, recovers its athleticism, skill, and, yes, its footballing dreams. Football, in Heidegger's case, is how the body accesses and archives (dare one say) a Meßkirchean paradise lost. This leads us to wonder as to when else (surely, there must have been other such reenactments) Heidegger was given to demonstrating his left-wing skills. Did they all, if there were others, every one of them revolve around Beckenbauer? Did he not want to make like the Brazilian Pelé? Or the English striker Bobby Charlton, naturally right-footed but almost as good with his left? Was Heidegger distraught after West Germany lost that epic 1966 World Cup final to England? That game where Geoff Hurst scored a hat trick (an event to which we will return in the "Interlude"), that game where a twenty-year-old then-central midfielder Beckenbauer was not yet quite so imperious, that Wembley final when he was not yet Der Kaiser, that final when he played in central midfield rather than central defense. In the history of

football, of course, central defense is more readily identified as Beckenbauer's position. As it should properly be, because it was from his position as a commanding central defender that his greatest accomplishments were achieved.

"Stages," Herman Hesse's paean to the value of beginnings, achieves an ironic poetic resonance—a vivacity—in relation to Heidegger. "In all beginnings dwells a magic force / For guarding us and helping us to live." "To begin" marks an opening, it announces the onset of possibility. But "to live" again that which was, "to live" again in this spirit is to spontaneously experience the joy of living again, fully, that moment which was, just a minute ago, entirely lost to memory. What "helps us to live" is the joy of living again that which was once lived. There is an unadulterated pleasure to be found in beginnings, but in certain moments—or, perhaps, at a certain age—what gives true joy is the brief recapturing of a long-ago beginning. As such, we might say, to bring the argument full circle, the "magic" of the beginning is its ability—its "force"—to recast what was presumed to have ended as a "new" beginning. In this way, every beginning promises the prospect of retrieving that which was understood to have been lost.

Democracy, unbound.

Because of that Heideggerian moment in the train carriage, football as being-with and being-like achieves, paradoxically, subversively, mischievously, a kind of democratization. It is democratization of the sort that can only arise out of the philosopher's dream, Heidegger's desire to show off his (surely inconsiderable) skills. In football, it is the players' dreams that make all players equal, until that cruel moment that is athletic reckoning, when "delicate ball control" must actually be demonstrated rather than reenacted (when, as Sartre says, everything becomes complicated by the reality of the "opposite team"). On the football field, regardless of how big or small, fast or slow, tall or undersized, they are, regardless if they're (West) German or Argentine, all players are equal until they are not. That is, until they are distinguished according to their level of talent, when one player shows him- or herself to possess greater skill, to be able to execute delicate dribbles, to envision a pass that no one else could imagine. That is the moment of truth in football. To be equal on the football field, then, is always only a "technical" matter, because the means of judgment—skill, talent, discipline, stamina, the desire to win—is confounded by the individual body. By themselves, height, weight, muscle density, mean nothing—or very little. After all, in what other sport can a player standing five

foot five, as Messi does, routinely and as a matter of course reign supreme over players who stand, as Beckenbauer does, around six feet? (Der Kaiser is half an inch short of six feet.)

Messi, for a second time of asking.

But, again, I digress. Again I am too much taken with that unknown left-winger, Martin Heidegger.

However, instead of lamenting my digression, I should perhaps be grateful for the lure that is *Mitsein*/zu sein wie, for the possibilities it opens up, for how it makes other thinkings—"beginnings"—of Leo Messi possible, of how the politics of sport, philosophy, and national expectation converge on the football pitch. (Beckenbauer, among that first generation of postwar Germans, understood—and accepted—the burden of national expectation more readily than most of his contemporaries.)

If Heidegger's affection for football is little known, reduced to a mere paragraph at the end of Safranski's biography of the philosopher, almost a footnote in work dedicated to a life of a thinker whose "passion was for questioning," then Messi stands in sharp contradistinction to his fellow left footer.[2]

In the contemporary game, Lionel Messi is a ubiquitous presence. In truth, however, it seems as if it has been that way since Messi first pulled on the *blaugrana* ("blue and red," or "maroon" rather than "red," if you insist) shirt of FC Barcelona on November 16, 2003. Football, *fútbol*, *Fußball*—in whatever language you choose, Lionel Messi is the game at its very best. With invention, grace, and sometimes nothing short of sublime beauty is how Messi plays the game. Millions around the world appreciate it. Many of those millions are not slow to show their appreciation for how Messi plays. I would venture that the older Heidegger would have been among those to sing Messi's praises.

Surely you've encountered Messi, whether you're a football fan or not. Look around as you stroll or hurry through the airport, kids and grownups alike sporting his number 10 FC Barcelona jersey; same thing when you're cruising your local mall, or when you drop your kid off at school. All this, of course, is to say nothing of the preponderance of Messi jerseys that can be spotted wherever pickup games are being played. Leo Messi strides across the planet, all five feet five inches of him, like a colossus, making more bank for Nike than any other athlete. (He is listed at five foot seven, but that's clearly a stretch, no pun intended.) Maybe Messi has made a football fan out of you. Maybe he has made an FC Barcelona fan out of your son or daughter.

Martin and Messi.

In one moment, in a single flash of insight (not quite a blinding flash, not quite an epiphany, but so close to both you'd hardly know the difference), Lionel Messi and Martin Heidegger came together. That is, in a single moment Heidegger's concept of *Mitsein* and not zu sein wie, I should be clear, in all its philosophical complexity and density, was fully revealed. It was revealed through, or rather, in the person of Leo Messi. (That is, *Mitsein*, being-with, as the predominant concept but a positing of *Mitsein* in which the resonances, the desire to be-like, can be detected; sometimes those resonances are more, sometimes less, audible.) It is Messi who gave Heidegger's notion of "being-with" life in the most animated, the most politically entangled, and the most philosophically weighted way. Leo Messi made it possible to understand, in a single, wonderfully charged moment, *Mitsein*. In that moment, Messi might have been Heidegger's best friend in all the world (of football). Messi might have been, in that moment, the greatest advocate for what it means to "know" *Mitsein*. To know, for an instant, the signal difference between being-with and being-like.

But, in doing so, Messi might have, once more, raised the possibility that, in (footballing) truth, Heidegger never really knew *Mitsein*.

License, please: the match in which *Mitsein* came to life.

It is on account of this relation between the Argentine footballer and the German philosopher that philosophical license is asked for; a request that is, consciously, made in the name of hubris. Philosophical indulgence is asked for in the name of the game of football, for the game of football thought philosophically.

To begin with, an unsustainable negation, a claim that is, clearly, philosophically preposterous. No wonder, then, that license and a certain indulgence is requested. Martin Heidegger, philosopher of philosophers, philosopher for philosophers, knows nothing of *Mitsein*, one of his signature concepts. Heidegger could not have known what *Mitsein* truly was. Heidegger could not have known what *Mitsein* truly meant, although he spent his entire career thinking about it, because he had not met Lionel Messi.

What a great pity it is that Martin Heidegger, who died in 1976, did not live to see March 8, 2017. If he had, he would have seen *Mitsein* come fully to life. Come to life for the entire world to see what it truly means to be-with-the-other.

Let us recall this football match in which *Mitsein* made itself manifest in

the world. It took place, as we know, on a Wednesday evening. On this early spring evening, *Mitsein* was "staged" at Camp Nou in the 2016–17 Champions League round of 16 clash between Messi's Barça and PSG.

The Champions League is Europe's top club footballing competition. It features the best teams from the continent—Liverpool (England), Barça, Real Madrid (Spain), Bayern München (Germany), and so on. It is divided into two stages. The first stage is known as the "group stages." In the first stage, four teams are drawn together in a group, and they play each other twice, on a home and away basis. The top two teams from every "group," labeled unimaginatively A, B, C, all the way to H, qualify for the "knockout stages." The second stage comprises eight matchups, in which the teams play each other, as in our case, Barcelona v. PSG; again, it's on a home and away basis. This time, however, the team that scores the most goals over the two "legs" goes through to the next stage. Following the round of 16 are the quarterfinals and the semifinals, culminating in the final, of course. In the "knockout stages" the rules are such—in order to encourage attacking play away from home—that in the event of the score being tied at the end of the second leg, it is not simply the team that scores the most goals but the team with the most away goals that is awarded the win. So, if the score is, as it might have been at Camp Nou in March 2017, say, 5–5, and PSG (as it did) boasts an away goal to its credit and Barça does not (again, this was the scenario for a minute or three), then PSG progresses to the quarterfinals.

In the first leg, PSG had run riot against a tepid Barça, winning comfortably 4–0 at their Parc de Princes stadium. This meant that in the return leg Barça would have to win 5–0 or by 5 clear goals in order to qualify for the quarterfinals. Messi's Barça started off well, going up 3–0 in the sixtieth minute and with half an hour to score two more. For a Barcelona team packed with offensive talent, this was not an insurmountable task.

The Uruguayan Luis Suárez, who is discussed in more detail later, scored a goal in only the third minute. A PSG "own goal" (the PSG left back, Layvin Kurzawa, deflected the ball into his own net) in the forty-first minute meant that Barça went into halftime up 2–0. In the fiftieth minute, Messi added an emphatic penalty for the third. 3–0.

Then disaster struck for Barça. Edinson Cavani scored that all-important away goal for PSG in the sixty-second minute. This meant that in the remaining time, some twenty-eight minutes plus whatever time the referee added

on (five minutes, it turns out), Barça would have to score three goals without conceding another. A tall order, especially for a Barça team that seemed to have run out of steam and ingenuity after the Cavani goal. For the next twenty-six minutes Barça huffed and puffed, to no avail. Even when Barça's Brazilian striker, Neymar, struck an inch-perfect free kick in the eighty-eighth minute to make the score 4–1, Barça still needed two goals. It seemed to be over. Even when Barça was awarded a penalty in the ninety-first minute, which Neymar converted (5–1), there was still something of a mountain to climb. Maybe a hill, but the incline was sharp and time was running out. All PSG had to do was defend for the next four minutes.

It was so close that PSG could taste it.

So near, it turned out, and yet so far. So very far, so painfully far . . . It was all about to come crashing down.

In the ninety-fourth minute Messi took a free kick from the left side of the PSG defense. He curled it toward goal, but a Parisian defender met it with a stout header. The ball ricocheted to the middle of the park, about thirty meters from goal. There to meet it was Neymar, out of position, dead center. Neymar normally operates on the Barça left flank, but Messi took up that space with the free kick. From a Barça point of view, the ball dead center, so close to goal, was far from ideal.

But Neymar was equal to the task. He moved to his left, and with delicate precision chipped the ball, from some twenty-two or twenty-three meters out, toward the PSG goal. Sergi Roberto, native born-Catalan and without a goal in eighteen months, made a perfect diagonal run from the right flank. He stabbed his right foot at the ball, and in so doing redirected it past the hapless Kevin Trapp in the PSG goal. Pandemonium ensued. Gerard Piqué, Messi, and Neymar all rushed toward Roberto. The Barça fans went into a frenzied celebration. Camp Nou burst into uproar. Their heroes had just completed the greatest comeback in Champions League history.

The last minute of extra time was a mere formality. This Champions League tie had been dramatically settled.

A further irony.

In August 2016, for the princely sum of €222, Neymar signed for none other than PSG.

He was, he declared, "following his heart."

The truth is less generous to Neymar.

As the new icon of Brazilian *futebol*, or, as his countrymen and -women say, joga bonito (the "beautiful game"), he could no longer tolerate life in Lionel Messi's shadow.

Such "being-with" had become intolerable.

In "being-with," the self at once, by turns, in the most contradictory of fashions, "gives up" (such is the logic and ethics of the team, sacrificing for the team is what is demanded, putting the self in the service of the larger—team, the collectivity of record—good) and "accrues" to itself. The self, the individual player, "gains" through the collective talent, skill, labor, and commitment of his or her teammates.

Playing with Neymar and Suárez was such a "gain" for Messi. And Messi clearly relished it. He plays unselfishly, providing goal-scoring opportunities for his fellow strikers, thriving on the ability to be able to lay the ball off to them. As such, Messi understands—embodies, once more—*Mitsein*. To be-with for him, playing alongside Suárez and Neymar, meant that he had more time, perhaps just a fraction of a second, but a fraction of a second is a lot of extra time on the ball for Messi; what is more, he used this fraction of more time to create for his teammates and to punish the opposition when they tried to defend the goal-hungry Uruguayan and the no-less-insatiable Brazilian. Messi, too, got his share of goals, but he seemed especially thrilled to be part of such a talented and deadly trio of marksmen.

Neymar, in hindsight, clearly did not.

So off to Paris he took himself.

Which leads one to at least two conclusions.

Firstly, if you can't play on a team with Leo Messi, you can't play on a team. At least not on a team where you (Neymar) are not the featured star. We could, in terms of the National Basketball Association, say the same thing about the Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James's former teammate, Kyrie Irving.[3] If you can't play with as unselfish a superstar as LeBron, ignominy should be your fate.

Secondly, Neymar, unlike Messi, as we're about to see, knows (as yet) nothing of *Mitsein*.

*Mitsein*.

When the final whistle blew, the Barça players offered heartfelt but perfunctory handshakes to the PSG players. And condolences. One imagines that was an act of mercy. Nobody in the visiting ranks wanted to linger on the Camp

Nou pitch any longer than they absolutely had to. The PSG players were shell-shocked and visibly distraught. Some were close to tears, Marquinhos foremost among them. It was a case of so near and yet so very, very far.

