
Loftus as Afrikaner heterotopia: The life world of rugbymentality¹

Charles Villet

Abstract

The aim of this article is to explore the nature of contemporary Afrikaner identity philosophically through the *topos* of Loftus and the game, the spectacle, and the experience of rugby. I suggest that Loftus Versfeld stadium in Pretoria is a heterotopia for many Afrikaners. The concept of heterotopia, as suggested by Foucault, represents a place where the ideas of utopia and dystopia exist alongside each other. An analysis of Loftus as heterotopia offers a number of novel insights about the place (both physical and mental) that the stadium represents. Loftus acts as a mirror to the lifeworld of Afrikaners, termed here as so-called 'rugbymentality': Loftus reveals that Afrikaners have moved economically beyond apartheid, but that their political voice has become almost insignificant. Loftus represents the expression of this economic advancement with simultaneous political regression. The result is an invented tradition and postcolonial nostalgia that reveal what it means to be an Afrikaner. Loftus and rugbymentality function as the attempt by Afrikaners either to insulate themselves (*laertrek*) from post-apartheid South Africa, or to become part of the cultural mosaic of South Africa, which could both be expressed through achieving excellence in rugby.

Key words: Afrikaners; Blue Bulls; Foucault; heterotopia; Loftus Versfeld Stadium; rugby

Introduction

Pretoria has been at the centre of governmentality in South Africa during the apartheid era and after. The privilege of this governmentality has shifted from Afrikanerdom to the current ANC-government. The spaces within which Afrikaners have power changed since 1994 and they have been disenfranchised within the political sphere but still remain an economically affluent group. Many sites of significance for Afrikanerdom remain in Pretoria and are found virtually within the shadow of the Union Building where the government resides: *Affies* (the famous secondary schools for boys and girls), *Tukkies* (the University of Pretoria) and the Loftus Versfeld rugby stadium with the Pretoria East Dutch Reformed Church (*Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk*) just across the road. This is probably the most significant Afrikaner neighbourhood in the country. Here one finds in close proximity three of the 'encircling influences' identified by Jansen (2009:70-79), which facilitate the transmission of knowledge across Afrikaner generations, namely school, church and rugby. The role of rugby as a source of knowledge for the identity of Afrikaners is what is at issue in this article, and one of the most prominent rugby symbols in the country is Loftus.

Loftus (Figure 1) is a landmark in Pretoria and a monument to rugby and Afrikanerdom. It might only have been a coincidence, but the establishment of the Northern



Figure 1: Loftus, archive photo, 1991 (Gallo Images)

Transvaal Rugby Union (now the Blue Bulls Company) in 1938 took place in the same year that the centenary of the Great Trek was celebrated with much fanfare by Afrikaners across the whole country.² Loftus came to be the home of the so-called Blue Bulls right from the start, albeit in different reincarnations as each of the pavilions were rebuilt over the years. In a sense it is one of few contemporary public spaces where Afrikaners are still in power. The symbols of the Blue Bulls and the Springboks are an integral part of the daily life of many Afrikaners and their culture. The Bulls and the Boks bring to mind the image of big, burly Afrikaner men (Figure 2) who are not to be messed with.³ These rugby players have become prime role models for many Afrikaners. According to Grundlingh (1995c:118), rugby has contributed to the 'common consciousness' of Afrikaners since the early days of apartheid. Rugby plays a central role in the knowledge and history of self that Afrikaners develop as a group, what Gaffney

and Bale (2004:35) call the 'construction of collective history'. Loftus is a stadium where this takes place and the lifeworld of Loftus provides Afrikaners with a sense of belonging to a group. One could (following Gaffney & Bale 2004:34-35) even say that Loftus is almost a 'sacred place' that carries a sense of 'religiosity' for some Afrikaners and that a visit to Loftus is a kind of 'pilgrimage' for fans. Many sport stadia across the globe carry these meanings in the lives of fans because sport is the culture of the masses – although there are interesting variations in intensity and character (Black & Nauright 1998:1).

In this article I turn to the 'intensity' of rugby in the lives of Afrikaners because it carries more weight in their culture than simply being the proverbial opium of the masses. The main concern in this article is to look at the spectators of Loftus and conceptualise an attitude of so-called 'rugbymentality'. This mentality

provides a certain experience for many Afrikaners of their life world. This article will investigate rugbymentality through the Foucauldian lens of 'heterotopia', which would help to put into perspective the significance of rugby and Loftus in the lives of Afrikaners.

What is rugbymentality?

