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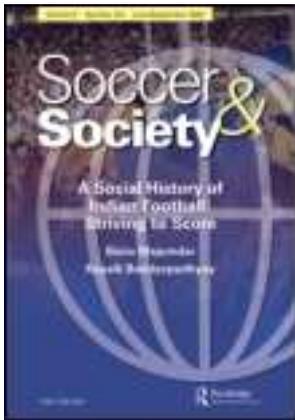
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### From 'pats on the back' to 'dummy sucking': a critique of the changing social, cultural and political significance of football goal celebrations

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## From ‘pats on the back’ to ‘dummy sucking’: a critique of the changing social, cultural and political significance of football goal celebrations

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The essay offers a critique of the changing social, cultural and political significance of goal celebrations by considering how, during the transition from football as a local, proletarian, masculine industry and product of Fordist modernity to a global, mediated, paradoxical entertainment spectacle, a postmodern culture of goal celebration has emerged, which acts as a comment on or reaction to modernity. In many cases, individual postmodern goal scorers have shifted their interest from a concern with the ultimate end of scoring a goal and restarting the game as soon as possible, to a pragmatic concern relating to the optimal performance of celebration. Through a series of genres, the essay discusses how the postmodern goal celebration in creative modernity has several styles, all of which demonstrate the way in which football culture ‘has become increasingly self-reflexive, juxtapositional and parodic through the growing irrelevance of a stable conception of reality’.

### Introduction

The scoring of a goal in football has always been one of the most – if not *the* most – significant parts of the game, whether it be during a high-school friendly match, a third-division local derby, or on the ‘greatest’ stage of all: in the World Cup final. Goals can of course be scored in many ways, but whether they are scored through a ‘bullet header’ from a cross or a 20-yard volley into the top corner, every goal scorer faces that moment which occurs directly after the goal is scored. That moment – that celebration or non-celebration – has provided football with some of its most iconic images, some of which have proved more iconic than the goal itself.

To many scholars within the field, the phenomenon of the goal celebration may, on the surface, appear rather comical and not worthy of any serious academic scrutiny. However, goal celebrations are, and have generally always been, a part of football culture and are thus worthy of critical examination. So the initial interest of the essay derives from the questions: what are goal celebrations? What do they mean, and how do they differ? It is not the purpose of this study to try and account for every type of goal celebration as, of course, goals are celebrated in many different ways. Furthermore, it is not possible here to consider the many different types of celebrations throughout leagues all over the world. However, in examining specific trends and developments over a period of time within the context of English

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football, the essay aims to discuss how certain types of goal celebrations may come to tell us a lot more about the social, cultural and political nature of football and society at that time. It is important, however, to recognize English football's relationship with Europe in particular, and to consider the cultural influences of those goals celebrated at the World Cup.

The goal-celebration phenomenon has become a fashionable topic within the UK broadsheet national newspapers. Recent documented goal celebrations within the sports media have included some journalists, albeit with limitations, looking back historically at how they may have changed,<sup>1</sup> while others have attempted to list the top 10 most memorable goal celebrations.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the topic is often a site for discussion on internet forums and fan pages, with many supporters putting compilations of their favourite celebrations on YouTube.

It is interesting to note that most of the discussion of celebrations refers to either a relevant topic of the day – for example, Tim Cahill's handcuff celebration;<sup>3</sup> a look at the implications of such celebrations for the future;<sup>4</sup> or a recollection of famous goal celebrations, which mostly tend to focus from the 1990s to the present day.<sup>5</sup> There are some examples of goal celebrations before this period; for example, Denis Law's raising his arm into the air in his playing career which spanned the 1960s and 70s, Johnny Metgod's fist pumping in 1986, and Marco Tardelli's ecstatically emotional 'running nowhere' celebration during the World Cup final of 1982.<sup>6</sup> However, these references do not provide any real insight into the social or cultural significance of those celebrations.

As a result, it is interesting to pose the question: what is it about the culture of football and society today, which includes celebrations by the 'robotic' Peter Crouch, the 'dummy-sucking' Carlos Tevez, the 'mask-covering' Facundo Sava and the 'six-somersaulting' Julius Agahowa, that makes it distinct from the culture of football and society throughout the mid to late twentieth century?

Drawing on a range of qualitative library, popular literature and electronic research – in particular, online newspapers, blogs, YouTube video clips and DVD footage – the essay aims to provide an initial sociological investigation into the phenomenon of the football goal celebration, before exploring a postmodern theorization of the current creative, playful and individual goal celebration culture which is occupying the attention of an array of new media.

### **Towards the 1960s halfway line: nearing the end of the 'traditional' celebration**

The traditional football goal celebration was, by today's standards, very reserved, regardless of how significant the goal scored itself was perceived, and often included a 'firm handshake', a 'pat on the back', followed by a 'brisk walk back to the centre circle'.<sup>7</sup>

Dorfan has provided a telling example of the 'traditional' goal celebration, describing the celebration of Helmut Rahn's 1954 World Cup-winning goal for Germany. As Dorfan notes, whilst many books have been written about the social, cultural and political significance of Rahn's goal for Germany, specifically regarding the way it 'brought them back into the central stream of European culture and provid[ed] a crushed nation with a new identity and sense of pride', the celebration itself was very reserved: 'two of Rahn's teammates approached him, with one shaking his hand and the other patting him on the shoulder'.<sup>8</sup>

The significance of this extremely low-key, conservative and ‘masculine’ celebration, of a type which was also evident in English football, was that it also represented the social, cultural and political nature of post-Second World War society. With the local proletarian experience based around values of teamwork and solidarity, goals were generally left to speak for themselves, with players preferring to modestly congratulate each other through a ‘traditional’ gesture. This demonstrated that the goal was perhaps more important for the team, rather than the celebration being important for the individual player and audience.