The TV cameras, however, were focused on the Barça players grouped in a delirious huddle, centered on Sergi Roberto, as unlikely a hero as one can imagine. And they caught the mournful glances of the PSG team, none so traumatized as the usually stoic Thiago Silva, who captains not only PSG but also Brazil. He had just been on the receiving end of his national teammate Neymar's magic. It must have felt strange to Silva to be a Neymar victim, after all those matches in which the boot had been on the other foot.

As Silva, Cavani, and the rest of the PSG team headed for their dressing rooms ("lockerroom"), the Barça players and coaching staff broke their huddle and jogged briskly out to their fans to share their joy (and disbelief, one imagines) at the incredible victory just achieved.

One of their number, however, had already disappeared into the crowd, held safely and lovingly in the arms of the Barça faithful. At the final whistle, Messi had virtually sprinted from his teammates, past the stricken PSG players, straight to the fans.

For a moment that seemed to last a lifetime he perched precariously on the advertising hoardings, his face aglow, the ecstasy of a historic win making his face almost beatific. He stood, his arms akimbo, welcoming all into the vast expanse of his embrace. And how they loved him. They surged toward him, the Barça partisans (historically known as the *cules*, the "half-asses"), their love mingled with excitement, their disbelief overwhelmed by the enormity of what they had just witnessed. They returned Messi's love for them.

And then he tumbled into the crowd and like a rock star surfed across the arms of his fans.

Leo Messi was a man who had finally, in that very moment of his leaping onto the hoardings, found himself, for the first time in his professional life, at home. This is what, in Heidegger's terms, it must feel like to know *Wohen* ("dwelling"): to know Being, to Be (fully) in Camp Nou, the professional dwelling you call home.[4]

This is what *Mitsein* looks like, this is what it feels like. Camp Nou, March 2017, is what it is like to witness *Mitsein* come to life before your very eyes. To be-with is to be enveloped by, is to give yourself into the arms of the other. Remind me again how it is that Heidegger understands *Mitsein*? Yes, that's

it, "being-with-the-other." *Mitsein*, it is to feel safe enough to voluntarily cast yourself into the arms of the other; it is to trust yourself into the other's care. And the other's love. Yes, the other's love.

How I wish you could have seen it, Martin, how I wish you'd lived long enough to bear witness to the event of *Mitsein*. In the face of such an event, I doubt that a football fan and long-ago player such as you, you who loved the aesthetic and technical beauty of the game, would not have been moved. Ah, what moves you would have had for that theater director on a train ride should you have met on another occasion. Had you met in, say April 2017. How the other passengers would have marveled, in 2017 or 2018 or 2020, at your rendition of Messi at Camp Nou. After all, in Messi, because of Messi, the event of *Mitsein* that so preoccupied you was right there, right there to hand.

Might I render the event of *Mitsein* in the American vernacular, Martin? Might I suggest that until you have seen the event of *Mitsein* that is Leo Messi, well, Martin, "You ain't seen nothing yet"?

In the event of *Mitsein* that is Leo Messi there is nothing but the pureness of *Mitsein*: an event in which there is nothing between self and other. It is now possible to say we know what *Mitsein* looks like. It is a joyous thing. No, like grace is love beyond love, so *Mitsein* is joy beyond joy. Indeed, the truth of *Mitsein* might very well be that there is nothing other than love. The unfolding of love for all the (football) world to see. *Mitsein* is the event of love more true than love could ever have imagined itself to be.

For the most part, however, it is not love as such but Leo Messi and *Mitsein* that constitutes the governing problematic of the first chapter of this book. Messi being one with Catalunya is the condition of being that is thought in chapter 1. *Mitsein*, that is, and not love, as the epitome of being-with.

The "victims."

In the midst of all the joy, the tears, the palpable sense of the miraculous hanging over the stadium that is Camp Nou, the Catalan fans beside themselves, it was almost impossible not to feel sympathy for those two groups, one present as the historically unfortunate "opposite team," the PSG players, and others a continent removed, those who pledge their loyalty to Los Celestes, the Argentine national team.

Argentina is a nation with a proud, if tarnished, reputation in the world of football.

It was almost impossible not to "feel" ("to feel sorry") for the Argentines

because they have never had the experience of *Mitsein* with Leo Messi, who captains their national team and is one of its three greatest players. In the Argentine pantheon, Messi is, in my judgment, sandwiched between the greatest of them all, the greatest footballer of all time, Alfredo Di Stéfano (the Buenos Aires–born striker who is most often remembered for his time with Real Madrid (1953–64), FC Barcelona's arch enemies), and the irascible but massively talented Diego Maradona.

Not for nothing is Leo Messi the central figure of *Entre-Nous*. It is through Lionel Messi that this book thinks that which is, in the spirit of Jean-Luc Nancy's work on Hegel, between-them-and-us; that which is, specifically, between Messi and the Argentine nation. It is a thinking that, in order to "get" what is at stake—a thinking that begins with the question of "essence," a thinking that cannot be disarticulated, in our supposedly postnational moment, as nothing other than the "essence" of the (Argentine) nation—in the ways that Messi gives life to Heidegger's *Mitsein*. Because of Messi, *Entre-Nous* wrestles with the philosophical and political difficulty that is *Mitsein* in two discursive modes. Predominantly, the first chapter offers a critique of the concept of entre-nous in a recognizably philosophico-political discourse, but it also interrupts this mode with a series of italicized reflections, reflections that provide an anthropological, shall we say, meditations on how Messi's relationship to Argentina registers in Buenos Aires at key moments in the qualifying campaign for the 2018 World Cup in Russia. The "anthropological" mode seeks to both explicate and animate what Messi means, how Messi is rendered, in the nation of his birth at a critical juncture in Argentina's footballing life. In short, how does *Mitsein* manifest itself when there is, a priori, overdetermined by history, no possibility of *Mitsein* culminating in love?

Crying for Argentina.

The event of *Mitsein* as such is, for Argentine fans, what they have been denied, what they have not experienced with Messi. For Los Celestes fans—and of this Argentines are sure beyond words—Barça is always Messi's preference. It is where, in Heidegger's terms, Messi is. It is where the truth—*die Wahrheit*—of Messi resides. It is where Messi's heart, his love, resides. Even if Argentines do not pronounce outright that they "know" that Messi's allegiance, his "first fidelity," if you will, is to Catalunya (and not Argentina, the country of his birth, that is, to "them," to their beloved Los Celestes), for them Catalunya, and Barça most especially, is what stands entre-nous, between him and them.

It is Messi's performances for Barça, especially in games such as the one against PSG, that confirms for the Argentines that Messi is decisively not theirs. He wears the Argentine colors and has pulled on the Los Celestes shirt more than 120 times to date (128 times, at the time of writing), most recently in his appearances for Argentina in the 2018 World Cup. (The last four appearances at the 2018 World Cup ended, as we know only too well, in painful defeat.) The captain's armband adorns his upper left arm, but his heart, Argentine national team fans suspect and quite often say (and loudly, too), is emblazoned with the yellow and red of the Senyera, the colors of the Catalan flag.

In the moment of the event that was *Mitsein*, I find it, for once, no matter the philosophical niceties of the argument that follows in these pages, hard to quarrel with Porteños, as the natives of Buenos Aires are called. I have a certain sympathy for them. For how they feel that they are outside of the possibility of the event of *Mitsein* (love) with Lionel Messi. His heart, as they say, belongs to the Catalans. How does one assuage such psychic hurt? How does one countenance such an abandonment of the nation? There is no case to be made against the South American nation in the face of the unarguable truth that was the PSG event. There is no gainsaying the force of *Mitsein*. Like love, *Mitsein* is a jealous mistress: there is only room for one.

The truth of the matter, then, is that while the governing rubric of *Entre-Nous* is the logic of that which is between-us, this argument is thrown into blessed relief by the event of *Mitsein*. This interplay between the titular concept, "entre-nous," and *Mitsein*, shapes each of the book's two chapters as well as the "Interlude." The dialectic that is "entre-nous" *Mitsein* grounds the Messi chapter as well as chapter two, which thinks the relationship between Luis Suárez and his national team coach, Óscar Washington Tabárez. Additionally, and much more so than in the Messi chapter, we find that because of what is entre-nous Suárez and Tabárez, love again demands to be thought.[5] This same dialectical logic permeates the "Interlude" where we encounter that what is between the author and himself is the incorrigibility of his place of origin. Once more we turn to love, this time a love that is complicated by, among other factors, time. In the "Interlude" the time of love is intensified by distance. However, for all that, love shows itself to be resilient, what is more, and a mode of sustaining the author, in the face of his uncertainty, in the diaspora.

For just one moment, one glorious, never-to-be-forgotten moment, the joy of being-with trumped everything. This is what Leo Messi gives us. This is his

gift to us, his unique gesture, his almost indiscernible, gentle nod in the direction of Heidegger's (and Nancy's) philosophy.

The paradox, of course—and the power of the paradox must never be underestimated, as *Entre-Nous* makes clear—is that it would have been impossible to grasp the event of *Mitsein* without thinking (through) the concept that is entre-nous. And so, through the person of Messi, through Messi's "animation" of *Mitsein*, through the event of Messi bringing it to life, it becomes possible to understand how Messi's "being-with" Barça puts him in tension and often in outright conflict with his native Argentina. What is the nation-state to do when its most brilliant footballer shows such love, before the world, for the *autonomista* (the nominally, and not so nominally—as the independence stirrings in Catalunya attest—independent regions of Spain) among which he has lived since the age of thirteen? How can such a display of unadulterated love, passion, and commitment not be understood as an act of betrayal? How is Argentina not to feel as a lover spurned? Or, as Jean-Luc Nancy would have it in terms that are fundamental to the argument of this book, how is the demonstration of *Mitsein* (for/with the other) not to be experienced as (a) negation?

The path from Lionel Messi, as traced through *Entre-Nous*, is not so much one that leads from football to philosophy, or from philosophy to football. It is, rather, that this book proposes philosophy—as a mode of enjoying philosophy—as the only proper way to fully grasp, to comprehend with some authority, the actions of a Leo Messi. Leo Messi must be approached philosophically. To that end, *Entre-Nous* absorbs Martin Heidegger, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Lacan, and others entirely into its thinking of Messi, Suárez, and Tabárez.

It is, then, not so much that Leo Messi made this all possible but rather that the invitation from philosophy to football, from football to philosophy, was already there. As such, *Entre-Nous* marks nothing more than the act of taking up a long-standing and, in truth, permanent invitation to think sport philosophically and to come to terms with philosophy through sport.

Still, there is something fortuitous about this "arranged" (or was it always preordained, preordained in that very moment that Heidegger sought to make like Beckenbauer?) engagement between Leo Messi and Martin Heidegger. Something on the order of a Hessian beginning: "So every virtue, so our grasp of truth, / Blooms in its day." "Our day," the day of the event of *Mitsein*, can be identified as March 8, 2017. That day allowed for a "blooming" of the question of *Mitsein*, which opened onto the possibility of "grasping" a Heideggerian "truth."

March 8, 2017, was an event. It was an event made, as Nancy would insist, in the "present." It was an event that brought to light, brought to life, the relation between football and philosophy. Or, following the "exchange" of terms between Heidegger and the German poet Paul Celan, it becomes possible to assert that *Entre-Nous* is the act of staking a claim to what Heidegger conceives of as the clearing (*Lichtung*); for his part, Celan takes the concept up as "*Lichtzwang* (light compulsion)."[6] *Entre-Nous* is that creation made possible by thinking philosophy and football, by thinking football as a brief moment of an old left-winger's joy. And then, following that illumination of joy—the dream of making-like, zu sein wie—and the philosophical questions that emanate from it across the world of football, across the world because of football, *Fußball*, futbol, and, yes, even Neymar's world of *futebol*.

This can be done because Martin Heidegger cleared for us the way to think (and it must have been a slightly tentative if not creaky kind of making-like) what is entre-nous in/between Argentina and Barcelona; what is between the Uruguayan "Maestro" Tabárez and his star student Suárez, a star student who nonetheless tests his every limit as teacher; and what is between an amateur footballer from apartheid Cape Town and his teammates. (In truth, of course, the way was already "cleared"; such a thinking was permitted, from the very beginning. In fact, the beginning is that which, before all else, demands thinking. No matter, I take a certain pleasure in stamping *Entre-Nous* with Heidegger's seal of approval.) For thinking with joy, for demonstrating, as Heidegger did in that carriage on that now long-ago train ride, how it is to think the joy of football. The kind of joy, that is, that understands itself as free to take liberties with Heidegger; liberties that are, however, always taken affectionately.

Surely there can be no more pleasurable debt to Martin Heidegger than to acknowledge how *Mitsein* "compels" the joy of thinking football to "light." How brightly it sheds Celanian joy on that "light" that is our—my—love of football. And my love of Messi, Suárez, and Tabárez, and a now long defunct team named Lansur United Amateur Football Club that I loved playing on. A team from the working-class Cape Flats township of Hanover Park that was once a buffer against the stringencies of apartheid. Finally, *Entre-Nous* is a mark of how football does not so much resolve what is entre-nous as give the concept the opportunity to come fully to, to come fully into, the philosophical "light."

