Vitalist Cubisms:

The Biocultures of Virility, Militarism and *La Vie Sportive*

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Abstract:
A monumental rugby player personifying Nietzsche's 'Übermensch' appears caught in flight while leaping for the ball by the Eiffel Tower in Robert Delaunay's *L'Equipe de Cardiff*. Amidst Delaunay's simultaneous rhythmic pulsations and vibrations of complementary colour applied like the strident chromatic models used in posters, the place in which this happens appears as dynamic as the action capturing these vitalist sensations. By contrast, it is a union of rugby players who run with the ball in Albert Gleizes' *Les Joueurs de football*, to signify their collective force. It is a pyramid of rugby players who support André Lhote's rugby player soaring upwards in the match being played during the First World War by the battlefields of the Somme. The biocultural and biopolitical differences in the vitalism they portray is the focus of this chapter and the ways in which they are challenged by Pablo Picasso's parodies of the newspaper sensationalism surrounding such events designed to produce virile bodies as ready to regenerate the French population as to fight in world wars.

Following Charles Darwin's *Descent of Man,* France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War was identified with its waning fertility, decreasing numbers, 'lack of vigour' and its 'grade of civilization' (Weiss 1977: 107). It ignited 'a profound anxiety, a consciousness of weakness, a concern about decadence, an obsession with diminution' (Rabinbach 1993: 22). The plummeting birth rate alongside the extensive infirmities and diminution discovered in conscripts at the beginning of the Third Republic was correlated by Neo-Lamarckian physicians, physiologists, neurologists, scientists and hygienists to hereditary disorders and unhealthy environments, particularly the pathological effects of decadent societies.[1] The application of pathology and photography to the study of alcoholism, arthritis, criminality, idiocy, tuberculosis, hysteria and syphilis as hereditary disorders seemed to confirm accelerating degeneration and waning biopower in a pathological milieu (Nye 1982: 57).[2] More disturbingly by the 1880s this

[1] Medical examinations of conscripts in 1872 revealed 30,524 out of 325,000 with feeble constitutions and 109,000 20-year-olds medically unfit for service.
[2] 'Hérédo-syphilitics', 'hérédo-tuberculeux', and 'hérédo-arthritisme' thus joined the list of afflictions that could strike the unhappy victim whose 'resistance' had been lowered by abnormal heredity, a pathological milieu, or some combination of these factors. Also refer Dr. Henri Le Grand du Salle, *La Folie héreditaire* (1873), Théodule Ribot, *L'Hérédité psychologique* (1873) and Charles Féré, *La Famille névropathique* (1894).

explosion in degenerescence encompassed increasing numbers of young men suffering *épuisement* – what the American physicist, George Beard termed neurasthenia (Beard 1881).

Linked to the acceleration of competitive productivity, *neurasthénie* was defined by the Salpêtrière neurologists, Adrian Proust and Gilbert Ballet, as 'an incessant and exaggerated function of the nervous system' that left males exhausted, weak and impotent (1887: 10). 'The present generation is born fatigued', despaired the rational gymnastics advocate, Philippe Tissié (quoted in Rabinbach 1993: 22). With France's quantitative decline continually matched by its qualitative demise, by 1896 the Nobel-Prize winning French physiologist, Charles Richet asked, *Will France perish?* (Richet 1896) In 'la lutte pour la vie', as Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' was translated, Richet like many others considered France seemed to have failed to heed Darwin's forewarning: 'Decreasing numbers will sooner or later lead to extinction' (Darwin 1871: 222). For France's demographer, Jacques Bertillon, the crucial questions then facing the nation were: 'How to prevent France from disappearing? How to sustain the French race on earth?' (Bertillon 1911: 1)

To reinforce the vital force of French bodies, enhance male potency, accelerate the birth rate, rehabilitate the nation and breathe new life into a fatigued civilization, the answer seemed to lie in modern sport and physical education. *La vie sportive* would stimulate 'a cult of energy', Victor Margueritte maintained, able to preserve the French race and expand its 'vital force' (1908a, b).[3] For Baron Pierre de Coubertin, *la vie sportive* would 'halt the universal neurosis of modern life'. As he elucidated, 'very often, the psychoneuroses are distinguished by a kind of disappearance of the virile sensibility and there is nothing like sport to revive and sustain them. It is the art of virilizing bodies and souls.' (1913: 79) Regarded as a Neo-Lamarckian imperative and national bioculture, *la vie sportive* was considered able to, in the words of Senator Charles Humbert, 'augment the worth of men since we are no longer able, alas, to augment their number' (quoted by Nye 1982: 53).

To regenerate France's biopower and virilize its masculinity, the institutions of medicine, science, politics, art, culture, physical education and sport coalesced in their focus upon the body. Their biocentrism was predominantly Neo-Lamarckian. A fusion of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck's 'Zoological Philosophy' of *Transformisme* with Darwin's natural and sexual selection, it entailed strengthening organs through use and passing them onto descendants. To

[3] Margueritte was the Republican Founder of the Physical Culture *Ligue républicaine d'action nationale.*

transmute lower forms into higher species, increase virility and the population, and pass on greater vigour and health to the next generation, modern sport and physical education appeared the perfect strategies to achieve Neo-Lamarckian *Transformisme* and prepare the male population to reap *revanche* against France's dire enemy, Wilhelmine Germany. Propelled by the new sporting press, *la vie sportive* became identified with national regeneration plus the vital new energies and vitalist sensations unleashed by French athleticized modernity, particularly through cycling and rugby. Championed by the 'Salon' Cubists, from 1912 Robert Delaunay, Albert Gleizes, Jean Metzinger and André Lhote endeavoured to capture how the dynamic sensations of vitalism in modern space-time were experienced simultaneously and most powerfully by the energized body engaged in *la vie sportive,* particularly in cycling competitions and rugby matches performed alongside such modernist metropolitan icons as Le Tour Eiffel and La Grande roue amidst the vibrant billboard culture of Paris. Yet as early as 1905, Picasso had depicted *la culture physique,* followed by Francis Picabia eight years later. While Picasso also engaged in *l'éducation physique* alongside *la vie sportive,* both featuring in his Cubist pasted papers, they do not appear to be aligned with a regenerative vitalism of the body but with the strategic regeneration of the French race in relation to military preparedness for war. By pitting Picasso's parodic engagement with *la culture physique* and *la vie sportive,* against the dynamic energies unleashed by the sporting body captured by Metzinger, Delaunay, Gleizes, and Lhote, the Cubist biocultures of sporting vitalism shall be explored. By identifying their differences in relation to vitalism, militarism and the political allegiances with which each sport became identified, the biopolitics underlying *la vie sportive* shall also be unravelled.

'Nouvelle Anatomie Artistique': **Picabia, Picasso, Physical Education and *La Culture Physique***

Sport had featured at the 1889 'Exposition Universelle', as had physical education, the 'Comité pour la propagation des exercices physiques' presided over by Jules Simon leading to the 'Congrès international pour la propagations des exercises physique dans l'éducation'. At the 1900 Olympic Games in Paris entitled 'Concours d'exercises physique et de sports', the Salpêtrière neurologist and sculptor, Dr Paul Richer had measured, documented and posed

Olympic athletes for the photographer, Étienne-Jules Marey.[4] At the same time he had displayed at the 'Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1900', his sculptures of athletes including *Coureurs*, *Coup de Pied*, *Boxeurs, Lutteurs* and *Joueurs de Football,* reexhibiting them three years later at the Racing Club de Paris. While Sporting Unions, Associations and Ligues burgeoned after the Olympic Games, 300 gymnastic clubs grew as did the private enterprises of physical culture designed for the busy office worker, particularly by the 'father of physical culture', Edmond Desbonnet (Jablonka 2011: 47).[5]

From his launch of *L'Education Physique* and *La Culture Physique,* his photographs of bodybuilders featured on their covers, particularly the Deriaz brothers, Maurice and Adrian. That *La Culture Physique* and Desbonnet-trained bodybuilders directly intersected with art is illustrated by the paintings of Gustave Courtois exhibited at the 'Salon National des Beaux-Arts' in which the model for *Perseus Freeing Andromeda* is none-other than the Desbonnet-trained bodybuilder, Maurice Deriaz (Fig. 1), while the hunky *Hercules* (in tiger skin) *at the Feet of Omphala* is his brother, Adrian (Brauer 2008: 119-123). That physical culture also intersected with avant-garde art and artists is demonstrated by Guillaume Apollinaire, André Derain and Maurice Raynal all enrolling in Desbonnet's 12-week programme at his gymnasium, 'La Culture Physique', 148 Faubourg Poissonniere, with Apollinaire and Raynal also publishing in Desbonnet's main magazine, *La Culture Physique* (Apollinaire 1907a, b).[6]

Upon their final 'workout', their purportedly revitalised anatomy seems to have proven irresistible to Picasso's satirical pen. In keeping with Alfred Jarry's travesty of the fitness imperative, his novel *Le Surmâle* (1902) in which André Marcueil performs superhuman feats of strength, winning a 10,000-mile bicycle race and attaining the world record of 82 orgasms in one day, Picasso absurdly distorted their naked display of pumped-up bulk after training, particularly

[4] At the 1900 Commission of Hygiene and Physiology, presided over by Marey, Richer was secretary, treasurer and responsible for organizing the photographs of champions. After giving participants a questionnaire to complete on their anthropometry, he photographed them from three different views, front, profile and back (300 images) to ascertain the physiology and the musculature developed by particular sporting champions.