Of course, after every goal is scored in football, the game is restarted from the centre circle; thus players from both teams are required to take up their original positions within each half of the pitch. What was significant about the early traditional goal celebration, however, was the relationship between this recommencement and the way in which the players would celebrate, with players choosing to acknowledge the goal whilst always running back towards the centre circle. This sense of ‘getting back to business’ reflected a period prior to the acceleration of affluence and media technology, in which the proletarian type of production still very much took the form of the ‘capitalist factory system’.<sup>9</sup>

The ‘traditional’ goal celebration, then, which a conservative estimate would consider popular up to the mid-1960s, was a product of Fordist modernity<sup>10</sup> in which the reserved universal repetitive style of the celebration and its protestant-ethic gesture signified football as a practice and industry, specifically drawing attention to its mechanically reproductive nature. This industrial celebration ‘largely replicated the rationality and norms of wage-labour’,<sup>11</sup> and thus rather than ‘being an alternative to labour, it turned out to be just another instance of it’. As labour was rationalized to serve the social, cultural and political interests of capitalism,<sup>12</sup> so too was the traditional football goal celebration, through an industrial Fordist discourse.

### **Mid-1960s to early 1970s: the birth of the televised celebration**

1964 saw the birth of *Match of the Day*, an English football television programme which would, throughout the 60s and 70s, become one of the key ingredients of English football culture. *Match of the Day* is significant here because it captured the changing face of football in the developing media era and provided the platform for the relationship between football and popular culture to be screened and experienced by millions, eventually reaching across Europe.

As televised football grew in popularity throughout the decade, the shaking of the hand and pat on the back slowly started to make way for a more elaborate raising of the arm and hugging of team mates. This would, however, still often occur as players returned to the centre circle. In a game between Tottenham Hotspur and Manchester United in 1965, the third goal, scored by Jimmy Greaves – which gave Tottenham a 3-0 lead – was an individually captivating run and strike. In keeping with the celebration climate of the mid-1960s, Greaves celebrated the goal by returning to the centre circle. However, he demonstrated individuality by raising his arms in the air, as if to acknowledge that it was he who had scored, and was almost mobbed by the rest of his team. This celebration represented the beginning of a slow increase in intensity in the players’ shows of emotion after scoring, and perhaps also in team mates’ perceptions of the scorer’s importance.

The mid-1960s saw a rise in stardom and football’s drama began to take centre stage. Acceleration of this change was indicated during the 1966 FA Cup semi-final

between Sheffield Wednesday and Chelsea, when Jim McCalliog scored the winning second goal to put Sheffield Wednesday through to the final against Everton. After scoring, McCalliog chose not to return to the halfway line, instead going towards the supporters at the side of the pitch and executing a forward roll. This gymnastic expression was a significant moment in the decade that saw the birth of the televised goal celebration, and perhaps represented society's slow movement away from early 1950s, traditional, conservative masculinity and toward a more modern, mediated, expressive and dramatic spectacle.

In an era that saw players gaining in confidence as the maximum wage shackles were removed, goal celebrations were starting to become more individual. Jimmy Hill's new 'football entertainer' now had the potential to bring the goal celebration into the larger sporting drama context.

### Acceleration of the modern 'organic' celebration: early 1970s to early 1980s

The early 1970s saw an increase in cameras, multiple angles and instant action replays, and thus players began to understand that they now played a critical role within the sporting theatre. One of the most iconic goal celebration images to date occurred at the final of the 1970 World Cup, when Pele, 'no longer an innocent youth of 17 as in the final of the 1958 World Cup, celebrated in a much more dramatic way than in 1958'.<sup>13</sup> While people saw Rahn's 1954 goal in the newsreels at the movie theatre after the game, the 1970 final in Mexico was seen by millions all over the world via satellite.<sup>14</sup> After Pele had risen above the Italian defence to head in the first goal, he was hoisted into the air by his teammate Rivelino. As Dorfan notes, the celebration represented a significant moment of modernity, where players were now beginning to be seen as global stars through a media discourse. The nature of the celebration thus demonstrated a 'coronation' of the 'greatest player in soccer history, the richest sportsman outside of boxing, the first black face to appear on the cover of Life magazine',<sup>15</sup> and the new global star of football theatre.

Turning to the English football league during the 1970s, this acceleration of the modern mediated goal celebration was often seen on *Match of the Day*, with a number of players running towards supporters behind the goal or at the side of the pitch and often waiting to be congratulated by teammates. Football commentator John Motson has noted how during the early 1970s in particular, '*Match of the Day's* cameras were often in the right place at the right time',<sup>16</sup> which nicely captured the new relationship between the modern goal-scoring moment and its audience.

During a fifth-round FA Cup tie between Colchester United and Leeds United in 1971, David Simmons, after scoring the third Colchester goal to knock Leeds out of the competition, celebrated the goal by running towards the crowd behind the net before turning and leaning his back into them, thus allowing the crowd to hug and grab hold of him. Other significant celebrations in the 1970s included Charlie George's lying down on the ground and waiting for his teammates to approach and acknowledge him after scoring for Arsenal against Liverpool in the 1971 FA Cup final, and Francis Lee's 'big grin' at scoring for Derby County against his former club Manchester City at Maine Road in 1975. Commentator Barry Davies proclaimed: 'Just look at his face, just look at his face', as Lee ran towards the camera, almost as if he were telling the audience that the stage had been set for Lee to score, the script indicated that he had scored, and thus the audience should now watch what happened next – in other words, heightening the significance of his goal

celebration. Interestingly, the media also thought it newsworthy that Denis Law did not celebrate after scoring a significant goal for Manchester City against his old club Manchester United, thus imbuing this lack of celebration, or sadness at having scored against a club he dearly loved, with significance through media discourse.