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I had no intention, when I started writing *In Motion, At Rest: The Event of the Athletic Body* (published 2013), more than a decade ago, of producing three works on philosophy and sport. I had no idea that I would spend so much time, all of it enjoyably, thinking about the event in sport, the event and sport. And now that the time has come to acknowledge those people who helped in the process of writing *Entre-Nous: Between the World Cup and Me*, it seems abundantly clear that *Entre-Nous* is the final part of that project. In between, no pun intended, I published *The Burden of Over-representation: Race, Philosophy, Sport* (2018).

These three works do not so much echo each other as manifest a sustained (and sustaining) interest in sport and race, philosophy, and the event, and, perhaps most importantly, they articulate a commitment to producing a language for thinking sport that can bear the (philosophical, political) weight of thinking sport.

These acknowledgements, it is my hope, mark my final foray into this field. Time to call it a day. I've enjoyed the run, but there are other things I'd like to say. At least I'd like to try. Besides, three's a good number.

I've been fortunate, in this process, to have the benefit of truly incisive, sympathetic, and patient editors on all three projects.

*Entre-Nous* provided me with the opportunity to work with Courtney Berger. I've known Ms. Berger, mainly from a distance, for a while, going back

to my time in Durham, where our paths crossed at Duke University Press and on the Duke campus. However, none of my previous interactions with her prepared me for Ms. Berger's response to the project when I first sent it to her. Her insight will remain with me. Verbatim: "I thought I would learn about sport through philosophy but instead I learned about philosophy through sport." Nothing could top that. In a single sentence, she grasped what I was trying to do. I am forever grateful for her confidence in the project, for the alacrity with which she responded. But, mostly, I will always be in her intellectual debt for that most incisive of remarks.

I first imagined *Entre-Nous* as a very different undertaking. For suggesting such a project to me, and talking me through (too) many, I am sure, of the initial drafts, I owe Aaron Jaffe a tremendous thank you. It was especially pleasurable to share the Heidegger-Messi moment with him. Without Aaron's prompting, I would not have written this book. My friends David Ellison and David Faflik were generous and patient with me. From Sydney and Brisbane, David Ellison pushed me to make the "Interlude" true to itself. David insisted that I dig deep, and then deeper still. He found, with unerring sharpness, those moments when my reticence won out. He would not permit it. Thanks for insisting. David Faflik made me see where the philosophical threads led, and he guided me along that path—I am sure he would name it "Hegel"—with a sure intellectual hand. Once more, Dr. Faflik, once more I have reason to be grateful to you. From Ljubljana, Jernej Habjan offered his usual insights, whip smart, and laced with a sense of humor sharp enough to make Dave Chapelle sit up and take notice. *Hvala*.

Jeff Nealon has been a consistent presence in all three projects. With each reading of my work, my regard for Jeff grows. With every critique he offers, I learn. Furthermore, I now find that when I am writing I try to imagine how Jeff might respond. It seems to me a good thing to be, in advance, haunted by Jeff Nealon.

Over the past eight years I have relied upon the administrative expertise, kindness, and friendship of Ms. Renee Milligan. Whatever thanks I offer her will be insufficient but, as things stand, it's the best I've got and so it will have to do. She, no doubt, will have something to say about my insufficiencies.

My research assistant, Dr. N. Bragg, was, as always, industrious and utterly reliable.

Ms. Sandra Korn, who assists Ms. Berger, is, above all, a sensitive partisan.

She does not take defeat lightly, a characteristic that has the fortunate effect of endearing her to other partisans. It is a pleasure to meet a fellow traveler.

To Sara "Mama" Leone: Billy Joel has something to answer for. Thank you for your excellent editorial labors.

Dirk Uffelmann provided invaluable assistance with my clumsy German translations. Followed by his ineluctably sardonic humor. *Danke*.

WM, as is his wont, provided access as it was needed and, again, without fail, offered "reassurance." "That's all you need." His words, and needed they were. Thanks.

Much of the rewriting, or perhaps the very first writing, of this book was undertaken in Minneapolis during the 2016 Christmas holidays. Steve, Mary, and ATrane were wonderful hosts to Nip, Jane, and me. Nip and his brothers, ATrane and Alex, had a great time hanging out, and Nip learned to cross the street all by himself. Mary served up a never-ending supply of good food, and Steve introduced me to a cool music store where I bought my first Lee Morgan LP.

I have long lived with that 1985 Lansur United team. Until our thirtieth reunion, I could not have imagined that I would one day be compelled to write about our experience. I am grateful to Shaheeda for organizing the reunion. To the eleven other guys on that team, and to four or five other guys who moved—either then or later—in its orbit, what I have tried to do here is honor our team. Now that Lansur United is gone, through *Entre-Nous* I have tried to remember. And it is my hope that I have paid homage to the lives we lived then.

If Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, and Jacques Derrida are the figures who dominate *In Motion, At Rest*, and *The Burden of Over-representation* turns, decisively, on Derrida, then *Entre-Nous* owes almost everything to Jean-Luc Nancy. His work, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, which I first pored over in Minneapolis and then in Ithaca, gave *Entre-Nous* its philosophical bearings.

Por Izzy, "Izz-Bizz," *mi guapa perra*.

For Nip, who regards Cape Town as at once a wonder and a mystery.

For Bug, who visited Baires with me and was decidedly underwhelmed.

Finally, por Juanita: *Gracias, mi amor*. I am sure that you will find it amusing to have a work that depends so extensively on abstraction dedicated to you. I'm afraid it's a burden you'll now have to bear. Thanks for putting up with it. I promise to try and do better next time, although I have no clue as what "better" will either look like or what it might yield.

# INTRODUCTION

## Entre-Nous | *Between the World and Me*

> The instability and the fragility of an encounter, of a division, the unity of which cannot be arrested or pinned down.
> —— JEAN-LUC NANCY, "Sense"

> As soon as we encounter the other, as soon as we open our mouth or show our teeth, our economy fractures space (and) time, breaks away from the continuity of the Matrix thus always creating another reaction, another unexpected direction—another text, another violence—a move *of* and/or *in* the Matrix. —— JEAN-PAUL MARTINON, *After "Rwanda": In Search of a New Ethics*

RELATION THROUGH SEPARATION · It is impossible to think relation, Jean-Luc Nancy argues, without separation. Relation is what is established in relation to, in the aftermath of what is consonant with separation. (Something along the lines of what Nancy names "co-appearance," that which manifests itself in the moment of, as a consequence of the act of, separation. As such, relation must always be thought as grounded in, as a form of, negation. All relation, as thought here, is relation to negation. Relation is always a matter of the relation to negation; as such, negation is a concept that is critical for thinking, for the thinking of *Entre-Nous*.) So conceived, relation is constituted out of both what makes (that which makes up) separation and that which emerges out of that which divides; that which it divides, that which it divides into. That which, let us say, establishes difference from, puts "distance between," and, in so doing, forms the basis of the relation between what might be named A

FIGURE I.1 Lionel Messi celebrates Barcelona's 6–1 win over Paris Saint-Germain, March 8, 2017. Credit: Luis Gene/AFP/Getty Images.

and B. Rendered figuratively, in which the sign ↔ marks both, simultaneously, separation (divided from) and connection (related to), we can say that A ↔ B. A "and" B stand in relation: stand in a relation of conjuncture (joined to each other) that must be thought, in the same act, in the same moment, as simultaneously "bound" by separation as well being bound in/through negation.

We can count among the elements that constitute, make possible, that take as their goal, separation, an array of political forces and desires. All of these, without exception, are borne out of a commitment to one mode of being rather than another. These elements, in their individuality and their collectivity, demand a recognition of the plurality of histories that make up a singularity. If we follow the terms of Nancy's "being singular plural,"[1] we can say that these elements demand an accounting for the various "infrahuman" tensions that mark the life of every individual; those tensions that mark life itself, as such.

What exists in separation and, as such, as relation through/because of separation is something akin to the intricate way in which Nancy proposes, in his essay "Cosmos Baselius,"[2] that we understand the "unity of the world" as "not one" but, as it would follow, as a "multiplicity of worlds . . . within this world."[3] A "multiplicity of worlds" that composes a single world (a world of "exceptional

singularity") denotes the presence of infinite tensions among the constituent elements; a "multiplicity of worlds" in which the "exceptional singularity" of a Messi finds himself located, whether he wants it or not, and sometimes in the same moment, sometimes by turn, sometimes in turn, in this "world" and that.[4] These elements, political forces, desires, articulations, commitments, and so on share the same time and space (Martinon's "space [and] time") and, as such, are always possessed of a certain combustibility. Out of the interplay between and among these elements there emerge, among other effects, the surging up of difference, conflict among the elements, jockeying for primacy or articulation; all these effects seem to be, in one way or another, the inevitable outcome of how these various elements respond to one another. Politically speaking, the effect of this interplay is that it renders individual subjects vulnerable to the force of judgment or, worse, indictment. We have already seen the latter effect play out, and we will see it again in greater detail shortly, with regard to Messi's relationship to Argentina. That is, Messi as "insufficiently" Argentine because of, in Goethe's terms, his "elective affinity" for FC Barcelona.[5]

That is not to say that *entre-nous* is an entirely "negative" political condition, because there is also another side to it. It is what one might describe as a conspiratorial mischievousness. *Entre-Nous*, as such, touches only very lightly on this effect, but the very concept of *entre-nous* turns on the notion of the (shared) secret. That is, following Jacques Derrida's work on the postcard, an understanding of the secret not as that (item of information, invariably highly politicized) which is largely unknown, but rather that which is publicly understood but, nevertheless, demands a conspiracy of "silence" for its functioning. That is, one whispers, with affection (or not), in jest (or not), about that person who is between us, that s/he is "really just out of it" or is silly to hold such-and-such an opinion. There is, needless to say, an extremely porous (and thin) line that divides conspiratorial mischievousness from outright judgment (that is, in its negative sense, as indictment or condemnation). Although it is, by and large, the negative aspects of what is *entre-nous* that engages this project, there are, nonetheless (especially in the "Interlude," that which, structurally, organizationally, typographically, literally stands between Messi and Luis Suárez) moments when the more playful possibilities of what is between manifest themselves, lending a certain levity—and, indeed, a kind of nostalgic, wistful pleasure—to *Entre-Nous*. As such, the possibilities that the conspiratorial and the mischievous (routine practices in daily life, after all) open should

never be underestimated; and, because of this, should be enjoyed, politically and otherwise, all the more.

In this spirit, then, it would be wrong to name the primary deployment of *entre-nous* in *Entre-Nous* as purely "negative," as loss, absence, political deficiency. (All the while, of course, understanding how important "negation" as such is to the work of Jean-Luc Nancy, whose thinking is central to this project.) Rather, what is between is thought as an attempt to understand the effects of forces—and the forces themselves, of course—that obtain in and between and among what is the time and the space of *entre-nous*. The project, in short, is to think everything—or as much as possible—that constitutes (the) *entre-nous*, to think the forces of separation that make up, in their complementarity ("water and wine") and antagonism ("water and oil"), that which is *entre-nous* (Goethe, 52). It is to think what forces are present, how they are operative, what the nature of their work is, and—this is beyond question (difficult as they may be to "pin down")—to understand how they work incessantly, restlessly, toward and for separation. It is to recognize that there is no constitutive outside to relation. Everything is relation. However, this does not mean that "relation" as such operates in an overdetermined fashion. It must (still; that is, more than ever) be thought for, identified, explicated, struggled with and over. The precise nature of the relation must be specified under the condition of "no outside."

Let me cast the matter in the intensely racialized (the geopolitics of space) terms offered by Ta-Nehisi Coates in his work *Between the World and Me*, terms that figure prominently in *Entre-Nous* as a study of the politics and philosophy of relation. Describing the fatal sense of enclosure (incarceration, the overdetermined carcerality of urban black life, as it were) that he, his family, his friends, his neighbors, those other black kids he walked in mortal fear of, and the entire black community experienced as normative life in the West Baltimore of his youth, Coates offers a fatalistic declarative: "We could not get out."[6] We will return to the notion of the impossibility of escape as raised by Coates in the "Interlude," but suffice it to say for now that the irrepressibility of relation, the unrelenting demand to think relation, is precisely what stands, in *Entre-Nous*, as not only between the world and me but, indeed, *as* the world and me. The world as constituted out of nothing so much as the thinking of relation: the indefatigability of, shall we name it, the ubiquity, the constant need to negotiate the world as relation. In the terms that Goethe borrows from eighteenth-century chemistry and then renders as the discourse of thwarted

love, "Just as each thing has an adherence to itself, so it must also have a relationship to other things" (Goethe, 52).

For Messi, as for Suárez, it is the political reality of the nation-state, a reality frequently experienced by Messi as oppressive; Suárez, for his part, encounters his native Uruguay as almost invariably demanding but also as supportive, as the source of solace that only the nation (or, perhaps only the nation that allows for the hegemony of a coach such as Tabárez), in its plenitude, can give. In the "Interlude," however, relation figures much more in Coates's (racialized and political) register. In the "Interlude," it is first the apartheid and then the (failures of the) postapartheid state, mediated as it is by a diasporic reality that complicates that already complex mode of being in relation to the world, that forms the political DNA of relation. The impossible struggle of "get out"; the struggle to remain in relation at all costs, to remain in relation from somewhere else (the diaspora); the unwinnable struggle to "get out," a psychopolitical inexorability (a battle against and with the self that is Sisyphean in cast) that is as much welcomed as it combatted as though it were a matter of life and death. Sometimes, it must be added, this battle is conducted more bitterly than others. Sometimes resignation wins the day.