[5] Born in 1867 in Lille, Desbonnet died on 28 June 1953, in Varenne, aged 86. Due to delicate health In this childhood, he practised gymnastics at the pensionnat Ste. Marie in 1875 and at the Ecole Supérieure de Lille. In 1878, he discovered photos of strong men, which he began collecting.

[6] During 1907, Gustave Coquiot published six articles on theatre in *La Culture Physique* while three years later Maurice Raynal published 'Inventaire Sportif, La "Culture Physique" à Narbonne', *La Culture Physique,* No. 122 (1 February 1910), 65-69. Adrian Hicken points out that Apollinaire was probably introduced to *La Culture Physique* by his friend, René Dalize, who pursued the 'natural' physical culture of Lieutenant Hébert; three books by Hébert were in Apollinaire's library (Hicken 2017: 70-71).

in his sketch entitled *Guillaume Apollinaire en athlete*. While the poet-critic's bulging biceps, pectoral, thigh and calf muscles appear to signify the muscular embodiment promoted by *La Culture Physique*, as signified by the placard Apollinaire appears to be holding, their grotesque inflation is played off against the diminution of Apollinaire's brain to a pin-head (Fig. 2).[7] Nevertheless, it was the bodybuilders trained by Desbonnet who entered the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts as models while Desbonnet's photographs of them helped to form its archives of *Nouvelle Anatomie Artistique* from the time that Richer became its Professor of Anatomy in 1903.

Upon Richer's appointment to the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, *la vie sportive* and *la culture physique,* become integral to its syllabus.[8] In his *Physiologie Artistique de l'homme en mouvement,* Richer stressed the need to study an anthropology of all races in a range of movement generated by the new physical culture of the body (Richet 1895). Abandoning undeveloped anatomy as anachronistic, the body developed by modern sport and bodybuilding comprised what he called 'new artistic anatomy' (Richet 1906-26; Brauer 2008: 122). The modern Apollos were, Richer maintained, cyclists or footballers. Throughout his 24 anatomy lectures at the École, Richer directed students to scrutinize all the muscles of the living athletic not dead body, not just those visible at a single moment, in order to understand the physiological mechanisms of movement.[9] Discarding the immobility of studio poses, Richer projected Marey's and Albert Londe's chronophotography of Olympic athletes, Desbonnet's photographs of his bodybuilders, as well as lantern slides of sprinters, discus throwers and shotputters, wrestlers, weightlifters and footballers, to expose students to this new science able to capture the 'new artistic anatomy' in multiple, moving form. Rejecting the hermeticism of the studio, he urged students to go out and find this regenerated body in 'the body builders renewing the labours of Hercules, in […] the young, athletic bodies at sporting reunions and football matches' (Richet 1897: 36). Espousing the new union of 'le muscle et l'esprit' at the same time at the Sorbonne,[10]

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[7] In *La Jeune Peinture française* (Paris, 1912) André Salmon points out that Picasso had 'used a drawing to tease his friend into collaborating with the review, *La Culture Physique*.'
[8] When appointed Chair d'anatomie artistique de l'École des beaux-arts, Richer replaced Mathias Duval.
[9] Richer's course, *Nouvelle anatomie artistique du corps humain*, was divided into practical and oral components with lectures lasting three-and-a-half hours. It was supplemented by the archive he developed for student access of over 3,000 photographs of athletes, bodybuilders and footballers arching, bending, stretching, kneeling and throwing; cf. Brauer, 2008: 119-121.
[10] Pierre de Coubertin, 'La Philosophie du débrouillard', discours prononcé dans le grand amphithéâtre de la Sorbonne, le 30 janvier 1907, lors de la fête organisée par la Société des sports populaires pour la "distribution du Dîplome des Débrouillards", 200.

Coubertin was encouraging painters and sculptors to frequent and 'canvas' *les milieux sportifs* while championing the benefits of their artworks being displayed in gymnasiums and sporting stadiums 'to contribute to the education and eurythmic perfection of young athletes.'[11] Their aspirations seemed to coalesce at the 1913 'Congrès International de l'Éducation Physique' accompanied by the 'Exposition de l'Éducation Physique et des Sports' where, art, physical education and physical culture seemed to become intertwined as illustrated by its poster (Fig. 3).

Never before had there been an international exhibition and congress on physical education and sport on this scale, announced its director-general, Georges Weiss: 'At a moment when survival of the fittest becomes day by day more arduous, physical education becomes more and more imperative.' (Weiss 1913: 30) Its organizational committees included every major politician, physical culturalist, sports champion and artist of the regenerated body with, notably, Richer as Vice-President, and Coubertin on its Committee of Honour. Each day, gymnastic demonstrations by twenty-two nations were held at the Gymnase Huygens and Vélodrome d'Hiver. These included outdoor demonstrations of French fitness and military prowess, most spectacularly displayed by 350 males aged from seven to twenty-one trained in 'Hébertise', the outdoor physical cultural training that Lieutenant Georges Hébert called 'la Méthode Naturelle' to attain 'la culture virile' (Hébert 1912, 1913) At the same time as these were demonstrated, performances were projected every afternoon in cinematographs, and exhibited in works of art.[12]

The vast exhibition at the Sorbonne Faculty of Medicine consisted of an historical retrospective of nearly two thousand paintings, sculptures, tapestries, engravings and prints to illustrate sporting games from the fifteenth to the twentieth century from hunting, shooting and fishing to athletics gymnastics, boxing, fencing, wrestling and skating (*L'Exposition* 1913).[13] By no means confined to French art history, this exhibition extended into a substantial display of contemporary art, starting with a special installation of Auguste Rodin's sculptures and drawings (Beausire 1988: 340-343). Amongst some two hundred pieces of sculpture displayed were Felix

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[11] Ibid., 198: '*Le gymnase ne fournirait pas seulement aux peintres et aux sculpteurs des modèles, mais encore des emplacments appropriés pour leurs œuvres d'art. Et ces œuvres, à leur tour, contribueraient à l'éducation et au perfectionnement eurythmique des jeunes athlètes.*'

[12] Every afternoon in the Faculty's grand amphitheatre, the 'Établissements Gaumont' projected eight films: 'La gymnastique Suédoise; Union des Sociétés de Gymnastique de France; une leçon de culture physique à l'école des Fusiliers marins (méthode du lieutenant de vaisseau Hébert); les exercices de gymnastiques de l'École de Joinville; la gymnastique rythmique (méthode Dalcroze); une leçon de gymnastique à l'école; exercices sportifs divers and exercices des pompiers de Paris.'

Charpentier's *Wrestlers,* Tait McKenzie's *Sprinter, Athlete,* and *Boxer* and fifteen sculptures by Richer, including his *Footballers*. Consistent with the growth of combat sports in the *avant-guerre,* including Desbonnet's new journal, *La Boxe et Les Boxeurs,* four of Richer's sculptures represented French and English boxing. Even though modern sport had begun to feature at the avant-garde salons, André Dunoyer de Sergonzac's *Boxer* being exhibited at the 1911 'Salon d'Automne', not one avant-garde artwork was selected (Vere 2018: 12). Nevertheless, this exhibition along with the 'Congrès International de l'éducation Physique Exposition' was lauded by the 'Poincariste' press for demonstrating the panacea to national devolution, eugenic regeneration and military preparedness. These events were also strategically timed to synchronise with Plan XVII: Poincaré's project to militarise the entire nation; taking-up arms for the Republic represented, according to Poincaré, 'both the badge and moral consequence of citizenship' (Goldberg 1962: 444).