The idea of 'rugbymentality' brings to mind Foucault's idea of *governmentality*. For Foucault (2002a:219-220), the idea of governmentality has to do with a complex form of power which could be more broadly understood as power of an administrative and bureaucratic kind which is exercised through the government. This form of power concerns the control of three important aspects: A target population, the key knowledge of political economy, and apparatuses of security. Afrikaners had control of each of these aspects during the apartheid era: The target population of black South Africans, the key knowledge of Christian nationalism as guiding principle for governance, and the apparatuses of the police and the armed forces keeping the target population in place. Governmentality was thus the privilege of Afrikaners to wield, but there has been an obvious shift for Afrikaners away from governmentality after apartheid. The question is: through what form of knowledge or mentality do they now assert their knowledge? My answer would be that at a substantial proportion of Afrikaners form their identities through so-called rugbymentality. Rugby and arts festivals are the two encircling influences that, according to Jansen (2009:73-75, 77-78), have probably grown most in importance in the post-apartheid era as forms of knowledge that help Afrikaners to forge identities.

'Rugbymentality' is obviously a play on words – on 'governmentality'. This play is quite deliberate because it demonstrates a shift in the position of power that Afri-

kaners experienced, from the space of the government during apartheid to the narrow place of the rugby field in the twenty-first century. Their say in the civil service has become negligible (Giliomee 2009:701), but on the rugby field, they are still in power. For example, in the group of thirty players that were chosen to represent South Africa at the 2011 World Cup, nineteen were white and Afrikaans-speaking. That constituted almost two-thirds of the team, even though Afrikaners only make up 6 per cent of the population of the country (Giliomee 2009:700).⁴ Rugby is an integral and central aspect in the cultural landscape of Afrikaners and the numbers simply serve to demonstrate how important rugby is in their cultural-associational lives.

Rugbymentality concerns the relation of many Afrikaners towards their country; whether they feel pride in this respect or not depends heavily on the success of their rugby teams. The general function of sport around the globe as a source of national pride and nationalism is exemplified in Afrikaner society (Booth 1999:182). At this point, an important qualification needs to be made in order to be fair to the wider array of identities available to Afrikaners. Rugbymentality as conceptualised here concerns a well-known public image of Afrikaners that appears on television every Saturday. This public image is representative of a large portion of Afrikaners, but not all of them. The point is that many do subscribe to this image and Loftus is the symbolic focus of this group. Rugbymentality refers to the role and function of rugby in the cultural lives of the Afrikaner public.

Who are these Afrikaners? I would argue that they are a mixture of two groups within Afrikaner ranks during apartheid identified by Krog (2007:30-32), namely the rising middle class and the passive followers of ideology and institution: They are affluent undiscerning consumers whose life world has been largely depoliticised in

the pursuit of economic goals (Rossouw 2007:90). They are also driven by an unconscious desire to escape the post-apartheid 'nervous condition' (a term used by Fanon 1967:17) that is the crisis of Afrikaner identity. This article analyses the form that this consumerism takes in the Afrikaner guise beyond apartheid, centred on Loftus and rugby.

Rugbymentality and the heterotopia of Loftus

In the text entitled 'Of other spaces', Michel Foucault (1986:22-27) elaborates on the idea of heterotopia. This strange notion carries two meanings: Firstly, heterotopia could be a space where the normal and accepted logic and rules of a society are allowed to be suspended. In other words, things can be done in heterotopia that are not allowed or accepted in 'decent society'. Secondly, the heterotopia can be defined as a designated space within or outside of society that functions as a kind of mirror to the state of affairs within society, be it as a mirror of perfection or imperfection (Foucault 1986:24, 27). In this way, heterotopia consists of contradictory spaces that are either (or both) utopian or dystopian in kind. The point is that heterotopia consists of strong contradictions between what society should, or should not, be like and what society is actually like.

Why rely on the Foucauldian concept of heterotopia in looking at Loftus? Certain other concepts could also be quite helpful, such as the anthropological concept of 'liminality' or the more generalised idea of 'nostalgia'; indeed, the idea of the heterotopia relates to both. Liminality refers to 'in-between situations and conditions that are characterized by the dislocation of established structures, the reversal of hierarchies, and uncertainty regarding the continuity of tradition and future outcomes' (Horvath *et al* 2009:3-4). As will be

seen, heterotopia carries a similar meaning and demonstrates each of these aspects in some way. However, heterotopia is different in one important aspect which exactly concerns the function of nostalgia: heterotopia reveals how the disruption caused by liminality in each of the above ways is countered by nostalgia itself. In other words, the disruption caused by societal change in post-apartheid South Africa to Afrikaner identity is countered by Afrikaners in turning to cultural nostalgia in a number of ways. Viewing Loftus as heterotopia will bring this dynamic to the fore. Heterotopia is a kind of heuristic device through which one can come to understand the power dynamics within a specific context, in this case the postcolonial context of South Africa and the ways in which it influences Afrikaner identity.

The main advantage of using the concept of heterotopia is that it brings to light the intricate dynamics involved in societal and identity formation. Current Afrikaner identity is constructed partly on the basis of what Foucault calls 'pastoral power'. This kind of power is distributed in a more diffuse manner in society although it is still attached to institutions of some sort, for example Christianity and the Church, but also the state (Foucault 2002b:333-334). Pastoral power provides the opportunity for individual identity formation through the appropriation of knowledge which is disseminated in society by institutions (in the strict or loose sense of the word). There is an ambivalence involved here, what Foucault (2002b:336) calls a 'double bind' which involves 'the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures'. The problem is to explain how we actively and freely form our identities (within bounds) by way of the knowledge at our disposal without passively subjecting ourselves to these institutions (Foucault 2002b:336). The discussion of rugbymentality aims to demonstrate how pastoral power is at work in both ways in the lives of



Figure 2: Bulls players training in the gym (Gallo Images)

Afrikaners through the 'institution' of Loftus, whether in an active manner (i.e., creatively) or passively, where their identities are simply formed by outside influences.