During this time, the nature of football was slowly changing from industry to entertainment; goals too were involved in this change, particularly through the introduction of the popular 'Goal of the Month' competition on *Match of the Day*. Goals were being scored regularly by football's new superstars and entertainers. Goal scorers were often given heroic names by supporters and the media – such as 'Super Mac', the moniker bestowed upon Newcastle United's Malcolm McDonald – and the celebrations would often represent this, with, for example, 'Super Mac' running with both arms aloft as if flying, in order to acknowledge his individual comic hero status.

The relationship between football and the culture of popular music strengthened during the 1970s, and goal celebrations often reflected this through the development of particular styles and trends. Mick Channon would regularly celebrate scoring a goal for Manchester City by whirling his arm around like the guitarist Pete Townshend from the Who, while other celebrations often emerged in response to the crowd.

It is important to recognize however that although goal celebrations were now becoming more iconic, in many cases – in a similar way to streaking at sporting events – they were produced 'by the occasion and the event' rather than purely by the individual.<sup>17</sup> In a sense, then, there was still something rather 'organic' about the modern goal celebration throughout the 1970s and 1980s, with the celebration often occurring because the developing football drama demanded it.<sup>18</sup>

From Bob Latchford's 1975 celebration in which he ran intensely down the touchline after scoring for Everton against Derby County to Trevor Francis' falling on his knees with his head in his hands after scoring for Birmingham City against Burnley in the same year, these celebrations, while breaking from the traditional capitalist factory style and slowly becoming more individual, were 'products of a collective fan culture'<sup>19</sup> in which the goal scorer often expressed the crowd's relationship to the event. Through the rise of Europeanization and influence of Brazilian *futebol*, football had become more carnivalesque,<sup>20</sup> and terrace fan culture would, through the scoring of a goal, come to 'celebrate itself'. The modern euphoric football goal celebration, then, would represent supporters' dreams of being players themselves and scoring goals for their team.

Ronnie Radford's goal celebration after scoring for Hereford United against Newcastle United during an FA Cup tie in 1971 was one of the most iconic celebrations of that decade and captures this organic emotion best. After scoring with a 25-yard strike into the top corner of the goal, Radford ran wildly, with both arms in the air, around the pitch, which then was invaded by hundreds of supporters. It was almost as if the goal represented a revolutionary overthrowing of the bourgeoisie by the collective proletariat.

### **Rise of post-Fordist and Thatcherite celebration: early 1980s to mid-1990s**

1981 saw the birth of shirt advertisement, which subsequently became an accepted part of football culture in the UK. At the same time, the introduction of 'live' football represented an opportunity for advertising to be commodified

and consumed. As football clubs were becoming commodified through the new economics of 'signs and space',<sup>21</sup> the development of post-Fordist 'live' football provided the opportunity for goal-scorers to advertise the latest products on the market through close-up camera angles. Raising the arm or running into the crowd were now not the only signs witnessed, and thus the audience of the goal celebration became the audience of post-Fordist and Thatcherite ideology.

The 'authoritarian and populist law agenda', particularly with regard to the problem of football hooliganism and terrace culture throughout the 1980s,<sup>22</sup> meant that goal celebrations had to be relatively controlled for fear of being interpreted as part of that same culture. This was clearly evident during Clive Allen's 'jogging on the spot' celebration after scoring for QPR against West Bromwich Albion during an FA Cup semi-final at Highbury in 1982. Allen's celebration, which was aimed towards the crowd behind the goal, was greeted by police officers patrolling the edge of the stand. Whilst police presence itself wasn't anything new at football matches, the agenda of 'controlling' the crowd to prevent supporters running on the pitch to celebrate with the goal scorer accelerated. Players and supporters were now realizing that the goal celebration was, to a certain extent, subject to the same conditions of social control, in a climate which perceived the 'lawlessness and hedonism of the crowd'<sup>23</sup> as something that needed curtailing and criminalizing.

While the relationship between the football goal celebration and the football authorities intensified throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s, there had been previous examples of law and order issues surrounding specific celebrations – those involving 'mooning' – throughout the 1970s; to some extent, these set the tone for the cultural politics of the 1980s and early 1990s.

Steve Curry, a UK sports journalist, provided a brief history of the 'cheeky' goal celebration, which discussed the famous case of Terry Mancini baring his bottom at QPR chairman Jim Gregory in 1974. Curry notes how Gregory's blocking a proposed move which would have seen Mancini move to Arsenal led the footballer to celebrate a goal and victory by running in front of the directors' box before dropping his shorts. Mancini was later transferred and was given a two-match ban and a £150 fine by the FA for what they found to be an obscene act. Curry adds that five years later, Sammy Nelson, Arsenal's left back, had been the subject of taunts from fans at the North Bank end after scoring an own goal in front of the home fans. After scoring the equalizer in the second half, Nelson bared his Y-fronts to them, leading again to a two-week FA suspension and a fine of two weeks' wages by his club.<sup>24</sup>

These celebrations captured the way society was transforming from old to new, with traditional, conservative, reverential values making way for more rebellious and assertive cultural forms which contradicted the traditional patriarchal, masculine and industrial roots.<sup>25</sup> A telling example of this came in an FA Cup semi-final between Wimbledon and Luton in 1988, where after scoring a goal for Wimbledon, John Fashanu was greeted by Dennis Wise. Fashanu picked up Wise, who then, while wrapping his legs around the goal scorer, kissed him on the lips. The goal celebration was becoming a 'laboratory for masculine style and a place for the display of its "confusions and contradictions" as well as a location for the reinforcement of its "traditional" forms'.<sup>26</sup>

### Commodifying and commercializing the postmodern celebration: mid-1990s to the present

The transition from football as practice and Fordist modern industry to a global, mediated, entertaining spectacle within free-market hegemony has transformed the nature of fandom<sup>27</sup> from local citizen to post-Keynesian global consumer.<sup>28</sup> This transition, acting as a 'vehicle for insatiable consumerism and forum for physical pleasure, cultural affiliation and playful creativity', has enabled the goal-scoring moment not only to be concerned with the organic and collective emotion of scoring a goal, but also to act as a site for the global consumerism of the goal scorer.