On 6 March 1913, the Briand government tabled a Bill to replace the 1905 two-year conscription law with three years' active service, and twenty years' association with the forces, for all Frenchmen between the ages of twenty and forty-eight (Goldberg 1962: 444). Denounced by the leader of the French Socialist Party, Jean Jaurès, as a 'crime against the Republic', from its first day in the Chambre des Députés, both Socialist Parties resolved to block the Bill (Goldberg 1962: 445).[14] This meant that for the entire duration of the Congrès and its Exposition, antimilitarist protests and anti-conscription demonstrations occurred in Paris. On 15 March 1913, the front-page of *L'Humanité,* edited by Jaurès, was emblazoned with headlines about the pacifist demonstrations without one mention of the Congress. Even two days later when the Congress was officially opened, there was not one front-page report of it in *L'Humanité,* this page being devoted to the massive demonstration at Pré-Saint-Gervais by the people of Paris against the Three-Year Law (Anon. 1913). By contrast, not one mention of this pacifist demonstration was made in *Le Journal.* Instead this Congrès and its Exposition were front-page news on *Le Journal* to sway public opinion for the Three-Year Law. This may be why this headline and its illustration features in Picasso's pasted paper, *Bouteille de Vieux Marc, Verre et Journal,* but not in any commemorative way (Fig. 4).

[14] Both French Socialist Parties, the Parti Socialiste Français headed by Jaurès and the other headed by Jules Guède, supported this Bill.

Scribbled heavily over in black crayon, Picasso seems to have tried to deface if not obliterate it while juxtaposing this newspaper against the epitome of alcoholic degeneration that physical educationists condemned– a bottle of 52% proof *Vieux Marc* brandy with liqueur glass (Brauer 2020). Conterminously Francis Picabia, created his painting entitled *Culture Physique,* with significations not just to Desbonnet's methodology but also to Hébert's 'natural method' and 'virile culture', as well as to Émile Jaques-Dalcroze's eurhythmic gymnastics that had also been demonstrated at the Congress (Fig. 4). Premised upon the obstacle course to generate muscularity, dexterity and speed while enhancing energy, virility and willpower in the French military, Hébert's 'natural method' at the Congress had been hailed as a 'veritable triumph' for 'adapting in such a remarkable way to the national temperament' and providing the most effective method for training those to be conscripted with the new Three-Year Law.[15] While Coubertin, Georges Demenÿ and Rodin were on the Committee supporting Hébert's appointment in April 1913 as Director to the Collège d'athlètes de Reims, Apollinaire owned all of Hébert's books, one bearing a dedication from him (Hicken 2017: 70). Close as he was to Apollinaire, Picabia was also absorbed in the eurythmics developed by Jacques Dalcroze at his College of Rhythm in Geneva, particularly what Jacques Dalcroze called his 'sensorial experiments' in kinaesthetic memory, 'tonal feeling and the sense of harmony', and the sensibility of muscles to transmit acoustic sensations, through touch, gesture and body rhythm (Dalcroze 1930; see also Brain 2009).

Following *L'Art et le Geste* by his friend, the aesthetician Jean d'Udine, Picabia connected eurhythmics with synaesthesia, reconceiving art as synaesthetic wave-forms emitting new rhythms and vibrations (d'Udine 1910). Instead of providing an iconic image of physical exercises or feats of corporeal strength deriving from Desbonnet or Hébert, Picabia created rhythmic ribbons of flesh and coloured stripes twisting and coiling over one another in a nocturnal space, without any point of rest, to convey the kinaesthetic sensations of performing and scoping physical culture amidst the dizzying array of vibrations experienced in the modern metropolis – in Paris as much as in 'the Cubist city', according to Picabia, New York. Just as

[15] *Le Figaro,* 18 March 1913: 'Ce sera l'honneur et la gloire du lieutenant Hébert d'avoir empruntée aux sports ce qu'il fallait pour cré rune méthode nouvelle, dite naturelle, qui s'adapte d'une façon remarquable au tempérament national' (quoted by Thibault 1987: 153). See also *Site official de l'Association de Georges Hébert, 1913, La Reconnaissance:* 'Il y remporte un véritable triomphe et la Méthode naturelle apparaît aux yeux du public comme "la" méthode à adopter'.

physical culture, particularly eurythmics, was meant to activate the nervous system, so Picabia's painting of it appears to be aimed at jolting the beholder out of passivity and into the pulsating rhythms of the new body cultures. 'Modernist art is physical culture', concludes Robert M. Brain, 'and vice-versa, with a shared aim of achieving superior bodily control and, at its most utopian, of emancipating a new creative spirit of improvisation in all who participate in it.' (2015: 213) In so doing, these modernists seemed to pose a vitalist challenge to this 'Congrès' and 'Exposition de l'Éducation Physique et des Sports' while projecting an alternative visual culture. This became clearer when the 'Salon des Artistes Indépendants' opened a month after the 'Congrès' and 'Exposition' had closed. There *la vie sportive* championed by its exhibitors, Metzinger, Delaunay and Gleizes, was pictured as the dynamic sensations of vitalism in modern space-time to be experienced simultaneously by the energized body cycling and playing football.

Ending 'Universal Neuroses'; Radiating Energy: Cycling, Rugby and Metzinger's *Au Vélodrome*

The energy, vigour and strong sensations to be ingested at modern sporting games, particularly cycling and rugby, albeit as a performer and/or beholder, had long been perceived as an antidote to flailing French masculinity, diminishing virility and escalating neurasthenia. Yet by no means had the threat of neurasthenia abated by the 'Congrès' and 'Exposition International de l'Éducation Physique' as signified by the constitution of a second Extra-Parliamentary Depopulation Commission followed by inception of the 'Société française d'eugénisme' at the end of 1912 (Rollet-Echalier 1990: 30-321).[16] 'Depopulation is no longer a vague menace to our country', announced Minister of Finance, M. Klotz, in his address to the Commission. 'It is a national danger, at once pressing and immediate, and one which demands rapid and efficient measures.' (cited by Garner 1914). The physiological lassitude, intellectual exhaustion and sexual impotence diagnosed by Dr. de Fleury in 1901 seemed to have become so prevalent by 1913 that according to Dr. Lucien Grellety's *Névrosés et decadents,* it was the *maladie du siècle* (de Fleury 1901; Grellety 1913; Weber 1986: 12). 'Never has the monster claimed more victims', he declared, "either because ancestral defects accumulate, or because the stimulants of

[16] The aim of the 315 strong Commission extraparlementaire de la depopulation headed by Minister of Finances, L.-L. Klotz, was to find a fiscal plan to resolve the problem. Inaugurated in December 1912, the 'Société française d'eugénique' had its own journal, *Eugénique;* Pinard was Vice-President of both this Society and the 'Congrès International de l'Éducation Physique'; see Brauer 2012.

our civilization, deadly for the majority, precipitate us into an idle and frightened debilitation.' (Grellety 1913) In his anti-decadence response, *Essais de Psychologie Sportive,* Coubertin argued vigorously that sport would be able to bring an end to 'universal neuroses' since the very concept of *l'esprit sportif* signified vitalism (Coubertin 1913: 120).

Propelled by these events and buoyed by the vitalist philosophies of Friedrich Nietzsche and Henri Bergson, the new generation of avant-garde artists turned away from the aesthetics of decadence towards a new aesthetics of vitalism, what Charles Lalo called the 'sentiment de vitalité' imbued with an 'irradiation indéfinie d'une source d'énergie' (1910: 152-153). This new source of energy was what Jean Bourdeau termed 'la volonté instinctive de l'action' (Bourdeau 1912) For President of Honour of the 'Club Sportif de la jeunesse littéraire', Charles Péguy, the vitalism inherent in cycling competitions and rugby embraced not just strenuous energetic action but intense aesthetic feeling (cited in Rousseau 2019: 152). Yet for the beholder to be able to live and relive the exciting adventure of rugby, the modernist poet Blaise Cendrars considered that artists needed to capture the sensual and dynamic experiences of the game by appealing to all the senses in order to make the beholder feel its tensions through providing an uninterrupted chain of sensations, as he explained: 'Il faut avoir des sens pour le comprendre. Il s'agit d'être sensual, de ressentir, de vivre chaque tableau, afin que l'aventure compte dans l'interrompue chaîne de sensations qu'est la vie. Il faut sentir' (1913; cited Certigny 1984: 701).