As with all kinds of mentalities, there is a physical space that is symbolically representative of rugby mentality, namely the Loftus Versfeld Stadium in Pretoria. Loftus is the prime symbol of rugby mentality and probably *the place* in the country that most visibly represents the public image of Afrikaner-identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Jansen (2009:73-74) provides an apt description of the significance of the stadium for Afrikaners:

When one enters the almost all-white, almost all-Afrikaans rugby stadium called *Loftus Versfeld*, it becomes immediately clear that this game is much more than rugby. It is an event of tremendous social and cultural significance for the Afrikaner. It is, of course, at base a sport, and so the normal travails and joys of losing and winning are the same as with sports everywhere. But there is something more, for this is the sport in which power, nationalism and masculinity are projected and entrenched in Afrikanerdom.

Jansen points to the link between rugby and the self-image of Afrikaners and the weight that the sport carries in their culture. Loftus, and the rugby mentality that it engenders, function as an important mirror to

Afrikaners. Loftus represents a complex postcolonial invented tradition that reveals what it means to be an Afrikaner. Certain kinds of games (i.e., types of sport) attract a specific kind of audience and these 'games discipline instincts and institutionalize them' (Callois in Esposito 1995:114). If we regard rugby from this vantage point, then an analysis of Loftus as an institution of rugby will tell us a lot about how this game shapes, and is shaped by, Afrikaner identity and culture.

Loftus Versfeld rugby stadium itself is the *place* that represents Afrikaner identity – that is, an actual geographic site – but also a *space* that can tell us about Afrikaners. Space concerns the multiple symbolic meanings and experiences of a place, which can be diffuse and differ from the perspective of one individual to the next. Loftus is both the physical place that it is, and the mental and experiential space that it represents, namely rugbymentality. Heterotopia concerns this relation between place and space. In the discussion of Loftus (as physical space) and rugbymentality (as mental space), creative use will be made of the principles of heterotopia outlined by Foucault.

Loftus as a space of crisis and deviance

Foucault (1986:24) asserts that all cultures and societies consist of either (or both) of two types of heterotopia, namely a heterotopia of crisis and a heterotopia of deviance. *Heterotopia of crisis* is a space where 'there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis' (Foucault 1986:24). *Heterotopia of deviance* is a space 'where individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed' (Foucault 1986:25).

In what sense is Loftus a *heterotopia of crisis*? I would suggest that the shift from the Union Building to Loftus as the symbol of Afrikanerdom is a symbolic demonstration of an identity that has been in crisis for quite some time. Afrikaners are still in the process of rethinking their identity, which was inextricably bound up with apartheid. Krog (2009:126) describes the disruption caused by the end of this social and political order:

Afrikaners found their way of life forcefully splintered by a gradually self-asserting black majority, and the majority of Afrikaans-speakers turned out to not be white and started claiming the majority space in their language. So Afrikaners, who have so easily appropriated the land and the continent, found themselves in a new kind of post-colonial dynamic and are still reeling and deeply resentful about the incoherence of their lives.

The end of apartheid threw the identity of Afrikaners into turmoil and turned their world upside down: Apartheid was an attempt by Afrikaners to create a 'coherent' society although it was already 'incoherent' as African cultures were disrupted by colonialism. Afrikaners simply lived in a 'completely closed coherent world' (Krog 2009:126), which was itself disrupted and exposed with the end of apartheid. The collapse of Afrikaner nationalism left a massive symbolic gap (Rossouw 2007:90) and rugby has helped to deal with this situation. Rugby has become an integral part of the identity of many and represents a link to an otherwise disgraced past. The continuity that rugby represents between the past and the present provides a rich source of heroes for Afrikaners (Figure 3), heroes that are untainted by their political past. These heroes are not admired only by Afrikaners, but also by the general South African public. The expression of power by Afrikaners takes place on the rugby field despite the political disenfranchisement off the field. This expression is quite effective, for the reverence



Figure 3: Three heroes of the Bulls and the Springboks (Gallo Images)

for the Springboks is second only to the All Blacks, famous for the Haka war cry (a Maori challenge to battle) that they perform before every match. For Afrikaners in the latter half of the twentieth century, the rivalry with New Zealand significantly took the place of the British, because of the dominance of international rugby by the All Blacks (Black & Nauright 1998:77).