Goal-scorers themselves now in many cases take the form of the playful creative artist, and often celebrate goals by running to supporters – both at the 'live' event and through the mediated 'live' – and directing their hands over their heads in order to point to their own printed names on the back of their shirts, an example of the new, 'self-referential', commodified, cultural politics of football. Harvey offers a telling discussion of the opposing tendencies of Fordist modernity and flexible postmodernity, noting specifically how, during flexible postmodernity, an increase in individualism has replaced the influence of trade unions and group solidarity.<sup>29</sup> The playfulness and individual artistry of postmodern goal celebration is often placed on centre stage by teammates, who will stand back and allow the individualism of the star goal scorer to shine through the celebration, before congratulating them. Alternatively, they may become part of the actual celebration themselves, through the choreographed and pre-rehearsed planning of the celebration before the game or during training.

Through the development of the European Champions League and the migration of players from all over the world post-'Bosman', European football has become the 'tower of Babel, where the goal celebration acts as a site for the display of different traditions and messages that players wish to convey to the world'.<sup>30</sup> The legacy of the Bosman case has provided a 'postmodern' reaction<sup>31</sup> to the 'modernist distinction between the local and the global',<sup>32</sup> with the global migration of players representing an 'expansion of the international tourist industry and mass communications networks'. Furthermore, the goal celebration now provides a significant moment for the individual player or team to perform and entertain the new middle-class audience in ways never seen before – and particularly never seen during the 1960s and 70s.

Kane suggests that the 'new' generation of footballers after 1992, 'shaped by MTV and digital culture, will necessarily have a less "dignified", more fluid approach to the boundaries and regulations of sport'.<sup>33</sup> What concerns Kane is the idea that these 'new' players do not submit to 'arbitrary authority, as was once expected in the factory, the school or barracks', and 'rather are shaped by music, fashion, dance culture and movies'.<sup>34</sup> Perhaps the most significant point noted by Kane is that 'among the young football fans he knows, the post-goal celebrations, or mid game tricks of their favourite stars, are as significant as their functionality to the team', and thus motivates him to question whether 'this is in fact football, or cabaret?'.<sup>35</sup>

There is a suggestion, then, that throughout the 1990s a 'new' goal celebration culture developed specifically through the rise of new media technology, such as satellite and interactive television, computer games and the internet. In many current cases, goal celebrations then would act as a fashionable accessory and signature of the postmodern goal scorer. Kellner's Debordian theorization of the spectacle is

appropriate here, because it allows us to understand the postmodern creative goal celebration as a symbolic reflection of the football spectacle's commodity form.<sup>36</sup> The creativity and individualism of goal celebrations during this phase serve to celebrate the 'society of the spectacle, and its dominant values, products and corporations through their unholy alliance with sports celebrity, commercialisation and the media spectacle'.<sup>37</sup> The postmodern goal celebration in the current phase has then become image conscious and a potential product to be advertised'.<sup>38</sup> Carlsberg have realized this market for advertisement, creating an advert that includes a postmodern creative and choreographed goal celebration to fit with its own advertisement slogan.

### **Towards a 'creative modern' theorization of fantasy consumption and entertaining celebration**

Having documented the changing face of goal celebrations throughout specific periods, I now turn towards a sociology of the current goal-celebration phenomenon. Redhead's use of the term 'creative modernity',<sup>39</sup> with its description of the 'new cultural state or condition' which was formed historically around the mid-1990s and its relationship to the cultural regime of 'New Labour' governance, is an appropriate theorization for the development of a creative modern goal-celebration culture. What Redhead suggests within this cosmopolitan discussion of the 'new cultural state' is that creative modernity involves the social engineering of a new individualism, where citizens are remade as creative entrepreneurs. In this sense, then, the creative goal celebration became a 'fashion practice',<sup>40</sup> within football culture throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, and the goal-scoring global stars, particularly of the World Cup, Champions League and top leagues all over the world, now market this creative individualism as an aspect of the global mediated entertainment spectacle.

Carter has noted how greater individualism and exhibitionism within society, specifically after 1992, has generally led to a growing obsession with celebrity,<sup>41</sup> and thus numerous sports channels are required to package and market football as another form of entertainment. Many players are now signified by their own particular goal celebration, which is often designed to advertise the brand identity of a particular player. Additionally, players use the goal-celebration moment as a site for innovative and harmful displays of creative fun, where in a similar way to streaking in its latest commodified phase, it has also 'reproduced the crowd as 'passive' spectators, and reinforcing, rather than dissolving', as the organic modern goal celebrations do, 'the binary of the crowd/performer'.<sup>42</sup>

Simon Hattenstone of the *Guardian* newspaper has noted how, through the creative modern football drama, the goal celebration – as all stories – has several basic plots.<sup>43</sup> In order to discuss some examples of the creative modern goal celebration, I draw on his ideas and categories, which allow me to document a series of cases and head towards a postmodern theorization.