The bicycle had generated, according to Paul Adam, 'a cult of speed for those who wanted to conquer time and space.' (1907: 449-450) With nearly one million bicycles on French roads by 1911 and cycling competitions, cycling had become an everyday sport. Urged on by a bet between Gleizes and Jacques Villon that Metzinger could 'cycle 100 kilometres without putting a foot on the ground', he had begun his laps in the Vélodrome d'Hiver (O'Brien 2012). As Metzinger vividly recalled, 'an hour went by and then another.' The spectators, 'Fernand Léger was among them, cheered me on with increasing enthusiasm until quite unexpectedly the sound of a gong brought me to a halt.' (Weddigen 2012: 33) While the dynamic sensations of this experience was captured in Metzinger's three paintings, *Au Vélodrome, Le Bicycliste* and *Coureur cycliste,* it was Charles Crupelandt's energy and exhilaration on nearing the winning post at the arduous and hazardous Paris-Roubaix race that appears to have been specifically conveyed in *Au Vélodrome* (Fig. 5). In geometricizing the motifs and delineating most of the cyclist's head and upper torso in transparent planes, they appear to fuse with the stadium. In the

stadium, the cheering crowds rendered in cubes around the judges in the vividly striped rectangular viewing box, conjure an experience of flux amidst the duration of this event speeding across earth and through air that seems to be accentuated by the incorporation of paper collage and the granular surface. The multiple viewpoints with which the handlebars, bicycle wheel and the cyclist's arms and legs are rendered alongside the whirling rear bicycle wheel-spokes of a rival convey the exhilarating split-second-timing experience of space, as distinct from the static depictions of cycling in J. B. Louvet's Tour de France posters. When juxtaposed with Jean Beraud's representations of the bicycle in *Le Chalet du Cycle au Bois du Boulogne* (c. 1900) where bourgeois women cyclists bearing bloomers are depicted at leisure, Metzinger's *Au Vélodrome* may be also viewed as capturing a modern mass spectacle embodying male rivalry and masculine energy able to subvert the threat of neurasthenia.[17] Yet since Metzinger chose the place, not the race, for his title, he may have aimed to capture the exhilaration of this dynamic mass spectacle demonstrating new feats of endurance, biopower and virility. This was facilitated by the 728-yard track within the 3,000-seater Stade Vélodrome instigated by the champion racing cyclist, Henri Desgrange, founder of the cycling magazine, *L'Auto* with, by 1912, over 100,000 subscribers. The place where major rugby matches were played proved just as significant for the other 'Salon' Cubists, Delaunay and Gleizes.

Even though gymnastic societies and athletic clubs had sprouted after physical education became compulsory in schools following the 'Loi Ferry' in 1880 (Arnaud 1991: 19),[18] Pierre de Coubertin declared the entire French education system in need of reform:

> We create a bachelor … a doctor, but a man? On the contrary, fifteen years are spent destroying his virility. We give society a ridiculous little mandarin who hasn't any muscles, who doesn't know how to leap a barrier, to elbow his way forward, to shoot a gun, or to mount a horse, who is afraid of everything … who needs to be directed in everything (1888: ---).[19]

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[17] David V. Herlihy, 'The Bicycle Boom', *Bicycle: The History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 269.

[18] As Jules Ferry's Law of 27 January 1880 rendered gymnastics compulsory, it marked the birth, according to Pierre Arnaud, of physical education in France (Arnaud 1991: 19).

[19] Pierre de Coubertin, *L'Éducation en Angleterre* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888); *L'Éducation anglaise en France* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1889).

To virilize French men and to generate ‘a republic of muscles’, Coubertin proselytized the British public schools model of modern sports in the open air, particularly football, as epitomized by Thomas Arnold’s Rugby. ‘With him [Arnold], athletes penetrated a great public school and transformed it’, effused Coubertin, ‘and from the day on which the first generation fashioned by his hands was launched on the world, the British Empire had a new look.’ (1967: 8) Enamoured by *Tom Brown’s Schooldays,* from 1883 Coubertin regularly crossed the Channel to monitor cricket, running, rowing, swimming, pugilist competitions and most of all, rugby games played at Rugby. Through Coubertin’s advocacy, the Racing Club de France mushroomed, the Stade Français was inaugurated on the Champ de Mars, the ‘Union of French Shooting Societies’ launched and in 1890 the powerful ‘Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques’ (USFSA) was founded with Coubertin as President (Weber 1970). In 1892 the first Rugby championship final was held between the Racing Club de France and Stade Français with Coubertin as referee, following by a match between Stade Français and the English team, Rosslyn Park. Despite the popularity of Soccer from 1920, it was designated a ‘latecomer, faced with a cold reception […] with no publicity for its matches’ (Weber 1986: 223).

Following Coubertin’s intervention, the Olympic Games were re-established in 1894, revived in Athens in 1896 with modern sport competitions, including rugby, and held in Paris in 1900 with France winning the Rugby and by far the most Olympic medals at its ‘Concours d’exercises physique et de sports’. Prized as the perfect panacea for enhancing virility while regulating the libido, instilling ethical values while regenerating French manhood, modern sports were promoted as a national duty reinforced not just by these spectacles but by art and visual culture. This visual culture was propelled by an efflorescence of the sporting press stretching back to *La Revue des Sports* launched in 1876, *Le Véloce-Sport* in 1885, *La Revue de sport vélocipédique* in 1886, *Le Vélocipède illustré* and Coubertin’s *La Revue Athlétique* launched in 1890; *La Bicyclette; Les Sports athlétiques*, Pierre Giffard’s *Le Vélo* (which reinforced Coubertin’s policies) and the relaunching of *La Revue des Sports* in 1892. *L’Auto Vélo,* renamed *L’Auto* from 1903 when it launched *the Tour de France,* was soon joined by *Les Sports* and *Le Monde sportif*. Yet from 1898, it was *La Vie au Grand Air,* published weekly by Pierre Lafitte, with bold coloured covers, avant-garde graphic designs and photographs of boxing, cycling, gymnastics, soccer and rugby matches on almost every page that achieved renown as the greatest of all sporting newspapers (Seidler 1964: 61-62; Dauncey 2012: 62). This new sporting press

was reinforced by sports sections initiated in every national newspaper from the beginning of the Dreyfus Affair, particularly *Le Figaro, Le Petit Journal, Le Petit Parisien, Le Martin* and *Le Journal* in which an entire page was devoted to *la vie sportive.* While athletics, boxing and rugby featured prominently in every issue, so did physical education.

Since winning the gold medal in Rugby at the 1900 Paris Summer Olympics, the Racing Club de France and Stade Français continued to be French Rugby Club Championship winners, joined by the Stade Bordelais, Stade Toulousain, Aviron Bayonnais and AS Perpignan from 1904 until 1914, cheered on by huge numbers. 'No game has ever attained the degree of popularity of football', declared Jack Cameroun in *La Vie au Grand Air* (Cameroun 1913). 'Much more than in football or basketball,' Philip Dine observes, 'we find in rugby this idea of a territory to be defended, which is exacerbated by the violence of the physical contact involved.' (2001; 10, fn. 30) Regarded as 'France's first modern team game', according to Dine (2001: 6),[20] able to 'make men' (Nauright and Chandler 1996), rugby became a new genre for some artists at the 'official salons', as illustrated by Octave Guillonet's exhibition of his two 10 metre long paintings, *Scène de rugby,* at the 1899 'Salon des Artistes Français' (Brauer 2013).[21] Yet it was not until some ten years later that this game became a modernist subject exhibited at the avant-garde salons when the 54 year-old Douanier, Henri Rousseau, exhibited his *Joueurs de football* at the 1908 'Salon des Artistes Indépendants' (Fig. 6) (Brauer 2013) Depicting two rugby teams, the player fending off an attack by the orange-and-white team to catch the ball appears to be a much younger Rousseau or indeed Coubertin with his finely waxed moustache. Dressed in the blue-and-white Racing Club de France colours, he and his team appear to be playing near their headquarters in the wooded Bois de Bologne. Yet despite the virilization of French men associated with this game, Rousseau's players hieratically disposed in a manicured forest appear relatively effeminate. Seeming to perform what Pascal Rousseau calls 'a eurythmic ballet of gestures', which *Gil Blas* senior art critic*,* Louis Vauxcelles, called 'hilarious', Pascal Rousseau points out that nevertheless this painting epitomizes 'the taste of the epoque for the strong sensations of modern games and their vitalist significations' (2019: 152). None seemed to

[20] For Fred Inglis, it is the overlap between art and sport in the popular culture sphere that helps to explain the deeper significance of the seemingly trivial. 'No examination of rugby in France would be complete without a consideration of its festive dimension, with all that this term implies in the way of a 'carnivalesque' celebration of excess.' (cited by Dine 2001: 8-9)

[21] Commissioned by the Association des élèves des Lakanal, it was installed as a fresco in the Lycée Lakanal.

capture this more so than the virilized bodies and rugby dynamism by the so-called 'Salon' Cubists, Gleizes, Delaunay and Lhote for whom rugby epitomized the vitalism of modern life (Rousseau 2019: 151).