Out of this tumultuous "unity" of (overdetermined political) fate and (the misguided belief in Nietzschean self-) will,[7] of opposition and complementarity, which we must pronounce as precarious and whose energy is almost impossible to "arrest," emerges, time and again, as something other than the forces of separation. What comes into being, what is released into life, what is made politically possible, just now and then, are those forces within separation that are themselves struggling to establish new modalities, new nodes, of relation. In relation, constitutively present, is separation; out of separation, relation; many of these relations we can, to some extent or other, anticipate; others are more likely to catch us entirely by surprise when they present themselves to us. And, if we are so fortunate, then, in Nietzsche's poetic terms, in that "autumnal hour of ripeness" we find ourselves as (Nietzsche's) beneficiaries: that moment when the relation of separation to relation reveals itself to us, "almost as a gift" (Nietzsche, 510).

Let us render this unruly, restless mode of philosophical production schematically, a representation that is important for understanding how relation works through separation in this project. That is, how the relation between relation and separation throws light on Leo Messi's relationship to the nation-

state of his birth (Argentina; the nation he represents at the Copa Mundial) and the deep bond that marks his ties to Catalunya (where he plays his club football for FC Barcelona), and, of course, the amalgam of forces at work, active, politically intense, that constitute what is *entre-nous* Messi and Argentina/Catalunya; how that relation, and its numerous effects, cannot but be bound by and find themselves bound up within the logic of *entre-nous*.

Messi, of course, is recognized not only as the greatest player of his generation but ranks among the greatest of all time.[8] Born in Rosário, Argentina, in June 1987, Messi is the son of a factory manager (his father, Jorge Messi) and a magnet manufacturing workshop employee (his mother, Celia Cuccittini).[9] To watch Messi today is to be struck not only by his gifts as a footballer but to almost immediately recognize his "compromised" (it appears to us) physical stature. He plays as though he were bent over from the lower spine, so odd and arresting is his posture. His "compromised" body is the result of a childhood growth hormone deficiency, diagnosed when Messi was ten years old and playing as a junior for his hometown club, Newell's Old Boys. The treatment needed for Messi's condition was expensive, about $1,000 per month, and his father's health insurance covered it only for two years. Newell's had agreed to pay for treatment after his father's insurance ran out but reneged when the payment came due. The Buenos Aires–based River Plate,[10] one of Argentina's powerhouse clubs, was rumored to be willing to pick up the tab, but nothing came of it. (Historically, Argentine football has been dominated by the two dominant Buenos Aires clubs, River Plate and Boca Juniors.)

However, Jorge, who is partly Catalan, still had family there, and a trial was arranged for Lionel at Barça. (Messi's mother, as her name suggests, traces her origins to Italian immigrants.) Messi immediately impressed the FC Barcelona first team director, Charly Rexach, and, despite some hesitation on Rexach's part,[11] Messi was signed (on December 14, 2000). This contract was inked, so the story goes (it has reached apocryphal proportions by now), on a paper napkin, the only writing material that Rexach could find. The greatest player in the world, secured by a handy paper napkin—it makes for a good story. In February 2001, Messi and his family moved to Barcelona, and within a year young Lionel was installed at the La Masia de Can Planes (more commonly known by its Catalan name, "La Masia," or "The Farmhouse"),[12] Barcą's famous youth training headquarters.[13] The generation of players whom Messi joined at La Masia was a distinctly very talented group, including the central defender

Gerard Piqué and the midfielders Cesc Fàbregas and Pedro;[14] not only were they talented—all of them would, for various lengths of time, eventually star for Barça—but they would constitute the core of the team for a considerable length of time, although by 2016 only Messi and Piqué remained. However, that generation that Messi encountered at the Barça youth headquarters, an old country house revamped to house some sixty members enrolled in the club's youth system, has become famous as the class of 1987—which designates, of course, the year in which all three were all born (Fàbregas in May; Piqué in February; and Pedro in July—Sergio Busquets, another of the stars, was born in July 1988).[15]

Messi's teammate at Barça, Luis Suárez, on whom the second chapter of *Entre-Nous* turns, was also born in 1987 (January 24, in Salto, Uruguay, some 308 kilometers northwest of the capital Montevideo, and about 12 kilometers from the Argentine border town of Concordia). *Entre-Nous* is, quite unexpectedly then, also a book about a generation, a generation in football, a book about two of the best players of their generation. That Messi and Suárez were born exactly five months apart, to the day, separated by a single border and less than 200 miles (190 miles, to be exact, or 306 kilometers), adds its own relationality, a kind of national intimacy (the proximity of neighbors, with all the complication that such proximity entails, especially as it pertains to football in Latin America), if you will, to this project. These connections are, of course, intensified by the fact that (from 2014–) Messi and Suárez found themselves teammates on Barcelona.

After the central midfielder Sergio Busquets, Messi is thus the second-youngest of the 1987 quartet but, by some considerable measure, the standout performer. He is the key to Barça as a team, having won eight La Liga titles, four Champions League medals, and a host of individual awards, not least among them his five FIFA Ballons d'Or (the Ballon d'Or is FIFA's award for the best male player; it is voted on by international journalists, national team coaches, and captains). Messi is one of the only two players to have won this award five times (Ronaldo is the other)—four times consecutively, from 2009 to 2012.[16] Individually, the Ballons d'Or are a poor metonym for all the awards Messi has secured in his career, but they undoubtedly provide a handy place to begin the process of tabulating the many that have been afforded him. To count them all, an abacus or three would be advised. As such, what Messi has done is make of himself a truly defining figure in the history of football, a history that appears

in need of revision every time Messi steps onto the football field, more often than not since the 2014–15 season in the company of Luis Suárez.

If *Entre-Nous* presents Messi as an intensely "*singular* plural" individual, his teammate Suárez is apprehended here in a much more interpersonal way. That is, Suárez is thought in relation to his Uruguayan national team coach, Óscar Washington Tabárez, so that we can say Suárez and Tabárez are always in a relation that is at once an intense(ly related), R, as befits a player-coach relationship, and separated, again, befitting because S marks the "spacing"—in terms of the hierarchy or chain of command that structures a football team, often more so when it comes to a national team setup, where the coach is presumed to shoulder most of the burden of responsibility for performance, for, that is, representing the nation. That is, the *entre-nous* that constitutes the R between self and other. Nevertheless, what is salient about the Suárez-Tabárez relationship are the affective and political forces that bind two individuals to each other, self-self, the intensity of "being-with-one-another," and the history and the political ideology that frame their relationship. There are forces operative here *entre-nous* Tabárez and his star striker Suárez that are equally, and simultaneously, it would seem, incendiary and affirming.

Suárez, who has scored more international goals than any other Uruguayan player (forty-nine goals in ninety-five appearances; a fantastic rate of more than a goal every two games), has worked his way up to the European elite after beginning his career with the Montevideo team Nacional, for whom he played only twenty-seven games (ten goals). Suárez moved to Montevideo from Salto at the age of seven, and his parents separated when he was nine. Growing up, Suárez worked as a street sweeper in Montevideo, and many speculate that his aggressive behavior on the pitch can be traced to his impoverished childhood. After Nacional he joined the modest Dutch team Groningen (twenty-nine games, ten goals), which led to a transfer to Ajax, historically the most successful club in the Netherlands (it was, as we know, also the great Dutch—and Barcelona player and manager—Johan Cruyff's first club). At Ajax Suárez became a star. In 110 games for Ajax, Suárez scored a phenomenal eighty-one goals, a strike rate that boggles the mind. In January 2011, he was transferred ("traded") to Liverpool, where he quickly established himself as one of the best players in Europe, with sixty-nine goals, in the much more competitive English Premier League, in the same number of games as he played for Ajax. After the 2014 Copa Mundial he left Liverpool for Barcelona.

Suárez is a player renowned as much for his prodigious and impish talent as for his ability to attract controversy. (He is something of, a concept I have deployed elsewhere,[17] an état *voyou*, a lovable, mischievous rogue with a commensurate capacity for getting into trouble. It is not only in the "Interlude" then, that mischievousness is manifest, but it is, both a priori and "post ipso facto," as it were, present with Suárez.) Playing in the quarter final of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, Suárez deliberately handled the ball on the goal line. From the resulting penalty, the Ghanaian striker Asamoah Gyan hit the bar. Suárez, who was sent off for his offense, stopped before heading down the tunnel and cheered when Gyan missed. "I made the save of the tournament," an unrepentant Suárez declared as Uruguay triumphed 4–2 in the penalty shootout to advance to the semifinals against the Dutch. With the talismanic Suárez suspended, a game Uruguay lost 3–2 to the Netherlands. Suárez returned for the third-place game, which Uruguay also lost, 3–2 to Germany. Every time he touched the ball in that ceremonial game, the warm-up to the World Cup final between Spain and the Netherlands, Suárez was booed. A pyrrhic act of loud, *vuvuzela*-based solidarity between the South African crowd and their vanquished African neighbors to the northwest, one presumes.[18]

Suárez's other misdemeanors include diving (deliberately throwing himself to the ground in order to win a free kick; or, if the "offense" takes place in the opposition's penalty area, a spot kick). And he was involved in a nasty brouhaha about racism with an opponent, Patrice Evra, while playing for Liverpool, a charge that he has vehemently denied. However, what has won him the most notoriety is his propensity for biting an opponent, an offense for which he has been suspended thrice; first with Ajax and then with Liverpool.

However, it is the third biting incident, in the 2014 World game against Italy, that is determining for his relationship with Tabárez. It is also the biting incident that frames the chapter on him and Tabárez. In the seventy-ninth minute of a 2014 World Cup match that was scoreless, Suárez challenged for the ball in the Italian goal area and lunged into Giorgio Chiellini, the opposing defender, who clutched his shoulder. Suárez, in dramatic fashion, threw himself to the ground. Chiellini pointed to the bite marks on his shoulder, but the referee took no action. Uruguay scored from the resulting corner, the only goal in the game that knocked out Italy. However, after reviewing the incident, the FIFA disciplinary committee suspended Suárez for nine international games (the longest suspension in the history of the World Cup), ending his participa-

tion in the 2014 Copa Mundial and, effectively, with it Uruguay's chances of advancing.

Not only at home in Uruguay but also internationally Suárez's punishment was met with a significant show of support for the then-Liverpool striker. Even the victim of his aggression, Chiellini, pronounced the ban excessive. (Suárez apologized on Twitter, and Chiellini graciously accepted.) Among those who denounced the ban were Suárez's national team captain, Diego Lugano; the president of the Uruguayan Football Association (AUF), Wilmar Valdez; and Suárez's lawyer (who called it a "European-based campaign against Suárez"). (No matter, it seems, that the first two biting offenses were committed in Europe; in fact, it was Suárez's history of biting that lead to the severity of the ban—three bites and you're out, it would appear, at least from the Copa Mundial, if that's where the crucial third bite takes place.)[19] In general, the ban was received with scorn, skepticism, accusations of discrimination against a small Latin American country, and, quite remarkably, denunciation of FIFA by the Uruguayan president, José Mujica. The heavyset president, who has the avuncular appearance of an idiosyncratic relative (his coat doesn't quite fit and his sweatshirts are a little too roomy, all of which works to make his girth entirely comforting), pronounced the FIFA officials "una manga de viejos hijos de puta"—a bunch of old sons of bitches.[20] Such is the passion that Suárez inspired in his fellow Uruguayans, from the president's office on down.

However, *Entre-Nous* is specifically concerned with what emerges *entre-eux* Suárez and his national team coach, the highly esteemed "El Maestro" ("The Teacher," a position he did indeed once hold, as a primary [grade] school teacher), Óscar Washington Tabárez. A deep-thinking football man, Tabárez is an avid reader who regards the work of his fellow Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano highly. Tabárez is also a keen admirer of the Argentine-born revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara (he named his daughter Tania after Che's last *compañera*), and perhaps the national coach best suited, in terms of political sensibility, to coaching República Oriental del Uruguay—the "Oriental Republic." Uruguay is known as the "Switzerland of Latin America," in part because it "boasts the highest levels of literacy in the continent and one of the lowest levels of corruption"; it is the second-smallest country in the Americas, and yet its tiny population, some three and a half million people, "enjoy the highest Index of Human Development, one of the most equitable distributions of income, and of the highest life-expectancy rates."[21] Tabárez and his native land

were made for each other, in terms of how they understand being in the world and, of course, in football, where Tabárez's penchant for open, attacking football taps into the long tradition of playing *joga bonito* (the "beautiful game") beautifully. In the "Author's Confession," which opens *Football in Sun and Shadow*, Galeano gives voice to his love for beautiful football, a love that overwhelms any propensity for partisanship. "I've finally learned to accept myself for who I am," Galeano writes, "a beggar for good football. I go about the world, hand outstretched, and in the stadiums I plead: 'A pretty move, for the love of God.'"[22] A "beggar" impatient with partiality, and with decidedly aesthetic tastes, to boot, our Señor Galeano.