#### ***The acrobat***

During the mid-1990s, Peter Beagrie of Everton and Manchester City would 'express his delight at scoring by treating crowds in England to a well executed summer-sault'.<sup>44</sup> Robbie Keane of Tottenham Hotspur regularly celebrates with a cartwheel and forward roll followed by an 'invisible arrow fired at an invisible enemy'.<sup>45</sup> Julius Aghahowa perhaps performed the most impressive acrobatic celebration after scoring

a goal for Nigeria against Sweden at the 2002 World Cup in Japan, running on in ecstasy and performing no less than six forward somersaults. Manchester United's Portuguese international Nani regularly executes four or five somersaults after scoring.

### *The pole dancer*

The original pole-dancing celebration on the global stage was 'choreographed by Cameroon's Roger Milla at the 1990 World Cup in Italy'.<sup>46</sup> Fletcher notes how Milla's dance created 'several pulsating moments of limbo hip-jiggling',<sup>47</sup> whilst Dorfan acknowledges its eroticism.<sup>48</sup> Hattenstone is more elaborate, noting how Milla's goals in 1990 were 'celebrated by dirty dancing the corner flag with supreme lubricity'.<sup>49</sup>

Dorfan has suggested that Milla created a heritage in which the corner flag, during creative modernity, has often become the site for playful and artisan goal celebrations.<sup>50</sup> In the 1990s, former Manchester United winger Lee Sharpe would often 'celebrate by making his way towards the nearest corner flag and pretending to use it as a microphone, before treating his adoring public to a quick rendition of an Elvis tune'.<sup>51</sup> Tim Cahill of Everton often celebrates scoring a goal by running towards the corner flag before using it as a punch bag, showing off his boxing skills to the audience.

### *The thespian*

Football is flooded with 'unrequited mime artists',<sup>52</sup> and comedians, and in creative modernity the goal celebration has often been a site for dramatic performance. Dorfan<sup>53</sup> has noted how at the USA World Cup in 1994, the Brazilian striker Bebeto, after being joined by teammates Romario and Rai, performed a 'cradle rocking movement' towards the audience and cameras, in 'honour of Bebeto's newborn son'. The legacy of this celebration is that it has been copied by hundreds of players all over the world, from Premiership stars to teenagers playing in Sunday junior leagues. The Bebeto celebration has been 'copied by most Chelsea players and has become shorthand for Mawkish Fertility God'.<sup>54</sup>

Leeds United's Jermaine Beckford regularly celebrates by imitating throwing a basketball into a hoop, whilst former Palermo player Mark Bresciano would regularly freeze and mimic a statue. Bafetimbi Gomis of Lyon celebrates scoring a goal by imitating a panther, whilst Fiorentina's Alberto Gilardino pretends to play a violin on one knee.<sup>55</sup>

### *The egotist*

Former Brazilian international Ronaldo and French international Robert Pires would regularly celebrate scoring a goal by jogging towards supporters and the camera, waving their right index finger in an 'I told you so' fashion. In David Beckham's mid-1990s Manchester United days he was often the butt of abuse from rival supporters, particularly through taunts about his famous wife. Once after he scored against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, which was 'particularly vicious in its taunts',<sup>56</sup> Beckham 'cupped his ear with his hand to celebrate the silence in the stadium'.

Beckham is also the creative architect of other egotistical celebrations, particularly the way he celebrates goals by spreading his arms out wide by his sides as he

runs to supporters in a Christ-like pose. Steven Gerrard of Liverpool has often invoked the self-referential aspect of creative modernity, running towards rival supporters whilst pointing to his name on the back of his shirt, as if to egotistically point out 'don't forget my name'. However, perhaps the strongest example of the egotist in creative modernity was Manchester United's Eric Cantona, who, after scoring a famous goal against Sunderland at Old Trafford, stood with his 'chest puffed out, arms aloft and collar up', as if to say 'adore me, I am the resurrection'.<sup>57</sup> After scoring goals for Manchester United, Cantona would often wait for his teammates to jump on him, and then 'emerge from the celebration, with a simple straightening of his collar'.<sup>58</sup>

### *The ecstatic*

Perhaps the clearest example of the ecstatic goal celebration was Marco Tardelli's 'running to nowhere' celebration after scoring the World Cup winner for Italy in 1982.<sup>59</sup> Murray notes how the 'enormity of what Tardelli had just achieved took a couple of seconds to hit home'.<sup>60</sup> He started running with his 'arms stretched out, his eyes wide with wonder then as his head shook and the tears began to flow, he broke into a lunatic semi-circular sprint towards the Italian bench'.<sup>61</sup>

Temuri Ketsbaia, after coming on as a substitute for Newcastle United against Bolton Wanderers in 1998 and scoring the winning goal, 'raced behind the goal, flung his shirt into the crowd, thought better before taking his shorts off, made an abortive attempt to remove his boots, before violently hooting the pitch-side advertisement boards'.<sup>62</sup> Ryan Giggs celebrated scoring a late important goal for Manchester United against Arsenal during an FA Cup semi-final in 1999 by sprinting wildly and ecstatically 'twirling his top around his head',<sup>63</sup> while after scoring a goal for Real Madrid, injury-cursed Jonathan Woodgate celebrated by ecstatically jumping into the arms of Madrid's club doctor.<sup>64</sup>

### *The ironic*

After scoring a goal for Argentina against Greece at the 1994 World Cup, Diego Maradona ran towards the side of the pitch and, putting his face right in front of a TV cameraman, screamed as if he were on drugs. The ironic aspect of this celebration was that later Maradona was in fact proven to be on drugs and banned for failing a drugs test. Craig Bellamy, after finding himself in a media storm before Liverpool's Champions League match with Barcelona at the Nou Camp in 2007 over reports that he had hit teammate John Arne Riise with a golf club, celebrated scoring by mimicking a golf swing,<sup>65</sup> producing an ironic and humorous response.