'Strong Sensations' and 'Vitalist Significations': Delaunay's *L'Equipe de Cardiff* and Gleizes' *Les Joueurs de football*

More than any local game of rugby, international matches drew huge crowds. In 1912, 20,000 spectators swarmed to the game of France playing Ireland at the Vélodrome. On 1 January 1913 when France played Scotland, 24,000 packed the stadium – most in anticipation of France achieving another victory over the Scottish fifteen achieved two years earlier when France reportedly stunned the rugby world with its 16 points to 15 defeat at the Stade de Colombes. Since this had been France's only international victory, there was huge pressure upon vindicating its flailing prowess with another. Yet while France reportedly played well on this New Year's Day, particularly in the second half, as indicated by the cartoon, *Ecosse-France* (Fig. 7), they lacked the tactical skills of the Scots. As the Scots slowly but surely secured a twenty-one points to three lead, the referee James 'Bim' Baxter – a former international rugby player for England – frequently penalised the French. As the score began to rise so tempers began to fray. Increasingly Baxter's whistle became drowned out by the derision of French spectators. When the final whistle blew, they stormed the pitch, as indicated by the stampede depicted in the final scene of the cartoon. (Fig. 7) While some Scots were battered with flying stones, Baxter was physically assaulted. Despite this violent hooliganism and the need for police intervention followed by the Scottish severance of all sporting relations with France thereafter, 'l'Affaire Baxter' – as it became known – the French fervour for rugby remained undiminished. With a million French registered in football clubs by 1913, Georges Leroy perceptively concluded, 'il semble que le côté émotional du rugby a joué un très grand role' (1913: 371).

At this polemical moment, Delaunay appears to have launched into research for his painting series, *L'Équipe de Cardiff* (Fig. 8), finding that the Cardiff rugby team had travelled to Paris regularly in 1911 and 1912 to play French teams and was esteemed as remarkably robust by the French sports press. Winner of eleven international matches, on 20 February1912, *Le Journal* had predicted that the Cardiff Team were so strong that although the French team, Stade Français, may be able to marshal a robust defence against their strident attack, they did not stand

a chance of beating them.[22] By no means an isolated observation, apprehension over the relative inferiority of French rugby teams was regularly aired. Immediately Delaunay seems to have cut out a photograph of the 'Toulousains à Paris' from the 18 January 1913 issue of *La Vie au Grand Air* illustrating the match between Stade Toulousain and Sporting club universitaire de France (SCUF) (Fig. 9). By no means the only avant-garde exhibitor to draw upon a newspaper photograph of a significant rugby match, Albert Gleizes appropriated the newspaper photograph of Cyril Lowe being tackled by Jacques Dedet in the 1913 France-England match (Fig. 10) to form the central focus of his painting, *Les Joueurs de football* (Fig. 11). The dramatic lurch by Lowe with the oval ball seems to have been reworked by Gleizes to form his tense moment of denouement when one of the blue jersey team players – possibly a member of the Stade Français team according to Bernard Vere (2018: 98) – appears able to break away from the gold jerseyed opposition in order to score a try. Yet with a gold team player seeming hot on his heals, a tackle appears imminent.

Over the photograph published in *La Vie au Grand Air* indicated in Fig. 9, Delaunay seems to have begun to draw, with a ruler, the letter 'A' on its background, a rectangle above it with an arc on the right flanked by a series of rectangles.[23] In his second and third versions, Delaunay added an advertising hoarding with what appears to be his own name. Delaunay then seems to have followed the publicity surrounding the rugby match to be played at the Parc des Princes on 28 February 1913 between France and Wales entitled *L'Equipe de Cardiff*. Following the Welsh win by 11 to 8, with their team, not the French, hailed on the cover of the March edition of *La Vie au Grand Air* as the 'masters of rugby', Delaunay could hardly have failed to perceive how another humiliating defeat would wound the French ego and make France appear as an inferior biopower, not measuring up to the superpowers (Fefèvre 1912). 'Une fois de plus', as Pascal Rousseau succinctly surmises, 'le match ravive l'obsession d'une infériorité des Français face aux Anglo-Saxons.' (2019: 146) This obsession, harking back to Coubertin's

[22] 'Stade Français contre Cardiff F.C., La Vie Sportive', *Le Journal,* 20 February 1912, 5: 'Cardiff nous envoie sa toute première équipe, celle qui est actuellement en tête du championnat gallois et qui comprend onzeinternationaux. […] Le équipe stadiste […] ne peut pas gagner, mais peut néanmoins opposer aux Gallois une bonne defense, coupée souvent d'attaques perçantes et dangereuses.'

[23] Vere points out that Delaunay was working on the first version of the painting before this issue of *La Vie au Grand Air* was published. Given its exhibition with the title, *L'Equipe de Cardiff. Esquisse. 1912-1913,* at *Der Sturm* Gallery in Berlin, opening on 17 January 1912, Vere deduces that Delaunay must have begun working on it before the end of the previous year. He also deduces that Delaunay reworked his *Esquisse* after this exhibition in 1912.

concerns continually aired after his visits to English colleges, particularly Rugby, had been voiced as early as 1890 by Edouard Maneuvrier on the front page of *Les Sports athlétiques.* 'It has made us see', wrote the journalist, 'how much the Anglo-Saxon race has surpassed us in all social works that issue from will-power and action. The irrefutable figures testify to our inferiority in industry, commerce, merchant marines, colonial enterprises, etc. Each day we lose terrain.' (Maneuvrier 1890) This may be why in the same issue of *La Vie au Grand Air* was an article counterbalancing this humiliation. Entitled 'Le peuple français aviateur', it pointed out that never had any sport succeeded in crossing the world in the way French aviators had done. This counter-balancing strategy appears seminal to the simultaneous iconography at play in Delaunay's final painting exhibited at the 1913 'Salon des Artists Indépendants' (Fig. 8).

Unlike Metzinger's *Au Vélodrome* (Fig. 5) in which crowds figure prominently in the Bergsonian flux and durée of this climactic moment and unlike the grand-stand of spectators outlined in Gleizes' painting, *Les Joueurs de football* (Fig. 11), Delaunay's spectators are conspicuously absent within all three paintings, especially in his final painting, as can be recognised in Fig. 8. Instead we, the beholders, are positioned as the spectators of this dynamic experience. In all three large canvases, Delaunay chose to depict the moment of anticipatory energy and heightened tension when action has just resumed - the lineout. After the touch and quick throw, both rugby teams appear to be positioned on the playing field in readiness distinguished by the colours: the blue and white stripes of the SCUF jerseys and the black with purple shorts of the Stade Toulousain – extracted by Delaunay from *La Vie au Grand Air* –, not the colours of the Cardiff team. The dynamic movement of one monumental figure ascending in the line-out is enhanced by the spiral axis of the composition in the painting at the 1913 'Salon des Artistes Indépendants' (Fig. 8). The beholder's gaze is then swirled from the black and blue-and-white shirted players on the lower left disposed in a respectable gap from the throw, around to the referee in red-orange on guard on the right – depicted from behind with arms apart and body posture alert to any breaches of the Rugby Code that may require the extraction of penalties. As Delaunay's coloured planes of simultaneously contrasting primary and secondary colour seem to swirl around his body, they direct the beholder's gaze up towards the moment of denouement in the match – the tallest rugby 'jumper' in black and purple leaping unaided far

above his rivals to catch the ball.[24] While this figure was literally traced by Delaunay from the photograph in *La Vie au Grand Air* onto his canvas, others in this painting, as well as the modern motifs, seem to have been also drawn from the mass media and popular culture (Rousseau 2019: 146). Although Gleizes seems to have extracted his central figure and others from the popular sports media (Fig. 10), possibly mediated by his close friend and brother-in-law, the occasional sports commentator, Jacques Nayral – whose Cubistic portrait Gleizes had painted and exhibited two years earlier – there are significant differences between their compositions.[25]