The importance of rugby in the lives of Afrikaners is not limited to the present: Rugby began to displace traditional forms of culture (*volksfeeste*) in the 1970s during a time when South African sport teams in general were boycotted as a result of political sanctions (Grundlingh 1995b:100-101). The boycott of South African rugby teams during apartheid made a deep impression on Afrikaners in terms of the isolation that they felt from the rest of the world. This mixture of rugby and politics did not end with apartheid. There is still a strong political side to rugby; surrounding the

sport are also debates about the role of Afrikaners in the country, for instance the debate about the Springbok and the question as to whether this symbol should disappear owing to its association with apartheid. The Springbok has proven to be a symbol that Afrikaners fight to keep within the public domain. The Springbok is symbolic of their identity crisis and the battle for the Springbok is also one of the battles for the identity of Afrikaners and the last bit of public power that they have. Rugby represents a significant expression of public power for Afrikaners and it has filled the vacuum left in the wake of the disappearance of the myths of apartheid, providing new myths that offer themselves to mediating the identity of Afrikaners. This might sound like an overstatement of the importance of rugby but some go as far as saying that 'the demise of the Springbok could draw a line under the once dominant influence of Africa's last white tribe' (Evans 2008). Issues of identity, community and myth are often intertwined

with sport (Foster 2010:254). The myth of rugby contributes to the reinvention of Afrikaner identity.

In what sense is Loftus a *heterotopia of deviance*? I would argue that the deviance of Loftus lies with the violent nature of rugby, which neatly ties in with the metaphor of sport as war. Sport could be considered as a substitute for war; World Cups in sport attest to this function of sport, where one finds an 'orgy of chauvinism and mime-show of war between nations' (Coetzee (2001:351), in his description of the 1995 World Cup in South Africa). The 'sports field and battlefield are linked as locations for the demonstration of legitimate patriotic aggression' (Mangan 2006), and the aggression on the rugby field no doubt fulfils this role. The violence on the field is the focus of the spectator and usually remains on the field, although it can sometimes spill over into the stands if some become a bit '*warm onder die kraag*' (hot under the collar).

This role is not openly fulfilled by the players on the field but, from a psychoanalytic point of view, it is the role that they fulfil in the eyes of many spectators. Rugby provides Afrikaners with a kind of psychological compensation for their political problems off the field. The languishing political voice of Afrikaners is canalised into the sport and their rugby heroes project an image of power back to them, thus providing Afrikaners with a sense of empowerment (what Grundlingh (1995c:118) calls their 'ethnic self-esteem') despite a low political self-esteem. It represents a kind of catharsis for Afrikaners, where success on the rugby field can compensate for their political woes. This helps rugby fans 'to regulate potentially harmful emotions' (Lambert 2010:219) and find the opportunity to vent their political frustrations in a 'healthy' (albeit subconscious) manner. This can be done at Loftus in a manner 'that could not be expressed in other social contexts without a degree of embarrassment or offence' (Lambert 2010: 223). The key here is that the rugby stadium (namely

Loftus) provides a space for this psychological function, and a place where a certain type of aggression and behaviour is legitimate. This reveals an important function of heterotopia as a space within or outside of society where the accepted logic and rules of society are allowed to be suspended. In other words, things can be done in heterotopia (namely Loftus) that are not otherwise allowed or accepted in 'decent society', for example open patriotic aggression, public drunkenness and its related misconduct.

The symbolic meanings of Loftus

According to Foucault (1986:25), 'a society, as its history unfolds, can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion'; 'each heterotopia has a precise and determined function within society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another.' In this respect, Loftus is a heterotopia because the stadium itself, although seen as a symbol of Afrikanerdom, also carries other functions apart from Afrikanerdom or rugby. The stadium has been used for the purposes of soccer during the 2010 World Cup and is also home to the soccer team of Mamelodi Sundowns. In the former instance, the stadium interestingly became a space where people from all around the world congregated to watch soccer matches. The stadium was also used for some of the religious gatherings that Angus Buchan recently organised around the country, which filled stadiums (and Loftus) up to the brim. In this instance, the majority of Buchan's audience were probably Afrikaners, but they came to Loftus for religious reasons. This reveals the importance of both rugby and Christianity in the lives of Afrikaners. To complete the list of its functions, the stadium has also been a venue for rock concerts over the years.



Figure 4: A horned Bulls *bakkie* with the Orlando Stadium in the background (Gallo Images)

Rugby has another significant role in the lives of Afrikaners: Sometimes it does provide a way for them to reach out to other population groups, or at least to share in a sense of what it means to be South African in the midst of the national glory provided by the Boks or Bulls winning a big competition. The most distinct examples of these are the two World Cups, with President Mandela (in 1995) and President Mbeki (in 2007) visibly present when the Boks lifted the trophy. In May 2010, the Bulls played the semi-final and final matches of the Super 14 competition in Orlando Stadium (Figure 4) because Loftus Versfeld had already been handed over to FIFA for the Soccer World Cup.⁵ President Zuma was present at the final in which the Bulls beat the Capetonian Stormers, their compatriots and archrivals, and the event displaced the heterotopia of Loftus to Soweto. These events were fleeting but incisive symbolic events which revealed that some Afrikaners aligned themselves with a sense of a broader national identity.