After scoring a great individual goal for England against Scotland during Euro '96, Paul Gascoigne reacted to newspaper reports and photographs of he and fellow England players enjoying a drunken night out in the buildup to the tournament by running to the side of the goal and lying down on the floor, ironically recreating the 'dentist chair' photograph by allowing teammates to spray his mouth with water from a bottle. During the 1990s Jurgen Klinsmann would regularly celebrate scoring a goal for Tottenham Hotspur by performing an 'ironic dive as a tribute to himself'<sup>66</sup> after arriving in England with a 'tainted reputation for being a diver and conning referees into giving free kicks'.<sup>67</sup>

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of the ironic creative goal celebration was Robbie Fowler's celebration after scoring for Liverpool against Everton during a Merseyside derby in the late 1990s. In response to rumours around the city and on internet chat rooms suggesting that Fowler was a cocaine addict, he ironically pretended to 'sniff the line' at the side of the goal in front of the Everton supporters.<sup>68</sup>

### *The political*

After scoring a goal against Real Zaragoza for Barcelona in 2005, Samuel Eto, who had been the subject of racial discrimination in the form of 'monkey' chanting, celebrated scoring a goal by 'running a few metres in front of the Zaragoza supporters and . . . jumping up and down, grunting like an ape'.<sup>69</sup> Eto's pointed response to the Zaragoza fans' treating him as a 'monkey' was to simply use the goal celebration as a way of behaving like one. Later that year, during a match between Real Madrid and Barcelona at the Bernabeu, Eto once again faced racial discrimination, to which he responded with the 1968 Black Power salute.<sup>70</sup> In Italy, Paolo Di Canio, after returning to Lazio from England, often celebrated goals 'the way he loved to – with a fascist salute',<sup>71</sup> while in an ideological contrast, Christiano Lucarelli of Parma often uses the goal celebration as a site for his 'clenched fist' salute of Communism.<sup>72</sup> After scoring a goal for Everton against Portsmouth in 2008, Tim Cahill created controversy when he celebrated scoring a goal by running towards the corner flag with 'one wrist placed over the other as if in handcuffs'.<sup>73</sup> This celebration was dedicated to Cahill's brother, who was serving a six-year prison sentence 'for an attack on a man which left him partially blinded'.

In England there has recently been a 'trend for players, including Aston Villa's Curtis Davies and Fulham's Andrew Johnson, to make the sign of the letter A with their fingers', which is now 'widely recognised as an advertisement for a football development school for underprivileged children'.<sup>74</sup>

### *The propped*

In recent years the creative modern goal celebration has in some cases included the introduction of props. Former Fulham centre-forward Facundo Sava regularly celebrated scoring a goal by pulling a face mask from his sock and putting it on as he ran towards the supporters. The 'mask of Zorro' celebration was so eagerly received by fans in Sava's home country of Argentina that 'they would often send in their own masks for him to use'.<sup>75</sup>

One of the most interesting recent goal celebration cases occurred in the English Premiership, with former Manchester United striker Carlos Tevez introducing a child's dummy to the audience. After scoring a goal against Birmingham on New Year's Day in 2008, Tevez 'removed an unused baby's pacifier from his shorts before putting it in his mouth and sucking on it'.<sup>76</sup> In explaining the celebration, Tevez noted that 'the idea behind the dummy was to pay homage to his daughter and to let her know that his family are still his priority'.

What is evident within the newspaper coverage of the current cultural state of play is a concern that the 'organic' emotion of scoring a goal has, in some cases, been replaced with a 'less real' performance in which players use the celebration as a site for making statements, with the 'knowledge that they will be picked up by the cameras'.<sup>77</sup>

### Towards a postmodern theorization of the creative celebration

Against the background of the above-mentioned specific cases and genres, which represent the accelerating creative modern climate, we may now turn towards a theorization of how specific current cases act as a postmodern comment on or reaction to modernity. It is important to recognize the relationship between those critical changes discussed and this type of postmodernism: only through an understanding of those specific developments during the acceleration of late creative modernity are we able to understand the context in which this postmodern goal celebration culture of comment gains its very significance.

The 'postmodern condition', as defined by Lyotard, is the 'incredulity towards meta-narratives'<sup>78</sup> in which, through the technological advancement of mass media and artificial intelligence, a shift has occurred in terms of production, with linguistics and symbolism becoming central ingredients of post-industrial society and post-modern culture.

The acceleration of creative modernity and the development of goal celebrations as the site of 'individualised self-realisation, through the embracing of anti authoritarian gestures, iconoclastic habits and the critique of everyday life'<sup>79</sup> have produced those acrobatic, thespian, pole-dancing, egotistical, ironic and political postmodern performances. Guilianotti notes that 'postmodern culture is marked by eclecticism and pastiche, where barriers between cultural styles and artistic movements, or systems of identity break down'.<sup>80</sup> The postmodern goal celebration which represents this culture breaks down the barrier between 'high' and 'low' art<sup>81</sup>, where the scoring of a goal now often includes that dramatic and theatrical celebration, for example, the way in which the operatic Nessun Dorma accompanied the replaying of Marco Tardelli's famous 1982 World Cup celebration during TV coverage of World Cup Italia 90. In the mid to late 1990s, the English television programme *Fantasy Football League* came to represent this postmodern comment on football culture through pastiche, imitation and recreation of famous footballing moments. This was particularly evident in its regular feature 'Phoenix from the Flames',<sup>82</sup> which included famous goals and celebrations.