By comparison to Gleizes' regimentation of his players into a grounded battalion to signify their collective force (Fig. 11), Delaunay's figures appear relatively individualized and airborne With the climax encapsulated by his figure in-flight, Delaunay appears to have already conceived of the rhythmic movements of rugby as a ballet that could be choreographed before his collaboration four years later with the Ballet Russes dancer, Léonide Massine, on the project called *Football* (Danto 2014; Rousseau 2019: 164).[26] While the facial features in Gleizes' painting are relatively individualized by comparison to those by Delaunay, his bodies are less distinct. Consistent with Gleizes involvement with the communist collective of artists, the Abbaye de Créteil, inspired by Jules Romain's philosophy of *Unanimisme,* his rugby team appears composed of autonomous individuals, each distinctive but with aptitudes seemingly able to unite them as a dynamic collective body into an 'élan unanime' – the very 'team' model proselytized by both Coubertin and Romaine for French industrial and social reform (Brooke 2001: 9-11).[27] As Pascal Rousseau observes, 'Gleizes dépeint l'esprit de corps: Delaunay préfère l'esprit de touche' (2019: 165).

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[24] According to the World Rugby Rules, a line-out code is generally deployed by teams to ensure that all their players know what is planned, who the ball will be thrown to, what that player will do with it, and what follow-up play is intended. One player from the throwing team is usually designated to shout the code, and it is particularly important that the thrower should know what the code is, so that he can execute the throw as intended.

[25] A pseudonym for Joseph Houot, Nayral married Gleizes' sister, Mireille Gleizes, in 1913. Author and dramatist, Nayral was also editor-in-chief of the publishing house, Eugène Figuière, which published Gleizes and Metzinger's *Du Cubisme* in 1912. To draw his portrait from his experiences of Nayral, Gleizes stressed a process of 'arming my memory with essential characteristics'.

[26] During 1917-1918, Robert Delaunay provided gouache sketched of the décor for this project with Léonide de Massine and the Spanish composer, Manuel de Falla. On Stravinsky introducing Massine to Ravel, he recalls: 'For a long time we discussed the idea, suggested to me by the painting of Robert Delaunay, of showing a football match by means of choreography. Positions, movements, the rhythm and the virtuosity of sport, according to him, was not hard to turn into forms of contemporary ballet. I was also interested in the image of the ball flying from one group of dancers to another, and agreed, that this subject would be very fitting for creating new, various movements and combinations.'

[27] Brooke points out that Gleizes was the most committed member to the Abbeil de Créteil, 'the first to arrive and the last to leave', calling it in 1918 'a communist experiment' and acknowledging it as a precedent to Moly Sabata.

This distinction is also embodied by Delaunay's depiction of the aspiring rugby player detached from his team to leap for the ball – an 'heroically' constructed action, according to Apollinaire, that may signify Nietzsche's 'overman', incited by Delaunay's relationship with Franz Marc and August Macke, and the concept of Nietzschean vitalism.[28] Its Nietzschean significations seem to be compounded by the football. While Gleizes' football seems embedded amidst the players as a signifier of their mobility as well as their vitalist collective rhythm as a team, Delaunay's football appears caught in flight, isolated from the players and illuminated against the sky. Half-sun, half-moon, it summons up the astral forms that Delaunay was creating simultaneously in Spring 1913 with his *Formes circulaires* of the sun and moon (Rousseau 2019: 165) (Fig. 12). Hence while the union of players in Gleizes' painting is designed to convey the vitalism of a group dynamic acclaimed by Coubertin, Delaunay's leaping figure and astralized football acts as a vitalist Nietzschean affirmation of the heroic individual, if not the self, as signified by such autoreferential indices to Delaunay's surname in capital letters on the green advertising hoarding directly below the Eiffel Tower (Fig. 8).

By 1913, such rugby matches were played in the same place as Metzinger's cycling championship – at the Stade Vélodrome of the Parc des Princes in the 16th arrondissement south-west of Paris (Fig. 5). Even the iron bridge in Gleizes' painting (Fig. 11), appearing like the one over the Seine at Passy, signifies that it is at the home-ground of the Stade Français, not by the Champ de Mars, as signified by Delaunay's juxtaposition of the Eiffel Tower with the Ferris wheel (Fig. 8). Yet while the arc of the Eiffel Tower, echoed by the Ferris wheel, circumscribe a bright light halo around the prized, hand-sewn leather oval ball, they also locate the game of rugby at the modern heart of Paris.[29] As distinct from the garden park framing Rousseau's rugby

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While closed by the end of 1908, Brooke points out that the group remained in close contact, even being accused by *L'Action Française* in the 1920s of preparing France for Bolshevism. See also Rousseau (2019: 165).

[28] After Franz Marc visited Robert Delaunay in his studio on 2 October 1912, they regularly corresponded, inviting Delaunay to exhibit in *Der Sturm* in September 1913 where he showed 21 artworks. For Marc's adaptation of Nietzsche's 'Übermensch' – 'the overman' - to his theory of what he called 'the higher type' of animal able to abandon the crowd mentality, see Levine 1976 and Reinhart 2013. A triangle motif is also employed in both Nietzsche's and Wassily Kandinsky's writings to demonstrate how an escape from the masses (represented by the narrowing walls of the triangle as it moves away from its wide base) eventually leads to the pinnacle of individuality (the triangle's narrowest point). In his book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912), Kandinsky suggests that, often, only one man will occupy his pinnacle.

[29] The size and shape of the ball was not written into the rules until 1892, when it was determined as follows: Length 11 to 11 1/4 inches; circumference (end on) 30 to 31 inches; circumference (in width) 25 1/2 to 26 inches; weight: 12 to 13 ounces; hand sewn with not less than 8 stitches to the inch. In 1892 the Rugby Football Union endorsed ovalness as the compulsory shape.

players (Fig. 6) locating it at one of the parcs on the periphery of Paris, Delaunay's inclusion of modern motifs locates this match at its centre (Fig. 8). Following Delaunay's experience of posters and billboards at the stadiums in which strident colour was deployed to attract immediate attention, Delaunay's insertion of a billboard for the French manufacturer of airplanes, balloons, and dirigible airships founded in 1908, is conveyed in the simultaneous rhythmic pulsations and vibrations of colour derived from Charles Henry's *Cercle Chromatique* applied like the strident chromatic models used in posters. With its name, ASTRA, depicted in strident vermillion red capitals on the cadmium yellow rectangle directly parallel with the picture plane – below which are faintly sketched the words "Sciété Constru Aerop" – the billboard optically projects from the canvas like a punch in the eye replicating the simultaneous vitalist sensations experienced by spectators in the stadium. Directly above, the biplane – a Wright flyer developed by the Wright brothers – trailing triangulated clouds appears to be flying through a vermillion coloured Ferris wheel, by the Eiffel Tower to signify Louis Blériot's pioneering flight across the English Channel, the subject of Delaunay's painting the following year. Given the intensity of energy in the green rectangle with Delaunay's name above the word Paris, the name of the artist appears to be announced with as much vibrancy as the name of the companies sponsoring this Rugby Game. As Delaunay explained in an essay written in 1924:

> The surface of the painting is living and simultaneous; the whole of the painting is an ensemble of rhythms. The modern elements, the poster, the *Grande Roue*, *La Tour*, take part in the football game, [as do] the bodies which weave together in life. Their relative space, their movement are a part of the general movement of the painting – not dead and descriptive parts which atrophy the breath of life yielded by the larger vision of the work (1957: 63).

Quick to seize upon these significations, at the 1913 'Salon des Artistes Indépendants' Apollinaire singled out *L'Equipe de Cardiff* as 'the most modern painting of the Salon' (Apollinaire 1913).

