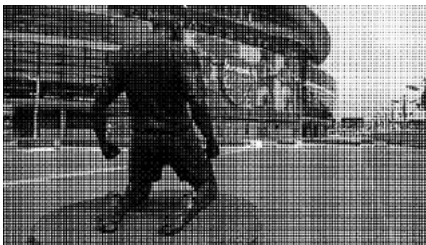


WAYS OF SEEING; A CELEBRATION
by Billy Howard Price



Like many of you reading this now, I've always enjoyed looking at this image.

Not so much for the person at its heart,
fixed on their knees in a defiant moment of triumph...



~ we know all about *that pose* ~

...but for the people in the background, in the stands, looking down.

Their fury, confusion & awe
immortalised & frozen in all its awkward glory, forever.



(14).

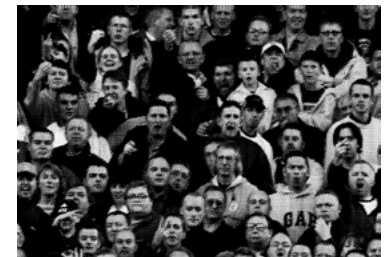
It's rare that our attention wavers so totally away from the central figure of an image,
but maybe that's what's so powerful about this one.

We are helped in this visual gymnastic by an inch perfect, precision assist from the
photographer. Specifically their instinctive decision to gently pull focus from

the foreground,



to



the background.

In one playful flick of their wrist, a proverbial drop of the shoulder,

they gently shift attention from the man at the centre of this image...
to the people in the distance.

From cause, to effect.

Tilting our eyes up, out & across
towards the depths of this generous tableau and a world pregnant with possibilities.

Like how Thierry would open up his body as he
cut inside from the left

and the course of a day,
your evening,
the game,
our season

and the confidence levels & credibility of innumerable goalkeepers,
defenders,
and opposition fans

would suddenly

open up
along with it.

Reshaping the way we looked at things



and the way they looked at us.



ODI TE AMO



Look long enough at the depths of this image & something interesting starts to happen.

We see the usual spasms of



fury & rage;

faces contorted and chewed up in painful paroxysms

two fingers held aloft



or else beckoning Thierry forwards
offering him out to fight.

We see middle fingers raised up



And index fingers,



pointed down.

There are despondent faces,



crushed & deflated

And vacant faces, staring listlessly off



into space

perhaps glimpsing for a second the gaping abyss between the two teams on the field.

There's belligerence,



bile



and bluster.

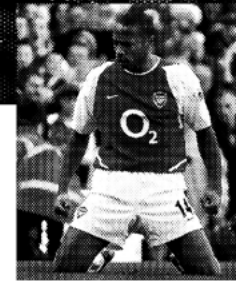
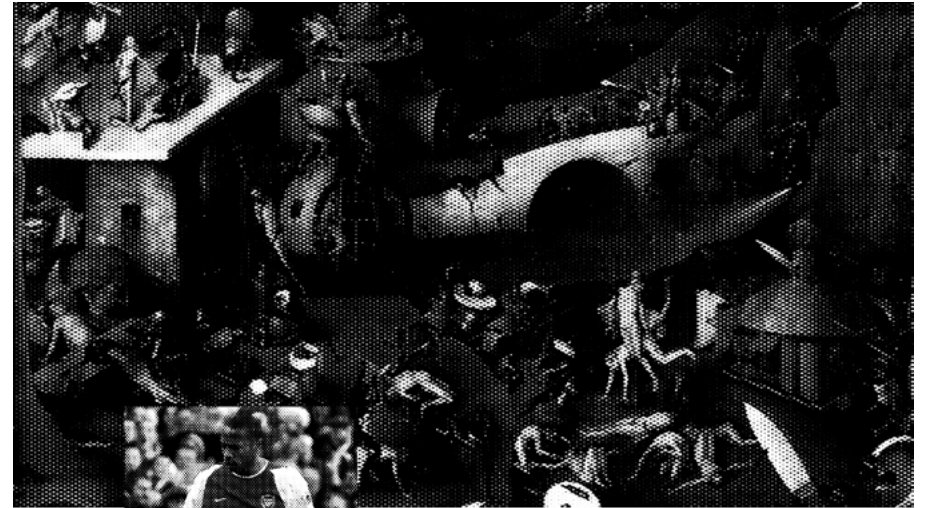


There's Burberry caps on shaved heads.