In Suárez, much like in former Uruguayan strikers such as Daniel "el castor" ("The Beaver") Fonseca and Diego Forlán, Tabárez appears to have found a man who most closely resembles him.[23] All three strikers share Tabárez's commitment to playing beautifully, to representing "Los Charrúas" with passion and joy. (Translating roughly as "The Plows," "Los Charrúas" stands more as an honorific dedicated to honoring the Amerindian population who lived in the area millennia ago. The indigenous Charrúa were driven south by the Guaraní thousands of years ago into regions that today incorporate parts of southern Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay.) Suárez is, like the other ten most-capped Uruguayan players in the nation's history, the product of Proceso de Institucionalización de Selecciones y la Formación de sus Fútbolistas—the careful organization of the Uruguayan national system, from the youth teams, under-13, and under-15 through to the senior side. Tabárez instituted "El Proceso" ("The Process") in 2006, when he began his second spell as national team coach. Through El Proceso, Tabárez has managed to provide the entire structure of Uruguayan football with an identifiable style of play.

It is the fact that Tabárez and Suárez seem to have so much in common that, as the second chapter of *Entre-Nous* argues, must have made it so difficult for Tabárez, a deeply ethical man (the *tecnico* who always wants to do right by his players and by history), to confront the event of Suárez's third biting offense. After all, Suárez's act effectively put paid to Uruguay's chances of advancing in the 2014 Copa Mundial, given that he was—and remains, for now—the national team's lynchpin. How Tabárez confronted the event of the Chiellini bite, how he addressed it, given what is *entre-eux*, between them, between Tabárez and Suárez, between *el tecnico* and his player, is what this chapter addresses. There is something about this relationship that makes one wonder if,

as a former school master, Tabárez ever approaches Suárez as "the boy that no schoolmaster wanted,"[24] to use the language of George Augustus Moore, novelist and, with Lady Gregory and William Butler Yeats, the leader of the Irish Literary Revival. Suárez, the irascible, marvelously talented charge who cannot, ever, be brought fully to heel—and a good thing, too, Tabárez would say, one suspects, given the figures who dominate his political archive. It is worth remembering a famous sentence from Moore's autobiography, *Confessions of a Young Man*, that foreshadows Suárez's—or shares with Suárez—an inevitable doom. The fate that Moore suffered as a schoolboy, anticipates—somewhat uncannily—Suárez's footballing demise at the 2014 Copa Mundial: "I was a boy that no schoolmaster wants, and the natural end to so wayward a temperament as mine was expulsion."[25] The Catholic "schoolboy" from nineteenth-century County Mayo who claimed Sir Thomas More as an ancestor and the irascible street urchin from Montevideo both know the experience of "expulsion," albeit "expulsions" of a very different nature. Moore went on to read and write literature, and thereafter he helped found a nationalist movement; Suárez, in his turn, found himself "expelled" from one of the two greatest spectacles in modern sport (the other being the Summer Olympics), and in doing so he condemned his nation to more or less, in his absence, guaranteed defeat; and his "expulsion" presented his coach with an ethical and philosophical quandary to test the very fiber of Tabárez's political beliefs.

As such, what is *entre-eux* Tabárez and Suárez is, of necessity, at once evocative of and distinct from what is *entre-nous* Messi and the nation-state (Argentina) and the *autonomista* (Catalunya). *Entre-Nous* seeks to understand both what is shared among these figures from neighboring countries and how they each demand a distinct and complementary thinking (which requires an a priori openness to dialectical agonism) of what is *entre-eux*. That is, what is between Suárez and Messi, what is between Suárez-Tabárez and Messi, what is between Argentina and Uruguay, what is between an "elective affinity" to the *autonomista* and allegiance (*Wahlverstandtschaft* as both an "alchemical" and a chemical reaction, or, set of relations), however qualified, uncertain, or complicated, to the nation-state. The point, then, is not to "compare," an impossibility, in any case, Messi and Suárez/Tabárez but to think the ways in which they pose/propose different articulations of the concept *entre-nous*. A thinking, of course, that is brought into sharp and personal relief in the "Interlude," where what is *entre-nous* shows itself to be, in truth, not about football

at all. In fact, we could say that in the "Interlude" football is only the pretext or the first provocation for writing—itself a loaded act—the (apartheid-inspired) politics of *entre-nous*.

Nonetheless, the two chapters stand as the architectural pillars of *Entre-Nous*, in no small measure because they inaugurate the difficulty of accounting for, simultaneously and by turns, how to think in a single gesture that is singular but never solitary or in isolation (from other such gestures), as regards the relation of *entre-nous* to *entre-eux*. How are they to be distinguished? Can the two terms, and the thinking of relation they impel, be kept separate, however momentarily? *Entre-Nous* approaches this conceptual conundrum by trying to establish, however provisionally and tentatively, what different kinds of tensions mark relation, as figured through Messi, and those that arise *entre-eux* Suárez and Tabárez. This line of inquiry leads to the question of what happens when the passage of relation runs through, that is, within, the nation-state rather than between nation-states, or their equivalencies. It also makes imperative an explication of what happens to the thinking of separation when it takes as its primary articulation that which is *entre-eux* rather than that which is—a question that the "Interlude" takes up, is compelled to take up (with existential consequences)—a line of inquiry that demands a neologism, in another language, a language truly "foreign" to a key political constituency in the "Interlude," *entre-moi-et-moi-même*. What is between me and myself? What language can bear that, surely among the most intimate of relations? What language must be, in two senses, *made* to bear that which is *entre-moi-et-moi-même*?

> *Signes et événements. /* Perhaps it is in the holes that movement takes place. —— GILLES DELEUZE, quoted in Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy*

Thinking what is *entre-moi-et-moi-même* is the source—the first thinking, the first articulation—of the "Interlude." It is about an amateur football team, Lansur United Amateur Football Club (AFC) and the ways in which the politics—the postulates, in and from which direction is thought emanating?—of what is *entre-nous* is explicated through a "singular plural" subject. Moreover, a "singular plural" subject emerging from out of the context of the history of apartheid and its effects on this football club from the coloured[26] ("mixed race") township of Hanover Park. Like many other coloured townships, Hanover Park

was—and remains, to this day—home to a working-class community in a region of the Western Cape known as the Cape Flats. (The Cape Flats, often described as a windswept area with hardy, sparse vegetation, is located about sixteen kilometers (about ten miles) from downtown Cape Town. On a clear day, the splendor of Table Mountain in all its majesty is brilliantly visible, but the city and the wealthy, leafy, tree-lined suburbs that nestle on the slopes of the mountain are, in truth, a world away.) The "Interlude" uses *entre-nous* to think what it is exactly that marks, deforms, and persists in the relation through separation that is extant between the apartheid state and the individual who moves, relentlessly and restlessly, between the post-/apartheid state and the United States. (It is important to note that "restlessness" is a key term for Nancy in his thinking on Hegel,[27] as announced in the title of his book, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*; the term that is rendered here, in order to achieve the full Hegelian effect, as *Rastlosigkeit*—the most positive philosophical iteration of the term in German. *Rastlosigkeit* is, as such, distinguished from terms such as *Ruhelosigkeit*, which has a similar meaning but does not carry the same positive aspect, or *unruhig*, which would be the adjectival form.)

The "Interlude" is not quite of the diasporic order of Moore's notion that, as he puts it, "a man travels the world in search of what he needs and returns home to find it."[28] Nor is it as inexorable a rendering of the relation to nativity (the place of birth, its—perpetual, unbreakable—hold on the self), but there is nevertheless a certain Moore-like quality to the "Interlude." The "Interlude" is, as much as anything, an address to an amateur football club, a club now more than twenty years defunct, that provides not so much a passage to "connectivity," to invoke Nancy, but to weave the thread that is separation-intimacy, the intimacy of separation, and what it means to live (with the effects of) deracination, a thread and a threat that binds this book, no matter how fragile and speculative it might be, a threat/thread that runs through *Entre-Nous*. That thread that links, in ways both assertive and uncertain, the chapters on Messi and Suárez-Tabárez to the "Interlude," that thread which throws *entre-nous* into relief and animates the concept in entirely unexpected ways.

As such, the "Interlude" argues for *entre-moi-et-moi-même* as that mode of thinking relation that is, at once, derived from and more than simply the derivation of one concept from another. That is, *entre-moi-et-moi-même* as a less fully articulated concept but by no means a secondary one. What *entre-moi-et-moi-même* does is give voice to the thinking that first uttered—however halt-

ingly, a voice eminently unsure of itself, a voice struggling to come into itself, to come into its own language—*entre-nous,* this project's organizing concept, as a philosophico-political difficulty. *Entre-moi-et-moi-même*, then, stands as the "first" address of (and to) Messi, Suárez, and Tabárez, from within the world that is between-us, the world that is between them and me. *Entre-Nous*, in this sense, is a project that begins in the middle. Not in medias res but a book that can be read from the middle. From the middle out. From the middle in either direction. *Entre-Nous* as a work whose "logic," if such a term might be permitted, "unfolds" either from the middle or chronologically. Or *Entre-Nous* as a book to be read toward the middle. *Entre-Nous* as a book that frees the reader to begin, in an absolute sense, anywhere, randomly. The "logic" of *Entre-Nous* can be constructed out of a multiplicity of arrangements. It is a book that invites its "logic" to be, again, *made*.

It is, in this regard, a project that affords a "spatial"—conceptual—latitude. Here Michael Hardt's sense of Deleuzean possibility, which invites us to do something with-in the "space" that Deleuze opens up, is apropos. Quoting his subject, Hardt says, "It is in the holes that the movement takes place." As such, the "Interlude" performs several philosophical functions at once. It serves to mark, anchor, and name the "hole," and one in particular, that one out of which the (Nancian/Deleuzian) "movement" obtained its (Nancian) "restlessness." Having identified the "hole" and recognized the possibilities for thinking that it engenders, it is also, then, to acknowledge that this "movement" toward Messi, Tabárez, and Suárez, to phrase the direction of thinking—the thinking of *Entre-Nous*—inelegantly, is the consequence of an a priori "upsurge." The "hole" as the space, and the time, of a fecund volatility; the "hole" as the domesticized space of restlessness, a restlessness that threatens to undo the very grounds of its domesticity; the "hole" as the time of struggle, of struggles, against apartheid, a struggle within the self, that has identifiable political names. Simultaneously, of course, the very attempt to impose a name finds itself confronted by that name's (innate) stubbornness: it is always on the verge of plotting an escape; or, it is always likely to refuse to submit to the force of nomenklatura.

The "movement in the hole," then, as the result of a straining against the (domestic) containment that was apartheid (and the inequities that have persisted into postapartheid South Africa), as much as it emerged out of a determined inclining in the direction of the world. As such, *Entre-Nous* "moves" in

and through a variegation of worlds that cohere in the "singular plural" world that is football. *Entre-Nous* stipulates to a world at once (far, far) removed from the habitus of an amateur football club, a world that did not permit of any conceiving of a(n intimate) relation between-Messi-and-me, and the force with which that world (for which the name "apartheid" is nothing but a convenient shorthand) was—can be—drawn into that world where the likes of Messi, Suárez, and Tabárez manifest themselves and, yes, flourish. *Entre-Nous* thinks, exploits, we might even say, the philosophico-political possibilities that surge up out of that division, that fecundity that is (the) between-us. As such, *Entre-Nous* posits a world, worlds, that do not so much need to be "overcome" as inhabited, conceptually, imaginatively. Inhabited, yes, but never without, never before (again and again), making its way through the passage that is *entre-nous*. As much as anything, the "Interlude" speaks to the strength that is *entre-nous* and the intensity with which what is between-us is grappled with, struggled against, all the while lived-with, all the while, in its own way, and on its own terms, giving form and (footballing) content to that which is *entre-nous*. What is *entre-nous* is, then, never, as such, overcome, defeated, or even, much to the name's regret, refused. No, is it only ever, as such, endured ("lived-with"). Instead it provides that which is *entre-nous*, a "singular plural" mode of being self in its relation to the world—to the world of the football pitch, both the local apartheid one, and the one on which Messi and Suárez strut their stuff, that pitch, those training grounds, where Tabárez has and continues to put his stamp on the game.

However, one can begin to think the "Interlude" by acknowledging that between the greatest player of his generation, between the most prolific and successful Uruguayan striker of all time (and a player once beloved by the Liverpool partisans, myself included, on Lansur United AFC), between a coach much admired for developing El Proceso, there is, for the amateur footballer, a world. A world that cannot, as Nancy remarks (in a term full of poetic Nietzschean and Heideggerian allusions; allusions from which, as we shall see shortly, Nancy invokes as much he takes his distance from them), be "bridged." What is between is absolute, unbridgeable. That world where what is *entre-nous* is indeed, at least under the conditions of apartheid, apprehended as world that can never be accessed. And yet it out of this world, where the amateur coloured player under apartheid could only admire (and dream about, hopelessly), that world that the world knows as the Copa Mundial but never participates in,

that *Entre-Nous* in all likelihood found its first, tentative articulation. What is between-us, between Messi, Suárez, Tabárez, and the constitutive "us" of Lansur United is not so disconnected as to be out of place, as to have no place, in *Entre-Nous*. Au contraire. It is for this reason that the "Interlude" must be understood as more than a break or a rupture, more than a moment for reflection, a moment of reflection on Hanover Park from some other place. *Entre-Nous* would try, in vain, to name who is, properly speaking, other, and so it cannot stand as of or apart from the enunciation of the other. The "Interlude," then, is located as it is in the very constitutive middle of this project because it is the philosophical heartbeat of *Entre-Nous*. What is *entre-eux*, as it were, makes possible a different, disruptive, or "rupturous" (the preferred neologism here) thinking of the difficulties, the philosophical prospects and promises, and the politics, in short, of that which constitutes the "world" of football. A thinking that may last only a moment, a moment possible only courtesy of a "singular plural" philosophical mode.