Loftus as space of exotic tradition

Heterotopia concerns the notion of *incompatible spaces*, that is, the capacity to juxtapose 'in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible' (Foucault 1986:25). Loftus is a heterotopia in this sense: within its off-field culture one finds a strange mixture of the traditional and the 'exotic'. The traditional can be seen in the integral role that Afrikaans music plays at Loftus: The song *Liefeling* (Beloved) by Gé Korsten once dominated the music played at the stadium and Steve Hofmeyr's *Die Bloubul* (The Blue Bull) is considered the 'national song' (*nasionale lied*) of the Blue Bulls (Van der Berg & Burger 2008:148). The exotic can be seen in the strong element of Texan culture resonating in the entertainment surrounding the rugby field. The metaphor of the Bulls make Pretoria seem like Dallas: The horns, the offroad 4x4 *bakkies*

(Figure 4), the *braais* (barbeques) covered with all manner of meat and the open demonstration of Christian faith in interviews with the players after the match. The dancing girls, the Bulls Babes (Figure 5), at one point wore cowgirl outfits and matching cowboy hats. This last example demonstrates how the role of women remains subordinate to that of men: The women provide entertainment next to the field and a furtive sexual distraction to the display of aggression on the field, where the men in charge are the 'male actors who create and sustain the nation by military and constitutional or political struggles [now rugby struggles] from which women by definition are excluded' (Gaitskell *et al* in Grundlingh 1995c:126). Rugby reinforces gender relations in Afrikaans society (Gaitskell *et al* in Grundlingh 1995c:126), whether through tradition or through the exotic.

The reason for the 'American exotic' is probably two-fold: Firstly, an affinity that Afrikaners feel towards the frontier mentality and nostalgia of the American mid-West; and secondly, the advent of professionalism in 1995 and the accompanying commercialisation (and thus Americanisation) of rugby (which had already been underway since the mid-1980s, according to Grundlingh 1995a:19). Sport teams have become brands within the consumerist culture and the Bulls brand is sold as a mixture of the traditional (Afrikaans) and the exotic (American). The traditional element in the Bulls brand sets it apart from most sport brands in the world and makes it part of a smaller group of brands whose fans invest some kind of regional or nationalist sentiments in the team. Other examples are Bayern Munich and FC Barcelona: many Bavarians and Catalonians have the same secessionist sentiments harboured by some Afrikaners, aspiring to separate themselves from the nation-state and to form their own homeland (*volkstaat*). The ideal of the *volkstaat* (such as the picture painted by Roodt (2006:378-385)) gestures toward a

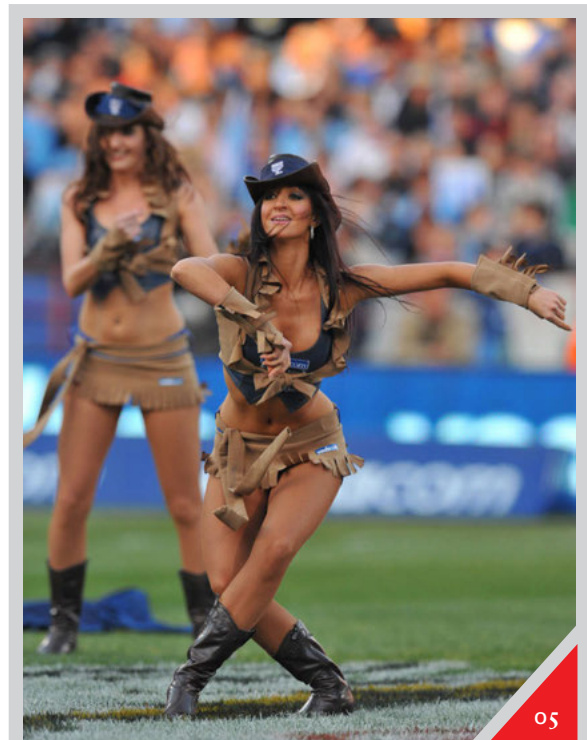


Figure 5: The Bulls Babes in their 'full' regalia (Gallo Images)

future heterotopia that would exist in the midst of a dystopian South African society.

Loftus as museum and monument

Heterotopia is frequently linked to slices in time, where 'the heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time' (Foucault 1986:26). Loftus is a heterotopia because time seems to stand still there. This gives it the feel of a (noisy) museum or a monument; at Loftus, one is in the same space where so many past events of glory took place *in memoriam* (in this sense, many rugby and sports stadia could be considered heterotopic). Figure 1 shows an archive photo of this 'museum' taken during the Currie Cup final in 1991. The stadium has remained much the same, although



Figure 6: Bulls fans in the traditional blue jerseys and horned hats (Gallo Images)

the Eastern pavilion (from which the photo is taken) has since been rebuilt with the addition of an upper deck.⁶⁾ Afrikaners have a 'historical experience' (see Gaffney & Bale 2004:34) at a stadium event when they watch rugby at Loftus. The stadium provides Afrikaners with a sense of historical continuity, a connection to memorable events in the past that can be celebrated even though they took place in the time of apartheid. The architecture of Loftus as stadium can be read as a historical text where 'the collective energies, dreams and aspirations of large segments of the [Afrikaner] population are posited and deposited in the stadium' (Gaffney & Bale 2004:35).