Viewing this photograph can become not unlike the action of scanning the pages of a Where's Wally book

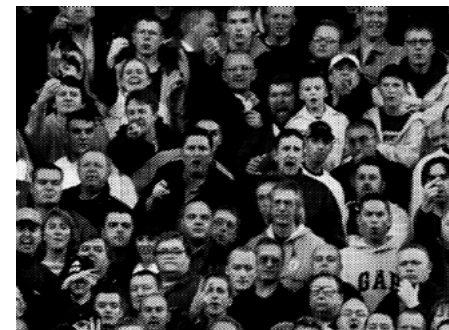
or

studying the myriad details of a nightmarish Hieronymus Bosch tableau.



Thierry's Garden of Earthly Delights

But look closer still



and we see something more surprising at play.

Because there, spread amidst the anger and the hatred of the mass of furious away fans,

one cannot fail to see shining clear instances,

here & there,



of awe,



admiration



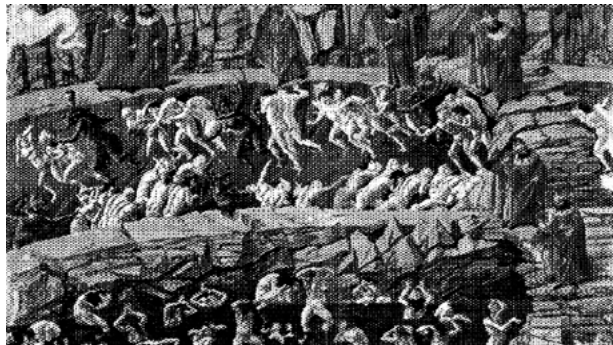
and



(whisper it)
pleasure.

They're enjoying it.

Like the ghoulish figures that lie prostate atop one another
in an infernal Bosch painting,



or the masses of the Damned
shown in the images Botticelli drew of the Nine Circles of Hell,

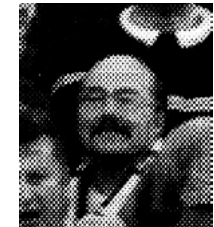
many of these characters seem to be taking distinct pleasure



in the pain being inflicted upon them.

Enmeshed in this fiery diorama, they are revelling in their torment

and indulging greedily in their own torture.



We see it writ across their anguished faces and in the form & shape of their strange wrath;



{ snap }

an unavoidable adoration for the sublime power of the spectacle that just unfolded
before them.

We see machismo peppered with masochism; a perverse but inevitable bond.

Odi et amo; I hate and I love.

And, maybe, at its core, this is essentially what we all love about football.

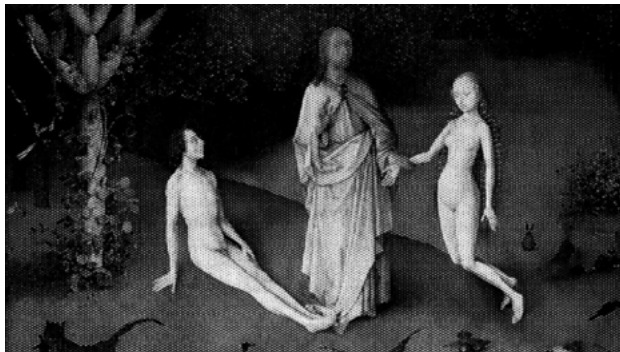
The flippant fickleness with which our singular and collective hopes, passions and ideals can be destroyed before our eyes,

in an instant
by the drop of a shoulder,



a change of pace
or the teasing opening of the curvature of a body.

A gentle focus pull revealing that our pleasures and our pains



are never far, apart, & behind every Garden of Earthly Delights,
is a Hellish twin making up the dichotomy.

Or another fate yet worse

to make up an unholy triptych. (iii)

Perhaps, upon closer reflection, that is what this photograph shows us most of all,
when we look closely enough.



But, ultimately
I much prefer to read this image as a record of the moment

{ one of many }

that Tottenham fans truly understood, without any doubt, the eternal gulf in class
between *our* club

and theirs.

Odi et amo; I hate and I love.



You'll always be shit.