It is a world that encompasses, as *Entre-Nous* tries to faithfully do, the world that is the World Cup, the Copa Mundial, the Coup du monde, Weltmeisterschaft, the world of football in its entirety, as least as offered here, in order to apprehend the force of *entre-nous* at once from the very highest echelons of the game and from a level that is not only rudimentary but well outside the realm of conventional philosophical and cultural reflection. There may be, because of this rendering of the "Interlude," a more prosaic truth at work, a truth that should be but is not always easy to admit. In this regard, Elspeth Probyn's work on shame has something instructive, and not a little bracing (so effective is it in pulling the self up short), to say: "When you get very interested in something, it quickly seems that the whole world is revealed in its light. Falling in love is a good example."[29] *Entre-nous* is the act of interest, intense interest, in *entre-nous.* It should, of course, be—especially for someone who has written on sport before, and is likely (if putatively unwilling) to do so again in the future[30]—easier to acknowledge how much, to blend the unrelated terms of Probyn's argument, how "quickly" "interest" can spawn "love." But even this acknowledgement does not quite get to the heart of the matter. *Entre-Nous* is the effect of an "interest" that enabled the "revelation" in a host of disconnected, but persistently evocative, worlds; worlds that spoke to, and speak of, one another, in terms that are frequently dissonant (discordant, disrupting each other, erupting into each other) but also consonant (concordant, in har-

mony, "at home" with each other) in their ability to draw something out of each other. Each, in its turn, each, almost without fail, surprising in what it "reveals" about the other.

In this way, what *Entre-Nous* offers is not so much a "connectivity" but the recognition that the force of what is between-us, and between-them, operates, at least provisionally, unequally, that is to say, in different registers but sometimes in ways that are resonant, evocative, and, indeed, revealing, of similarities, echoes, hauntings, and, yes, love. That is, as much as it reiterates the difference of what is *entre-nous* in these different worlds. In thinking what is *entre-nous,* therefore, this project begins, began, who knows how long ago, from a subject (Lansur United, I, me) long since preoccupied with the force of *entre-nous*. A subject that "surges up" through the thinking, a subject constituted out of what is *entre-nous*. As such, *Entre-Nous* emerges out of the world that is, that was (apartheid, the amateur's lack of skill, if not ambition), between the World Cup and me, and the constitutive, metonymic, necessarily partial, Lansur United. And yet, it is out of precisely that between-us, because of that between-us, that makes it possible to address, to conceive of, *entre-nous* as an idea that is philosophico-political to its core. It is for this reason that the concept of *entre-nous* governs *Entre-Nous*.

*Entre-Nous* begins, then, with the constitutive insufficiency that is at the core of the "Interlude." It recognizes the tension, the appropriation at work, in recounting a moment in an institution that has disappeared from Hanover Park, beloved by all its members (at the very least, beloved by most of them), which makes of the "we," as Nancy says, a "'we' [that] is inevitably 'us all,' where no one of us can be 'all' and each one of us, in turn (where all our turns are simultaneous as well as successive, in every sense), the other origin of the same world."[31] There is thus in play, spoken or not, an entire series of "origins of the same world" so that *Entre-Nous* at once stakes its claim to the "origin" and understands that in speaking—on behalf of, as—the "all" of Lansur United, the account of the club is, in every act of speaking, in relation with the unspoken,[32] simultaneously and successively unarticulated "other origins." It may very well be that it is in this way, as the stirrings and hauntings of these "other origins," that the idiomatic Afrikaans, which occasionally punctuates the "Interlude," speaks most volubly. Township Afrikaans, a language inflected by race as much as by class and geopolitics, marks, as and in itself, more clearly than anything, the "other origins of the same world." As such, township Afrikaans is a

discourse—a mode of being in the apartheid and postapartheid world—in which the traces of other languages, and here English is preeminent, are distinctly audible. (A sort of Spanglish of the Cape Flats, if you will, similarly spiced with a certain joie de vivre. In previous incarnations it was sometimes referred to as Kaaps, Afrikaans for, roughly translated, Cape, stamping the language with a geopolitical imprint in which, again, race and class figure prominently.[33]) It is, if such a description might be permitted, a decidedly "impure" discursive mode in which linguistic invention, borrowing and constant renovation, is the order of the day. The conceptual license taken with French (and German, too), then, can be said to be in the spirit of Cape Flats creativity.

THE OTHER SURGES UP · In those other names, in naming the other—in its abbreviation, in the prevalence of nicknames, names that speak affection and intimacy, yes, but also give voice to the unalterable, linguistically stubborn otherness of the other—as such the "other origin of the world" surges up into the world that is *Entre-Nous*. In the end, it is possible to say, to say rupturously, that what may emerge in both two chapters and the "Interlude" is at once a sense of pathos and the purest form of alienation, that which Nancy names the "bare exposition of singular origins."[34] The self, in being-with, stipulates to the immense difficulty involved in "achieving" being-with. Being-with is never, however it is desired, that which is always there for us to simply take, to take up, to "appropriate," to make our own, much as it presents itself to us, repeatedly, in one fashion, in one form or another. It is necessary to struggle to gain access to being-with. And, in significant ways, *Entre-Nous* grapples with the difficulty involved in achieving being-with as much as it tries to identify, without ever hoping to "overcome," that which stands in the way of its being-with.

For all that, this is a stubborn difficulty, as resistant to being named as it is averse to being "overcome." And we should not be surprised at the nature—and the philosophical persistence of the difficulty that being-with presents. After all, something of substance, politically, epiphenomenologically, is at stake. Nonetheless, being-with must be addressed because, as Nancy points out, the "themes of being-with and co-originarity need to be renewed and need to 'reinitialize' the existential analytic, exactly because these are meant to respond to the question of the meaning of Being, or to Being as meaning."[35] The

"themes of being-with and co-originarity" constitute, as will be made clear especially in both chapters and in the "Interlude," each, in their own way, an argument for how to be in the world, and an address to the ways in which Being (*Sein*) pertains for each of the various protagonists. It is, in all likelihood, this struggle toward and for Being that animates *Entre-Nous* (the brief invocation of Nietzsche's will set us on our way toward the encounter with Being); more than even that, it may constitute its very core. Or it is this struggle that radiates out from the very core of *Entre-Nous*, consuming everything—every question, every line of thinking, every thought that is pursued, however successfully or not—with which it comes into contact.

To acknowledge Being as such, then, is to commit oneself to the act (thinking) as act (that is, to activate, to make something happen through philosophy; "thought is the penetration into the thing"), and to give the self over to the thing (thinking, the "object" being thought) itself.[36] It is Being as a "breaking or a sinking into the thing" that requires the paradoxical (and yet not) act of active "surrender": to do the work of "breaking into the thing" while also "submitting" to the "thing"—giving the self (over) to the force of Being (*Dasein*), to being one with Being (*Mitsein* of the highest order), no matter how difficult or impossible this desire might be.[37] In this way, the philosophical stakes that *Entre-Nous* raises has everything to do with football (the difficulty, shall we say, of Being, for Leo Messi is, as we will see, considerable, as it is for Luis Suárez), but the horizon of philosophical possibility also extends far beyond the purview of the field, certainly, and the game itself. In one articulation or another, it is the question of *Sein* that is the first and the last confrontation that *Entre-Nous* commits itself to. *Sein*, thought at once broadly and very narrowly, is what propels *Entre-Nous*. Or, in truth, it may be the confrontation, the question, that this book seeks most to address, no matter—or maybe because of—the impossible difficulty of thinking *Sein* as such, a difficulty of which Heidegger has long since made us aware.

THE SCHEMA · In each of the two chapters and the "Interlude," the logic of the schema, rendered as relation ↔ separation (R ↔ S) and separation ↔ relation (S ↔ R), operates on the following principle. Every instance of relation ↔ ("leads to," this is what the symbol designates) separation and every separation, in turn, without fail, leads to a new relation. That is to say, R ↔ S ≠ S ↔ R.

This means that, let us call it R1 (relation 1), the relation that produces the "first" separation might resemble the relation that emerges out of that separation, let us call it R2 (relation 2), but the two are in no way identical to each other. That is to say, every S (separation) produces an entirely new R (relation). Every separation produces a distinct R; and this means that every S must be understood as producing its own kind of rupture leading to a distinct R, every time. There might be similarity, but there can be no absolute replication of R.

THE EXISTING SINGULAR · This also entails that one not know exactly . . . what or who is an "existing singular," neither where it begins nor where it ends. —— JEAN-LUC NANCY, "Cosmos Baselius"

It is for this reason that every R ↔ S ≠ S ↔ R produces, to amend Nancy's terms, which has to do with the struggle for justice ("*au juste*") and spatiality (beginnings and endings), its own "existing singular."[38] What *Entre-Nous* is concerned with is less the specificity of spatiality or temporality (which we might name the "when" of), but the constituent elements—the constituting force—of the "existing singular" that makes up each R, that makes each R distinct from every other R because of the facticity of S. Every S produces its own individual R; or, as Nancy puts it, "What posits the distinct, and identifies it, is separation."[39] Positing every R in its particularity, in its separation (in what it is that makes it "distinct and identifies it"), however, "entails" a fair measure of constitutive uncertainty. That is because, even if we are rigorous in our fidelity to Nancy's notion of "separation," it remains difficult to know "exactly how" every "existing singular" R is distinct from every other one (At what point does it become "distinct?" At what point does it disarticulate itself from the R that precedes or succeeds it? How is the "distinction" marked?), especially the one that immediately precedes it, the one whose S out of which it has emerged, and upon which the distinction of R depends entirely. Nancy acknowledges this difficulty insofar as he recognizes that "every given unity" is composed of "something derived, deposited—a moment, unstable like every instant, in the movement that gives relation, in which relation gives itself."[40] It may be that the impossibility of relation "derives" from the very "movement" that makes relation possible. Without "movement," we can assume, relation itself cannot come into being; in other words, stasis, the lack of or refusal of movement will,

sooner, rather than later, result in first the atrophying and then, inevitably, the death of R. It is, for precisely this reason, that what has been proffered here as the "indistinction," R that is always proximate to R through/despite the rupturous force of S, serves to explicate why it does not matter—or, at least, matters only very little—that one R be held utterly discrete from every other R, either the one that succeeds or precedes it. That R1 is not R2 matters, but it matters less than the ways in which R1 and R2 evoke each other. R is constituted out of itself; R is, when all is said and done, autogenerative of R.

Under these terms it becomes absolutely necessary, as an act of fidelity to the thinking of the schema, to recognize the importance of holding every R apart (as a part of other parts) and thinking it, to coin a Nancian phrase, as an "existing singular plural." That is, there are constituent elements that every R might share, and every S, too, for that matter; and these must be taken into account in thinking the distinctiveness of every R in relation to every other R. *Entre-Nous* is, then, engaged in the difficulty of thinking the "plurality" of the R while accounting, as rigorously and scrupulously as possible, for its resonant, constitutive, jealously enunciated "singularity." (Let us think it as an all-too provisional, contingent and transient sovereignty.) There is, for this reason, an ongoing struggle between the two signs. These two "logics," as it were, that designate inequivalence as much as equivocation, hesitation, uncertainty, a reluctance to pronounce too quickly, are locked in a productive tension; the one, let us say R, is not always in perfect relation to the other, but neither is it (ever) entirely without the propensity for relation (R) and separation (S). R1 is never entirely discontinuous from R2. It is for this reason that Nancy can confidently argue that "everything is at the same time separated in relation, everything is only separated and in relation."[41] It is because Nancy's writing on what is between, *entre-nous* (between-us; being-with-the-other),[42] *entre-eux* (between-them), and, not least, because his work on Hegel lends complexity and a restrained pathos to the concept of *entre-moi-et-moi-même* (between-myself-and-I, also rendered as "I-and-I"),[43] is so textured and attuned to the political in its many manifestations (desire, love, and caring not least among them, all of which figure prominently in this project) that his work is so central to *Entre-Nous*. (The pathos to which Nancy's work is attuned is especially resonant in chapter two, especially in light of Moore's trope of the "boy no schoolmaster wanted," except Tabárez, that is. A trope, of course, that is replete with Dickensian overtones as, before all else, the echoes of *Oliver Twist*'s

"Please, sir" ring in our ears.) These different modes of being (it would be very difficult to stipulate as to exactly how many, these different and distinct modes of what is *entre*) work to reinforce, complicate, and "fulfill" each other; or, to phrase it in a more rudimentary way, they "fill each other out." These various modes of being *entre* "complete" each other, insofar as "completion" is possible, enabling us to explicate "fully" each of the constituent elements, in both their singularity and their plurality, as well as, of course, their "singular plurality."