Lyotard notes how the 'condition of "postmodernity" amounts to the delegitimation of modernity's concern for the purpose of life and the means by which it should be lived'.<sup>83</sup> Thus individual postmodern goal scorers have 'shifted their interest from a concern with the ultimate ends of scoring a goal and restarting the game as soon as possible, to a pragmatic concern relating to the optimal performance of celebration'.<sup>84</sup> The role of the temporary contract is also a vital part of this postmodern reaction;<sup>85</sup> the accelerated migration of players on short-term contracts in the post-Bosman period is closely related to the temporary nature of the postmodern creative goal celebrations perceived as the most fashionable by football supporters each week.

While Peter Crouch's 'robotic' goal celebration for England at the 2006 World Cup was probably more a postmodern 'riposte to critics who first jeered and then sneered that he was a stiff, robotic sort of player',<sup>86</sup> it does nicely capture the paradoxical relationship between the modern and postmodern mechanical mind and action, and perhaps acts as an example of Baudrillard's vision of the social world being a 'world in which the real has given way to simulations, codes and hyperreality'.<sup>87</sup>

As postmodern football goal celebrations have become more experimental and playful, there has been a modernist authoritarian reaction to them. Harvey notes the

‘oppressive qualities of scientifically grounded technical–bureaucratic rationality as purveyed through monolithic forms of modern institutionalised power’<sup>88</sup> such as the FA and FIFA. The postmodern goal celebration, then – and in particular those choreographed artistic performances – is often viewed as a threat to productivity and a form of time wasting. One interesting example was the case of Aylesbury United and their 1995 FA Cup celebration, which included the whole team forming a line before getting down on their knees and waddling along the pitch pretending to be ducks.<sup>89</sup> This particular celebration, it could be argued, set the context for modernist control, in other words, as celebrations began to be more about art, performance and playfulness through such choreographed performances, they became less about productivity (in the traditional sense) where the quiet return back to the centre circle is threatened by such potential acts of time-wasting. These performances then become deemed as ‘excessive’.

In 2004, FIFA’s clarification of Law 12 led to the introduction of a yellow card for players who removed their jersey after scoring a goal. Throughout the 1980s, it was often seen as unsportsmanlike behaviour for a player to remove their jersey when celebrating scoring a goal. However, this clarification now made it punishable. Under the section ‘Additional Instructions for Referees and Assistant Referees’, the Laws clearly state: ‘Removing one’s shirt after scoring is unnecessary and players should avoid such excessive displays of joy.’<sup>90</sup> Thus the implementation of Law 12 acts as a modernist measure through which FIFA and the FA are able to ‘legitimize their universal power’.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, the FA’s Laws of the Game handbook for 2007/2008 dedicated a specific section to the goal celebration issue in ‘Law 12: fouls and misconduct’ (pp. 95–96), stating that

Whilst it is permissible for a player to demonstrate his joy when a goal has been scored, the celebration must not be excessive to celebrate a goal. Reasonable celebrations are allowed, but the practice of choreographed celebrations is not to be encouraged when it results in excessive time-wasting and referees are instructed to intervene in such cases. A player must be cautioned if:

- (1) in the opinion of the referee, he makes gestures which are provocative, derogatory or inflammatory
- (2) he climbs on to a perimeter fence to celebrate a goal being scored
- (3) he removes his shirt or covers his head with his shirt
- (4) he covers his head or face with a mask or other similar item

The postmodern goal celebration offers the goal scorer the Derridean opportunity of ‘decentring authorial control’ through the establishment of a ‘more creative, experimental and autonomous play role’. Furthermore, this celebration becomes a performance art ‘facilitating performer creativity and interaction of difference’ with the audience.<sup>92</sup> Whilst Law 12 acts as a modernist measure to curtail and control the postmodern goal celebration, there is still the potential for that ‘psycho-cultural space of creativity, corporeal transcendence and possible escape from the routines of rationalised instruction’.<sup>93</sup> So paradoxically, whilst the authorial control of Law 12, in treating the postmodern choreographed celebration as a potential act of time-wasting, is in keeping with the modernist view of football as industry, the FA’s relationship with the Premier League and BSkyB also suggests an acceptance of some of those innovations which have enabled football to become a more entertaining and widely consumed global spectacle.

Perhaps what FIFA and the FA really fear from those provocative gestures and the running into the crowd is a return to the ‘dramatic’ football theatre in which the collective participatory experience of the terraces, through the goal scorer’s incitement of the crowd, comes to regularly replace the ‘epic’ football theatre and the postmodern passive experience created by new stadia. Additionally, perhaps the real discourse evident within Law 12 is a craving for a return to the hyper-masculine, heterosexual nature of the mechanically conservative ‘brisk walk back to the centre circle’ and a marginalization of those postmodern, contradictory, homoerotic, free and playful goal celebrations.

### Concluding thoughts

In a sense, then, the postmodern goal celebration, while representative of a ‘world characterised by fragmentation and domination of surface appearance over substance’,<sup>94</sup> paradoxically does provide the goal scorer with a site of playful and creative potential, in which the celebration not only represents the organic joy of having scored a goal, but also an opportunity to disrupt the capitalist logic<sup>95</sup> or make a political statement. As the global entertainment spectacle continues to grow, it is not clear which direction these

postmodern comments will take. Some people may crave for a return to the traditional, some to the organic, while others will see such postmodern dummy-sucking as a commitment to the ‘decentring’ of football<sup>96</sup> and a reaction to the truth and meaning of celebrating a goal through its free and playful nature. As players perhaps continue to become ‘increasingly self-reflexive and self conscious’,<sup>97</sup> an opportunity arises for them to engage more critically with the spectacle and, through a Brechtian ‘multilayered process of self reflection’,<sup>98,99</sup> to further transform the prescriptive nature of the goal celebration into the performative, while ‘alienating, interrupting, and making strange’ the critical relationship between players and audience.