From these perspectives, *L'Équipe de Cardiff* may be viewed as simultaneously vitalist. It was not just vitalist in Delaunay's choice of this vitalizing subject, but in the moment of denouement depicted during 'le combat dynamogénique de l'Equipe de Cardiff' where the

Nietzschean overman soars above all others. It was also vitalist in the location of this rugby match within the cultural, scientific and technological heart of France. Additionally, Delaunay's juxtapositions of saturated primary and secondary colours to ensure they would vibrate against one another conveyed what Pascal Rousseau calls 'cette esthétique vitaliste' (2019: 157). In his choice of colours for the jerseys, the prominent blue and white stripes with white culottes instead of the blacks and whites in the photograph, played off against the red and oranges of the referee's uniform, a battle of colour emblems ensues signalling the vitalist energy and psychological fortitude of Coubertin's 'psychologie du costume sportif'. As Coubertin explained, 'il est hors de doute que l'uniforme incite à la vaillance et – hors du combat – inspire et facilité les attitudes viriles et les allures martials.' (Coubertin 1913: 81)[30] This vitalist energy could also be accommodated within the contemporary aesthetic trend identified by Delaunay's friend, the poet Nicolas Beauduin, as 'great virile creations of audacious joy' (Muller and Picard 1913: 34). At the same time, *la vie sportive* and rugby were also referenced by Picasso in his Cubist pasted-paper although their significations substantially differed from those of Delaunay and Gleizes. However, they appear uncannily analogous to the paintings of André Lhote.

'The Grand Match': Picasso, Lhote, Sport and the First World War

From 1902, *la vie sportive* became a major feature in the high-circulation daily newspapers, many allocating as much as a quarter of their entire space to sport. Most notable amongst them was *Le Journal,* the newspaper that Picasso selected for its coverage of *la vie sportive* on 5 December 1912. One of the great centrist newspapers, *Le Journal* was venerated by those Louis Vauxcelles called, after Karl Marx, '*la bourgeoisie manqué*' - the pseudo-bourgeoisie. Never disturbing its readership with strong emotions, nor displeasing them with extreme opinions*,* it was able to act as, in Madeleine Rebérioux's words, 'the regulator of collective passions […] handing on stereotypes, models to integrate people in society.' (1975: 87) Like *Le Figaro, Le Matin* and *Le Temps, Le Journal* cultivated an exclusive rather than extensive circulation positioning itself above the sordid fray of politics, while discreetly supporting the Alliance Démocratique (Lejeune 1991: 53).[31] When its leader, Raymond

[30] He adds 'on s'habille pour se livrer à un exercice violent' (1913: 83) and explains how particular sportswear or uniforms act as a kind of 'preface' able to attune the players to the muscular action that they shall need to deploy (86).
[31] Dominique Lejeune stresses the importance of these newspapers to the success of the Alliance Démocratique.

Poincaré, formed a Ministry on 12 January 1912 and beat both Radical and Socialist candidates in the presidential elections on 17 January 1913, no longer did *Le Journal* cloak its allegiances. 'It is not the victory of a man or a party', *Le Journal* crowed. 'It is the victory of the national idea.' (Dhur 1913) This 'national idea' entailed the remilitarization of France through the offensive military strategy developed by Marshal Joffre during the 1911 Morocco Crisis and elaborated by Poincaré into Plan XVII. Although presented as crucial to national defence, Plan XVII entailed preparing France for its own offensive war against Germany through renegotiation of the Franco-Russian Alliance, accelerating armament manufacture, increasing conscription, and ensuring the nation was fit for warfare through *la vie sportive*.[32] So important did *la vie sportive* become to *Le Journal* that it not only encompassed an entire page but became front-page news, 'a fine match being worth as much as a crime' (Seidler 1964: 69). Yet like the turn-of-the-century journal, *Almanach des Sports*, its coverage of team sports in *la vie sportive* was, as Eugen Weber points out, invariably conveyed as a 'veritable little war, with its necessary discipline and its way of getting participants accustomed to danger and blows.' (Weber 1986: 224) During the Balkan Wars, the increasingly explicit militaristic orientation of *la vie sportive* in high-circulation newspapers was due not only to its relationship to sportive nationalism but also to sporting militarization, as is evident by the article from *Le Journal* on 6 December 1912 that Picasso chose to invert for his *Compotier avec fruits, violon et verre (Bowl with Fruit, Violin and Glass)* (Fig. 13).

In the first column of this feature are reports on the races at Auteuil and the prize-winners, followed by an announcement of the motor race, *Le Foire Automobile*. The third column consists of a 'modern' ice-skating event to be held at the Palais du Glaces featuring the young Norwegian ice-skating world champion, Oscar Mathieson. This is followed by news of the rugby match won by Afrikaners against Ulster by 10 points to 9. The next item highlights an international soccer match to be played between Paris and London teams on the following Sunday at Saint-Ouen, followed by the results of the interscholastic athletic and soccer championships between the École Normale and Lycée St-Louis. Within this pasted paper, these feats seem to be complemented by Picasso's inclusion of chromolithographed botanical prints of

[32] Harvey Goldberg points out that this campaign to remilitarize was also a means of aligning the *Poincaristes* with the armaments industry, particularly the 'Syndicat des constructeurs de navires', the 'Syndicat des fabricants et constructeurs de matériel de guerre' and the trusts of some thirty-five companies, including Schneider's *Société du Creusot.* See Goldberg (1962: 441, note 66).

an apple, pear and quince to signify the rational, nourishing diet recommended to sustain *la vie sportive*. Yet while the athleticization of France through *la vie sportive* is conveyed, so is its militarization.

To quell anxiety over French masculinity and its military prowess, French rugby had been heroized by politicians and the French press as a signification of the nation's preparedness for war, particularly through acts of bravery. As Eugen Weber surmises, 'the birth of the sporting movement in France was incontestably marked by the political context of militarism.' (1998: 22). The militarization of *la vie sportive* is evident in the second column in Picasso's collage, particularly the part that has been most scribbled over in black chalk. The first entry in this column refers to the subscription organized by the Aeronautic Military Association to commemorate Colonel Renard who had died on the military terrain of Chalais-Nebdou. It is followed by the series of lectures on aviation to be given by the popular aviator, Jules Védrines, at the 'Universitaire Aerodromme du France', the Aéro Club, Saint-Denis, Lausanne and Grenoble. In the next column entitled *Les futurs pilotes militaires,* the training of future military pilots to be undertaken by ninety-nine officers, sub-officers and future aviators from all over France is highlighted, particularly their three-week theoretical course on aviation at Versailles and their visits to factories manufacturing planes and aviation engines. Concluding with the 1,890 metre 'brevet militaires' successfully undertaken by Lieutenant Bresson and Chief Pilot Parnardin at the Champagne aerodrome, these reports convey the rapid militarization of the Radical Republic as it had transpired from the time Poincaré became President and the Bill for increasing military conscription was drafted with physical education, rugby and association football posited as imperative to military training. (In fact, during the Great War, both French rugby and football continued to be played (Waquet and Vincent 2012)). This may be why this part of the article is the most defaced by the committed pacifist, Picasso. As the sporting journalist, Georges Rozet, pointed out, French men were dutifully building their strength through rugby albeit recognizing that the greatest test awaiting them was 'The Grand Match' (Rozet 1012|) No sooner was war announced on 3 August 1914 than Rozet declared that they would be put to the test in 'The Grand Match of War' by defying 'these Prussian bastards' (Rozet 1912). Given the conception of war as an international football match equivalent to the 1916 Olympic Games with good soldiers aligned with good sportsmen, it is not altogether surprising to find that rugby did not cease with the outbreak of the Great War (Deçoin 1916, cited by Vere 2018: 102-

103). Organized in the name of the war effort, soccer and rugby events actually increased, being played not only between the French army teams but also between them and the Allied armed forces (Waquet and Vincent 2012: 52-53).

Progressively the French army granted free sports period when rugby and soccer could be played between French inter-army teams and in Inter-Allied matches on fields alongside the military camps. On the day of the matches, crowds of around 2,000 would gather around the pitch and sing the Marseillaise as the French team ran onto it and God Save the Queen if a France versus Britain match. The magazine *Sporting* reported on 10 November 1915 that, after concluding the match with a cup of tea, 'the English and French bade each other farewell, adding "see you soon" as a sign that a further match was to come. Back at the camp […] not a word was spoken. Nearby cannons roared.' (cited by Waquet and Vincent 2012: 56) These games were boosted from 1917 when General Pétain became Head of the French army command for northern and eastern France. While the Ministry of War ordered 5,000 soccer and rugby balls, a military sports congress was organized, sports grounds established and 'war clubs' initiated to organize Inter-Allies tournaments culminating in the rugby match between Lucrétia and the Anzac team at the Parc des Princes velodrome on 21 January 1917 watched by a crowd of 5,000. 'With France still in a state of war', conclude Waquet and Vincent, 'military rugby asserted itself over rugby in clubs and federal rugby.' (2012: 71) It was during the Great War that Lhote repeatedly painted scenes of rugby.