The term *entre-nous* is itself borrowed from Nancy in no small measure because his work recognizes the conceptual challenges that thinking what is between—between us, between myself and I, and so on—presents. In his long essay *Being Singular Plural*, Nancy offers a "definition" of the concept, one in which he insists upon (a characteristic with which we are already familiar) a "spatial" thinking of *entre-nous*. "This 'between,'" he says, "as its name implies, has neither a consistency nor continuity of its own. It does not lead from one to the other; it constitutes no connective tissue, no cement, no bridge. . . . it is that which is at the heart of a connection, the *inter*lacing [*l'entrecroisment*] of strands whose extremities remain separate even at the very center of the knot. The 'between' is a stretching out [*distention*] and distance opened up by the singular as such, as its spacing of meaning."[44] (Here Nancy refuses the "bridge" as a means of "relation"—a means of getting to the "other side." In *Was Heißt Denken?* and *Zarathustra* the "bridge" functions as the architecture of relation for Heidegger and Nietzsche respectively.) It is in just this "spacing of meaning" (which makes possible an extension—"distention"—into new meanings) that we encounter the various modes of what is *entre*. (So that, we might suggest, *Entre-Nous* stands as a series of "odes" to what is *entre*.) And it is in this "spacing of meaning" that the singular reveals its relation to the plural and, as such, makes it necessary to think the production of the singular under the condition of nonrelation, to name it poorly. As Nancy says, "One does not lead to the other," there is "no connective tissue, no cement, no bridge," so it becomes absolutely necessary to think separation (S) as constituting the core.[45] It is S that is at the "very center of the knot," and the "knots," in their turn, bring R into being.

As such, in thinking Messi, Tabárez, Suárez, and Lansur United as "knotted together" through the force of what is *entre*, in the several iterations that *Entre-Nous* raises, "knotted together" in such a way as to make its unknotting (if not its unraveling) an impossible undertaking, *Entre-Nous* begins with the

difficulty of S. Or what it is that S makes possible in its relation to R. In Nancy's rendering, R is possible only through (that is to say, because of) S. Everything, then, turns on S. It is only through S that we understand how R1 is related to R2. In the absence of a "connective tissue," it is only through S that we can think the "extremities" in their relation to each other. In other words, *Entre-Nous* is that project that seeks to create a language—through its discursive exchange with Nancy as its central but by no means only mediating figure—for S: the language of separation, a language adequate to the politics of S.

*Entre-nous* is a language marked by the struggle to explicate relation through separation and, as such, to find in the concept of *entre-nous* a language that can bear the palimpsest nature of S. One articulation or uncovering of S, or revelation, of relation inexorably produces "another reaction," making possible "another unexpected direction," demanding yet another thinking of S and R. Every articulation of S and R is then, a priori, inadequate—it is never sufficient to the task of explicating relation—and generative—as Jean-Paul Martinon reminds us, it is the germ of "another text."

The "text" that follows "this" one (S or R) is also, however, the first word in the direction of a new "violence," the violence that may or may not explain the constitutive force of R or the rupturous (and equally, but distinct) force of S. S makes R, to present the schema another way.

However, it is important to recognize that the force of S, named "rupturous" here (as in, to rupture with—always potentially violent—intent), must be thought in relation to violence, both the violence that is present in the initial or "first" S, and the violence that is to come, *la violence à venir*, the violence that will inexorably emerge from the relation that R establishes. Needless to say, it is understood that such a violence is already present in every R ↔ S, has from the very first iteration of relation been present in that schema. Every thinking of relation constitutes, as it must, an act of violence *against* relation (R ↔ S) itself so that it is impossible to think R (R ↔ S) without doing violence to any thinking of relation or separation, R or S. And yet, without that "upsurge" of violence, to use one of Nancy's signature concepts (a forceful, surprisingly poetic noun), R itself, so foundational to *Entre-Nous*, will remain stubbornly unthought[46] (wherein resides the richness of the concept, of Nancy's thought), and, as such, possibly even unthinkable (which is precisely why it demands thinking). Such a prospect amounts to a philosophical intolerability because not thinking R in this way would constitute a violence, certainly a greater violence, to/against

relation, and so, given what is at stake, relation must be engaged. Thinking R in the violence that is/of its unthought, is precisely what makes R that thought that must always be thought.

THE CONCEPTUAL LANGUAGE OF *ENTRE-NOUS* · In the three constituent essays, *Entre-Nous* sets itself in the direction of a language that might, if at all possible, bear the politics inscribed within R and S, and, of course, within its founding equation, R ↔ S.[47] Through these three essays on football, *Entre-Nous* locates the self in relation to the other; it delineates how the self stands in relation to itself; it stipulates what stands between, between-us, between-them, between-myself-and-I; it seeks to understand how R emerges out of S, emerges into its own singularity that is inextricable from (its constituent) plurality, and what it means for relations to endure and multiply in their singularity, what it means to write the R to the other, susceptible—constituted out of—as that R is to the inevitable force of rupture, S. In order to explicate the relation through separation, schematized as R →← S (the →← designates the "passage" of R through S; differently phrased, it is S that produces R so that R is the result of S and not the other way around), *Entre-Nous* attends to the inextricable bond that "connects"—with a precarious resilience, that "bridge" which is always under construction, which is always in danger of collapsing; but it is that "bridge" which can also make R possible—self to other. (A commitment, then, to thinking that inexplicability that so captivates Nancy.) This bond of being, of being unbearably vulnerable (to the other), is common to and constitutive of humanity and is, as such, unthinkable except in and through R →← S, the relation that is separation; or R = S, with all the complexity that constitutes what is between-them. Between self and other there is, as the "composition" (the politics) of what is, *entre-nous* insists, at once everything and nothing.

Between the world and I, the world-and-I, nothing: *il n'y a plus rien*, "there is nothing left," or so we are prone to thinking in moments. But there is only nothing because of what is and remains *entre-nous*, because of, as Nancy argues, the "negation" that demands a thinking of what was (constitutive of, what was once there). In thinking *il n'y a plus rien* it becomes possible to grasp what is between the world and I and, as such, to understand the world in its "unity," in the "mutual sharing and exposition of all its world." *Entre-Nous*, between

the world and I, there is everything, a history, experience, experiences, shared: *nous avons un arrangement*, "there was an arrangement, an understanding," or so I thought. *Ce qui est maintenant entre nous?* Between the world and I: division and unity, diversity, plurality, singularity, all turned toward being (*Sein*); out of this emerges an encounter so singular as to be, at once, insignificant and eminently apprehendable (that which can, and must, be held in place, if only momentarily, in order to "fully" process what is at stake), and so momentous as to resist apprehension, in its very being, entirely.

This is an encounter marked by and in language and, to be precise, understanding that, as Nancy says, the *"speaker speaks for the world, which means the speaker speaks to it, on behalf of it, in order to make it a 'world.'"*[48] As such, this world, the one made in and through *Entre-Nous,* is a "world"—the world of football, internationally, in the cathedrals of the sport and locally, in relation to an amateur team that no longer exists but which still constitutes the "world of the speaker," the "world of the speaker" that has survived the death of the institution; the "world of the speaker" now endowing the institution which no longer is with an after-life; and, in some ways, writes its life for the first time—in which language assumes disproportionate importance.

This difficulty of language begins in the "Interlude," which is to say the difficulty of language was there from the beginning, in which the status, the "speaker speaking" English (the authorial "I") spoke English, in relation to football, with an intense awareness of the otherness of English in a football community where Afrikaans was the lingua franca (or, as has been pointed out, a working-class speaking of Afrikaans with a distinct regional inflection and politics). The difficulty of language, then, proceeds from English first and foremost, but the insistent turn to French (about which a word more, momentarily), the invocation of German, and the particular idiom of Afrikaans (of which, again, Kaaps—or Kaapse Vlakte, Cape Flats—is but a single designation of this mode of sociolinguistic engagement), one that, to be sure, one requires "translation," shall we say. It requires, at the very least, this idiom of Afrikaans, another rendering of names (nicknames, places, phrasings, and so on) in English, but most importantly what is acknowledged here is that all these languages combine to make the language of *entre-nous*, and, of course, of the "world" that *Entre-Nous* "speaks."

To sustain such a thinking of what is *entre-nous,* this project insists upon the language inherited as such, the acceptance of the gift made by Nancy in

works such as *Hegel* and *Being Singular Plural*. That is, the governing concept, *entre-nous*, as well as its constituent (and/or complementary) parts, *entre-eux* and *entre-moi-et-moi-même*, are all rendered in French so as to mark, beyond question, their "rupturous" quality. These terms, as Nancy might have it, are invoked to surge not only up and out of our thinking ("upsurge" is Nancy's preferred usage) but are used to retain their strangeness—that is, their unfamiliarity and, as such, their difficulty. In order to think what is between-us, *Entre-Nous* moves between and among discourses (philosophy, football history, politics, personal "reflection," and so on) and linguistic registers. Kaaps and French, to say nothing of switching of discursive codes (between say, Nancy's philosophy and Leo Messi's erudite left boot), are woven together—and only sometimes seamlessly—in order to "illuminate," to think, the philosophical concepts and political stakes that inhere in football.

*Entre-Nous* also, of course, moves between and among (formally speaking) languages, between, say, English and Kaaps, grounded as the project is philosophico-political concepts rendered in French. *Entre-Nous* crafts a language—a discursive apparatus—that can bear the weight of that which football, nominally and expansively conceived, reveals as *entre-nous*, as well as that which reveals what is *entre-nous* despite it being, initially, opaque to how it is football is thought. As such, *Entre-Nous* demands a dislocation, through language, a dislocation whose "passage" runs through a discursive, explicatory apparatus that requires that it, not so much first but simultaneously be approached—or, understood, translated, awkwardly, imperfectly, thinking in a language that belongs not to self or other but, inadequately, provocatively, rapturously, to both—and used as though it were itself, as Nancy might have, the "address."

The project of thinking *entre-nous* begins with *entre-nous* as the "first" address to be addressed. (It is an address to which we return, to which we turn, again and again, always as if it were entirely new to us, which, of course, it both is and is not; we know it, we know nothing of it.) That is, in every one of these constituent essays, each of these terms is tuned to its own "singular plural." Each of these constituent essays (to assign a generic term to the six "parts/pieces" that make up *Entre-Nous*) reinforces, challenges, and complicates the others, in order to produce not so much a "coherent" argument but an argument that can best give voice to the variegated issues and difficulties that emerge from thinking *entre-nous*. To this end, then, each essay is written in a

"language" crafted specifically for its demands, crafted in that language that can best articulate the particular philosophico-political stakes it, by itself and in argument with the other essays, raises. Each essay, then, is at once discrete and complementary, distinct and a constituent part of the provisional whole that is *Entre-Nous*.

As such, the intention is not to produce that "bridge" or "connectivity" that Nancy warns us against, but to forge out of each essay, out of each (in their) together(ness), in each of their "being-with," a provisional "existing singular" that seeks not so much to identify where one ends and the other begins, or this one begins and that one ends, but to mark their disjuncture and their sharing. To mark, that is, those elements—of thinking, for thinking—that appear, in one articulation or another, incessantly, restlessly (*Rastlosigkeit*), again and again, never the same, as such, but always evocative of, always provoking a thinking of the other through the passage that is S →← R, that concept that runs, relentlessly, in a range of articulations, through *Entre-Nous*. S →← R is, in Hegel's terms, "*die Sache selbst* (the real issue)"[49] that preoccupies *Entre-Nous*. S →← R is the bond that, in all its knottiness and difficulty, in all its various philosophical shadings and political iterations, in the several discursive modes and linguistic registers, holds *Entre-Nous* together. Holds it together because it is what animates every essay, that is to say, every discrete and collective thinking, in *Entre-Nous*.

# NOTES

## PREFACE

1 Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

2 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 429.

3 In July, 2018, James left the Cleveland Cavaliers to sign for the Los Angeles Lakers.

4 In "*Bauen Wohnen Denken*" ("Building Dwelling Thinking"), one of his most famous essays, Heidegger establishes "dwelling" as not only distinct from but elevates it above (mere) "building." For Heidegger, "dwelling" might very well be the closest approximation we get to Being, even if "dwelling" can only be achieved through and because of our "building." Fittingly, for the paradoxical purposes of my thinking here, Heidegger declares: "Bridges and hangars, stadiums and power stations are buildings but not dwellings" (Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking," Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, New York: HarperPerennial, 2008, 347). How great are Lionel Messi's (philosophical) accomplishments.

5 Love, that is, on the order Friedrich Nietzche's Zarathustra, especially that moment when Zarathustra refuses any possibility of loving human beings. Zarathustra declares that the "human being is for me too incomplete an affair. Love of human beings would be the death of me" (Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, translated by Graham Parkes, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 10). It is precisely Suárez's "imperfections" that make Tabárez's love for his player such a salient response in the face of Suárez's transgressions. In fact, we could say that is a love on the order of the New Testament.

6 Safranski, *Martin Heidegger*, 425.

1 I am, of course, invoking the title of Nancy's work *Being Singular Plural*, trans. Robert D. Richardson and Anne E. O'Byrne (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

2 The title of this essay might be translated as "The Order of the Monarchs." The term "Baselius" (βασιλεύς) is best understood as referring to the Byzantine monarchs, locating the honorific firmly within the Greek experience. In English "Baselius" is most easily rendered as "king" or "emperor." Nancy's use of *Nomos* evokes, intentionally or not, Carl Schmitt's *Nomos of the Earth*, a work in which Schmitt seeks to provide a framework of "order" that organizes the world, a notion of "order" that is especially interested in how the project of dominion over the seas (oceans) is engaged. For his part, Nancy is interested in how to achieve "infinite justice" (Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 188).

3 Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 185.

4 Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*, 185.