Loftus as rugby stadium becomes a kind of parallel reality during the rugby match: during the 80 minutes of

the game (the slice of time that Foucault refers to), reality fades as the spectators escape into the parallel reality. In the slice of time that is the rugby match, it is not only the rugby stadium where this experience is felt. Rugby (and most sport) lends itself to the medium and format of television. Indeed, spectators watching the match at the stadium constitute a small proportion of those who watch it on television. The match can be watched live on television, whether it is played in the same city or halfway around the world. A recording of the game can be watched again and again on television (or on a computer or cellular phone screen). The slice of time that is the rugby match (or highlights thereof) becomes an iconic event on television, whether in real time or *in memoriam*. If it were not for television, then sport (and rugby) would not exert the attraction

that it enjoys in modern culture (and for that matter in Afrikaans culture).

Concluding remarks: Loftus as mirror

I would like to bring this paper to a close in relating Loftus to the final principles of Foucault's heterotopia. Heterotopia, with its 'relation to all the space that remains' (Foucault 1986:27), serves as a kind of mirror exposing different contradictions within society. On the one hand, heterotopia creates an imaginary space that exposes the illusions of every *real* space in society (Foucault 1986:27). On the other hand, the role of heterotopia can be the creation of a space radically other to the communal space of daily life. What insights do Loftus and rugbymentality offer when viewed as a mirror, but also as imaginary space, of Afrikaners?

The first insight concerns specific ideological shifts. The consumerist nature of current Afrikaner culture expressed through 'rugbymentality' confirms the shift in the ideology of Afrikaners that Rossouw (2007:89-90) identifies: From the ideology of republicanism in the nineteenth century (that motivated the *Great Trek* and the Anglo-Boer War), to the ideology of nationalism in the twentieth century (which formed the bedrock of apartheid), and now (since the 1970s) the ideology of consumerist capitalism. Economic ideals now take precedence over political ideals in the lives of Afrikaners (Rossouw 2007:3). The integral function of rugby within Afrikaner culture is no coincidence. Rugby, like any sport, is part and parcel of the development of modern culture since the Industrial Revolution. Rugby has been present in all three of the above phases since it was imported here from the British Isles in the late nineteenth century. One can imagine that for Afrikaners at that time, beating the English

at their own game provided a way of dealing with the scars wrought by English domination; much of this sentiment was carried over into the twentieth century, when rugby 'matches against the British Lions were significant opportunities for Afrikaners to teach *die Engelse* [the English] a lesson' (Black & Nauright 1998:77).

The second insight concerns the manner in which Loftus as heterotopia can either open or close the world of Afrikaners to others and also open or close the world to Afrikaners themselves. Heterotopia encompasses 'a system of opening and closing that both isolates [it] and makes [it] penetrable' (Foucault 1986:26). This means that the heterotopic site can at the same time be freely accessible to everyone (in theory) but also inaccessible to some. This relates to *Loftus as exclusive and inclusive space*: Loftus as place and brand is accessible to anyone and everyone (Figure 6 shows fans of different groups). Becoming a Bulls fan is simple because in essence anyone could be a Bull and yet, being an Afrikaner is a far more complex and exclusive affair. As a cultural symbol Loftus is part of an attempt by some Afrikaners to retroactively insulate (*laertrek*) themselves from the social and political realities of South Africa, whilst others see Loftus inclusively, as a way to become part of the cultural mosaic of the country.

Rugbymentality can function as a form of *self-imposed exclusion* for some Afrikaners. Rugbymentality reveals an interesting variation on the Foucauldian heterotopia: heterotopia is not just a physical place but also a specific *experience* of the world. In other words, rugbymentality leads many Afrikaners to experience the places that they daily inhabit in ways different from those of their fellow citizens, whether black or poor. The disempowerment of Afrikaners within the political sphere and the social realities of post-Apartheid South Africa have led to a sense of alienation, and rugbymentality

is a way of dealing with this. Loftus provides a physical space within which this mentality, and a sense of power, can be expressed. The rugby match at Loftus provides many Afrikaners with a kind of festival which is 'confined to the limits of a reality of which it is a negation' (Bataille 1991:215-216). The game is an escape from a reality they would like to deny and yet the game overflows into reality, whilst reality also has a direct impact on the game itself.