Supportive of the 'Club Sportif de la Jeunesse Littéraire' created by Jacques Rivière and Alain Fournier in 1913, Lhote was, like them, an ardent proponent of rugby. He was also partisan of Cubism as a 'modern classicism' continuing the classical values of reason, clarity and objectivity embodied by the French Renaissance and seemingly unpolluted by alien cultures (Lee 1993: 87). Drafted into the army on the outbreak of war and stationed in his native Bordeaux, from his discharge in 1917 Lhote created a series of 'modern classical' Cubist paintings depicting rugby. Like Delaunay's subject, Lhote's *Les Joueurs de Rugby* (Fig. 14) represents a lineout. Unlike Delaunay's compositional helix continually swirling the beholder's gaze around the earth-bound action into aerial space composed like his disks (Fig. 12), Lhote's composition of geometrical ordered, symmetrically aligned planes appears, as Vere observes, 'strictly and classically governed' (Vere 2018: 100). Even though three diagonal shafts from the lower left to the upper right intercept these planes, the equilateral triangles that they form

accentuate rather than disrupt the pictorial symmetry, just, as they do in Nicolas Poussin's severely classical paintings. Dramatically strategic, the diagonal incepted at the golden section of the bottom edge of Lhote's painting and reiterated across the composition leads the beholder's gaze to the moment of denouement: The upward surging brown shirted rugby player reaching the ball. Such a dynamic impact has this vitalist gesture that it seems to ricochet across the rugby field, as signified by its fan-like reticulation across the picture plane. Nevertheless, unlike the vitalist Nietzschean individualism highlighted by Delaunay, Lhote's player soaring upwards seems to arise from a supportive pyramid formed by those in earthy brown and white striped shirts seeming to blend into each other as the embodiment of teamwork in this team-sport.

Unlike Delaunay's brassy billboards, the only comparable sign on Lhote's painting is a modest placard with the letters 'EVENE' above the number 12. Short for 'évènement', it announces the date of the game on the playing grounds near the battle fields of Amiens, Lille, Verdun or the Somme. Unlike the pulsating and vibrating opticality of Delaunay's simultaneous contrasts of primary and secondary colours, Lhote's palette seems relatively muted capturing what Christopher Green calls his 'nature-based version of Cubism' fitted into 'a reassuringly nationalist view of tradition' (Green 1987: 65). Restricted to khaki greens alongside organic burnt-siennas and earthly ochres seemingly textured with sand-grains from the land itself, Lhote's tertiary colour scheme integrates the Great War soldiers as rugby players with the terrain on which they were fighting and in which they would have lived for months on end in trenches. Unlike the light against which Delaunay's ball is glimpsed taking flight, like an asteroid, the rugby ball in Lhote's painting is juxtaposed by a black cloud amidst a violet sky – an ominous signifier of the noxious explosions and chemical warfare captured at Verdun by Félix Vallotton, amongst other avant-garde artists, in which rugby would have been played alongside the battle fields. Opposed to the seemingly vacuous experimentation and relatively hedonistic representation undertaken by Gleizes, Metzinger and Delaunay, as Lhote explained in *Totalisme,* he had sought to capture the 'severity of the times' (Lhote 1916). This entailed commemorating those who played rugby on the battlefields as those who were risking their lives for their country.

For preparing French soldiers for war and invigorating them during the First World War, *la vie sportive* was hailed, as it was for endeavouring to end 'universal neurosis', enhance virility, generate vigour and ensure that France would not perish as a superpower. Within this bioculture, the experimentation by Delaunay, Gleizes, Metzinger, Lhote and Picabia with vibrant

chromatic juxtapositions and strong simultaneous sensations synchronized with dynamic sporting spectacles within modern space-time, may be perceived as a biocultural strategy of regenerating the nation by vitalizing and energizing their beholders. As indicated earlier, they regarded their vitalist conceptions of Cubism as capable of jolting the beholder out of passivity and into the pulsating rhythms of the new biocultures in modern life. Yet while modern sports played an integral role in the battles fought on the fields of France, they were the subject of internecine battles. Fought between diverse proponents of athleticism, physical culture, physical education, military sports and rugby, these were uncannily conveyed by these avant-garde artists (Cooper 1991). In the very year that Coubertin had proselytized *L'éducation en Angleterre,* the 'Union des Sociétés français de sport athlétique' (U.S.F.S.A.) had been formed while Philippe Tissié founded 'Ligue Nationale de l'education physiqu'e. Not only was Tissié vehemently opposed to the 'rational' physical culture of Desbonnet but also the 'English brutality' he considered to be embodied by Rugby. So incensed by Coubertin's 'Comités pour la propagation des exercises physique' was Pascale Grousset, co-founder of the 'Ligue Nationale de l'Éducation Physique', that he accused Coubertin of treason. Following Charles Maurras of *L'Action Française,* he denounced Coubertin as an Anglophile who blindly defended Thomas Arnold's philosophy and 'sporting internationalism' against the sporting heritage of France seemingly embodied by tennis, treasured by *Sports et jeux d'exercice dans l'ancienne France*.[33] Galvanized by Paul Déroulède's 'Ligue des Patriots' and the quest for 'revanche' as a national duty, two years after physical education became compulsory in French schools, the militarily trained 'batallions scolaires' emerged followed by shooting competitions organized by Déroulède out of which arose the 'Union des Sociétés de Tir de France'. When Déroulède and Grousset denounced Coubertin's project of the Olympic Games, while others jeered at it, Coubertin maintained: 'Let us export our fencers, our runners, our rowers to other lands, for therein lies the future, and the day we do it the cause of peace will have received a strong and vital ally.'[34]

When Grousset's method was elaborated by the 'natural method' of Lieutenant Hébert, young men were to be trained in natural environments to pursue military strategies – not Coubertin's Olympic Games or the Tour de France which were dismissed as being 'without

[33] Marcelin Berthelot co-founded of the 'Ligue Nationale de l'Éducation Physique'.
[34] This was part of Baron Pierre de Coubertin's first public proposal to resurrect the Olympic Games, on 25 November 1892 at the Sorbonne.

educative value'. Hébert was also vehemently opposed to modern sport becoming a popular culture spectacle, particularly through such sporting journals as *La Vie au Grand Air*. On the eve of war, Henri Massis, writing under the pseudonym of Agathon, maintained: 'Sport calls for endurance and sangfroid, the military virtues, and it keeps youth in a warlike frame of mind.' (Ferro 1973: 15) Due to their antithetical nature, these sporting philosophies opposed one another, the first modelled on the gymnast being normative and overtly militarist, the second defended by Coubertin, premised upon the Anglo-Saxon model of collective sports and individual liberty. Even the strong proponent of Coubertin's Anglo-Saxon methods, Jules Simon, defended a model of physical education that was far more virile and *revanchard,* consistent with the 'batallions scolaires'. As Pascal Rousseau succinctly surmises: 'La "gymnastique militaire" représente l'ordre établi, la mécanique sociale: les sports athlétiques illustrent plutôt l'initiative personnelle dans la groupe, la culture des échanges, du commerce.' (2019: 186) Within this battle, the choice of sporting subjects made by Picasso, Delaunay, Gleizes, Metzinger and Lhote and particularly their treatment of them was not just biocultural but biopolitical. Located within a Modernist culture of negation, Picasso's parodic sketches of Apollinaire and *La Culture Physique,* his inversion of *la vie sportive,* his defacing of its military sporting events, as well as of *Le Journal*'s front-page article of the 'Congrès International de l'Éducation Physique' and its Exhibition, signifies his scepticism of the benefits to be purportedly reaped by physical culture, physical education, rugby and soccer – if not his downright disillusionment. By contrast, the choices made by Delaunay, Gleizes, Metzinger and Lhote signify their affirmation of cycling and rugby, their internationalism, their popularity, the huge numbers of spectators they attracted and their equivalence to the excitement and sensations generated by the Eiffel Tower, the Roue and aeroplanes although, as this chapter has endeavoured to illuminate, their treatment of them also reveals their subtle biopolitical differences.

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