5 *Elective Affinities* is the English title of Goethe's 1809 novel *Die Wahlverwandtschaften*, which was translated into English in 1854. It is sometimes also translated as *Kindred by Choice* and deals with the difference between those who have affinity for each other, and mix like "water and wine," and those who do not, and separate into "water and oil." Goethe takes the term *Wahlverwandtschaft* from 18th century chemist, where "elective affinities" marks the preference that chemical species demonstrate for certain other species or substances. "Elective affinities" is also a term that Max Weber borrows for sociology from Goethe. In this scientific vein, Goethe's main male protagonist, Eduard (his female counterpart is Charlotte, his wife), explains: "'Just as each thing has an adherence to itself, so it must also have a relationship to other things. . . . Sometimes they will meet as friends and old acquaintances who hasten together and unite without changing one another in any way, as wine mixes with water. On the other hand, there are others who will remain obdurate strangers to one another and refuse to unite in any way even through mechanical mixing and grinding, as oil and water shaken together will a moment later separate again'" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities*, translated by R.J. Hollingdale, London: Penguin Books, 1971, 52). It should be noted, as accurately as Eduard describes the scientific principles of "elective affinities," it is knowledge put to idle use. That is, the *Novelle* (a "fictional narrative longer than a short story . . . but shorter than a novel") *Elective Affinities* is Goethe's critique of the "state of idleness" of the landed aristocracy (Hollingdale, *Elective Affinities*, 11, 15). The transient, largely useless labor of Eduard, Charlotte and their intimates (the Captain and Ottilie chief among them), whether it is their attempts to reshape the landscape or in their pursuit of love and passion, is ceaselessly mocked by

Goethe. The use of the concept of "elective affinities" in regards to Messi is, then, used in its scientific and not "Platonic" sense.

6 Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2015), 28.

7 (Self-)"will" is understood here in the sense that Heidegger deploys Nietzsche's concept in *Was Heißt Denken?* Heidegger writes, "all philosophy strives to find the highest expression for primal being as the will" (Heidegger, *Was Heißt Denken?*, 109). For Heidegger, in this moment, Nietzsche's "will to power"—read in relation to *Zarathustra*—is the "bridge" that can get us closer to Being. However, it is also important—arguably, more important—to keep in mind the distinction Nietzsche insists on between "two kinds of philosopher." On the one hand we have the archivists or the assiduous collectors—"those who want to ascertain a complex fact of evaluations (logical or moral)"—and the "*legislators* of such evaluations" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollindale, New York: Random House, 1967, 509). Nietzsche warns against, taking clear aim at Plato "and the "founders of religion," what he names the "will to blindness" (Nietzsche, 510).

8 The Real Madrid striker and Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo is preferred by some fans. I pay these fans of "Scuba Ron" (in other words, "See grass, will dive") no mind.

9 In fact, his full name is Lionel Andrés Messi Cuccittini.

10 Pablo Aimar, Messi's favorite player as a boy, represented River Plate from 1996 to 2000. Messi has said that Aimar is the player who had the most influence on him as a footballer. Aimar played in La Liga from 2000 to 2008, first for Valencia, and then Zaragoza, so that Aimar's and Messi's careers in Spain would have overlapped. Messi debuted for Barcelona in 2005. Their international careers also coincided—Aimar played for Argentina from 1999 to 2009, and Messi made his senior bow with Argentina in 2005.

11 The FC Barcelona management was reluctant to sign Messi because in 2000 it was still unusual for European clubs to recruit players as young as Messi. He was only thirteen and registered with Newell's Old Boys.

12 Two of Messi's contemporaries at La Masia were native Catalans, Gerard Piqué and Cesc Fàbregas. Piqué and Fàbregas left Barça for England's Premier League, Manchester United and Arsenal, respectively. Messi remained. First Piqué and then Fàbregas returned to Barça, but Fàbregas, unable to command a regular place in what was (and continues to be) a very talented but now aging side, has since returned to England for a second time, and he now plies his trade with Chelsea.

13 The transformation of La Masia from club headquarters into training academy was the brainchild of former Ajax Amsterdam, Holland, and Barça great Johan Cruyff, who both played for and managed Barça. Himself a graduate of the famed Ajax Youth Academy, whose graduates include Piet Keizer; Ruud Krol; Marco van Bas-

ten; Frank Rijkaard; the de Boer brothers, Frank and Ronald; Wesley Sneijder; and Maarten Stekelenburg (a massively abbreviated list, it should be cautioned), Cruyff set about proposing the establishment of a similar structure in his adopted Catalunya. Once renowned throughout the world for its production of good footballers, the Ajax Youth Academy has since been surpassed by the alumni of La Masia.

14 Nine of the players on Spain's 2010 Copa Mundial–winning squad passed through La Masia. In addition to Piqué, Pedro, and Fàbregas, there were Xavi Hernández, Andrés Iniesta, Carles Puyol, Sergio Busquets, Pepe Reina (Liverpool, Inter Milan, Bayern Munich), and Victor Valdés. Seven of these players were, at the time of the 2010 Copa Mundial, at Barça (Reina and Fàbregas, then playing for Arsenal in the English Premier League, were not), a record for a single club in a World Cup final, and the first six of those listed above started, another record for a final.

15 See Ian Hawkey, "Friends Reunited: Cesc Fàbregas and the Class of 1987," *Times*, March 28, 2010.

16 In 2010, for the first and thus far only time in the award's history, all three of the finalists, Messi, Iniesta, and Xavi, were from the same club.

17 The third chapter of *In Motion, At Rest: The Event of the Athletic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013) posits the former French captain, Zinedine Zidane (current Real Madrid coach), as an état *voyou*. Like Suárez, although it must be said that Zidane was much more successful as a player, leading France to victory in the 1998 World Cup, Zidane was a player with a known capacity for falling foul of the law. He was sent off for club (Juventus, during his time in Italy) and country, much more famously, of course, for head butting, an event that became known as the *coup de boule*, in the final of the 2006 World Cup. Against, as historical irony would have it, Italy.

18 The *vuvuzela*, as most football fans know, is a long plastic horn (generally about 65 centimeters long), unrelentingly monotone, that is blown regularly at football matches in South Africa. Traditionally, the *vuvuzela* was made of kudu horn (the "kudu," or "koodoo" as the indigenous Khoisan people named them, belongs to the antelope genus; it is part deer and part zebra) and used to summon villagers to community gatherings.

19 Suárez was also banned from any football-related activities for four months, a ban so uncompromising that it included a complete prohibition on entering football stadia for those four months.

20 "José Mujica en el recibimiento a la Celeste, Los de la FIFA son una manga de viejos hijos de puta," June 30, 2014. www.marca.com/2014/06/30/fctbol/mundial/uruguay/1404129785.html.

21 "El Maestro Seeks to Restore the Tradition of a Forgotten Footballing Identity," *Guardian*, October 2009. https://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2009/oct/14/uruguay-forgotten-football-identity-world-cup.

22 Eduardo Galeano, *Football in Sun and Shadow*, trans. Mark Fried (London: Fourth Estate, 2003).

23 Fonseca began his career in Uruguay with Nacional before moving on to Cagliari, AS Roma, Napoli, and finally Juventus in Italy. He currently works as a football agent. Forlán was a youth player with Peñarol in Uruguay before making his name as a striker for Independiente in Argentina, after which he moved to Manchester United in England and then on to Villarreal and Atlético Madrid in Spain; from there he went to play for Inter Milan, after which his career petered out with stints in Mexico, Japan, and back to his boyhood club before ending up with Mumbai City in the Indian Premier League. The highlight of his career was winning the Golden Ball award at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa—the FIFA award for the best player of the tournament.

24 The Victorian Web. http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/mooreg/bio.html. Last accessed November 2018.

25 Andrzej Diniejko, "George Moore: A Biographical Sketch."

26 Under apartheid, the South African population was divided into four racial categories. In hierarchical order these were: whites, Asians (more pejoratively known as "Indians" but generally referring to subjects of South Asian origin, many of whom came to South Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as indentured laborers), coloreds (South Africans of "mixed" racial ancestry), and "blacks" (those who traced their roots, with greater "physionognomic ease," shall we say, to the indigenous population).

27 Deleuze, as we know, is a critic of Hegel, and his *Nietzsche and Philosophy* may contain his sharpest line of disagreement.

28 The Victorian Web. http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/mooreg/bio.html. Last accessed November 2018.

29 Elspeth Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), ix.

30 In an articulation that gives one cause for pause, especially in light of the acknowledgment (admission? confession?) just offered, Probyn tries to account for why it might be difficult to write about that which is at the root of our shame. "My argument," Probyn writes, "is that a form of shame always attends the writer" (Probyn, *Blush*, xvii). While this may be valid in some instances, one wonders what distinguishes "shame" as such from, say, reluctance? Or what if overcoming "shame" so conceived serves not to strengthen but to detract from the critique being offered? What if the writer's shame is not in the least disabling but is precisely what sustains the argument, keeps the critique in and as the focus? What if shame makes of the writer an author more responsible to the project?

31 Nancy, *Being*, 11.

32 It is possible here to think of the "un-spoken" on the order, if not on the same

order of magnitude, of Jacques Derrida's notion of "under erasure." That is, for everything we say, we, per force, leave several things unsaid—or, in truth, which is where the provocation to thinking resides, it is precisely in their condition of being unsayable that they demand to be said. Derrida's notion of "under erasure" derives from Heidegger's *sous rature* (which is usually rendered as "under erasure") in which a word is crossed out in a text but remains visible so that it must be accounted for, confronted, thought. *Sous rature* is developed by Derrida into a critique of "presence" ("presence" as an impossibility) and, most specifically, as an insistent argument against univocity—no word can claim to have a single meaning; univocity, then, as an illusion or a desire that stands against thinking. See, in this regard, Nicole Anderson's *Derrida: Ethics under Erasure*, New York: Bloomsbury, 2012.

33 Afrikaans is a language that derives from colonial Dutch and was for a long time considered a bastardized version of the European tongue. It was sometimes referred to, in an obvious pejorative, as *kombuis Nederlands*, "kitchen Dutch," a moniker that at once domesticized and politicized Afrikaans, and is historically recognized as the language of the apartheid regime. The Cape Flats version of the language I grew up with in Hanover Park, as my second language, was marked by a different sense of inferiority. Its "impurity" was attributed to, as I have already argued, class and race, so that it was meant to mark its speakers of a lesser, grammatically compromised version of formal—or pure—Afrikaans (*pure Afrikaans*, in which "pure" is pronounced very differently, as something like "PeeRer").

34 Nancy, *Being*, 25.

35 Nancy, *Being*, 27.

36 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 15.

37 Nancy, *Hegel*, 15.

38 Nancy, *Being*, 186.

39 Nancy, *Hegel,* 22.

40 Nancy, *Hegel*, 19.

41 Nancy, *Hegel*, 28.

42 Nancy takes a moment, even though he does so parenthetically, to explain the syntax of being-with-the-other. ("By the way, the logic of 'with' often requires heavy-handed syntax in order to say 'being-with-one-another.' . . . But perhaps it is not an accident that language does not easily lend itself to showing 'with' as such, for it is itself the address and not what must be addressed"); Nancy, *Being*, xvi.

43 For Rastafarians, "I-and-I" designates the plural form of "communing-with"; that is, being-with. This form of the plural is a hallmark of reggae music, made popular as a concept most notably by Bob Marley and the Wailers. It is often used to articulate the relationship of human beings ("mortals," Heidegger would say)—the Rastafarians—to "Jah" ("God").

44 See my discussion of the singular plurality of the concept of "I-and-I" in Grant Farred, *What's My Name? Black Vernacular Intellectuals*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

45 It is here that Nancy differs from Heidegger, for whom the "bridge"—a "bridge" to—is less a critical possibility than an absolute philosophical necessity. The "bridge" is, Heidegger's lexicon, second only to the "leap" as that force that might get us to Being and thinking.

46 And, as we know from Heidegger, the richness of a thinker's thought resides in her or his unthought. For Heidegger there is a quantitative and qualitive commensurability: the more unthought that a thinker's thinking possesses, the greater the thinker. In this regard, see Heidegger's explication of Nietzsche via his critique of metaphysics in Lecture X, Part I, of *Was Heißt Denken?*

47 In short, the project is to "possess language" in such a way as to give language to the constitutive, sustaining violence of/in relation. This is, of course, an impossible undertaking, to "possess language." In *Sein und Zeit*, Martin Heidegger is clear that we are "possessed by language." I am thinking here particularly of the "Idle Talk" section in *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger stresses the need to take care with language (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press), 157–159.

48 Nancy, *Being*, 3; emphasis in original.

49 G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 2.

## CHAPTER ONE · A CONDEMNED MAN

1 Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (New York: Fall River Press, 2013), 86.

2 Around the time of the 2014 World Cup, the Brazil sports paper *Lance!* named Messi the "sixth greatest footballer ever." Ahead of Messi were Pelé, Garrincha, Romário, Ronaldo (Brazil), and Maradona. There are few judgments in football that carry as much weight as this one, not because of *Lance!* but because this is a singular honor for a Brazilian outlet to bestow on Messi, not only because of the deep antipathy that marks the history of Argentine-Brazilian relations but also because Messi is the only player on the list never to have won a World Cup.

3 Jean-Luc Nancy, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 70.

4 Nancy, *Hegel*, 70.

5 Nancy, *Hegel*, 70, 71.

6 See Grant Farred, *In Motion, At Rest: The Event of the Athletic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

7 Nancy, *Hegel*, 71.