Rugbymentality can also function as *the struggle for inclusion* on the part of Afrikaners. The struggle of the Springboks to win the World Cup and be the best in the world is more significant than being just a sporting pursuit. The status of the Springboks as world champions 'demonstrate[s] that the Afrikaner could beat the best the world could offer' (Grundlingh 1995c: 118). The success of the South African team at the world championship acts as kind of mirror to Afrikaners and demonstrates to them how worthy their contribution is to the country. If the Springboks are the world champions, then Afrikaners share in the pride of being South African. This pursuit is therefore also the struggle of Afrikaners for their own recognition as politically and culturally relevant within the wider South African community. Loftus can be a way for Afrikaners to reinvent themselves as citizens of post-apartheid South Africa making an important and essential contribution to South African society and rethinking what it means to be an Afrikaner. It is after all significant that Afrikaners call themselves Afrika(ners); with the emergence of this name came the realisation that they belong to Africa and live according to its rhythm (Krog 2009:123). In a sense they did not fully become a 'tribe' of Africa because of their role in the institutionalisation of apartheid which, in common parlance, is considered a form of colonialism. Only beyond apartheid can they envisage themselves as the white tribe of Africa with the claim of belonging to this place that is South Africa.

Notes

- 1 A word of thanks to fellow participants for their advice and feedback on an earlier version of this article that was presented at the Walkshop on 'Vryheidspark and other Governmentmonumentalities' at the University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria in September 2011. I further owe a number of ideas to fellow participants at a research seminar that I also presented at UNISA, this time at the Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology in April 2012. A number of ideas in this article were also inspired by conversations with Pieter Duvenage and Sampie Terreblanche. I found their thoughts and comments to be insightful and of great help. I am indebted to an anonymous referee for valuable feedback that helped to make this article substantially stronger. I also thank Gallo Images for their kind permission to reproduce the images in this publication.
- 2 The Northern Transvaal Rugby Union broke away from the Johannesburg-based Transvaal Rugby Football Union with its establishment in 1938 (see Van Den Berg & Burger 2008:11-13). During the period after South Africa became a Union within the British Commonwealth in 1910 through the apartheid era until the mid-1990s, most rugby unions in South Africa were named in some way after the four provinces of the country, Transvaal being one of them. At the end of 1994 after the first free general elections, the country was redivided into nine provinces. The rugby unions of Northern Transvaal and Transvaal both fell in the new province of Gauteng, which mainly consists of the greater metropolitan areas of Pretoria and Johannesburg. Both unions opted to move away from renaming themselves after the province and instead chose the more brand friendly names of the Blue Bulls and Golden Lions respectively.

- 3 This does not discount the fact that, according to a recent BMI survey, the majority of Bulls supporters are apparently black (see McGregor 2011:159). In an interview Barend van Graan, the current CEO of the Blue Bulls Company, explained that one must take into account that the mostly white spectators seen at the stadium represent only a small fraction of the greater fan base watching matches on television. Although a much higher proportion of white people are rugby fans, the majority black population means that even a small proportion of black fans at some point start to outnumber the white fans.
- 4 According to Gilliomee (2009:xiii), there were around 2.6 million people identifying as Afrikaners in South Africa in 1980. The current estimate is that there are around 3 million people identifying as Afrikaners in South Africa (www.unpo.org), hence 6 per cent of an estimated population of around 50 million, and even as many as 600 000 residing elsewhere in the world (official figures for the diaspora are hard to ascertain; figures given here are derived from the Wikipedia entry on 'Afrikaners'). These figures apply if one views Afrikaners as ethnically white, that is, the exclusive definition of Afrikaners, which makes them part of the greater 'white' population of around 4.6 million (SA Survey 2010/12:1). If one follows the inclusive definition, that is Afrikaners as first language Afrikaans speakers, the figure would be considerably higher – amounting to probably at least twice, if not thrice, the figure given above for ethnically 'white' Afrikaners. The inclusive figure includes the majority of the Coloured population, of almost 4.5 million (SA Survey 2010/12:1), and numerous black Afrikaans speakers. Both of these definitions of Afrikaners are problematic for different reasons: The exclusive definition is a racist definition, whilst the inclusive definition could lead to an oversight of the socio-economic problems that beset certain Coloured and African communities in grouping them together with their affluent white Afrikaans-speaking counterparts.
- 5 The Super Rugby competition (formerly Super 10, Super 12 and Super 14) is an international competition in which 5 regional teams each from South Africa, New Zealand and Australia compete from February to August. The competition has been running since 1993 and could be compared to the UEFA Champions League (in soccer) or the Heineken Cup (in rugby) in Europe. The Bulls have recently won three Super 14 titles in 2007, 2009 and 2010.
- 6 The Currie Cup is the national provincial rugby competition in South Africa. The competition has been running since 1889 and the Blue Bulls (formerly Northern Transvaal until 1996) have won the Cup 23 times, most recently in 2009. Only one team, the Bulls' archrivals Western Province from Cape Town, has won more titles with 31 wins (supersport.com). Bulls supporters will be quick to point out that 17 of these titles were won before the Northern Transvaal Rugby Union was established in 1938. During the Apartheid years especially, this rivalry between Northern Transvaal and Western Province replaced competitive international rugby. The resulting isolation led to a deep-seated provincialism that still exists today.