### Notes

1. Dorfan, ‘The Foot that Rocks the Cradle’
2. Oliver Brown, ‘Top 10 Memorable Goal Celebrations’.
3. Les Roopnarine, ‘Everton Defend Cahill Goal Celebration’.
4. Giles Smith, ‘After Carlos Tevez’s Dummy’.
5. Brown, ‘Top 10 Memorable Goal Celebrations’.
6. Scott Murray, ‘The Joy of Six’.
7. When Saturday Comes, ‘Celebrate’.
8. When Saturday Comes, ‘Celebrate’.
9. Deyo’s discussion, in Harvey, ‘The Condition of Postmodernity’, 154.
10. Harvey, ‘The Condition of Postmodernity’, 338.
11. Morgan’s ‘Sports: Social Theory from a Moral Perspective’ in Giulianotti, 175.
12. Habermas, ‘The Theory of Communicative Action’.
13. Dorfan, ‘The Foot that Rocks the Cradle’.
14. Dorfan, ‘The Foot that Rocks the Cradle’.
15. Dorfan, ‘The Foot that Rocks the Cradle’.
16. John Motson commentary on ‘*Match of the Day* DVD’.
17. See McDonald and Carrington’s discussion of the organic stalker in ‘The Ontological Impossibility of the Black Stalker’, 15.
18. McDonald and Carrington, ‘The Ontological Impossibility’, 15.
19. McDonald and Carrington, ‘The Ontological Impossibility’, 15.
20. Bakhtin, ‘Rabelais and his World’.
21. Lash and Urry’s discussion of signs and space in King, ‘The End of the Terraces’, 27.

22. McDonald and Carrington, 'The Ontological Impossibility', 17.
23. McDonald and Carrington, 'The Ontological Impossibility', 17.
24. Steve Curry, 'Over the Moon-ing'.
25. McDonald and Carrington, 'The Ontological Impossibility', 17.
26. Russell, 'Associating with Football', in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 'Football Cultures and Identities'.
27. Redhead, 'Fandom and the Millennial Blues'.
28. King, 'The End of the Terraces', 203.
29. Harvey, 'The Condition of Postmodernity', 340.
30. Dorfan, 'The Foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
31. Alvesson, 'Postmodernism and Social Research', 11.
32. Rojek, 'Decentring Leisure', 130.
33. Pat Kane, 'Let Football Eat Itself'.
34. Kane, 'Let Football Eat Itself'.
35. Kane, 'Let Football Eat Itself'.
36. Tomlinson, 'Theorising Spectacle', 57.
37. Kellner, 'The Sports Spectacle', in D. Andrews, 'Michael Jordan, inc', 39.
38. Whannel, 'The Unholy Alliance', 144.
39. Redhead, 'Creative Modernity', 5.
40. Redhead, 'Cultural Modernity', 5.
41. Carter, 'The football Manager, A History', 139.
42. McDonald and Carrington, 'The Ontological Impossibility', 27.
43. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
44. Fletcher, 'Celebrating in Style'.
45. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
46. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
47. Fletcher, 'Celebrating in Style'.
48. Dorfan, 'The Foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
49. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
50. Dorfan, 'The Foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
51. Fletcher, 'Celebrating in Style'.
52. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
53. Dorfan, 'The Foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
54. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
55. Wikipedia.
56. Dorfan, 'The Foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
57. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
58. Dorfan, 'The foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
59. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
60. Murray, 'The Joy of Six'.
61. Murray, 'The Joy of Six'.
62. Murray, 'The Joy of Six'.
63. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
64. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
65. Brown, 'Top 10 Memorable Goal Celebrations'.
66. Hattenstone, 'Bravo Bernardo'.
67. Smith, 'Handcuffs, Cocaine and Robots'.
68. Sportingo.
69. Hawkey, 'Eto's Kicking Out'.
70. Hawkey, 'Eto's Kicking Out'.
71. Dorfan, 'The Foot that Rocks the Cradle'.
72. Keyes, 'Culture of Soccer: Blog'.
73. Edwards, 'Has Everton's Tim Cahill...'
74. Smith, 'After Carlos Tevez's Dummy'.
75. Burnton, 'Fulham March On'.
76. Smith, 'After Carlos Tevez's Dummy'.
77. When Saturday Comes, 'Celebrate'.
78. Lyotard, 'The Postmodern Condition'.

79. Harvey, 'The Condition of Postmodernity', 38.
80. Giulianotti, 'Sport: A Critical Sociology', 179.
81. Huysen, 'Whither Postmodernism', in Lemert, 'Social Theory', 465.
82. *Fantasy Football League*, BBC Television, 1994.
83. See discussion of Lyotard in Rojek, 'Decentring Leisure', 133.
84. Ibid.
85. See discussion of Lyotard in Harvey, 'The Condition of Postmodernity', 291.
86. Barkham, 'C'mon Everybody'.
87. Smart, 'Postmodern Social Theory', in Turner, 'The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory'.
88. Harvey, 'The Condition of Postmodernity', 38.
89. Fletcher, 'Celebrating in Style'.
90. FIFA, 'Clarification of Law 12'.
91. Giulianotti, 'Sport: A Critical Sociology', 174.
92. Giulianotti, 'Sport: A Critical Sociology', 174.
93. Giulianotti, 'Sport: A Critical Sociology', 174.
94. Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 'Understanding Sport', 280.
95. McDonald, 'One Dimensional Sport'.
96. See Rojek, 'Decentring Leisure', 192.
97. Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel, 'Understanding Sport', 280.
98. Jameson, 'Brecht and Method'.
99. Walvin, James. *The People's Game: the History of Football Revisited*. Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2000.

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