References

- Bataille, G. 1991 [1957]. *The accursed share, Volumes II (The history of eroticism) & III (Sovereignty)*. Translated by R Hurley. New York: Zone Books.
- Black, D. & Nauright, J. 1998. *Rugby and the South African nation: Sport, cultures, politics and power in the old and new South Africas*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Booth, D. 1999. Recapturing the moment? Global rugby, economics and the politics of nation in post-apartheid South Africa, in *Making the rugby world: Race, gender and commerce*, edited by T Chandler & J Nauright. London: Frank Cass:181-200.
- Coetzee, JM. 2001. The 1995 Rugby World Cup, in *Stranger shores: Essays 1986-1999*. London: Secker & Warburg:351-356.
- Esposito, J. 1995 [1974]. Play and possibility, in *Philosophic inquiry in sport* (second edition), edited by WJ Morgan & KV Meier. Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics:114-119.
- Evans, I. 2008. Symbol of unity: the Springbok vs. the Protea. *The Independent on Sunday*, 16 January. [O]. Available: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/symbol-of-unity-the-springbok-vs-the-protea-770538.html> Accessed 4 September 2011.
- Fanon, F. 1967 [1961]. *The wretched of the earth*, translated by C Farrington. London: Penguin.
- Foster, J. 2010. Tell me how you play and I will tell you who you are, in *Soccer and philosophy: Beautiful thoughts on the beautiful game*, edited by T Richards. Chicago: Open Court:253-264.
- Foucault, M. 1986 [1984]. Of other spaces. Translated by J Miskowiec. *Diacritics* 16(1):22-27.
- Foucault, M. 2002a [1978]. Governmentality, in *Essential works of Foucault 1954 – 1984. Volume 3: Power*, edited by J Faubion, translated by R Hurley. London: Penguin:201-222.
- Foucault, M. 2002b [1978]. The subject and power, in *Essential works of Foucault 1954 – 1984. Volume 3: Power*, edited by J Faubion, translated by R Hurley. London: Penguin:326-348.
- Gaffney, C & Bale, J. 2004. Sensing the stadium, in *Sites of sport: Space, place and experience*, edited by P Vertinsky & J Bale. London: Routledge:25-38.
- Giliomee, H. 2009. *The Afrikaners*. Second edition. Cape Town: Tafelberg.
- Grundlingh, A. 1995a. The new politics of rugby, in *Beyond the tryline: Rugby and South African society*, by A Grundlingh, A Odendaal & B Spies. Johannesburg: Ravan:1-23.
- Grundlingh, A. 1995b. Responses to isolation, in *Beyond the tryline: Rugby and South African society*, by A Grundlingh, A Odendaal & B Spies. Johannesburg: Ravan:90-105.
- Grundlingh, A. 1995c. Playing for power: Rugby, Afrikaner nationalism and masculinity in South Africa, in *Beyond the tryline: Rugby and South African society*, by A Grundlingh, A Odendaal & B Spies. Johannesburg: Ravan:106-135.
- Horvath, A, Thomassen, B & Wydra, H. 2009. Introduction: Liminality and cultures of change. *International Political Anthropology* 2(1):3-4.

Jansen, J. 2009. *Knowledge in the blood: Confronting race and the apartheid past*. Cape Town: UCT Press.

Krog, A. 2007. '... between the nose and the mouth. Perhaps more towards the eyes', in *Some Afrikaners revisited*, by D Goldblatt. Roggebaai: Umuzi:29-34.

Krog, A. 2009. *Begging to be black*. Cape Town: Random House Struik.

Lambert, A. 2012. The evolution of the football fan and the way of virtue, in *Soccer and philosophy: Beautiful thoughts on the beautiful game*, edited by T Richards. Chicago: Open Court:215-230.

Mangan, JA. 2006. Sport and war: Combative societies and combative sports. *SGL Quarterly*, July. [O]. Available: <http://www.sgiquarterly.org/feature-2006Jly-2.html> Accessed 4 August 2011.

McGregor, L. 2011. *Touch, pause, engage!* Cape Town & Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.

Roodt, D. 2006. Stadstaat om Pretoria? (A city state around Pretoria?), in *Aweregs* (Slightly to the Right). Johannesburg: Praag:378-385.

Rossouw, J. 2007. 'n Rooi Z4 en 'n Renaissance-kasteel (A Red Z4 and a Renaissance castle). Cape Town: Zebra.

South Africa Survey 2010/11, edited by J Kane-Berman. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

Supersport.com. Sv. *Currie Cup finals history*. [O]. Available: <http://www.supersport.com/rugby/currie-cup/finals> Accessed 27 April 2012.

Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) 2009. Sv. *The Afrikaner*. [O]. Available: <http://www.unpo.org/members/8148> Accessed 4 November 2011.

Van der Berg, W & Burger, G. 2008. *Blou Bulle: 70 glorie jare* (Blue Bulls: 70 years of glory). Johannesburg: Penguin.

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia 2011. Sv. *Afrikaner*. [O]. Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afrikaners> Accessed 4 November 2011.